

Daily Times, 1 March 2006

**10,000 bird flu vaccines obtained, 25,000 chickens culled in NWFP** (Shahzad Raza and Zakir Hassnain)

ISLAMABAD/PESHAWAR: The Ministry of Health has obtained 10,000 doses of bird flu vaccine for humans while veterinary workers culled 25,000 chickens on two quarantined farms in NWFP amid fears on Tuesday of an outbreak of the deadly virus in Pakistan. The H5 strain of the bird flu virus was detected in two farms in Abbottabad and Charsadda in NWFP on Monday and samples have been sent to a laboratory in London to confirm whether it is the lethal H5N1 strain. Nasir Khan, the health minister, told journalists in Islamabad the results from London were expected today. He said provincial authorities had been told to tests workers at the farms where the H5 strain was detected for the disease.

Dawn, 1 March 2006

**New missile able to hit 'over-horizon targets'**

ISLAMABAD, Feb 28: Pakistan has attained another landmark in modern missile technology by producing a joint standoff weapon system. It is capable of hitting over-the-horizon targets with accuracy. The system uses technologies called 'Integrated Global Positioning System' and 'Inner-shell Management System Navigation'. The programme is designed around the modular joint airframe guidance and flight control systems. The maximum range of this missile is 70 kilometres. Under the programme, fighter jets fitted with sensors provide relevant details about potential targets and guide the fighter plane to strike them with an accuracy. This system is used to hit armoured vehicles and fixed targets, a local television channel reported. Dr Prof Hassan Askari, a renowned defence analyst, highlighted advantages of the system and said that the missile could be fired from a fighter plane while remaining outside the range of enemy's anti-aircraft and other defence systems.

Daily Times, 1 March 2006

**Poverty down by 6.7% in 4 years** (Fida Hussain)

ISLAMABAD: The government has said that poverty in the country declined by 6.7 percent in four years from 2001 to 2005, while unemployment dropped to 6.8 percent. Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Dr Akram Sheikh made this statement at a meeting of the National Economic Council (NEC) chaired by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Tuesday. He said that poverty levels dropped by 5.5 percent in urban areas from 22.7 percent in 2001 to 17.2 percent in 2005. Poverty declined from 39 percent in 2001 to 31.8 percent in 2005 in rural areas, according to the Pakistan Social Living Standards Measurement Survey 2004-2005 conducted by the Federal Bureau of Statistics (FBS).

Dawn, 1 March 2006

**JKLF vows to continue anti-dam struggle**

ISLAMABAD, Feb 28: Veteran Kashmiri leader Amanullah Khan has vowed to continue struggle against Bhasha dam and for the basic rights of Gilgit-Baltistan. "The JKLF will continue its struggle till the proposed Bhasha dam is renamed as Diامر dam and the royalty of the dam is given to Gilgit-Baltistan", Amanullah Khan said while speaking at a press conference at a local hotel after his release from Adiala Jail. The Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) Chairman was arrested along with other party activists and Bhasha Dam Naam Namanzoor Committee (BDNNC) Chairman Haji Ghandal Shah for holding a peaceful protest rally against the proposed Bhasha dam in Rawalpindi on February 5. About his arrest along with other activists of the party, he said their sacrifice had not gone in vain and had helped bring the issue of Bhasha dam to limelight.

Daily Times, 1 March 2006

**Pakistan, US sign \$12 million food assistance deal**

ISLAMABAD: The United States and Pakistan signed an agreement on Tuesday under which the US will provide 46,000 metric tonnes of wheat to Pakistan to replenish domestic wheat used to feed survivors of the October 8 earthquake. Ryan C Crocker, the US ambassador, and Khalid Saeed, secretary Economic Affairs Division (EAD) signed the agreement. The US Department of Agriculture is donating \$12 million to procure and transport US soft white wheat to the Pakistan Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock. The wheat will replace an equivalent amount made available soon after the earthquake to feed over one million earthquake affected people from November 2005 to March 2006.

Dawn, 1 March 2006

**Poppy cultivation resumes in Pakistan: UN** (Baqir Sajjad Syed)

ISLAMABAD, Feb 28: Poppy cultivation has resumed in Pakistan that had been declared a poppy-free country in 2002, said United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) representative Vincent McClean. He was speaking at the launch of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) 2005 annual report here on Tuesday. Poppy is now being cultivated in areas previously not known for its cultivation, including certain parts of Balochistan, Khyber, Kohistan and Kala Dhaka. The cultivation is being done on a limited scale but the UNODC official feared the problem may intensify and the country can once again become a major growing centre. Poppy crop in Balochistan was completely destroyed, but in NWFP it could not be wiped off, the official stated without elaborating the reasons why the crop could not be fully destroyed in the Frontier. However, he said, UNODC was

in an active engagement with the NWFP government.

Daily Times, 1 March 2006

**'Hangu incident was a suicide bombing'**

PESHAWAR: NWFP police confirmed on Tuesday that a suicide bomber had blown himself up at the Ashura procession in Hangu killing 39 people on February 9. Images of the suspect were captured by a video camera filming the procession and later released to the media inviting the general public to provide information on the suspect. In a press release, the police department held that the team investigating the incident had concluded that it was a suicide attack and that findings of the bomb disposal squad, Forensic Science Laboratory and other experts reaffirmed it. They said that despite giving out the images of the suspect in the media, no information about him had emerged, strengthening the view that he was indeed the suicide bomber.

