

Daily Times, 1 February 2006

FC soldier killed in landmine blast in Dera Bugti (Azizullah Khan)

QUETTA: At least one Frontier Corps soldier was killed and four seriously injured in a landmine explosion near Pirkoh gas plant in Dera Bugti, some 375 km south east of Quetta, on Tuesday. The paramilitary personnel were in the area to clear landmines and repair a water pipeline blown up by suspected rebel tribesmen a few days ago, Dera Bugti District Coordination Officer Abdul Samad Lasi said. Bugti tribe spokesman Agha Shahid Bugti claimed that three soldiers were killed and one injured when their vehicle struck a landmine. A paramilitary force spokesman said that a private vehicle struck a land mine in the Kohlu area on Tuesday and a passenger was injured. He said that rebel tribesmen attacked the Frontier Corp's camp in Kahan but no casualty was reported

The News, 1 February 2006

Pakistan still identifying Bajaur victims: military

ISLAMABAD: Military spokesman Maj-Gen Shaukat Sultan said on Tuesday that Pakistan has yet to find the bodies of al-Qaeda operatives thought to have been killed in a US missile strike more than two weeks ago and is still hunting for fugitive leaders of the terror group. Intelligence officials have said the strike was aimed at al-Zawahri but that he did not show up for a planned dinner in a border village that was hit. Maj-Gen Sultan said authorities were still investigating how many al-Qaeda suspects were killed in the attack and their identities. "The investigation is going on but there is no outcome yet," the spokesman told The Associated Press.

Daily Times, 1 February 2006

NATO concludes operations in quake areas

ISLAMABAD: The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) force has announced the conclusion of its 90-day operations in the earthquake-affected areas of Pakistan. Speaking at a joint news conference in Islamabad on Tuesday, NATO Ambassador Maurits Jochems and Relief Team Commander Air Commodore Andy Walton said that the NATO forces had successfully completed their mission. They said that the NATO forces were leaving Pakistan with fond memories, and expressed gratitude to the Pakistani government and armed forces for their support in carrying out relief operations. They appreciated the "effective" Pakistani leadership for tackling the disaster with "patience and great courage", and extending all possible support to relief teams from the world over. They said that it was a matter of satisfaction for NATO that local people encouraged them, recognised their services and extended remarkable hospitality.

Dawn, 1 February 2006

Work on Bhasha dam from 2007

ISLAMABAD Jan 31: Construction work on the \$6.5 billion Bhasha-Diamer dam is expected to start in 2007 after the completion of preparatory work, including soil testing, engineering designing, reconstruction of the Karakoram Highway between Thakot Bridge to the dam site. The dam would be completed before 2016. This information was provided to a meeting on Bhasha-Diamer dam which was convened and chaired by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Tuesday. The prime minister said the government would ensure the completion of the project by 2016 as decided by the cabinet. Mr Aziz assured all stakeholders that the government would take care of their legitimate demands and would address and solve issues related to the dam in a judicious manner. He said: "Justice will be done to all."

Daily Times, 1 February 2006

Search for militants continues

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani officials are yet to find the bodies of Al Qaeda operatives thought to have been killed in a US missile strike more than two weeks ago and are still hunting for fugitive leaders of the terror group, an army spokesman said on Tuesday. The comments from Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director Maj Gen Shaukat Sultan follow the airing of a video on Monday by the apparent target of the strike, Osama bin Laden's top deputy, Ayman al-Zawahri - his first appearance since the January 13 attack. In the video, Zawahri branded US President George W Bush a 'butcher' and a 'failure' because of the air strike. Zawahri also condemned Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, calling him a 'traitor.'

Daily Times, 2 February 2006

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia vow to fight terror (Umer Farooq and Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Wednesday held a wide range of talks on regional and international issues and expressed a "firm resolve" to jointly combat terrorism. The talks were held between President General Pervez Musharraf and Saudi King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, who arrived here on Wednesday for a two-day official state visit. The two leaders discussed the re-structuring of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC), efforts to fight terrorism, the situation in Iraq and the nuclear standoff involving Iran. Both sides supported a peaceful resolution of the Iran issue and agreed that a negotiated and peaceful solution to the Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India was key to peace in the region.

The News, 2 February 2006

Gomal Zam dam site attacked with rockets (Sailab Mahsud)

TANK: The site of the Gomal Zam dam in South Waziristan was attacked with more than 10 rockets in the night between Tuesday and Wednesday but no loss to life was reported. Official sources said the rockets targeted the posts set up by the paramilitary Frontier Corps and the largely untrained Khassadar Force at the site of the under construction dam. One of the posts, commonly known as picket, manned by the Khassadars was damaged after receiving a direct hit but nobody was inside at that time. The other rockets, fired by unknown people from the nearby mountains, missed the target. However, the rocketing created a scare in the area.

Daily Times, 2 February 2006

Israel lifts import bars on Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Israel has lifted its imports licensing requirements from World Trade Organisation members, including Pakistan, that have no diplomatic relations with the Jewish state or prohibit imports from Israel. "Israel hopes that this unilateral step will be reciprocated by those countries," which are mostly Muslim, according to a WTO statement released at the conclusion of a trade policy review of Israel at the WTO headquarters in Geneva. The Israel authorities informed the world trade body that in recent years, Israel had adopted a more liberal and open trade policy. An Import Policy department had been established within the Foreign Trade Administration. "Its mandate is to explore ways to further facilitate the flow of trade into, and out of, the Israel market as well as to carry out liberalisation steps. In the framework of the policy objectives, Israel has unilaterally liberalised its import policy from a relatively large number of countries which were subject to import licensing mechanism at the time the last review was written.

The News, 2 February 2006

Red tape entangles Pak-Sri Lanka FTA (Masood Anwar)

KARACHI: Bureaucratic delay deprived the country of the benefits of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Sri Lanka signed at the beginning of 2005 and commissioned from June 1, 2005. Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) has not evolved a strategy for the export of rice to Sri Lanka even after passage of seven months. The government of Sri Lanka has allocated export quota of 6,000 metric tonnes of long grain basmati from Pakistan under the FTA government. However, Pakistani bureaucrats have failed to evolve the mechanism to export a single grain under the FTA. On the other hand, Sri Lankan traders are fully utilising the opportunities under the FTA and tea, coconut, spices and other products' exports to Pakistan are in full swing.

Daily Times, 2 February 2006

Pakistanis among 'terrorists' seized in Afghanistan

KABUL: The police have arrested an Iraqi, an Iranian and three Pakistanis allegedly planning attacks in insurgency-hit southern Afghanistan, the Afghan Interior Ministry said on Wednesday. The men had entered Nimroz from Iran, ministry spokesman Yousuf Stanizai said. "They are all terrorists. They had crossed illegally into Nimroz from Iran and wanted to go to other provinces to carry out terrorist attacks," he said. The Pakistanis were identified as Gul Nazar, Mohammad Nawab and Alif Khan. The governor of Nimroz, Ghulam Dastageer, confirmed the arrests but said only two Pakistanis had been caught

The News, 2 February 2006

Protest against Thar border opening

KARACHI: The Sindh Qaumi Ittehad (SQI) has chalked out various protest programmes against the opening of the Khokrapar-Monabao border, an SQI spokesman told this correspondent. At the initial stage, he said, the alliance of five nationalist parties of Sindh would hold protest demonstrations throughout the province. In the second phase, they said, a sit-in would be staged on the day of opening of the routes. In this connection it is said alliance had already motivated people of interior of Sindh who according to the alliance were already charged for this movement. He said as these people were aware of the grave situation of the opening of the routes as they feared that migration across the border would further deprive them of their rights and might of their land.

Daily Times, 3 February 2006

Pakistan, S Arabia sign 5 agreements (Umer Farooq)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have signed five agreements to enhance cooperation in education, trade and politics. The agreements were signed following a meeting between Saudi King Abdullah and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Thursday. They include: a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for political consultation between the foreign ministers of the two countries, along with agreements on cooperation in technical education and vocational training, scientific and educational cooperation between the two countries' education ministries, avoidance of double taxation and provision of tax evasion regarding tax on income, and scientific and technological cooperation. Both sides discussed all aspects of Pak-Saudi relations along with regional and international issues, including the Pakistan-India peace process, the evolving regional security situation,

Afghanistan, the Iranian nuclear issue, the situation in Iraq and the revitalisation of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

Dawn, 3 February 2006

Pakistan spending \$3.4m on Afghan refugees: official

LONDON, Feb 2: Pakistan is spending \$3.4 million on 2.6 million Afghan refugees living on its soil, said Additional Secretary UN and Economic Coordination in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tariq Osman Hyder. The international community through UNHCR contributes \$12 million, while the rest of the amount is met through Pakistan's national budget. Osman made these remarks during the second day of the international conference on Afghanistan while giving details of Pakistan's role in the development and reconstruction of Afghanistan, said a press release issued by Pakistan High Commission. The conference ended here on Wednesday. He lauded Afghanistan's contribution to provide relief to victims of earthquake despite its economic constraints.

Daily Times, 3 February 2006

My govt was not involved in proliferation: Nawaz

LONDON: Nawaz Sharif has refused to accept that his government was involved in nuclear proliferation. "Neither my government nor the government of Benazir Bhutto was involved in any kind of nuclear proliferation since all nuclear facilities were firmly under the army's control," said the former prime minister, speaking to BBC Urdu. He couldn't say whether any senior army officials were in any way involved in the nuclear proliferation. A few days ago, Nawaz Sharif had, while addressing his supporters in London, declared that the decision to carry out the nuclear tests in 1998 was his and it was taken in the best interest of the nation.

The News, 3 February 2006

Indo-Pak talks on Kashmir truck service proposed (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India will hold expert level talks for starting a truck service between Muzaffarabad and Srinagar and a bus service between Rawalakot and Poonch. The truck service will be used for trade between the two parts of Jammu and Kashmir. India has proposed that talks on the truck and bus services be held on March 30 and 31 in New Delhi. Diplomatic sources told The News here on Thursday that Pakistan is studying the infrastructure on the Azad Kashmir side for any such service because it was destroyed in the devastating earthquake of October 8. The authorities concerned have been asked to prepare a report on the infrastructure before the commencement of the expert-level talks. Pakistan is expected to respond to the Indian proposal regarding the dates in a couple of days.

Dawn, 3 February 2006

Gun-battle in Dera Bugti continues; six injured

QUETTA, Feb 2: At least six people were injured on the third day of a gun-battle between paramilitary forces and Bugti tribesmen in the Dera Bugti town. Rocket attacks on Frontier Corps bases and checkpoints were reported from Loti, Kohlu and Nal areas and landmines were found and defused in other areas. All roads leading to Dera Bugti remained closed because of the gun-battle and landmines. People still inside the town were reported to be facing shortage of food and other items of daily use. Sources said buildings and shops in the town were hit as tribesmen and security forces continued to target each other's position with rockets and mortar shells on Wednesday night.

Dawn, 3 February 2006

Govt urged to release Marri tribesman

MULTAN, Feb 2: Some local government representatives of Kohlu district in Balochistan have demanded 'release' of their Marri tribe notable who, according to them, was 'kidnapped' by the government intelligence agencies in Dera Ghazi Khan. Speaking at a press conference here on Thursday, Mir Colonel Qadhafi said his brother Mir Asghar Khan, who is the head of Pirdadani sub-clan of the Marri tribe, was picked up in a joint action by the Dera police and some plainclothesmen on Jan 28 last when he, along with his seven-year-old son Rehan, was passing by the Fareedi Bazaar in Dera Ghazi Khan.

Daily Times, 4 February 2006

Musharraf wants militia to disarm for Balochistan peace

RAWALPINDI: President Pervez Musharraf has said that the private local militia in Balochistan must disarm for peace to prevail. "There is no military operation in the province and there is no collateral damage there," the President said at Camp Office on Friday. He said that the private militia must "stop hampering development" in the province. He spelt out a four-point solution, beginning with the surrender and disarming of the local militia, to end unrest in the province. "We will not let them flourish and challenge the writ of the government ... (which) will be established in Balochistan," he said. He said that the government will adopt a political solution to the issue only if the local sardars give up arms and stop hampering oil and gas exploration activities and development projects.

"I do not believe in politics at the cost of the nation ... the nation comes first," he said.

Dawn, 4 February 2006

Saudi investment likely in pipeline, refinery projects (Ihtasham ul Haque)

ISLAMABAD, Feb 3: Saudi Arabia is likely to invest in gas pipeline and oil refinery projects in Pakistan, says Prime Minister's Adviser on Finance Dr Salman Shah. Talking to Dawn on Friday, he said a Saudi delegation comprising leading industrialists and businessmen would visit Pakistan in May to identify areas for investment. The Saudis, he said, were also expected to invest in sectors of privatization, real estate, hotel & tourism, infrastructure, industry, telecommunication and Information Technology. "There is an oil boom these days which is providing new opportunities to Saudi investors. And after the visit of King Abdullah we see avenues for billions of dollars' new Saudi investment in Pakistan," the adviser pointed out.