Daily Times, 2 March 2006

**30 militants killed in Waziristan raid**

MIRANSHAH: Thirty militants, including a senior Chechen commander, were killed and a training facility was destroyed on Wednesday morning in a military operation close to the Afghan border in North Waziristan, a military spokesman said. "We launched the operation in the Dhanda Saidgai area, 15 kilometres northwest of Miranshah, after credible intelligence suggested the presence of a militant den," military spokesman Maj Gen Shaukat Sultan told Daily Times. It was not clear how many among the dead were foreigners. A soldier was killed in the operation while more than 12 were reported injured in the two-hour operation, coinciding with US President George W Bush's first-ever South Asia visit that began with a surprise stop in Kabul. The spokesman said that 30 militants were killed and more than a dozen wounded in the operation. The militant death toll is the highest so far this year. A security official said that among the killed was a senior Chechen commander and his local facilitator, identified as the nephew of tribesman Dareen Khan.

Daily Times, 2 March 2006

**5,000 personnel, over dozen aircraft to keep watch: Bush visit toughest security challenge** (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: President Bush's visit to India poses the "toughest security challenge" that the US Secret Service which protects him, has faced since the American leader went to Iraq, according to Stratfor, a news intelligence service. "Conditions in India are close to chaotic under normal circumstances, let alone during a visit from the US president. The security challenge will be a mammoth one," the analysis adds. In all, some 5,000 US personnel and a dozen US aircraft will be involved in protecting the US President. These security fears are based on several factors, including the fact that "a good portion of India's Muslim population resents the United States for invading Iraq and Afghanistan, and for the Bush administration's methods in carrying out its general war on terrorism." Stratfor notes that several insurgent groups are active within India, including Al Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Naxalites and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam.

Daily Times, 2 March 2006

**Indo-Pak trade talks from 28<sup>th</sup>** (Sajid Chaudhry and Umer Farooq)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India will discuss bilateral trade, economic and commercial cooperation as part of the third round of composite dialogue in Islamabad from March 28 to 30. The Indian delegation will be headed by the commerce secretary, sources told Daily Times. Sources said that a meeting of the Pakistan-India Joint Study Group (JSG) on bilateral trade would be held on March 28. As per an earlier agreement, the Indian side will inform its Pakistani counterparts of the measures the Indian government has taken to remove trade and non-trade barriers. Pakistan had earlier pointed out these barriers to India and asked for their removal to provide a level playing field for Pakistani exporters in Indian markets.

Daily Times, 2 March 2006

**WB offers \$100m for NWFP development** (Imran Ayub)

KARACHI: The World Bank has offered around \$100 million to develop general industry, trade and agriculture sectors in the NWFP, which it said would be implemented by the province's finance ministry. A senior official said the World Bank's funding was the part of its First Development Policy Credit for the NWFP, which covered both social and economic areas in the province. "The Development Policy Credit replaces the third operation in a series of three planned Structural Adjustment Credits to the NWFP and starts a series of three Development Policy Credits," said the official citing the World Bank document. "The choice of instrument is based on the multi-sector and cross-cutting nature of the multi-year Provincial Reform Programme." He said the Development Policy Credit supported the Provincial Reform Programme through a disbursement to the government of Pakistan of \$90 million with the rupee equivalent being on-lent to the NWFP government.

The News, 2 March 2006

**New money-laundering scam detected against Benazir** (Shakeel Anjum)

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has detected a new money laundering scam in Spain

against former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and her children, son Bilawal, and daughters, Bakhtawar and Asifa, NAB sources said. The Spanish government seized accounts of two Sharjah-based offshore companies and property including a "palace" in Spain at the request of the NAB on behalf of the government of Pakistan, they added. According to these sources, the new revelations were the result of an International Mutual Legal Assistance request filed by the NAB to Madrid, indicating the trail of money leading to Spain through Swiss banks.

The News, 2 March 2006

#### **FC man dies in blast; pipeline blown up**

QUETTA: A Frontier Corps man was killed and two others were injured in three separate incidents of landmine blasts in Dera Bugti, while an 18-inch diameter gas pipeline was blown up in the Pat Feeder area near Sui on Wednesday. Officials said some FC personnel were engaged in clearing the area of landmines in Lop Sirani, when one of the landmine exploded, killing a soldier on the spot. "The FC personnel were working to clear the Pathar Nullah area of landmines when one of the them hit a landmine," a source said. The sources said in Morenj area, a man, identified as Nohaq, was travelling on his camel. "The camel's stepped on a landmine that exploded. The camel was killed and the rider was injured."

Daily Times, 3 March 2006

#### **US diplomat, 3 others killed in Karachi attack** (Abbas Naqvi)

KARACHI: A suicide car bomber rammed into a diplomatic vehicle outside the United States Consulate in Karachi on Thursday, killing an American diplomat and three others, including the attacker. Hours later, two rockets exploded in a stream near the Gadap area but caused no damage or casualties. Reportedly, a white car packed with about 12 to 15 kilogrammes of explosives rammed into the American diplomat's five-door vehicle between 9.02am and 9.05am, killing the diplomat and three others. Police sources said the plan was made to deliberately use a small car so that it would be able to hit the chassis of the diplomat's larger vehicle in such a way that it exploded upwards. The car was parked outside the nearby Naval hospital. Sources said that a Rangers official, Zafar, had asked the attacker to move his car but the attacker made some excuse. In the meantime the diplomat's vehicle approached and the attacker rammed his car into it.

Daily Times, 3 March 2006

#### **Pakistan not against deal, wants same**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan said on Thursday it was not against a civilian nuclear deal between the United States and India and demanded the same facility for Pakistan. Information Minister Sheikh Rashid told Daily Times that President Musharraf would discuss the possibility of Pakistan-US cooperation in civilian nuclear technology with US President George Bush. "We hope that we will also get the same kind of cooperation," Foreign Office spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said. Last month Bush urged Pakistan to be patient with US nuclear cooperation with India but did not commit to – or rule out – a similar arrangement with Islamabad in the future. Meanwhile, China said on Thursday that nuclear cooperation between the US and India must conform with the rules of the global non-proliferation regime.

Dawn, 3 March 2006

#### **'India, Pakistan got nukes legitimately'**

NEW YORK, March 2: The US Ambassador to the United Nations, John Bolton, said on Wednesday the way India and Pakistan had obtained nuclear arms was legitimate, in contrast to Iran, which he accused of pursuing atomic weapons in violation of its international undertakings. While Iran is seeking to 'conceal development of nuclear weapons under the guise of a legitimate programme' to generate nuclear power, Mr Bolton said: "India and Pakistan did it legitimately." His comments, made in response to an audience question following a speech to a meeting of the World Jewish Congress, appeared to go farther than the administration of President George Bush has previously gone in embracing Islamabad and new Delhi's nuclear programmes. They also coincided with the visit by President Bush to India in which Washington offered New Delhi de facto recognition of its nuclear arms programme.

The News, 3 March 2006

#### **Afghanistan hits back at Pak dismissal of 'terror intelligence'**

KABUL: Afghanistan has hit back at Pakistan's dismissal of its intelligence about Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants in Pakistani territory, notably information about the whereabouts of the reclusive Taliban leader Mulla Omar. Afghanistan handed over the information during a visit last month by President Hamid Karzai to Pakistan. Islamabad said most of it was outdated, including about the possible whereabouts of the fugitive Omar. Afghan Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah questioned Pakistan's attitude. He told AFP in an interview that Afghanistan would not have handed over information it did not believe in and neighbours were expected to share details of the common threat. "We wouldn't have given anything to them had we not been sure about its credibility," he said.

Dawn, 3 March 2006

### **Relaxation on kite-flying ban extended till 15th** (Nasir Iqbal)

ISLAMABAD, March 2: The Supreme Court on Thursday extended for another five days its earlier 15-day kite flying relaxation by refixing the period from March 1 to 15 to facilitate Jashn-i- Baharan (basant) festivities. The five-day extension was granted on the request of the Punjab government during an in-chamber hearing by Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry. Advocate General Punjab Chaudhry Aftab Iqbal represented the provincial government. Earlier the apex court had allowed kite flying from Feb 25 to March 10. CJ also took serious notice of reports in the media suggesting that the law enforcing agencies had failed to control kite flying activities with sharp "Manjhaa" due to which two persons had died

The Nation, 3 March 2006

### **'No evidence of heroin labs in Pak'**

WASHINGTON (APP) - The Annual Narcotics Control Strategy Report released by the US Department of State on Wednesday said Pakistan saw a 58 percent decrease in opium poppy cultivation in 2005. The report says the authorities in Pakistan do not have evidence of heroin labs in the country. The number of drug addicts in Pakistan, the report says, ranges from three to five million. The report refers to Government of Pakistan's announcement that it intends to develop a new Master Drug Control Plan for attacking recently emerged narcotics threats from both the supply and demand sides. Pakistan's counternarcotics efforts are led by the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) under the Ministry of Narcotics Control, but also includes several other law enforcement agencies and the Home Departments of NWFP and Balochistan provinces.

The Nation, 3 March 2006

### **'Bush trip to Pakistan fraught with risks'**

President Bush's overnight visit to Pakistan "is not a risk-free undertaking" but he will not be deterred by attacks like the suicide bombing that killed an American diplomat in Karachi, said American National Security Adviser National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley on Thursday, reported a private TV channel. Bush will fly to Pakistan late Friday for a day of talks Saturday in Islamabad with Gen. Pervez Musharraf. Bush said his visit was an important gesture of solidarity with Musharraf in the fight against terrorism. "After all," Bush said, "he has had a direct stake in this fight - four times the terrorists have tried to kill him." Ahead of Bush's arrival, a suicide attacker crashed a car packed with explosives into a vehicle carrying an American diplomat near the Karachi consulate, killing four, including the diplomat. Hadley said there was evidence the diplomat had been targeted.

The Nation, 3 March 2006

### **SC orders to block blasphemous websites** (Assad Hameed)

ISLAMABAD - A full bench of Supreme Court headed by CJ Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry on Thursday ordered PTA and other concerned organs of state to take all possible measures for blocking internet web-sites exhibiting the blasphemous caricatures. Taking up a constitutional petition filed by renowned medical specialist, Dr Mohammed Imran Uppal under Article 184 (3) of Constitution, the august bench sought a report from the concerned authorities in this regard on March 13. Other learned judges in the bench besides the Chief Justice are Justice Faqir Mohammad Khokhar and Justice Mian Shakirullah Jan. Making Federation of Pakistan, Ministry of Telecommunication, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Yahoo Incorporation USA and 1&1 Co, (Webhost of the blasphemous site) through its Chairman Andreas Ganger, petitioner Dr Mohammed Imran Uppal has prayed before apex court to strictly stop the respondent internet service providers from publishing, transmitting and advertising any blasphemous material including the caricatures of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Pakistan.