Daily Times, 4 February 2006

Four million drug addicts in Pakistan

MIANWALI: More than four million people in Pakistan have fallen victim to drugs particularly heroin and the government will take steps for their rehabilitation at the district and tehsil levels, said Brig Babar Idrees, Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) commander in Punjab, while presiding over a District Anti-Narcotics Committee meeting on Thursday. District Nazim Obaidullah Shadikhel, Zulfiqar Ali Toor, the district coordination officer, Dr Ayaz, Anti Narcotics Force deputy director in Punjab, Khalid Butt, the assistant director, Dr Nasir Awan, the executive district officer (EDO) for health, Iqbal Tariq, EDO community development, Maqbool Shakir, EDO education, Abdul Rauf Rana, superintendent central jail and representatives of NGOs attended the meeting.

The Nation, 4 February 2006

Private militia in Balochistan must disarm: Musharraf

RAWALPINDI: President Gen Pervez Musharraf on Friday denied any military operation in Balochistan but said that the private local militia must disarm and stop hampering development in the province aimed at the socio-economic uplift of the people. "There is no military operation in the province and there is no collateral damage there," the president told mediapersons at his Camp Office. The president spelt out a four-point solution beginning with the surrender and disarming of the local militia to end the unrest in the province. "We will not let them flourish and challenge the writ of the government... the writ of the government will be established in Balochistan," President Musharraf said.

The News, 4 February 2006

Intelligentsia hails starting of Thar Express (Shahid Husain)

KARACHI: The intelligentsia in the 15-million-strong megapolis Karachi has hailed the decision of Pakistan and Indian governments to start Thar Express from February 18 and opined that it will help reunite the divided families and strengthen the peace process between the two countries. Prominent educationist and economist Prof. S.M Naseer told The News: "The decision to launch Thar Express is a continuation of peace process between Pakistan and India and people-to-people contact. A large part of the population living on either sides of Munabao are related with one another-including Hindus and Muslims- and the decision to start Thar Express will enable them to meet easily, he said.

Dawn, 4 February 2006

Compensation paid for Bajaur deaths

KHAR (Bajaur Agency), Feb 3: The governor's Fata secretariat on Friday distributed more than Rs2.7 million as compensation among heirs of the people killed in the US attack on Bajaur. The compensation cheques were distributed at a special ceremony held in the agency headquarters. Rs200,000 was paid for each dead and Rs50,000 to each of the three injured tribesmen. The ceremony took an awkward turn when tribesman Sher Afzal, whose 11 family members had died in the attack, refused to accept the cheque. It was, however, received by another man from the area. Another cheque was given to Mohammad Rahim who had also lost all members of his family.

The Statesman, 4 February 2006

Jirga asked to expel Mufti Shakir from agency

LANDI KOTAL: Assistant Political Agent, Riaz Mehsood convened a jirga of elders from all tribes of the agency at Landi Kotal Jirga Hall on Friday in order to review the increasing sectarian differences in the agency. The jirga was suggested that Mufti Shakir should also be expelled from the agency following expulsion of Pir Saifur Rehman. A tribal elder, Malik Darya Khan Zakakhel while addressing the participants said that tribal people wanted peaceful environment in the agency and discourage sectarian violence. He further said that it was the unanimous decision of all the tribes of the agency that Mufti Munir Shahkir should also be expelled from the agency same as Pir Saifur Rehman was expelled so the risk of violence could be minimized, he added.

Daily Times, 5 February 2006

HRCP's 'State of Human Rights in 2005': Information, democracy curbs 'grave problems' (Zahid Hameed)

ISLAMABAD: The continued denial of the people's right to know about matters affecting their lives and their right to participate in the process of decision making are "grave problems" confronting Pakistan, according to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). The HRCP expressed these concerns in an annual report, 'State of Human rights in 2005', that was launched here on Saturday. The report, which covers the period from November 2004 to August 2005, also says that violence against women remains high in Pakistan, and accuses the government of using anti-terrorist laws to target its political opponents.

Daily Times, 5 February 2006

3 soldiers die in Waziristan blast

WANA: Three paramilitary soldiers were killed and one injured on Saturday when suspected militants detonated an explosive device in South Waziristan, AFP reported. The roadside device went off as a convoy of the Frontier Corps was returning to Wana, a security official said. The blast in Zarmilan, 40 kilometres southwest of Wana, killed one soldier at the scene. Three soldiers were wounded, two of whom died later in the hospital. Meanwhile, troops on Saturday seized "a large quantity" of arms and ammunition from a truck heading to Datakhel near Miranshah, a military official said. He said the weapons, including rockets, heavy guns, shells, landmines and sleeping bags, were cleverly concealed under timber loaded on the truck.

Daily Times, 5 February 2006

Kashmir Solidarity Day: President, PM for peace in Kashmir

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz have emphasised the need to end violence and human rights abuses in held Kashmir. In a message for Kashmir Solidarity Day, being observed today (Sunday), Gen Musharraf reiterated his proposal of demilitarisation in the region. He said a peaceful environment was necessary for the success of efforts by Pakistan and India to resolve the Kashmir issue. The president said, "Rigidity and violence must give way to flexibility and positive engagement". He said that Pakistan had always extended moral, political and diplomatic support for a just and peaceful solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiris.

Daily Times, 6 February 2006

Explosion on Quetta-Lahore bus kills 12 (Azizullah Khan)

QUETTA: At least 12 people were killed and 19 injured when a powerful bomb exploded on a passenger bus on Sunday in Balochistan province, officials said. The Lahore-bound bus, which was carrying 34 passengers, left the bus terminal in Quetta at 4pm and was travelling through the Bolan Pass. The bus had reached Kolpur, some 55 kilometers from Quetta on the 1,200 kilometer-long route when the explosion occurred, police said. According to reports, the bomb was placed under a seat near the back of the bus. Provincial police chief Chaudhry Mohammed Yaqoob said that in addition to the dead the injured, an uncertain number of bodies were trapped inside the wreckage and could only be removed by using steel cutters. "This is part of the situation that has been going on in Balochistan for the past quite some time, and those people have a hand in this who have been involved in this type of explosion," Yaqoob told reporters.

The News, 6 February 2006

HRCP report not based on reality, says Rashid

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Sunday said a Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) report of human rights violation in Pakistan had no links to the reality. "The report reflects their personal desire and thinking and is not based on reality," the minister said while speaking in a TV programme. "The HRCP issued false and wrong reports which is based on their personal thinking," he added. He said minorities in Pakistan were enjoying full freedom and had right to cast their vote freely. "In presence of free media no one will believe on such a false report," he said, adding that vested interests were raising false issue to harm the country's image.

Daily Times, 6 February 2006

We must not miss chance for Kashmir peace: Musharraf

MUZAFFARABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf has again urged India to respond to his demilitarisation proposal for Kashmir as he feels there is currently a unique opportunity to find a solution to the dispute. "Now is the time and the leadership should make use of the opportunity and move towards a solution of the Kashmir dispute," Gen Musharraf said in a speech to a public gathering here on Kashmir Solidarity Day. He said this opportunity came in the wake of improving ties between India and Pakistan and the October earthquake that devastated the Himalayan region. He reiterated Pakistan's traditional stance on the Kashmir issue, but added that Islamabad could be flexible if India is.

The News, 6 February 2006¹⁴ die as bomb rips through bus in Mastung

Sui attacks death toll rises to six; one killed in fresh landmine blast (Muhammad Ejaz Khan)

QUETTA: At least 14 people were killed and 19 others were wounded, some of them critically, when a powerful bomb ripped through a passenger bus near Kolpur in the Mastung district on Sunday. Independent sources, however, put the death toll at 19 people killed in the bomb blast in the Dasht area, some 40 kms from the provincial capital, but Inspector-General of Balochistan Police Chaudhary Muhammad Yaqoob told The News that 12 passengers were killed and 13 others were wounded. The bus, carrying 31 passengers, was on its way to Lahore from Quetta, when the bomb, apparently placed under a seat, went off. Official sources told The News that the bomb was a time device.

The News, 6 February 2006

Rs 218m scam unearthed in Foreign Ministry

ISLAMABAD: In yet another big financial scam in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Pakistan's missions abroad, the auditor general (AG) has unearthed embezzlement of Rs 218.225 million and demanded action against elements and officers plundering the exchequer. In his report, published recently and presented to the president and the prime minister, the AG also disclosed that bureaucracy had refused to implement the orders of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) even after the lapse of 21 years. Eleven paras pointing out Rs 35.64 million embezzlement are still unattended, according to the report.

The News, 6 February 2006

Indian MP hopes for visa-free travel on Munabao route (AA Khan)

HYDERABAD: Manvinder Singh, a member of Indian parliament and son of former foreign minister Jaswant Singh, on Sunday hoped for a visa-free regime for the peoples of Thar and Rajasthan travelling on the Khokhrapar-Munabao route. Rajasthan and Tharparkar share similar culture and language, he said while talking to newsmen at a local hotel here. "After Rajasthani Sindhi is the second biggest language in Rajasthan. The peoples on both sides are peaceful. They share so many similarities. Why they are unable to meet each other," he asked. "I hope things will improve with the passage of time." Singh said the opening of the Khokhrapar route was a good omen for the peoples of both the countries, adding that he had written a letter to the Indian prime minister for opening the route as it remained peaceful even during the Partition.

Daily Times, 7 February 2006

Musharraf can be elected again by current assemblies (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League (PML) President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain has said that the current National Assembly and provincial assemblies could elect President Pervez Musharraf for another term. "The current assemblies can re-elect President Musharraf provided the general elections are held in 2008," the PML leader said in his chamber in parliament on Monday. PML sources said that the party leadership has told Musharraf that he can be re-elected before the next general elections. The PML and its allied parties are currently in a majority in the parliament and provincial assemblies in Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan.

Daily Times, 7 February 2006

Afghans, India, fuelling Balochistan insurgency, says Owais Ghani

KARACHI: Balochistan Governor Owais Ghani accused Afghan warlords and drug barons of arming tribal militants and India of financing them on Monday, a day after 21 people were killed in the latest round of violence. Baloch tribal militants have waged a low-level insurgency for decades, but the violence has escalated over the past year. Ghani said that the deteriorating security situation was partly a spillover from Afghanistan due to the weakness of President Hamid Karzai's government. "Unfortunately Karzai's central government is weak in the provinces, and the warlords and drug lords there are pushing arms into Balochistan," he told a news conference in Karachi. "We have successfully stopped 10 to 12 percent of arms movement from Afghanistan, but the border between Afghanistan and Balochistan is 1,200 plus kilometres long and it is very difficult to completely seal it."

The News, 7 February 2006

Munabao rail link meaningless sans reopening of consulates (Ammara Durrani)

It's a classic case of putting the cart before the horse. Would-be passengers of the Thar Express would have to temper their enthusiasm for the opening of the Khokhrapar-Munabao border next week, because the historic moment is likely to come without the added advantage of a simultaneous reopening of Indian and Pakistani consulates in Karachi and Mumbai, respectively. Officials at the Pakistan Foreign Office told The News on Monday that efforts to secure temporary premises in Mumbai's Mittal Chambers at Nariman Point fell through after the building's owners refused to lease the property to Pakistan despite an advance payment of Rs 20 million.

The News, 7 February 2006

Balochistan in grip of worst commotion (Tariq Butt)

ISLAMABAD: Balochistan is in the grip of worst commotion, volatility and instability with authorities hell-bent on finding solution to the problem by use of force. Rocket attacks, bomb blasts and sabotage at key national installations are the order of the day. Authorities seem helpless to stem the tide of alarming terrorist activities. Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Muhammad Yousuf has not been able to make even slight contribution to improve the situation. The federal civilian setup is also unable to help. The ruling coalition, especially the PML is debilitated to embark upon a concrete worthwhile political move to make the situation any better. Last year, PML president Shujaat Hussain and secretary-general Mushahid Hussain Sayed had made a bid, introducing a dialogue process to address the grievances and complaints of certain defiant tribal chieftains including Akbar Bugti. They had softened Bugti to some extent, but it did not take long for the accord to break down.

Dawn, 7 February 2006

Bhasha dam: GBNA warns of protest movement

ISLAMABAD, Feb 6: The Gilgit-Baltistan National Alliance on Monday warned of a protest movement against the government if its reservations about the construction of Bhasha dam were not addressed. Speaking at a press conference, the alliance representatives complained that they were not taken into confidence on the project. They also demanded immediate release of those arrested during a protest demonstration on February 2. Alliance chairman Inayatullah Shumali said the Northern Areas is a disputed region and on the agenda of the United Nations.

The News, 8 February 2006

Red alert as Lahore fears suicide hits (Salman Aslam)

LAHORE: Law-enforcement agencies have declared a red alert in Lahore following intelligence reports about the threat of suicide attacks. Sources told The News that the Lahore city was the target as terrorists might hit there, particularly on Ashura. Meanwhile, the Capital City Police have not only tightened the security in view of these intelligence reports but also launched a crackdown on the suspects, arresting at least 54 of them from various City localities on Tuesday. The police carried out raids at Mughalpura, Nishat Colony, Shahdara, Bund Road, Shera Kot, Shadbagh, Shah Pur Kanjran, Manga Mandi and Moaza Pajian Raiwind to arrest the suspects.