Daily Times, 3 March 2006

### **Landmine blast kills one, hurts 5 in Balochistan**

QUETTA: A van driver was killed and five passengers were hurt on Thursday when their vehicle hit a landmine in the latest violence to hit Balochistan, officials said. The van was travelling towards the town of Kohlu when it hit a mine planted on the road, local administrator Nasim Lehri said. Balochistan Government Spokesman Raziq Bugti said security forces were busy defusing land mines installed in Dera Bugti and Kohlu areas of Balochistan. Four Para military personnel were injured on Wednesday in Mand area of Makran division situated some 700 km from Quetta. An unknown person, identifying himself as Doda Baloch, claimed the responsibility on behalf of a little known organisation called Baloch Liberation Front. Meanwhile unidentified gunmen Wednesday shot dead a pro-government politician near the provincial capital Quetta and other attackers damaged a nearby natural gas pipeline.

The News, 4 March 2006

### **Countrywide strike paralyses life**

ISLAMABAD: Complete strike was observed across the country as all the business activities came to a standstill in all major cities and towns of the country in response to a call given by Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) and other opposition parties against publication of blasphemous cartoons in some European newspapers. Routine life was paralysed countrywide due to the strike. Like traders, the transporters also responded to the call keeping

their vehicles off the roads thus making the strike a big success. "We are thankful to traders and transporters who observed complete shutter-down and wheel-jam strike in a peaceful atmosphere," the MMA deputy secretary-general told The News.

The News, 4 March 2006

#### **Chechen commander slain in North Waziristan identified**

PESHAWAR: Authorities here are claiming that one of the Chechens killed in the recent military operation in North Waziristan was an important regional commander named Abu Khitab. Requesting anonymity, a senior government official told The News that Abu Khitab commanded the foreign militants operating in North Waziristan. He said the commander was killed along with his four Chechen bodyguards when a Pakistan Army helicopter gunship attacked his vehicle while fleeing Danday Saidgai village two kilometres from the border with Afghanistan. When asked about their bodies and any other piece of evidence that Abu Khitab indeed was killed in the operation, the government official said the local supporters of the foreign militants reportedly collected the scattered body organs of the Chechen commander and his bodyguards and secretly got them buried.

Daily Times, 4 March 2006

#### **Taliban stop tribal elders from visiting govt official**

MIRANSHAH: Senior Taliban commander Maulvi Abdul Khaliq issued on Friday "a new executive order" to bar "tribal elders" and "spies" from visiting the North Waziristan political administrator. The order, which comes a day after hundreds of Taliban seized government buildings, was passed during Friday sermons in Miranshah, said eyewitnesses. "I ask all tribal chieftains and spies to not visit the political agent," said Khaliq. He added the Taliban Shura would recommend punish to violators of the order. However, the Taliban leader allowed laymen to visit the government offices to address their problems.

Daily Times, 4 March 2006

#### **Car used in US consulate bombing stolen from Lahore**

KARACHI: Investigations into the suicide bombing outside the US Consulate on Thursday have revealed that the car used by the suicide bomber was stolen from Lahore in May 2005, Geo Television reported on Friday. The owner of the car is an Islamabad-based businessman and unidentified men stole the car from him when he was out to dine with his wife, the channel reported. The owner of the car was also shot. The men later changed the car's registration number to that of the Osta Muhammad nazim's vehicle, the channel said.

Daily Times, 5 March 2006

#### **Pakistan, US pledge to keep fighting terror**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United States on Saturday reaffirmed their commitment to a lasting strategic partnership with close cooperation in the war on terror. 'Part of my mission today was to determine whether or not the president is as committed as he has been in the past to bringing the terrorists to justice, and he is,' US President George W Bush said in response to a question at a joint press conference with President General Pervez Musharraf. 'He understands the stakes; he understands the responsibility; and he understands the need to make sure our strategy is able to defeat the enemy.' The presidents held one-on-one talks that lasted an hour. 'We have laid the foundation of a very strong, sustainable, broad-based and long-term relationship by commencing strategic dialogue in an institutional manner,' President Musharraf said.

Daily Times, 5 March 2006

#### **Over 100 militants killed in N Waziristan operations**

LAHORE: More than 100 militants were killed in two separate operations by security forces in Miranshah and Mir Ali in the North Waziristan Agency on Saturday. Three security forces personnel died in the operation while nine were injured, Geo Television reported. The main army base at Miranshah came under heavy rocket fire from militants, who occupied the main Miranshah Bazaar, various government offices and the telephone exchange. Security forces retaliated with helicopter gun ships and heavy artillery fire, Geo said. It confirmed that at least 85 militants had died in the operation. One soldier was killed and two were injured, including an army colonel, Geo reported.