Daily Times, 8 February 2006

Religious parties to launch campaign against caricatures

LAHORE: Religious groups of Pakistan have decided to launch a campaign against the blasphemous caricatures of Holy Prophet published in newspapers of Denmark, France, Norway and other European countries. A meeting of representatives of the Jamaatud Dawa (JD), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), Jamiat Ahle Hadith (JAH), Jamiat Mashaikh-e-Ahle Sunnat (JMAS), Muttahida Jamiat Ahle Hadith (MJAH), Hizbul Ahnaf (HA), Jamaat-e-Ahle Hadith (JAH), Majlis-e-Ahrar (MA), International Khatam-e-Nabuwat (IKN) and others was held at a hotel on Tuesday, which was presided over by JD leader Amir Hamza. The meeting decided to hold a national conference for consultation on February 11.

The News, 8 February 2006

300 Indian commandos to be deployed in Kandahar (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir)

ISLAMABAD: India is urgently dispatching 300 commandos to Afghanistan on the pretext of providing security to the Indian workers present in the war-ravaged country. The Indian commandos will be deployed in southern Afghanistan between Kandahar and the Iranian border. The Pakistani authorities have credible evidence about the active Indian assistance with money and weaponry to the disgruntled elements in Balochistan. President Gen Pervez Musharraf has already hinted at the external involvement in the Balochistan situation without referring to India. Pakistan has expressed grave concern over deployment of Indian troops close to its border.

Daily Times, 8 February 2006

Army destroying peace in Balochistan, says HRCP

LAHORE: The Pakistan Army is ruining peace in Balochistan to exploit its resources and is trying to create misunderstanding among Pakistanis with regard to the province, Asma Jehangir, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) chairman, said on Tuesday. She told a seminar that the government was conducting a military operation in the province and that Dera Bugti looked like a ghost town. "The area is surrounded by Frontier Corps personnel and people arrested by intelligence personnel are disappearing, which is a violation of human rights," she said. The Labour Party Pakistan (LLP) arranged the seminar titled 'Basha Dam, arrests and human rights' to condemn the arrests of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) leaders who were protesting against Basha Dam. Asma alleged that corrupt government politicians were supporting General Pervez Musharraf.

The News, 8 February 2006

Sindhis, Baloch protest at Pak embassy in Washington

WASHINGTON: The Sindhis and the Baloch from across the United States have criticised the "military action in

Balochistan" and the government's insistence on construction of dams on the Indus river. Several representatives of Sindhi organisations rallied in front of the Pakistan Embassy here late on Monday under the auspices of the World Sindhi Institute in collaboration with the Sindhi Association of North America, the World Sindhi Congress, the Global Pushtun Institute, the Baloch Society of North America, the Baloch Human Rights International and the Torture Abolition Survivors Supports Coalition International. Wearing symbolic Sindhi Ajrak, the rally delivered a memorandum to the Embassy of Pakistan, outlining their concerns and demands.

Dawn, 8 February 2006

Meeting on defence ties with UK (Arshad Sharif)

LONDON, Feb 7: Senior defence officials of Pakistan and the United Kingdom will be meeting here this week to explore avenues for closer cooperation in the defence field, Dawn has learnt. Officials from Pakistan's Ministry of Defence Production and organizers of the Ideas 2006 defence exhibition will meet officials of the British defence ministry, UK Defence Exports Services Organization, Defence Manufacturers Association and representatives of the defence industry. The meeting is aimed to "update and brief companies on the growing defence equipment relationship between Pakistan and the UK, to discuss export opportunities and to share experience of doing business in the market". When contacted, Pakistan's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Dr Maleeha Lodhi, said the high commission would also be participating in the meeting.

Daily Times, 8 February 2006

Terrorist training camps might exist in UK

LONDON: Police say that they uncovered evidence of terrorist training camps in Britain after raiding Muslim cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri's north London mosque, which they believe was a global magnet for Islamic militants. Police said that they have had evidence of the camps for years, but it could not be disclosed until Tuesday after the end of a trial at which the cleric was convicted of 11 charges, including soliciting murder and possessing a terrorist training manual. In January 2003, about 150 British police staged a dramatic raid on Finsbury Park Mosque as part of their investigation into a plot to make the deadly poison ricin at a nearby north London apartment.

Daily Times, 9 February 2006

George Bush waives export restrictions on Pakistan

WASHINGTON: US President George W Bush on Wednesday waived restrictions on exports to Pakistan, saying it would ease the democratic transition in the South Asian nation and help combat terrorism. In a memo to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Bush said that he was easing prohibitions under the Appropriations Act, which targets countries where a democratically elected government has been overturned by a coup, according to a White House statement. Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf grabbed power in a bloodless coup in October 1999, named himself president in June 2001 and was elected to a five-year term in a controversial election in April 2002.

Dawn, 9 February 2006

Last batch of Nato forces leaves

RAWALPINDI, Feb 8: The last batch of North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces, comprising 22 members, who provided relief to quake victims in Azad Kashmir and the NWFP, departed from PAF Base Chaklala on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, the Federal Relief Commissioner, Maj-Gen Farooq Ahmed Khan, appreciated the services of the Nato troops for the earthquake victims

Daily Times, 9 February 2006

Militants behind bus bombing: IG

QUETTA: Tribal militants are suspected of planting a bomb last Sunday that killed 13 people on a bus, in retaliation for an ongoing military operation against them in Balochistan, a provincial police chief told Reuters. The security situation in Balochistan has been deteriorating for the past year, and worsened further after a rocket attack in December during a visit by President Pervez Musharraf to Kohlu town on December 14. Baloch nationalists say hundreds of people have been killed during a subsequent crackdown said to have involved helicopter gunships, though analysts say this could be an exaggeration. Balochistan IG Chaudhary Mohammad Yaqoob told Reuters in Quetta that militant camps had been destroyed, but more were being established across the border in Iran, although it is on the opposite side of the province from where the tribes suspected of causing most trouble operate.

Dawn, 9 February 2006

NGOs blamed for damaging administrative system in AJK

LAHORE, Feb 8: Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in relief and restoration operations in the quake-hit areas of Azad Kashmir are partially to be blamed for damaging the local administration system. "Offices are open but officials are missing in quake-hit districts Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Rawlakot, as most of them have

been hired by the NGOs for carrying out their operations," said Tahir Abbasi and Syed Afraz Gardezi, two journalists from Bagh. Mr Abbasi is former president and Mr Gardezi sitting secretary-general of the Bagh Press Club. They, on a private visit here, had been invited by the Lahore Press Club on Wednesday to share their observations with local mediemen about the relief and restoration work going on in their area.

Daily Times, 9 February 2006

PM says dialogue okay, but no challenge to govt's writ

ISLAMABAD: The government wants to solve the problems in Balochistan through dialogue, but anyone who tries to challenge the writ of the government will be "dealt with accordingly", Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has said. He was meeting with Sindh Chief Minister Arbab Ghulam Rahim and Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Yousaf at Prime Minister's House on Wednesday. Aziz said that President General Pervez Musharraf had taken a personal interest in the development of the province, initiating projects worth billions of rupees on water supply, electricity, gas, health and education to improve the standard of living of the people of Balochistan. He emphasised that these projects must be completed on time. They also discussed the implementation on the decisions taken at a PML Parliamentary Board meeting on Wednesday and the reorganisation of the party in Sindh and Balochistan.

Dawn, 9 February 2006

Bhasha dam protesters released

GILGIT, Feb 8: Leaders of various nationalist and progressive parties, detained on Saturday for trying to stage a protest rally against construction of Bhasha dam, were released on Monday night after a court declined to extend their judicial remand. At least eight leaders and activists, including Balochistan Labour Party chief organizer Ahsan Ali, Karakoram National Movement chairman Mumtaz Hussain Nagari, KNM leader Dr Amjad Changezi and Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front's Ziaul Haque, Shahid Ali, Usman and Akramullah were kept in detention for two days and no charges were framed against them. Some of them freed leaders told Dawn that they would soon file a petition against the Gilgit superintendent of police for insulting and beating the protesters

Daily Times, 9 February 2006

Earthquake camps' closure planned in March (Umer Farooq)

ISLAMABAD: The federal government is carrying out a survey of relief camps to seek the opinion of earthquake victims regarding their return to their hometowns, as the government is planning to initiate the process of closing the camps in March. An official of the Federal Relief Commission told Daily Times that the survey was almost complete and "we are waiting for feedback". In one of its latest publications on earthquake relief operations, United Nations relief coordination officials said the Pakistani government would encourage the returns and begin the camps' closure possibly in mid-March. The government will encourage internally displaced persons (IPDs) to return to their place of origin before the deadline of March 31. However, the official said there would be no forced expulsion from the camps set up in the quake-affected areas of Kashmir and the North West Frontier Province.

The Nation, 9 February 2006

Gasline talks to resume next week

NEW DELHI (AFP) - India's new oil minister reiterated New Delhi's commitment to a multibillion-dollar natural gas pipeline from Iran and said talks with Pakistan on the project would resume next week. "Pakistan's oil minister (Amanullah Khan Jadoon) is visiting us February 17 and I will welcome him," Petroleum Minister Murli Deora said, adding talks during his trip would focus on the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project. "We are committed to making the project happen as we need the gas from Iran and we will continue to pursue the pipeline project," he told reporters. Deora was named petroleum minister in a cabinet shuffle earlier this month, replacing Mani Shankar Aiyar, who media reports said had ruffled US feathers with his vocal championing of the pipeline to which Washington is opposed.

Daily Times, 9 February 2006

5,000 troops deployed in Quetta (Azizullah Khan)

QUETTA: Around 5,000 police and paramilitary personnel have been deployed in the provincial capital to maintain peace during the Ashura procession today (Thursday). Balochistan Police Chief Chaudhry Muhammad Yaqub said that the army has also been alerted to help the administration if necessary. He said that 3,500 police and 1,500 paramilitary personnel had been stationed in sensitive areas of Quetta. Roads connected to the route of the main procession have been sealed while close circuit cameras have been installed at several points along the route, he said. All entry points to the city were also under tight scrutiny to prevent infiltration of terrorists. Police and Frontier Corps personnel would accompany the procession, and a few security personnel would also be posted on adjacent rooftops, he said.

Daily Times, 11 February 2006

Violence continues in Hangu after Ashura explosion

PESHAWAR: Forty people died as a suicide bomber tore through an Ashura procession in Hangu on Thursday, sparking rioting and a gun battle between the local Shia and Sunni communities. Soldiers rushed to the town 100 kilometres south of Peshawar after angry Shias torched shops and cars following the attack, agencies reported on Friday. Officials said that at least 90 people were wounded in the blast and the ensuing rioting, and 22 serious cases had been evacuated to larger towns. Others were being treated at Hangu Hospital.

Dawn, 11 February 2006

Govt blames terrorists for Ashura explosions

ISLAMABAD, Feb 10: The government on Friday said that Ashura bomb blast in Hangu, which killed 27 mourners and injured 40 others, was a terrorist act. Senate Chairman Muhammadmian Soomro, who chaired the proceedings, while commenting on a senator's statement said: "If President Gen Pervez Musharraf's government was illegal and unconstitutional (as alleged by him) then this very house (Senate) also becomes unconstitutional." His observations came when Senator Sanaullah Baloch said that Baloch leaders would never submit to Gen Musharraf's illegal and unconstitutional regime. Minister of State for Interior Dr Shahzad Wasim said that foolproof measures were adopted during the Muharram mourning days and except the blast in Hangu no untoward incident was reported from other parts of the country.

Daily Times, 11 February 2006

PM's team searched in US at Pakistani general's request (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: The frisking of Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz's delegation at JFK airport in New York before it boarded a special PIA flight for Washington was done at the instance of Pakistani not American authorities, according to a report. The weekly Pakistan Post, New York, reports in an exclusive story by editor Afaq Khyali that the US authorities are outraged by reports in the Pakistani media that the prime minister's delegation, which included several ministers and ministers of state, was frisked and body-searched at the orders of US Homeland Security authorities. The report, quoting an unnamed "senior official" of the State Department, says the delegation was searched at the express wishes of a Pakistani army general who was accompanying the prime minister.

Dawn, 11 February 2006

Four MoUs likely to be signed with Bangladesh (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Feb 10: Pakistan and Bangladesh are expected to sign four Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and one agreement in diverse areas during Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's three-day official visit here from February 12, diplomatic sources told Dawn on Friday. The four MoUs will be on agriculture cooperation, promotion of tourism, cooperation between two export promotion bureaus and on standardization of weights and measures, sources said. A bilateral agreement on visa abolition of diplomatic and official passports is also on the cards, it is learnt. The agreements are aimed at consolidating the existing close ties between the two South Asian countries, officials here maintain.

Daily Times, 11 February 2006

Pakistan won't import drugs from Europe, minister tells Senate (Zulfiqar Ghuman)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will not import medicines from Denmark and other European countries to protest the publication of the caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in their newspapers, Federal Health Minister Muhammad Nasir Khan told the Senate on Friday. This is for the first time that a minister officially announced ban on the import of any product from countries that hurt the religious sentiments of Muslims. "Muslims from Morocco to Indonesia are hurt. We cannot accept this nonsense," the minister responded to a query put by Kamil Ali Agha.

Dawn, 11 February 2006

US provided over 1 million gallons fuel for relief flights

ISLAMABAD, Feb 10: The United States Disaster Assistance Centre (USDAC) on Friday said so far the US had provided over one million gallons of aviation fuel to relief helicopters that transported more than 20 million pounds of humanitarian aid. USDAC Chief of Staff Lt-Col Aaron Aldridge said from the beginning of the relief effort we provided fuel to the United Nations, United Kingdom, Pakistan, Germany, Australia, South Africa, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Tajikistan and Libya. He said supplying fuel to all those involved in the relief effort was simply the right thing to do. As relief efforts transition to reconstruction, US army ground crews were now training their Pakistani military counterparts at Muzaffarabad how to operate the Rapid Refuelling Point (RRP). In March, US forces would turn over this system to Pakistan.

Daily Times, 11 February 2006

Hudood Ordinance — controversy and implications

ISLAMABAD: The Offence of Zina (Enforcement of Hudood) Ordinance 1979, commonly known as Hudood Ordinance, has been dubbed a controversial set of legislation by many social quarters. This claim is fortified by

the fact that almost all the major sentences given in Hadd cases have been reversed or lessened by the superior courts. As this ordinance includes certain provisions to deal with the cases of rape and adultery, the women have always been suspicious of its applications and implications. Women struggling for the protection of their rights from the platform of civil society organisations have been demanding complete repeal of this ordinance while people belonging to the extreme right wing want to get the ordinance implemented in its true letter and spirit. However, a majority wants amendment to this legislation by removing some controversial sections.

Dawn, 11 February 2006

Thar Express: Feverish activity at Zero Point (Arman Sabir)

ZERO-POINT (KHOKHRAPAR): The renovation of the Khokhrapar railway station has been abandoned half way after the government's decision to build a new railway station at Zero Point, bordering India. The government has attached prime importance to the station at Zero Point, and work on it is in full swing. The decision on this was taken at the eleventh hour owing to security reasons. Construction work began on Jan 19 in the desert area. Thar Express is scheduled to start its first journey at 11pm on Feb 17 from Karachi and will cross the border around noon on Feb 18. Most of the tickets for the train, having a capacity of about 900 passengers, have been sold, railway officials say. The train will have two stopovers, at Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas, en route to Zero Point. It will not stop at the Khokhrapar railway station.

Daily Times, 11 February 2006

Violence in Balochistan on the rise, says HRCP

PESHAWAR: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) expressed deep concern over the escalation of violence in Balochistan. "The use of heavy weapons by the armed forces and Balochistan militants has a deadly fall out for women and children," said Afrasiyab Khattak, member of HRCP mission to Balochistan. He said that lack of access to humanitarian organisations was aggravating the crisis as the people affected by the conflict could not receive any assistance. A very disturbing development in the last few days was the attacks on the houses of political leaders, he said. "As if the attack on Akbar Bugti's residence was not enough, the state intelligence agencies raided the house of a prominent political leader, Mehmood Khan Achakzai in Quetta," he said. They broke into the house and arrested three security guards. He said the government had not offered any explanation for its actions.

Daily Times, 12 February 2006

Private armies won't be allowed: President

CHARSADDA: President General Pervez Musharraf has said he will not allow 'private armies' in Balochistan to halt the development of the province. "No country can permit private armies bent upon targeting government installations and disrupting socio-economic uplift of the people or the completion of ongoing mega developmental projects," Gen Musharraf said in a brief address at a reception in Sheikhabad. "I want to tell the people who are using rocket launchers and missiles we will ensure writ of the government in the area and all projects will be completed," he said. The president urged people not to allow the exploitation of Islam to achieve political or personal vendettas.

Daily Times, 12 February 2006

Ceasefire negotiated between Shia, Sunni groups in Hangu

HANGU: A ceasefire agreement was reached between rival Shia and Sunni groups in Hangu on Saturday after several hours of negotiations, two days after a suicide bomb attack on a Shia mourning procession at Ashura. "A ceasefire agreement was reached and a peace committee set up, consisting of members from both sides, to supervise the situation," Kohat Deputy Inspector General Abdul Majeed Khan said. Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) NWFP President Senator Gul Naseeb led the talks, where each group blamed the other for Thursday's suicide attack and the ensuing rioting. The ceasefire comes after the latest exchange of fire between the two sides left two more dead and wounded nine others, taking the death toll since Thursday to 42.

The News, 12 February 2006

Countrywide strike on March 3 (Muhammad Anis)

ISLAMABAD: The ruling Pakistan Muslim League, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal and other political and religious parties on Saturday gave a call for a nationwide shutter-down strike on March 3 against the publication of blasphemous cartoons in some European newspapers. The decision was taken at a meeting of the national consultative council (Qaumi Majlis-e-Mushawarat) at the residence of MNA Mian Muhammad Aslam. Ulama and leaders of the religious and political parties from all over the country attended the meeting. The meeting also called upon the Muslims all over the world to observe an international sanctity of Holy Prophet (SAW) day by holding peaceful demonstrations, public meetings, rallies and conferences on March 3.

Daily Times, 12 February 2006

Baloch troubles won't affect Gwadar project, says Aziz

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has said the security situation in Dera Bugti and Kohlu will not affect the construction and operation of the Gwadar seaport. "The problem we have in Balochistan is in a small district where some people are creating trouble and the law enforcement agencies are dealing with it. People in Balochistan want development," the prime minister told Arab News in an exclusive interview. Asked whether security issues affected Pakistan's search for foreign investment, he said: "If something is happening in one part of the country it does not affect other cities. As you can see there are so many foreigners here you can't find a hotel room."

Daily Times, 13 February 2006

Two killed by suspected US mortar fire in Waziristan

PESHAWAR: Two women were killed and four children injured by suspected US mortar fire in a village in North Waziristan late on Saturday night. Sources in Miranshah, the headquarters of North Waziristan Agency, said militants attacked an allied forces post near the Pak-Afghan border at night, drawing mortar fire from US-led coalition forces in Afghanistan. Some mortar shells landed in a tented nomad village in the Bangidar Sulemankhel area four kilometres inside Pakistan tribal territory, the sources said. The injured children were taken to Mir Ali hospital in the agency. There were also unconfirmed reports that US planes intruded into Pakistani territory and bombed the village. Military spokesman Maj General Shaukat Sultan told Daily Times he knew nothing of the incident, but would inform the media as soon as he found out.

Dawn, 13 February 2006

Khaleda arrives; 4 accords likely to be signed (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Feb 12: Bangladesh's Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia arrived here on Sunday on a three-day official visit which promises to bolster cooperation in diverse areas and take bilateral ties to a higher plane. She is leading a 50-member delegation that includes ministers for foreign affairs, agriculture, health, advisers, businessmen and officials. Begum Zia was received at the Chaklala air base by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, his wife Rukhsana Aziz and Minister-in Waiting Neelofar Bakhtiar. The Bangladeshi leader was given a 21-gun salute. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia last visited Pakistan in January 2004 to attend the 12th Saarc summit.

The News, 13 February 2006

Rocket attack ruptures Loti gas pipeline (Muhammad Ejaz Khan)

QUETTA: Armed men again fired rockets at the pipeline of Well No 1 of the Loti gas field in Dera Bugti district on Sunday, suspending supply to the purification plant. Officials of the Dera Bugti administration said unknown assailants fired several rockets on the gas field, a camp of the Frontier Corps (FC) and mess of the Oil and Gas Development Corporation from nearby hills. One of the rockets hit the pipeline, disrupting gas supply from Well No 1. Paramilitary forces rushed to the site following the attack and cordoned off the area in an attempt to apprehend those involved in the attack. In another incident, armed men fired at least three rockets at the FC camp and the OGDC mess in Pir Koh area of Dera Bugti, the same day.

Daily Times, 13 February 2006

Reforms body on Balochistan met only twice in 8 months (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: A high-powered committee formed to implement reforms in Balochistan has held only two meetings since its establishment some eight months ago. The committee was to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the parliamentary committee on Balochistan, which include clearance of gas royalty arrears, revision of the Concurrent List, National Finance Commission (NFC) award, provincial autonomy and development of gas-rich areas. Official sources say PML leaders had advised PM Aziz that the implementation committee should hold monthly meetings.

The News, 13 February 2006

Kidnapping of women by cops: AJK police chief announces probe (Rauf Klasra)

ISLAMABAD: Inspector-General Police (IGP) Azad Jammu and Kashmir Shahid Hassan Qureshi on Sunday announced holding of an inquiry into the alleged kidnapping, illegal detention and use of five women of Gujar Khan by the Mirpur police as bargain chip in October last. The inquiry announced four months after the issue was highlighted by the media last year would be conducted at Kashmir House here on the demand of the victim family of Gujar Khan and other victims of police abuse who were afraid of going to Azad Kashmir to attend the inquiry proceedings.

Daily Times, 13 February 2006

Balochistan unrest: Agencies 'have proof' of Indian involvement

ISLAMABAD: Intelligence agencies have found proof of the involvement of India's Afghan consulates in creating unrest in Balochistan. Sources said on Sunday that in a report to the government, intelligence agencies have

provided "solid proof" that Indian consulates in Afghan cities are providing financial assistance to Baloch tribal leaders, along with funds and weapons to the Balochistan Liberation Army and the Balochistan Liberation Front. This support has played "an important part" in worsening the situation in the province, the report says. Besides funding Baloch militants, these consulates have also aided people carrying out terrorist acts along the Pak-Afghan border, the officials quoted the report as saying.

Daily Times, 14 February 2006

Pakistan powerless to stop US attack on Iran: Musharraf

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is opposed to a US attack on Iran over its nuclear programme, but has little power to stop it, President General Pervez Musharraf said on Monday. "We are against any aggression against Iran. However, if the United States attacks, I don't know how we could interfere," Gen Musharraf told a group of American and Asian journalists at the army chief's headquarters in Rawalpindi. He said he stood by plans for a pipeline that would bring gas from Iran to Pakistan and onto India, saying Pakistan's growing economy demanded it. US officials have said Washington opposes the pipeline.

Dawn, 14 February 2006

Violations of border to be discussed with Karzai (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Feb 13: The Foreign Office on Monday declared that Pakistan would raise the issue of recurring border violations with Afghan President Hamid Karzai during his visit here and at the upcoming Tripartite Commission meeting. "We have seen the reports of attacks, I'm sure these issues will be discussed both with the Afghan president and at the Tripartite Commission meeting," Foreign Office spokesperson Tasnim Aslam said at a weekly news briefing while responding to questions about continued border violations from Afghanistan. The Tripartite Commission's meeting is scheduled for Wednesday in Afghanistan.

Daily Times, 14 February 2006

Musharraf must give up dual role by 2007: Commonwealth

NEW DELHI: Commonwealth chief Don McKinnon said on Monday that President General Pervez Musharraf must give up either the presidency or control over Pakistan's armed forces by 2007, when his current presidential term ends. McKinnon, secretary general of the 53-nation club of mainly former British colonies, said that the body was monitoring the situation in Pakistan while being engaged with Islamabad in a "low-key but firm" manner. "2007 is the outer limit ... Commonwealth leaders have made it very clear that this (separation of the two posts) must occur at that time," McKinnon told the Press Trust of India (PTI) in an interview. "If it does not happen, obviously, the Commonwealth ministers would want to get together again and make recommendations as necessary," said McKinnon, who is in New Delhi for a broadcasters' conference beginning on Wednesday.

Dawn, 14 February 2006

'Muzaffarabad needs more aid'

MUZAFFARABAD, Feb 13: The administrator of the Municipal Corporation of Muzaffarabad has urged national and international NGOs and UN agencies to shift their focus to the AJK capital and help mitigate sufferings of its residents. "People of Muzaffarabad are still trying to come to terms with their huge physical and material losses. I have been suggesting at every forum that now NGOs and UN aid agencies should focus their attention on this town and its traumatised residents," said Zahid Amin while talking to a delegation of British aid agency Oxfam which had brought 200 wheel-barrow, 200 shovels and 300 sanitary workers' protective clothes for the civic body.

Daily Times, 14 February 2006

Protesters go berserk in Peshawar (Javed Afridi)

PESHAWAR: Police on Monday arrested 18 protesters on Monday after thousands of students attacked public and private property and burned several shops here to protest the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in some European countries. The police tear-gassed around 5,000 enraged students who pulled down dozens of signboards of a Norwegian cellular firm. The demonstration was the biggest in the city since the cartoons, considered blasphemous by Muslims, were reprinted in some Western newspapers. "We stayed away because the issue is very sensitive and any attempt to stop these people from expressing themselves against the issue will aggravate the situation," a senior police official told Daily Times on condition of anonymity.

Daily Times, 14 February 2006

Pakistan, Bangladesh sign 4 memoranda (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Bangladesh signed four memoranda of understanding (MoUs) on trade, standardisation and quality control, agriculture and tourism on Monday. The two countries also agreed to finalise a free trade agreement (FTA) by September 30. During bilateral talks, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and

Bangladeshi Premier Khaleda Zia agreed for the need to enhance the scope of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). An MoU between the Pakistani and Bangladeshi export promotion bureaus was signed to analyse business and trade conditions between the two countries. The two sides agreed to facilitate investment through identification of sectors of mutual interest, and exchange information and publications regarding development of trade relations.