Daily Times, 5 March 2006

#### **I will not violate Constitution, says Musharraf**

ISLAMABAD: President Musharraf on Saturday said he would not violate the Constitution and whether he could remain in uniform beyond 2007 was an issue that needed to be settled. 'I am following constitutional norms. I have been allowed to wear this uniform until 2007,' the president said in response to a question at a joint press conference with US President Bush. However, he said the uniform issue would be settled in accordance with the Constitution of Pakistan. 'I will never violate the Constitution,' he said, adding that democracy would prevail. 'Sustainable democracy has been introduced in Pakistan and it will prevail beyond 2007.' Bush said his country supported democracy in Pakistan. 'President Musharraf understands that in the long run, the way to defeat terrorists is to replace an ideology of hatred with an ideology of hope,' he said, adding that President Musharraf

envisioned a modern state that would provide an alternative to radicalism. He said the 2007 elections would be a great opportunity for Pakistan. 'The president understands these elections need to be open and honest. US will continue to work with Pakistan to lay the foundations of democracy,' he said.

Daily Times, 5 March 2006

#### **Jundullah suspected behind US consulate attack**

KARACHI: Investigators suspect the Islamic militant group Jundullah (Allah's Brigade) carried out the suicide car bombing that killed a US diplomat and three other people in Karachi, an official said on Saturday. No group claimed responsibility for the bombing Thursday that some officials believed was timed for the eve of US President George W Bush's visit to Pakistan.

Daily Times, 5 March 2006

#### **Opp describes Bush visit to Pakistan as 'disappointing?'**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani opposition on Saturday expressed disappointment over United States President George W Bush visit, saying the visiting president did not make any solid offer for Pakistan but instead asked President Pervez Musharraf to do more against Al Qaeda. Meanwhile Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed declared the visit successful because the US president reaffirmed that Pakistan was a strategic ally of the US in the war against terrorism. 'It's more like an informal visit. Basically, he had to visit India to sign historic agreements. Pakistan was on his itinerary by chance,' observed Makhdoom Amin Fahim, the Pakistan People's Party-Parliamentarians (PPP-P) president.

Daily Times, 5 March 2006

#### **Rocket attack damages goods train in Balochistan**

QUETTA: A fireman was injured and a railway engine damaged on Saturday when unidentified people attacked a goods train in the Naushki area of Balochistan, district administration and railway officials said. The train was on its way to Quetta from Taftan, located near the Iranian border. Bahadur Mengal, the Naushki district nazim, said that unidentified people fired three rockets at the train and later opened fire with Klashinkovs.

Daily Times, 5 March 2006

#### **Taliban responsible for February 14 riots**

LAHORE: Investigations have revealed that a group of about 12 young 'Afghan' men incited protestors to ransack buildings and set vehicles ablaze. Some investigators told Daily Times that they believed 'Taliban' were involved in the violence. Several police and intelligence agency teams have seen videos of the violence and questioned the arrested protestors to conclude that the instigators looked like Afghans. However, it is yet to be found out who called them to Lahore. Investigation revealed that a 30-year-old bearded man clad in brown shalwar kameez led the group of foreigners that incited the angry mob and disappeared when they made Operations SSP Amir Zulfiqar Khan hostage and forced him to shout anti-government and anti-US slogans.

The News, 5 March 2006

#### **Balochistan prepares poppy eradication plan**

QUETTA: The Balochistan government on Saturday claimed to have prepared a comprehensive plan for complete eradication of the poppy crop in the province. A decision to this effect was taken at a high-level meeting of the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) held with the provincial chief secretary, KB Rind, and the director-general ANF Pakistan, Maj-Gen Syed Khalid Amir Jafri, in the chair here. It was decided in principle that strict implementation would be ensured on the plan.

Daily Times, 6 March 2006

#### **Karzai oblivious to events in his own country: Musharraf** (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: President Pervez Musharraf has claimed that there is an ongoing "conspiracy against Pakistan" in the Afghan Defence Ministry, and has accused Afghan Hamid Karzai of being "oblivious" to events in his own country. In an interview with CNN's 'Late Edition With Wolf Blitzer', the president said that he and the Pakistani intelligence had informed Karzai about "attempts in the Afghan government to malign Pakistan". "President Karzai is totally oblivious of what is happening in his own country," he said. The president dismissed Afghan accusations that Al Qaeda and Taliban militants were hiding in Pakistan. He said that the list handed over to him by President Karzai was "outdated" and contained "dead telephone numbers and addresses that were useless". He said that the information provided by Afghan authorities about Mulla Omar's hideout was "nonsense". "There is nobody there. ... There are families living there and there is no sign of Mulla Omar," he said.

Daily Times, 6 March 2006

#### **NWFP govt will wrap up tent villages by March-end**

PESHAWAR: Quake refugees will be moved from tent villages to their homes from March 10 and the process will be completed in three phases by the end of this month, said an NWFP government statement. The decision to shut down tent villages was taken at a recent meeting of the provincial cabinet presided over by Akram Khan

Durrani, the NWFP chief minister. All of the tent villages will be closed down with the exception of one or two to house refugees who are unable to return. The district governments concerned and NGOs will provide the transport. NGOs and welfare organisations will also provide essential items to the refugees before their return.