Daily Times, 15 February 2006

Cartoon anger turns to violence (Shahzad Raza, Shahzad Malik, Noshad Ali, Shahnawaz Khan, Javed Afridi and Ahmed Raza)

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE/ PESHAWAR/HYDERABAD: Angry mobs stormed the Diplomatic Enclave in Islamabad and set fire to shops and government buildings in Lahore as protests against the publishing of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in European newspapers turned into ugly riots on Tuesday. Two demonstrators were killed in Lahore while countless minor injuries were reported. There were also major demonstrations in Peshawar, Gujranwala and Hyderabad. In Islamabad, police baton-charged and tear-gassed a group of protestors, mostly students, who stormed the Diplomatic Enclave and threw stones at embassy buildings. Thousands of students from the International Islamic University, H8 College, H9 College and other schools marched from Peshawar Mor to the Diplomatic Enclave via the Kashmir Highway.

The News, 15 February 2006

PM says Afghanistan govt needs to do its best (Kamal Siddiqi)

ISLAMABAD: On the eve of the arrival of Afghan President Hamid Karzai to Pakistan, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has once again cautioned on illegal cross-border movement between the two countries and says that he is not fully satisfied with the efforts made by the Afghan side to stop this. Speaking to a group of Asian and American journalists, who called on him as part of the Jefferson Fellowship Programme on Tuesday, the prime minister said that the challenge to both the sides was great but the "other side should do their best". He admitted that this was not an easy task and that the Pakistani side was also having problems plugging the gaps. He said that thousands of troops had been deployed on that side of the border " but there are two sides to any border and we want the other side to also be monitored".

Daily Times, 15 February 2006

Kashmir resolution only way to regional progress: Musharraf

ISLAMABAD: Political conflicts must be resolved in order to pave the way for prosperity in the South Asian region, said President Pervez Musharraf. Speaking to Khaleda Zia, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, at the Aiwan-e-Sadar on Tuesday, he said that Pakistan and Bangladesh were committed to making the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) a dynamic and vibrant organisation. Congratulating the Bangladeshi head of government on assuming the SAARC chair, he said that although South Asia possessed all the necessary resources to become a developed region, it was bilateral disputes that had blocked the way to regional prosperity.

Daily Times, 15 February 2006

9,300 seminaries registered so far: Ejazul Haq (Mohammad Imran)

ISLAMABAD: At least 9,300 seminaries belonging to the Ittehad-e-Tanzeemat Madaris-e-Deeniya (ITMD), an alliance of five religious boards, have been registered with the government. Religious Affairs Minister Ejazul Haq said in a press conference on Tuesday that 11,882 seminaries are associated with the ITMD. He said that the registration process began immediately after an agreement between the government and the ITMD on September 22 last year. There is no deadline for registration as it is a continuous process, he said. He said that the government would award the status of education boards to seminaries if the ITMD agrees to modernise its syllabus. He said that the government had already removed many of ITMD's reservations regarding registration, and the rest would also be addressed soon.

The Nation, 15 February 2006

Khaleda for \$1b trade by '07 (HAQ NAWAZ)

ISLAMABAD - Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Tuesday offered Pakistan to develop strategic business partnership in a number of areas including textile to get mutual trade benefits. "Despite the closeness of our relations, the volume of trade between our two countries is rather modest that needs to be increased to dollars one billion by 2007," she said while speaking at a reception hosted in her honour by Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) here.

Daily Times, 15 February 2006

Federal cabinet expected to ratify SAFTA today (Sajid Chaudhry)

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet is expected to ratify the South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA) agreement today (Wednesday), a senior government official told Daily Times on Tuesday. The federal cabinet will meet under the

chairmanship of Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and will take up an 18-point agenda. The ratification of SAFTA will enable the SAARC Secretariat to complete legal formalities for its enforcement from July 1, 2006 among member states – Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives.

Daily Times, 16 February 2006

3 killed as riots against caricatures continue (Javed Afridi, Shahnawaz Khan and Nauman Tasleem)

PESHAWAR/LAHORE: Three people were killed and dozens injured in Peshawar and Lahore as violent protests against the publication of caricatures depicting the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in European newspapers continued on Wednesday. The biggest protests were in Peshawar, where some 60,000 participated in rallies and rioters attacked foreign businesses, police and witnesses said. Two people were killed and 70 injured. Feroze, 28, was electrocuted when an electrical cable snapped in teargas firing by police, and Muhammad, 8, died when he was shot in the face, Dr Yousaf Pervez of Lady Reading Hospital told reporters. The protestors torched a KFC franchise, two petrol stations, 16 Daewoo buses, and attacked several banks, a police check-post and offices of Norwegian mobile phone firm Telenor. "Wherever the protestors saw western businesses, they attacked them," police official Malik Saad said. NWFP Chief Minister Akram Durrani blamed "trouble makers" for the violence, but Governor Khalilur Rehman held the MMA government responsible by refusing to impose Section 144.

The News, 16 February 2006

People hope Thar Express will bring life to Mirpurkhas economy (Ammara Durrani)

MIRPURKHAS: Citizens, merchants and the administration of this small town are excitedly awaiting the resumption of the Khokhrapar-Munabao railway service scheduled for Friday, Mirpurkhas being the last major station before Zero Point from where the Thar Express will chug into India, crossing the southern border in Sindh's Tharparkar district. Shopkeepers in the local Station Chowk market adjacent to Mirpurkhas Railway Station generally express enthusiasm and hope for economic growth, having experienced a sluggish economy for the last so many years. "People [here] are talking a lot about the train," said Shahid Qaimkhani, owner of an electronics shop, adding that the news about the soon-to-be launched Thar Express had brought about "hustle and bustle" to an otherwise sleepy station.

Daily Times, 16 February 2006

3 Chinese engineers, driver killed

QUETTA: Three Chinese engineers and a Pakistani driver were killed on Wednesday in Hub city, about 700 kilometres south of Quetta. Hub Deputy Inspector General of Police Pervaiz Zahoor said that the Chinese were returning to their homes from work at Attock Cement Factory. They were provided official guards but the guards did not accompany them on Wednesday. The names of the killed engineers are Long Wan Dei, Zhaobin and Veiy Jang Chang. A man identifying himself as Meerak Baloch and claiming to be a spokesman of the Baloch Liberation Army claimed responsibility for the attack. He said that the Chinese should stop work on all projects that the Baloch oppose in the province.

Daily Times, 16 February 2006

Islamabad, Kabul agree to enhance anti-terror efforts (Umer Farooq)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Afghanistan have agreed to enhance security cooperation to combat terrorism and deal with the growing problem of cross-border incursions. This understanding was reached at a meeting between President Pervez Musharraf and Afghan President Hamid Karzai at President's House on Wednesday. The Afghan president arrived on a three-day visit to Pakistan on Wednesday. The meeting reviewed the regional security situation along with the latest developments in the war on terror. The two leaders agreed to use the Pakistan-Afghanistan-US Tripartite Commission to increase security coordination and intelligence sharing. President Musharraf said that greater bilateral intelligence cooperation and coordination at the tripartite forum will help combat "the menace of terrorism, which retards regional progress".

Dawn, 17 February 2006

Strategic ties with Kabul discussed

ISLAMABAD, Feb 16: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and visiting Afghan President Hamid Karzai on Thursday discussed steps to raise bilateral relations to 'strategic level' through increased security and diplomatic and economic cooperation. The two leaders had a 45-minute of one-to-one meeting before their foreign and interior ministers and ambassadors joined them. The two sides agreed to increase contacts between their foreign ministries and consult each other on major issues. The issue of arms and production of drugs in Afghanistan also came under discussion. Both the leaders stressed the need for increasing security cooperation in terms of intelligence sharing to control cross-border movement of undesirable elements. Prime Minister Aziz reiterated that Pakistan desired a peaceful and stable Afghanistan as it was in the interest of the Afghan people as well as Pakistan. He said Islamabad would take all measures to achieve this objective. The two sides discussed the

possibility of Pakistani entrepreneurs setting up a textile factory in Afghanistan if Kabul had a market access and allowed an industrial zone there.

Daily Times, 17 February 2006

50,000 protest in Karachi (Hasan Mansoor)

KARACHI: Around 50,000 people attended a peaceful demonstration here on Thursday to protest the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in newspapers across Europe. Meanwhile, a complete shutter-down strike was observed in Multan city and cantonment area and Dera Ghazi Khan at a call by 200 traders' organisations. The main demonstration at MA Jinnah Road in Karachi was organised by Ahle Sunnat-o-Jamaat (ASJ). No one was hurt in the rally and there were no reports of damage to property. However, a few demonstrators burned the Danish and American flags at one point during the rally, but were immediately warned by the protest leaders. "You may express your anger by tearing flags but you must not burn any flags or effigies," a senior ASJ leader said on the loudspeaker. The rally ended on the time that the organisers had earlier promised the authorities. After speeches, the participants were asked to disperse, and markets nearby opened half an hour later. "We had assured shopkeepers that no damage would be done to their establishments," ASJ convenor Mufti Munibur Rehman told Daily Times.

Daily Times, 17 February 2006

55 held for Chinese's murders

QUETTA: As many as 55 suspects were taken into custody on Thursday after police raids in Hub and Sakran areas in connection with the killing of three Chinese engineers along with their Pakistani driver on Wednesday. Khuzdar Police Chief Pervez Zahoor, giving details of the operations, said that the raids were carried out in collaboration with the ATF. A large cache of arms and ammunition was also seized during the raids, he said. online

Dawn, 17 February 2006

Gas pipeline, railway track blown up (Saleem Shahid)

QUETTA, Feb 16: The Pir Koh and Loti gas plants stopped functioning on Thursday following explosion in the main pipeline. In another incident, the main Quetta-Sibi railway track was blown up near Mach late on Thursday evening. According to official sources, armed men blew up the 16-inch diameter pipeline connecting six gas wells with the main compressor of the Pir Koh plant. "The plant automatically shut down when gas supply dropped to zero level," a senior official of the district administration said. Railway authorities confirmed that a 2-foot piece of the track linking the city with the rest of the country had been blown up near Mach on Thursday.

Daily Times, 18 February 2006

Musharraf wants Pakistan to be China's corridor

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan wants to act as a trade corridor for Chinese exports to the rest of the world and is also interested in setting up an energy corridor for China, if it is technically feasible, said President Pervez Musharraf. Speaking to a group of Chinese journalists, he said China was helping Pakistan with several development projects that were integral for the country's progress. The development projects would sustain economic activity in the country, alleviate poverty, end unemployment and help fight extremism, he said. He said Pakistan would be extremely happy if the Chinese came into the country for joint ventures, trade and investment.

The News, 18 February 2006

Fences can't stop terrorists, says Karzai

CHARSADDA: Opposing the erection of fence on Pak-Afghan border, Afghan President Hamid Karzai on Friday said fences and barricades could separate two nations, but would not stop terrorist activities. "People on both sides of the borders are interlinked in lingual, traditional, cultural and religious relations. They cannot be separated through walls and barriers," he said, while talking to mediemen during his visit to Wali Bagh to condole the death of Pakhtun leader Khan Abdul Wali Khan. In response to a question, the Afghan president ruled out any interference in Balochistan, saying that Afghanistan neither interfering in the affairs of Balochistan nor would let anyone to do so.

Daily Times, 18 February 2006

Denmark closes embassy, Pakistan recalls envoy

Islamabad: Denmark temporarily shut its embassy in Islamabad and Pakistan recalled its envoy from Copenhagen on Friday, as violent protests against caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) sparked a diplomatic row. Copenhagen said its embassy staff would remain in Pakistan, but not in the embassy and denied that diplomatic ties were affected. "We decided on Friday to shut our embassy for security reasons, because we believe it is not responsible to keep it open at the moment," Lars Thuesen, head of the Danish Foreign Ministry's crisis centre, said. "Diplomatic relations have not been severed."

The News, 18 February 2006

Dukhtaran-e-Islam protest march today

KARACHI: Under a month-long schedule to hold protest rallies against publication of caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the women's wing, Jamaat-e-Islami, will stage a peaceful protest rally in the name of the Dukhtaran-e-Islam (Daughters of Islam) rally on Saturday at the Mazaar-e-Quaid and will terminate at Noorani Chowk (Old Numaish Chowrangi). The rally will be addressed by the women members of the National Assembly belonging to the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, including Samia Raheel Qazi, JI, MNA, Ayesha Munawar, JI, MNA, Dr Farida Ahmed, MNA, JUP, and Senator Firdous Kausar.

Daily Times, 18 February 2006

Kabul, Islamabad to share information on Taliban (Umer Farooq)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Afghanistan will share intelligence about the whereabouts of Taliban and Al Qaeda activists inside Pakistan and are devising a mechanism to ensure that subversive elements were firmly dealt with, the Afghan Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah said. Talking to Daily Times, the Afghan foreign minister said that there were no two opinions about the presence of Taliban on Pakistani soil. The issue, he said, was how to deal with the threat and how to fight the "common enemy", he said, adding that the issue had been discussed by Pakistani and Afghan leaders during the current round of talks. He said that security remained the main focus of the talks between President Hamid Karzai and President Pervez Musharraf.