Daily Times, 6 March 2006

#### **50,000 protest against cartoons in Karachi**

KARACHI: Around 50,000 people protested against cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Karachi on Sunday, and many took the opportunity to criticise the government and the United States. The cartoons, first published in Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten in September last year, sparked widespread protests across the Muslim world. They have since been republished in at least 56 countries, predominantly in Europe but also in Asia and the United States. The protesters carrying signs with the Prophet's (PBUH) name written on them in Arabic shouted "Death to Denmark", but many also chanted "Death to America", "Death to Israel" and "Death to Musharraf". They also burnt an effigy of US President George W Bush, who ended a 24-hour visit to Islamabad on Saturday. Hundreds of riot police lined the two-kilometre stretch of a road in central Karachi, but there was no violence. The rally had been organised by the MMA.

Daily Times, 6 March 2006

#### **Aziz and Blair discuss economy and defence today**

LONDON: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz will discuss Pakistan-Britain relations, including trade, defence, investment, Kashmir and blasphemous sketches with British Prime Minister Tony Blair today, Pakistan's High Commissioner to the UK Dr Maleeha Lodhi told reporters on Sunday. Aziz arrived here on Sunday on a three-day official visit to Britain. British High Commissioner in Islamabad Mark Lyall Grant, Deputy High Commissioner Abdul Basit and Lodhi received him. Lodhi said that the prime minister's visit would strengthen the strategic partnership between the two countries. Both countries are committed to a common vision and a partnership for peace and stability, she said. Aziz will also discuss regional and international issues, with a particular focus on the situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan's peace dialogue with India, confidence building measures and the need to move forward towards a lasting resolution of the Kashmir issue, she added.

Daily Times, 7 March 2006

#### **Bush optimistic about solutions to Kashmir and Palestine**

RAWALPINDI: President General Pervez Musharraf said on Monday that it was in Pakistan's national interest to fight terrorism and extremism and that by doing so his government wasn't doing the US or the international community any favour for which it should be rewarded. He also shrugged off allegations of "collateral damage" in the war against terror, arguing that it was minimal given the nature of the conflict in Waziristan. He was rebutting a suggestion made by one editor at a meeting with editors in Islamabad at the Army House yesterday afternoon that the focus on the war against terror by the Musharraf regime was misplaced. "How can we not focus on terrorism or not talk about it when the ground reality is that there are terrorists in Pakistan who are giving the country a bad name", he asked, clearly suggesting that the terrorists were hurting Pakistan rather than the war against terrorism.

Daily Times, 7 March 2006

#### **Afghanistan for Pakistani sincerity against insurgency**

KABUL: Afghanistan called on Monday for sincere cooperation from Pakistan in the fight against Taliban and Al Qaeda militants, amid a deepening row between the neighbours over the violence. Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah defended intelligence that Afghanistan handed to Pakistan last month about Taliban and Qaeda militants on its soil who are said to be directing a bloody insurgency here. President Musharraf has said the information, including that which said the Taliban's fugitive leader Mullah Omar had spent time in Pakistan, was outdated and "ridiculous". "Even if the information is a bit old, it still means that a problem exists," Abdullah told reporters. "The information which showed the presence of Mullah Omar or heads of Taliban itself is worthy." "Afghanistan and Pakistan should have a sincere and honest cooperation in fighting terrorism and it should not be on and off," he said. Musharraf told CNN there was a "very, very deliberate attempt to malign Pakistan" by some Afghan agents. In previous interviews he has alluded to the involvement of India's intelligence agency.

Daily Times, 7 March 2006

#### **Pakistan considering fencing border with Afghanistan, says FO**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has said that it is considering fencing its 2,500-kilometre long border with Afghanistan. "We will consider fencing our own side," Foreign Office spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam told a press conference on Monday. She urged the Afghan government to show "seriousness and commitment" in the war on terror and curb movement of militants across the border into Pakistan. The Foreign Office spokeswoman said that Pakistan has taken "effective and comprehensive measures" and deployed over 80,000 troops along the Afghan border "to stop the movement of terrorists". She said that the Afghan government should "seriously cooperate with us" instead of "making allegations and maligning Pakistan". About the list of suspected Taliban hiding in Pakistan provided by Afghan President Hamid Karzai on his visit, Aslam said that Afghanistan had not shared this information with Pakistan or even the US Central Intelligence Agency.

Daily Times, 7 March 2006

**Pakistan wants to delay Nankana bus service** (Mohammed Rizwan)

LAHORE: Pakistan has requested India to postpone the proposed Amritsar-Nankana Sahib bus service, scheduled to begin on March 10, till March 24. However, the proposed trial run for the Peshawar-Jalalabad bus service will be held as scheduled on March 15. "Yes, we have asked Indian authorities to postpone the Amritsar-Nankana bus service till March 24 because the infrastructure in Nankana Sahib will take more time to complete," confirmed Ministry Of Communications Joint Secretary Firdaus Alam. "There is no change of plans regarding the Peshawar-Jalalabad bus and the trial run will be held on March 15 and March 17," he added.

Daily Times, 7 March 2006

**3rd round of Indo-Pak talks from 28th** (Muhammad Imran and Iftikhar Gilani)

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI: India and Pakistan announced on Monday the schedule for the third round of the composite dialogue process between the two countries. The third round is spread over four months and involves dialogue on major disputes between the two countries. It starts with secretary-level talks on March 28-29 on economic cooperation, and culminates with a final foreign minister-level review on July 21-22 and the plenary session of the joint commission. The composite dialogue process was initiated in 2004 while the Bharatiya Janata Party was in power in India. Indian officials said that they will raise the issue of a rise in terrorist activities and drug trafficking from across the border during the talks.