Daily Times, 19 February 2006

Thar Express completes journey four decades in the making

ZERO POINT: The Thar Express returned with Indian passengers after a historic journey to India on Saturday, marking the reopening of a rail link between nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan that was closed for four decades. The train dropped about 165 Pakistanis in the Indian border town of Munabao before coming back hours later with some 260 passengers, officials and journalists who were accorded a festive welcome and served lunch. "I am delighted to have come on this train as I would meet my brother in Pakistan after 40 years," 55-year-old Mohammed Saleem told AFP. Earlier, hundreds of people on the platform cheered and a band played lively tunes as the train chugged into Munabao from Karachi. The passengers waved energetically as the green-and-yellow Thar Express pulled into the station. Some people aboard the train as well as on the platform were in tears.

The Nation, 19 February 2006

Rallies banned in Islamabad (DILSHAD AZEEM)

ISLAMABAD - The government on Saturday announced a complete ban on organizing "rallies and demonstrations" in Islamabad with the opposition parties in continued protest against blasphemous cartoons are all set to defy the restriction here today (Sunday) despite arrests of activists. "The MMA has been informed about the government's decision in security point of view," Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed told a news conference here after Interior Ministry formally conveyed the decision to Majlis leadership. On contrary, the MMA, backed by ARD parties, gave a strong statement to stage the rally in Islamabad at all cost and the government will be responsible for any untoward incident if the activists are stopped.

Daily Times, 19 February 2006

C'wealth backs Bhutto, Nawaz's return (Zulfiqar Ghuman)

ISLAMABAD: Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) leaders claimed on Saturday that the Commonwealth supported the return of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif to ensure free, fair and transparent general elections in 2007. "I appreciate your concern regarding the return of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif and believe that they'll come back before the next general elections," Iqbal Zafar Jhagra, the ARD secretary-general, quoted Commonwealth Secretary General Donald C Mckinnon as saying during a meeting at a hotel. Mckinnon held a half-an-hour-long meeting with ARD leaders Amin Fahim, Senator Muhammad Enver Baig, Raja Zafarul Haq, Tehmina Daultana and Jhagra.

The Nation, 19 February 2006

KSA oil pipeline on Musharraf's agenda (SHAIQ HUSSAIN)

ISLAMABAD - As President Pervez Musharraf leaves for Beijing today on a five-day visit, Pakistan is set to enter the new era of energy cooperation with China and Saudi Arabia in the form of an envisaged oil pipeline linking these three states. King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, who recently visited Islamabad and Beijing, discussed the idea of oil pipeline from his country right up to China via Pakistan with the leadership of two states, said an official here. He said President Musharraf would now have discussions on this vital matter with Chinese leaders. He said all these deliberations were in very initial stages but the three nations were determined to move ahead with the billion of dollars mega project.

Daily Times, 19 February 2006

Loti and Pirkoh gas wells attacked again (Azizullah Khan)

QUETTA: Unidentified men blew up pipelines at the Loti and Pirkoh gas fields on Saturday in Dera Bugti. The attack was the second on the gas plants in 24 hours. The militants blew up the gas pipelines from well number 24 and 10, suspending the supply of natural gas from the Loti gas field. Gas supply to Multan and Bahawalpur areas was stopped while security measures for Uch gas fields were increased. Dera Bugti District Coordination Officer Abdul Samad Lasi said that well number 10 was leaking five million cubic feet of gas because of the severed pipeline. He said the Pirkoh and Loti gas plants had been shut down and officials were trying to control the leak. Jamhoori Watan Party General Secretary Agha Shahid Bugti said that security forces and Bugti tribesmen had exchanged fire and it was possible that a mortar or rocket had hit the pipeline.

Daily Times, 19 February 2006

ISPR denies Balochistan report

RAWALPINDI: A spokesman of Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) has strongly denied the content of a news item, carried in certain newspapers, proclaiming: "Army heavily deployed' to fight Baloch insurgency". The spokesman clarified that there was no insurgency in Balochistan. He also denied "six army brigades are battling the Baloch Liberation Army". The spokesman responding to Selig S Harrison's article published in Washington Post claimed that the analysis was totally baseless, out of context and a figment of Harrison's imagination. He said it was the Frontier Corps mandated to maintain law and order in the province and establish writ of the government where challenged and this was what they are doing. The innocent civilians lost their lives in the mine blasts by miscreants, he said.

Daily Times, 19 February 2006

Karzai gave Taliban dossiers to Pakistan

WASHINGTON: President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan handed over extensive intelligence dossiers to President Pervez Musharraf, containing details of how suicide bombers who attack targets in Afghanistan are being recruited, trained and equipped in Pakistan. According to a report carried by the Washington Times on Saturday, although Karzai stopped short of accusing Pakistan of being behind the attacks, he said the United States and Britain would be "stepping up pressure on Islamabad" to take action to stop the attacks. Karzai, who ended a three-day visit to Pakistan on Friday, is said to be facing "extreme pressure at home, where anti-Pakistan sentiment is rising." There have been dozens of demonstrations over accusations that Pakistan was giving support to the Taliban. "We have provided President Musharraf with a lot of very detailed information on acts of terrorism being carried out in Afghanistan, and we discussed in great detail what actions Pakistan could now take," the Afghan leader was quoted as saying.

Daily Times, 20 February 2006

Pakistan tests Hatf-II missile

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan, on Sunday, test-fired a short-range surface-to-surface nuclear-capable missile, an ISPR statement said. "A successful test fire of the indigenously developed Hatf-II Abdali missile was conducted today," it said. The Abdali missile has a range of 200 kilometers and can carry nuclear and conventional payloads, the statement said. It said that India had been given prior notification of the launch, as agreed last year before all ballistic missile tests are conducted. President General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz have congratulated the scientists and engineers involved in the successful development of Abdali on their outstanding achievement.

The Nation, 20 February 2006

Denmark calls back envoy to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD - Danish ambassador in Pakistan, Bent Wigotski, left here Sunday for his country with Denmark saying he had been recalled because he could not work after violent protests over blasphemous cartoons. Officials here confirmed that the Danish envoy had left Pakistan owing to security reasons. The Danish foreign ministry also announced that ambassador Wigotski had been called back. "The Danish ambassador in Pakistan has been called back temporarily to Denmark because it is practically impossible for him to do his job under the current circumstances," said the Danish Foreign Ministry, in a statement on its Web site. It said that the Danes in Pakistan who needed help should apply to the German embassy. Denmark on Friday closed its embassy in Islamabad temporarily because of what it said security concerns and issued a new travel warning for Pakistan, urging its people here to leave as soon as possible.

Daily Times, 20 February 2006

Musharraf begins state visit to China to discuss N-energy cooperation

BEIJING: President General Pervez Musharraf arrived in Beijing on Sunday for a state visit intended to strengthen defence and economic ties between China and Pakistan. Musharraf told Chinese interviewers before his departure that his five-day visit would "broaden our cooperation" and reach strategic agreements between the two

countries, the official Xinhua News Agency reported on Saturday. The president said that he will discuss with Chinese leaders how the two countries can expand their economic ties and cooperation in defence and nuclear energy. Gen Musharraf will hold formal talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao on Monday, following which the two sides will sign agreements to boost cooperation in energy, communications, agriculture, science and technology, trade and investment.

Dawn, 20 February 2006

Saudi Arabia likely to invest in water projects (Khaleeq Kiani)

ISLAMABAD, Feb 19: Saudi Arabia is likely to participate as financier and investor in Pakistan's major water sector projects through its public and private sector, it is learnt. The Saudi government and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) have not yet made any commitment to the limit of funding or the number of investors taking part in the construction of big dams. However, they have agreed to exchange follow up delegations with Pakistan to crystallise their investments and financing arrangements for the water sector projects, official sources told Dawn. A delegation of Economic Affairs Division Secretary Khalid Saeed and water and power ministry's adviser Riaz Ahmad Khan returned from Saudi Arabia on Friday after holding talks with senior Saudi and IDB officials.

Daily Times, 20 February 2006

Over 50 injured as MMA defies ban on rallies in Islamabad (Shahzad Malik, Shahzad Raza, Zulfiqar Ghuman and Qamar Jabbar)

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE: Fifty people including 15 policemen were injured in clashes between protesters and security forces in Rawalpindi and Islamabad on Sunday as the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal went ahead with an anti-cartoon rally in defiance of a ban on public gatherings and despite the police sealing the capital. Some 5,000 police personnel, backed by 800 paramilitary forces, erected cordons and put up barbed wire around main routes to prevent MMA activists from entering the city and put MMA chief Qazi Hussain Ahmed under house arrest in Mansura to prevent him leading the rally. Over 300 protesters were arrested for violating Section 144 in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, police sources said. The Jamaat-e-Islami claimed that 3,463 of its members had been arrested nationwide to prevent them joining the 'Shan-e-Mustafa' rally against cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Daily Times, 21 February 2006

Pakistan and China sign 13 agreements

BEIJING: Pakistan and China signed 13 agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoU) on Monday in various sectors including energy, trade, defence and communications. The agreements were inked after formal talks between President Pervez Musharraf and his Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao. Both leaders were present at the signing ceremony. The documents also cover cooperation in the sectors of healthcare, pesticides and earthquake and meteorological studies. Commerce Minister Humayun Akhtar and his Chinese counterpart inked a framework agreement on expanding economic and trade relations. Minister for Defence Production Habibullah Warraich and his Chinese counterpart signed a framework agreement on cooperation in defence.

The Nation, 21 February 2006

Pakistan asks EU to prevent blasphemy (ABDUL AHAD)

ISLAMABAD – Pakistan has asked the European Union (EU) to put in place certain laws, which would prevent blasphemy incidents in future. The EU has to take concrete steps, as freedom of expression is not a licence to insult the sentiments of Muslims, Foreign Office Spokesperson Tasnim Aslam said in a weekly press briefing here Monday. She said every Muslim had the right to protest the blasphemous sketches of Holy Prophet but the demonstrations should be peaceful. She said the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) had already adopted a resolution in its emergency session held in Jeddah on 14th February, demanding from the EU to immediately adopt a legislation preventing any profane incidents in future. She said the OIC had already outlined steps that needed to be taken to prevent biased acts in future. These also call for necessary measures against Islamophobia.

Daily Times, 21 February 2006

MMA to protest till papers apologise (Mohammad Imran)

ISLAMABAD: The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) on Monday vowed to continue protesting against cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) until the European newspapers that published the caricatures apologise and pledge not to print such material in future. Speaking at a National Consultative Council meeting here, MMA leaders announced a schedule of protests against the cartoons. The religious parties alliance will organise nationwide protests on February 24 (Friday) and in Lahore on February 26. The MMA leaders warned the Punjab government not to try and stop the Lahore rally. The MMA also called a wheel-jam and shutter-down strike on March 3, when rallies are planned in several other Muslim countries.

The Nation, 21 February 2006

PAK-OIC joint strategy against cartoons today (SHAIQ HUSSAIN)

ISLAMABAD – Pakistan and OIC will evolve a common strategy against the blasphemous cartoons today as secretary general of 57-member Muslim organization will be holding talks on the vital issue with Pakistani leadership. OIC Secretary General Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu will meet Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and discuss with him situation in the wake of outrage across the Muslim world over blasphemous caricatures, said a senior official here. Prof Ekmeleddin will also hold talks with Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri on the vital issue with both sides striving to evolve common strategy to cope with the emerging situation, he said. Pakistan has already called back its envoy from Denmark and Ambassador Javed Qureshi was also likely to participate in the talks between the OIC secretary general and Pakistani leaders, said the official.

Daily Times, 21 February 2006

Treat Pakistan, India equally: FO

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office has called for the equal treatment of Pakistan and India as nuclear weapons states that are not signatories to the Non Proliferation Treaty, after France joined the United States in signing nuclear cooperation deals with New Delhi, APP reports. Pakistan's civilian nuclear agencies are under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and the exceptions being given to India should be given to Pakistan as well, FO spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said at a weekly press briefing on Monday. Umer Farooq adds: Pakistan and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) will talk to the European Union and international community about the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that have caused an uproar in the Muslim world, Aslam said.

The Nation, 21 February 2006

9,271 madaris registered, Shaukat told

ISLAMABAD – The process of Madaris registration in the country is going on smoothly and 9271 madaris have been registered so far out of a total estimated figure of around 13000. This was told to Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in a meeting reviewing the goals and targets of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Zakat & Ushr and Minorities Affairs at PM House on Monday. The Prime Minister was pleased to note that all the prominent madaris in the country have been registered and the organisations of madaris are cooperating with the govt in this regard. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz appreciated the arrangements made for Haj this year and emphasized on the need for further improvements in future. He was told that all the goals and targets given to the Religious Affairs Division regarding Haj have been achieved and a law regarding Haj and Umra Policy would soon be adopted.

The News, 21 February 2006

PM asks ERRA to submit resettlement plan in 10 days

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Monday asked the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) to submit a comprehensive plan for resettlement of the earthquake-affected areas focusing on housing policy, restoration of facilities of health and education so that construction activities could be initiated immediately. Chairing a third meeting of the ERRA Council here at the Prime Minister House, Shaukat asked the provincial governments to expedite the delivery of remaining installments for the reconstruction of damaged houses. A comprehensive housing programme along with schedule for payment of installments will be submitted to the prime minister in 10 days.

Daily Times, 21 February 2006

China should consult before signing project deals: Kachkol

QUETTA: Kachkol Ali, the opposition leader in the Balochistan Assembly, has asked China and other neighbouring countries to consult the Balochistan government before signing any agreement with the federal government. The federal government has begun various projects against the interests and wishes of the people of Balochistan, therefore any country that wants to work in Balochistan should consult the Balochistan government first, Ali told reporters at a press conference on Monday. Kachkol said that the "Punjabi establishment" in the federal government sold gold, silver and copper projects in Sandak to China against the wishes of Balochistan. Three Chinese engineers were killed along with a Pakistani driver in the province last week. Similarly, in May 2004 three Chinese engineers were killed and eleven were injured when a car bomb exploded in Gwadar, the coastal city of Balochistan.

The News, 21 February 2006

USAID grants \$2.7m to fight AIDS in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The US Combined Medical Relief Team 3 (CMRT 3) has donated 900 bottles of paediatric medicines and more than 300 pounds of construction material to the local relief camp clinic in Shinkiari. "This is extremely gracious of the US Marines," said Dr Ali Jadoon, chief medical coordinator for the Daryal Clinic, according to a US Embassy Islamabad statement. "Not only did they give a significant amount of medicine, but

they provided all the basic infrastructure for our clinics and pharmacy, basic needs like chairs, desks and tables." The donated medicines will treat illnesses such as flu, fever, asthma and the common cold. The construction materials are also important to the success of the clinic. New flooring will ensure sanitation and improve hygiene, and shelves, benches and desks will organize

Dawn, 22 February 2006

\$500m joint ventures with China planned

BEIJING, Feb 21: Private firms of Pakistan and China on Tuesday signed 19 agreements and memorandums of understanding worth \$500 million to undertake joint ventures in various fields. The signing ceremony was held at the Pakistan-China investment forum in presence of President Pervez Musharraf. The projects to be carried out under the agreements are related to real estate development, Karachi mass transit communications network, chemical, fertilizer, automobile and agro-based industries. The projects will be implemented in four to five years, according to Pakistan's Commercial Counsellor Shahid Mahmood. A joint venture plant for production of urea fertilizer will be set up in Thatta. The plant will be put into operation by the end of next year. Around 2,000 tons of fertilizer will be manufactured per day in the plant, to be implemented on equity basis.

Daily Times, 22 February 2006

Religious bias a threat to world peace: Musharraf

BEIJING: Unresolved political disputes such as Palestine and Kashmir and the resurfacing of religious prejudices are the biggest threats to global stability, President General Pervez Musharraf said on Tuesday. Non-resolution of political disputes spawned terrorism and extremism that, together with economic inequity, instituted the other main threats to world peace and security, the president said in a speech at China's prestigious Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing. "While the world saw momentous development in the end of the Cold War era in the last decade, new threats emerged because old disputes like Palestine and Kashmir persisted without resolution," he said. And the new disputes of Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran, he said, have added to the list of issues posing threats to world peace.

Daily Times, 22 February 2006

Cartoons were meant to fuel clash of civilisations: Aziz (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: The publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in European newspapers was an attempt to promote a clash of civilisations, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said on Tuesday. "It is partly based on ignorance about the true teachings of Islam and partly to demonise Islam. We cannot condone such insensitivities towards our beliefs and condemn them in the strongest voice," he said in a speech at the 12th General Assembly of the OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation. Aziz said Islam advocated harmony, coexistence, peace and compassion. He said Islam preached for dialogue, accommodation and harmony to foster understanding and to evolve a fair and just global order.

Daily Times, 22 February 2006

Islamabad, Kabul to discuss bus service today

ISLAMABAD: A joint meeting of Pak-Afghan standing committees is scheduled to be held today (Wednesday) in Rawalpindi. Both sides would discuss and finalise the details regarding operators, fares, frequency of bus services, security arrangements, terminal facilities, insurance cover etc. for the operationalisation of bus services on Peshawar-Jalalabad and Quetta-Kandhar routes. Earlier, Pakistan and Afghanistan signed an agreement for a bus service each on the Peshawar-Jalalabad and Quetta-Kandahar routes. Both sides have set up a standing committee to review and oversee the arrangements for the bus service on both routes. online

Dawn, 22 February 2006

EU should invoke offensive material law: OIC chief: Blasphemous cartoons (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Feb 21: OIC Secretary-General Prof Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu on Tuesday called on the European Union to invoke its existing law on offensive material over the publication of blasphemous cartoons and cautioned that failure to do so would put its credibility at stake. Prof Ihsanoglu said this while responding to a question at a joint press conference with Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri at the Foreign Office here in the evening. While conceding that prospects of the EU drawing up a new code of conduct for its media were dim, Prof Ihsanoglu emphasised the need for it to invoke its existing legislation on the cartoon issue to safeguard the dignity of Islam and values of the Muslims.

The News 22 February 2006

Pakistan seeks OIC FMs meeting (Muhammad Saleh Zafar & Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday asked for holding of an emergency meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to discuss the question of sacrilegious caricatures and the situation arising out of their publication. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz made this request on behalf of his country during his meeting with OIC

Secretary-General Prof Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu here on Tuesday. Speaking to the media after the meeting, the two leaders expressed deep shock over the publication of blasphemous caricatures. They held an hour-long meeting and discussed the issue at length, besides Pakistan's efforts and the OIC strategy in this regard.

Daily Times, 24 February 2006

Army operations suspended in North Waziristan

MIRANSHAH: Military operations against militants in North Waziristan were suspended and tribesmen given charge to flush out foreign terrorists, NWFP Governor Khalil-ur-Rehman told a Jirga. The governor, however, set no timeframe for tribal elders to purge North Waziristan of foreign militants. "The government has suspended operations in North Waziristan because it believes that the tribesmen are able to restore peace and normalcy through their own customs and traditions," Rehman told Utmanzai Wazir and Daur tribes in Miranshah, regional headquarters of North Waziristan. Khalil's visit to Miranshah follows last month disturbing images when local Taliban "mutilated" corpses after killing who they said were bandits. The announcement also comes days after Afghanistan delivered Pakistan a list of wanted Taliban leaders for their handover to Kabul.

Daily Times, 24 February 2006

Construction of dams: Provinces, politicians will be consulted: PM

GILGIT: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has said that major water reservoirs in the country will be built after consulting all provinces and political parties, agencies reported on Thursday. "The government will allay the apprehensions of all provinces about the construction of major dams, and such decisions will be taken with consensus," he said while addressing a public gathering after visiting the site of Basha Dam, 177 kilometres south of Gilgit. He had an aerial view of the site and was briefed by officials of the Water and Power Development Authority. Aziz also took the occasion to announce the renaming of the \$6.5 billion dam to Diamer-Basha Dam. He said that the people affected by the construction of the dam will be compensated "beyond their expectations", and arrangements will be made to ensure their resettlement, Ibrahim Shahid reported.

Dawn, 24 February 2006

Pakistan an emerging economic hub, says Musharraf

CHENGDU, Feb 23: President Gen Pervez Musharraf highlighted on Thursday Pakistan's potential as an emerging economic hub and an attractive destination for foreign investment. He urged Chinese entrepreneurs to benefit from the country's investor-friendly climate. "Don't see Pakistan as a stand-alone country, look at Pakistan which is blessed with central and strategic location," he told chief executive officers (CEOs) of leading Chinese companies based in China's industrial province of Sichuan. The CEOs called on the president during his visit to Sichuan province. The chiefs of Dongfang Electric Facilities Corporation, Sichuan Electric Power Import & Export Corporation, Grace Group Company, LOMON Corporation, Sichuan Textile Import & Export Company, Mingda Group, New Rise Corporation, Silk Import & Export Company and others attended the meeting. President Musharraf said Pakistan offered the shortest route to Central Asia, Western China and South Asia and served as trade and energy corridor to the region.

The Nation, 24 February 2006

Wapda refuses to electrify 6,980 Balochistan villages (DILSHAD AZEEM)

ISLAMABAD - Contrary to the government's announcement to electrify all villages by 2007, the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has categorically refused to provide electricity to 6,980 villages in next 15-20 years in Balochistan province alone, The Nation has learnt reliably. "Apart from these 6,980 villages, there are more than 10,000 villages, towns and tehsils in Balochistan where the WAPDA has yet to reach and provide the electricity connections on the pretext of economic viability," the sources at Ministry of Water and Power maintained. Quetta Electricity Supply Company (QESCO) is responsible to provide electricity but it refused to provide connections at the areas that are 20 kilometers away from the grid stations.

Daily Times, 24 February 2006

Caricature issue: Opp won't join MPs' team to Brussels (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: The opposition on Thursday rejected the government proposal for a parliamentary delegation to visit Brussels and discuss the issue of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) with European leaders. "Since the government is not sincere in this issue, we reject the proposal," Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the opposition leader in the National Assembly, announced after a meeting in Parliament House attended among others by Amin Fahim, Qazi Hussain Ahmed, Iqbal Zafar Jhagra, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, Hafiz Hussain Ahmed and Raja Pervez Ashraf. The proposal to send a parliamentary delegation to Brussels was originally made by Ejazul Haq, the religious affairs minister, to Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. The prime minister accepted the proposal and announced that Haq would lead the delegation.

Daily Times, 24 February 2006

Photo of Hangu bombing suspect released

HANGU: The police have released the photo of a suspected bomber of the February 9 Hangu suicide attack that killed more than 42 people. A police official said on Thursday that the police had obtained a video of the procession that had pointed to a new suspect in the investigation. "We suspect him to be the suicide bomber," said the police official on condition of anonymity. A young, shawl-clad suspect is now believed to be the bomber instead of another suspect spotted in an earlier video. "The young man's photo was shown to Shia leaders but they could not identify him," said the police official, adding that once the young man was identified, they would be able to get more leads on the real suicide bomber.

Daily Times, 25 February 2006

Petitions against Swara and Vani customs: SC directs IGs to stop marriages for compensation (Mohammad Kamran)

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Friday directed the inspectors general of police (IGPs) of the four provinces and the Northern Areas to stop women's marriages to settle family feuds, declaring the customs of Vani and Swara un-Islamic. A three-member bench consisting of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, Justice Faqir Muhammad Khokhar and Justice Mian Shakirullah Jan directed the IGPs to protect Vani victims. The court also summoned a report from the IGPs by the last week of April. The court was moved to abolish the social customs of Vani and Swara (a mode of dispute settlement in which young girls of the offender's family are wedded to the men of the victim family as compensation). The court also heard the cases of five girls from Mianwali who have appealed to President Pervez Musharraf and the chief justice to save them from Vani, and a petition by freelance anthropologist Samar Minallah against the notorious customs.

Dawn, 25 February 2006

Pak, Afghan, US trilateral commission to meet today

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistan, Afghanistan and United States trilateral commission will meet in Khost today (Saturday) to discuss border affairs and other related issues. The meeting was earlier scheduled for February 22 but was postponed to February 25. High-level military officials from all three countries will attend the meeting. The director general of military operations will represent Pakistan. Army sources said that Pakistan had summoned the commission to meet and discuss matters related to border violations by Afghan forces. They said the commission would discuss Indian consulates' interferences in Afghanistan and India's Research and Analysis Wing. Sharing and improving intelligence will also be discussed, they added. online

The News, 25 February 2006

S Arabia may fund water projects (Khalid Mustafa)

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia has asked Pakistan to formally submit its reference seeking funds for mega water projects of Bhasha, Kalabagh and Akori dams so that the Board of Directors of the Saudi Fund and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) could take up the reference for finalising the volume of funding, senior government officials told The News. A Pakistan team headed by Secretary EAD Khalid Saeed visited Saudi Arabia from February 12 to 17 and held preliminary talks about seeking maximum financing for the projects of paramount importance that will play a pivotal role not only for enhancing water storage capacity of the country, but also for increasing the capacity to generate power.

Daily Times, 25 February 2006

Govt officials stonewalling madrassa registration (Ali Waqar)

LAHORE: The reluctance of government officials to create an enabling environment in the registration process of madrassas has become one of the major hurdles in the smooth running of the registration process. To address this problem, the government has, yet again, extended the deadline for registration countrywide, sources told Daily Times on Friday. Since the registration drive was launched in September 2005 - in the wake of the June 20 London bombings - around 3,300 madrassas had been registered. Combined with the 6,000 already-registered madrassas in the country, the total number has gone over 9,300. Sources in the federal government revealed that they were expecting the registration of another 1,300 madrassas by March 15, 2005 (the revised deadline for madrassa registration).

Daily Times, 25 February 2006

Pakistan and US to sign investment treaty

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United States would sign a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) during President George W Bush's visit. The treaty will be signed to encourage direct foreign investment in Pakistan. In addition, the two countries would jointly announce a deal regarding the purchase of F-16 aircraft, which the government had postponed to carry out relief efforts in earthquake-hit areas. Official sources said the draft of the treaty had been finalised during the talks held between officials of both countries in Islamabad in the third week of January. The BIT is being described as vital for attracting private investment, boosting economic growth and creating new

jobs in the country. Earlier, the US president had said that the treaty would establish clear and transparent rules to provide greater certainty and encourage foreign direct investment.