Dawn, 7 March 2006

**EU asks Pakistan to defuse cartoons row**

BRUSSELS, March 6: The European Union sought again on Monday to calm the row over Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) cartoons, reiterating the need for free speech to be tempered by religious respect in talks with a Pakistani minister. But EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, speaking after talks with visiting religious affairs minister Ijaz-ul-Haq, also repeated criticism of violent protests including in Pakistan. "I would like to stress that freedom of expression is a fundamental right, but it comes with responsibilities and should be exercised with respect for all religious beliefs and cultures," she said. But she added: "Violent acts cannot be justified under any circumstances." Five people died in Pakistan last month during violent protests against both the cartoons — initially published in Denmark but republished in a number of European media — and the United States.

The News, 7 March 2006

**UK urges Pakistan to enhance democracy**

LONDON: British Prime Minister Tony Blair said on Monday he hoped to see Pakistan moved further toward democracy, but stressed it must enhance stability in the country. "Britain and Pakistan share common interests in tackling terrorism, poverty and climate change," Blair said as he held talks in London with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. Blair told reporters he wanted to see Pakistan develop democracy, but stressed changes must enhance "the stability and prosperity" of the country. Shaukat and Blair discussed cooperation on counter-terrorism and the deployment of more than 3,000 additional troops to southern Afghanistan in a NATO-led security mission, Blair said. "One thing that stands out very clearly in today's world is the common interest in fighting this extremism," Blair told reporters at his Downing Street offices following the talks.

The News, 7 March 2006

**Pakistan, China sign accord to strengthen military cooperation**

BEIJING: Pakistan and China have reached a broad-based agreement to strengthen their military-to-military cooperation, APP learnt from official sources here on Monday. The agreement is another manifestation of strong commitment of the two countries to help each other protect their sovereignty, territorial integrity and national independence. According to the sources, the agreement signed during the recent visit of President Gen Pervez Musharraf to China, is a broad-range document meant to consolidate their ongoing cooperation in defence sector and meet new challenges. It says: "China and Pakistan both commit themselves to support each other's efforts to protect their sovereignty, territorial integrity and national independence."

Daily Times, 8 March 2006

**Kabul may give more info on militants**

KABUL: The government of Afghanistan will present Pakistan with more intelligence on militants' whereabouts and it is "hopeful that measures will be taken," said Karim Rahimi, Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai's spokesman, on Tuesday. A rift between Afghanistan and Pakistan deepened as Karzai's office said intelligence about Taliban and Al Qaeda fugitives allegedly hiding in Pakistan was "very strong and accurate." Pakistan and Afghanistan are key allies of Washington in its war on terrorism. But relations have deteriorated sharply since Karzai, on a visit to Islamabad last month, gave a list to Musharraf of Taliban and Al Qaeda fugitives he said were hiding in Pakistan. Afghan and Pakistani officials said that the list included Taliban supreme leader Mullah Omar and top associates, and that Afghanistan also shared the locations of alleged terrorist training camps.

Dawn, 8 March 2006

**Pentagon views Pakistan as key partner** (Anwar Iqbal)

WASHINGTON, March 7: Pakistan remains a key US partner in the war on terror and its military is playing an important role in providing intelligence and support to the forces of the US-coalition in Afghanistan, the Pentagon said here. The US Defence Department's statement, issued in Washington days after President Bush returned from a landmark visit to South Asia, tries to dispel the impression that the US was unhappy with Pakistan's role in quelling an insurgency in Afghanistan. Last month, the Afghan government leaked an intelligence report to the Western media saying that Pakistan had provided sanctuary to Taliban and Al Qaeda insurgents and was also allowing them to carry out cross-border attacks into Afghanistan.

The Nation, 8 March 2006

**China to consider Pak assistance requests**

BEIJING (Agencies) - Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing said Tuesday that China is willing to continue the friendly relations with Pakistan and would seriously consider the assistance requests from Pakistan. "China and Pakistan enjoy profound traditional friendship," said Li, noting that China has been providing support to Pakistan within its capacity. Li made the remarks at a press conference held on the sideline of the ongoing annual full session of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature. APP adds: Pakistan and China have reached a broad-ranging agreement to strengthen their military-to-military cooperation, APP learnt from official sources. The agreement is another manifestation of strong commitment of the two countries help each other protecting their sovereignty, territorial integrity and national independence. According to the sources, the agreement signed during the recent visit of President General Pervez Musharraf to China, is a broad-ranging document, meant to consolidate their on-going cooperation in defence sector, meeting the new challenges.

Daily Times, 8 March 2006

**Foreigners financing rebels in Waziristan, Balochistan: Sherpao** (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Sherpao has said that the government has "credible evidence" of foreign financing of militants in North Waziristan and Balochistan. "We have obtained credible evidence that a foreign hand is helping the miscreants in North Waziristan and Balochistan ? the operation will continue till its logical end," he told journalists after chairing a meeting on Tuesday about the operations in Miranshah, Mir Ali and other tribal areas. The interior minister, accompanied by Interior Secretary Syed Kamal Shah and National Crisis Management Cell Chairman Brig Javed Iqbal Cheema, vowed to continue the operation in the tribal areas until "foreign and local terrorists are flushed out". The meeting was also attended by the NWFP inspector general of police and officials of various intelligence agencies.