Dawn, 25 February 2006

Submarine Hamza to be launched by year-end

KARACHI, Feb 24: The Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Mohammad Afzal Tahir, said on Friday that the third submarine Hamza would be launched by the last quarter of this year. "A contract for building a full fledged war ship has been signed with China," he told journalists at a ceremony to formally commission two fast attack missile crafts, Quwwat and Jurrat, at Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works on Friday. The chief of the naval staff said the programme of building the submarines would continue in future. Referring to the navy's increased responsibilities due to development of Gwadar port, war against terror and shortage of big war ships, he said some progress had been made for procurement of used ships, and expressed the hope that by the end of this year, significant headway would be made in this regard.

Daily Times, 27 February 2006

Lahore protest thwarted, modest rally in Karachi (Mubasher Bukhari and Qamar Jabbar)

LAHORE/KARACHI: Security forces prevented a rally in Lahore organised by the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) on Sunday, while just 25,000 people protested peacefully in Karachi against the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In Lahore, the organisers planned to gather at Nasir Bagh and then march to Faisal Chowk, but security forces blocked all routes to The Mall and arrested around 200 people, including MMA chief Qazi Hussain Ahmed, MNA Imran Khan and PML-Nawaz leader Pervez Malik. The government also stopped Maulana Fazlur Rehman, opposition leader in the National Assembly, and Amin Fahim, ARD chairman, from entering Punjab, though Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi denied this.

Dawn, 27 February 2006

Rockets fired on minister's house: Man killed; 20 suspects held (Saleem Shahid)

QUETTA, Feb 26: Twenty people were taken into custody on Sunday in connection with a rocket attack on the residence of a provincial minister on Saturday night that killed one person and injured eight others. Police said three rockets had been fixed on the official residence of Livestock Minister Mir Abdul Qudoos Bizenjo in the Railway Housing Society. One rocket hit the guesthouse in the building, killing a villager who had come to Quetta for treatment and injuring eight others. Another rocket landed in the house but it did not explode. Mr Bizenjo himself was in Islamabad attending a course at the National Defence College along with another minister Asghar Rind. Sources said that Mr Bizenjo's father, a former provincial minister and deputy speaker of the Balochistan Assembly Mir Abdul Majeed Bizenjo, and other family members were in the house when it came under attack.

The News, 27 February 2006

Pakistan to seek civil N-technology from US (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will ask the US president to offer it cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear technology. No formal agenda has been prepared for the summit talks between President General Pervez Musharraf and President George W Bush but Kashmir, terrorism and nuclear proliferation with reference to Iran are on top of the items to be discussed here and as well in New Delhi beside other issues. It has become a foregone conclusion that Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh will accept all the US conditions for cooperation in nuclear field. Indian fast breeder reactor (FBR) which will produce more plutonium than uranium poured in it will also come under safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Indians are asking for seven years exemption to their FBRs from IAEA's safeguards. India is short of energy.

Daily Times, 27 February 2006

NSC meeting on March 1

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf has called a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) on March 1 to discuss the consequences of the nationwide protests over cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Officials invited to the meeting include the prime minister, the Senate chairman, the National Assembly speaker, the four provincial chief ministers, the leader of opposition in the National Assembly, the vice chief of army staff, the Joint Chief of Staff Committee chairman, the air and naval chiefs.

The Nation, 27 February 2006

US mutually reinforcing relations with Pak, India

WASHINGTON (APP) – National Security Advisor Steve Hadley Sunday said the United States has "good relations" with Pakistan and India and added that these are "mutually reinforcing". In a special White House briefing in connection with U.S. president's scheduled visit to South Asia next week, he said the administration was trying to develop, intensify and broaden relationship with Pakistan and India. Hadley referred to establishing the principle that good relations with Pakistan by the United States don't harm the relationships with India, and

good relationships with India don't harm that with Pakistan. He said, "They are, in fact, mutually reinforcing." In respect of India, Steve Hadley said, both countries have "very good" cooperation in the war on terror.

Daily Times, 27 February 2006

Pakistan makes 'new' map of Kashmir

WASHINGTON: Some of Pakistan's embassies abroad are distributing a booklet which contains a map of the Jammu and Kashmir at variance with Pakistan's long-held position on the dispute. The map shows the Northern Areas of the state, which have been officially considered an integral part of the former princely state, as a separate entity, identified simply as the "Northern Areas". The Line of Control, formerly the Ceasefire Line, has been removed on the map. The entire state, both the Indian-held part and Azad Kashmir, has been shown as one, single, undivided entity, identified as 'Jammu and Kashmir state' with the words "disputed territory" appearing in very small letters under this appellation.

The News, 27 February 2006

Canadian PM due on March 10

ISLAMABAD: Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper will pay an official visit to Pakistan on March 10. He is undertaking the visit at the invitation of Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. Harper, who is coming to Pakistan on his first foreign visit since he assumed the office on the 6th of this month, will also visit to Afghanistan briefly to meet his troops deployed in that country. He will also call on President Gen Pervez Musharraf, while the prime minister will host lunch in his honour. The Kashmir issue, Pakistan's efforts to normalise its ties with India, developments in Afghanistan, curbing drug trafficking and terrorism, situation in Iraq and stand off on Iranian nuclear programme will figure in the talks between the two prime ministers.

Daily Times, 27 February 2006

Balochistan operation — Rs 6b a month

KARACHI: More than 123,000 personnel are engaged in the ongoing military operation for which Rs Rs 6 billion is being spent monthly and about 600 check posts for the military and paramilitary forces have been set up, alleged a Baloch leader on Sunday at a seminar on the 'Balochistan Crisis' organized by the Karachi-based Baloch Unity Conference and held at the Karachi Press Club. Balochistan National Party central leader Senator Sana Baloch said that the province has 6.5 million people who were being harassed by the military forces. The military establishment was taking decisions against the people of the Balochistan that were having a negative effect on the oppressed nations of the country, he added.

The News, 27 February 2006

Pakistan, Turkey to cooperate in tourism

ISLAMABAD, Feb 26: Federal Minister of Tourism Dr Ghazi Gulab Jamal on Sunday said Pakistan and Turkey had agreed to cooperate and support each other in the promotion of tourism and take necessary steps to increase mutual tourist flow between their countries. This was decided in the third meeting of Pakistan-Turkish Joint Commission on Tourism held in Turkey, says a press release issued on Sunday. The minister said both countries would take measures to enhance cooperation between Travel Agencies Association and other professional tourism institutions and associations operating in both countries. He said both countries would also exchange the available information and experiences in the field of tourism promotion, planning and marketing activities.

Dawn, 28 February 2006

China to sell 2 more N-power plants (Ihtasham ul Haque)

ISLAMABAD, Feb 27: China has, in principle, agreed to offer two more nuclear power plants worth about \$1.2 billion to help meet Pakistan's growing electricity requirements. A senior official told Dawn on Monday that President Gen Pervez Musharraf had been assured during his recent visit to Beijing that China will continue to cooperate with Pakistan for building "some more nuclear power plants". The Chinese leadership, he pointed out, believed that Pakistan's "genuine energy needs" should be fulfilled and that it (China) would not succumb to any pressure being exerted by the West or the 45-member Nuclear Suppliers Groups (NSG) over the issue. China had become the member of NSG last year. The 45-member NSG is comprised of nuclear supplier countries who seek to contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons through the implementation of guidelines they set for nuclear exports and nuclear related exports.

Daily Times, 28 February 2006

Bird flu is here (Iqbal Khattak)

PESHAWAR: Pakistan is awaiting confirmation of the presence of the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain of the bird flu virus after chickens at two farms in the NWFP tested positive for the H5-type strain, officials said on Monday. "We are not classifying it - low pathogenic avian influenza - as bird flu. It is not the N-type virus," Dr Muhammad Afzal of the Ministry of Food and Livestock told Daily Times. He said the ministry had sent the samples to the

World Reference Laboratory in Weybridge, London, to determine if it is the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain. The H5N1 strain has killed at least 92 people since late 2003 and the virus has spread rapidly in the past month with cases in wild birds and poultry confirmed across parts of Europe, Africa as well as India and Malaysia. Dr Afzal said all birds in the two farms, a breeder farm and a layer farm, in Charsadda and Abbottabad districts would be destroyed. About 700 birds on both farms had died after developing breathing problems, he said.

The News, 28 February 2006

'India meddling in Pak affairs' (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf made a strong case of Indian interference into the internal affairs of Pakistan from inside Afghanistan in his meeting with President Hamid Karzai earlier this month. "Absolutely fed up with the doctored documents that were being presented to Pakistan during the visit, as 'proof of unfriendly activities' inside Afghanistan from Pakistan, Musharraf was constrained to ask his aides to provide the Afghan intelligence chief, who was present in the meeting, with documents that clearly showed how India was operating from inside Afghanistan. Document after document was presented by Musharraf to which Karzai kept silent while the Afghan intelligence chief was clearly uneasy in his chair," said sources privy to the meeting.

Daily Times, 28 February 2006

Pakistan welcomes Bush push for Kashmir peace

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has welcomed US President George W Bush's plan to push for a peace agreement on Kashmir when he visits New Delhi and Islamabad this week, the Foreign Office said on Monday, AP reported. FO spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said Bush's approach was welcome and consistent with his recently stated policy. "We do encourage and appreciate the international community's engagement with Pakistan and India on Kashmir," she told reporters at a weekly press briefing. "The US has been, in a way, engaged in this process." Aslam said Bush's speech last week to the Asia Society in Washington "clearly spells out the US policy direction". Umer Farooq adds: Aslam said that President Musharraf would raise the possibility of cooperation in civilian nuclear technology with the US during his meeting with Bush.

Daily Times, 28 February 2006

Afghanistan and Pakistan at odds over Taliban list

KABUL/ISLAMABAD: An Afghan security official said on Monday Kabul had provided solid evidence to Islamabad about militant training camps in Pakistan and the presence there of Taliban leader Mullah Omar, but Pakistan's Foreign Office said the information was outdated. During a recent visit to Pakistan, President Hamid Karzai's delegation handed over confessions of 13 Pakistani terrorists arrested in Afghanistan and details of Taliban leaders in Pakistan, including phone numbers, locations and descriptions, the Afghan security official said. "It is currently crystal clear ... that terrorists are using Pakistan soil for planning attacks, for masterminding attacks on our soil," he told Reuters. Foreign Office spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said Pakistani intelligence agencies were investigating a list of under 40 suspected Taliban members Kabul suspects are running the insurgency from Pakistani soil.

Dawn, 28 February 2006

No ban on peaceful protests

ISLAMABAD, Feb 27: A meeting presided over by President Gen Pervez Musharraf here on Monday decided not to stop peaceful protests against publication of blasphemous cartoons in some European countries. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz also attended the meeting. Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed told reporters the meeting had resolved that Tahaffuze Namoos-i-Risalat was a joint responsibility of the Ummah and, therefore, no step should be taken to stop peaceful protests. The meeting decided to raise the issue at various world fora, including the United Nations and the Organisation of Islamic Conference. Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao briefed the meeting on the law and order situation. Arrangements for the two-day visit of US President George Bush later this week were discussed.

Daily Times, 28 February 2006

Pakistan will maintain minimum credible deterrence

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, has said that Pakistan will maintain a credible minimum deterrence for national security. "The intent of our national security strategy is to secure Pakistan's national integrity and accelerate economic growth to raise living standards," he said during a visit to Kamra to inaugurate the Boeing Offset project at the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC). He said that Pakistan Air Force would be provided all available resources, adding that PAC would be moulded on commercial basis. Shaukat Aziz said that the government and people of Pakistan were proud of PAF engineering skills and its reputation in the international aviation markets. He said it was a promising sign that PAC had attained a Quality Management Standard Certificate. PAC had started out from aircraft and engine overhauling and now they were manufacturing Mushhak and Super Mushhak aircrafts and handling co-production of the K-8 Jet Trainer and JF-17 and overhauling of 130

aircraft.

Dawn, 28 February 2006

Self-governance being discussed with India

ISLAMABAD, Feb 27: The Foreign Office said on Monday that Pakistan and India were discussing at various levels the proposal of self-governance in Kashmir. Answering a question about 'secret diplomacy' on self-governance in the disputed territory, FO Spokesperson Tasnim Aslam said: "I won't call it secret diplomacy, but we do have various levels of engagement with India on this issue." She pointed to the composite dialogue, engagement at political and leadership levels as well as back-channel diplomacy. Addressing the weekly news briefing, the spokesperson declined to comment on why the Indian prime minister had now talked about having the intention of revisiting the human rights situation in Kashmir.

Dawn, 28 February 2006

ADB rules out funds for dams

ISLAMABAD, Feb 27: The Asian Development Bank will provide \$1.458 billion to Pakistan for 12 projects this year, but has ruled out funding the package of dams announced recently by President Pervez Musharraf without the stakeholders' consensus. "The government has announced these dams as one package that will need over \$20 billion. This is a huge job. We can't fund this package until there is a consensus among all the stakeholders," said ADB Country Director Peter L. Fedon. Briefing newsmen on the performance of the in Pakistan during the past year and its planning for 2006, he said some of the dams would displace thousands of people. The ADB had clear guidelines for rehabilitation and relocation of people affected by dams and some environmental safeguards, he said, adding that the bank could not fund any project which did not follow the safeguards.