Daily Times, 8 March 2006

**Pakistan and Spain can promote interfaith harmony: Musharraf**

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday stressed the need to promote interfaith harmony. Talking to Spanish Foreign minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, the president said that Pakistan and Spain could play an important role in enhancing understanding between Islam and the West. The Spanish foreign minister regretted the publication of the caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and said that freedom of expression should not be used "irresponsibly". Online reported that both leaders discussed regional and international issues, including Pakistan-India relations and Afghanistan. Musharraf praised the prompt and substantial support provided by the Spanish government after the October 8 earthquake in Pakistan.

Dawn, 8 March 2006

**Military action against Iran opposed: Aziz calls for diplomatic solution**

LONDON, March 7: Pakistan will oppose any military action taken by the United States against Iran over its disputed nuclear programme, according to Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. "Pakistan's view is that there should not be any military intervention and we would certainly not be party to any such action," Mr Aziz told BBC television on Monday night. The BBC had asked him about Washington's refusal to rule out military action against Iran's nuclear programme which US and European diplomats fear may be used for nuclear weapons. Iran insists it is peaceful. He said Pakistan has always supported a diplomatic solution to the crisis over Iran's uranium enrichment programme, especially through the forum of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna.

Daily Times, 9 March 2006

**Musharraf wants more security on Afghan border** (Rana Qaisar)

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf on Wednesday told US Central Command (Centcom) chief General John P Abizaid that there was an urgent need to reinforce security on the Afghan side of the border to stop "miscreants" sneaking into Pakistan's tribal areas. Sources told Daily Times that the president presented the Centcom chief with evidence that infiltration was taking place from Afghanistan. "Documentary evidence to prove the Afghan government's accusations wrong was also presented to the US Centcom chief," the sources said, referring to recent accusations by Kabul that Islamabad is responsible for instability and trouble in Afghanistan.

Dawn, 9 March 2006

**US report says scores of civilians died in Balochistan** (Anwar Iqbal)

WASHINGTON, March 8: In its latest report on the human rights situation in Pakistan, the US State Department took serious notice of the conflict in Balochistan, noting that scores of civilians have already been killed in clashes between security forces and Baloch militants. The annual report for 2005, which is sent to the US Congress as an official document, points out that various political factions in Pakistan also committed politically-motivated killings. During local elections held on Aug 18 and 25, arguments between competing groups resulted in violent confrontations at polling places nationwide, leaving at least 55 dead and hundreds injured.

Daily Times, 9 March 2006

**Pakistani arrested for Qaeda link**

ABBOTTABAD: US troops have arrested a Pakistani in Iraq for having alleged links to Al Qaeda, Online reported on Wednesday. The detained Pakistani, Muhammad Jehangir, a resident of Abbottabad, was serving in an Iraq-based American construction company in the area of Taji in Baghdad for the last three years. His brother Abdul Jalil told reporters on Wednesday that Jehangir sent Rs 12,000 to him through the Western Union bank in January 2006 and later went missing. He said that when the family contacted the company to ask for Jehangir, the company's director said that US intelligence agencies had arrested him because "he had sent Rs 12,000 to his brother (Jalil)". "The company director told me that a man namely Abdul Jalil was wanted by US intelligence agencies and this was the reason that Jehangir was arrested for sending the money to me as my name is Abdul Jalil." Online reported that the Foreign Office has called an explanation from the US Embassy.

Dawn, 9 March 2006

**Proposals to develop N. Areas for tourism**

GILGIT, March 8: The Northern Areas Tourism Board (NATB) has proposed several measures to develop tourism in the region. Sources said on Wednesday that NATB officials had recommended making the board autonomous, particularly in financial and administrative matters. They said that an autonomous tourism body in the Northern Areas was the only way to promote tourism in the region. The officials pointed out that the tedious procedure for obtaining visa discouraged the flow of tourists and suggested that it should be simplified. They proposed opening of visa counters in Gilgit and Kashgher (China) to boost tourism along the Karakoram Highway that goes to China from Gilgit.

Daily Times, 9 March 2006

**'40% of all medicines in Pakistan are fake'**

KARACHI: Counterfeit drugs constitute 40 to 50 percent of all medicines available in Pakistan and according to the World Health Organization (WHO) Pakistanis spend 77 percent of their household health budgets on medicines half of which may be fake or unfit for human consumption. This was stated by PMA Secretary General Dr Qaiser Sajjad who added that the government needs to seriously work to control the production and sale of counterfeit medicines in Pakistan, which is currently ranked 13th in the world for the practice. This was stated during a seminar on "The menace of fake/counterfeit drugs in Pakistan" organized by the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) Karachi and Helpline Trust on Wednesday. He said that counterfeit drugs pose serious social and enormous implications.

Daily Times, 10 March 2006

**Basant cancelled under mullah pressure** (Khawaja Naseer)

LAHORE: The Punjab government buckled under pressure from religious parties on Thursday and imposed an immediate ban on kite flying in the province, effectively cancelling the Basant festival. The prohibition order means that festive Basant activities planned for the weekend will no longer be held. Officials of the Punjab government told Daily Times that all the district governments and relevant law enforcement agencies have been directed to ensure the implementation of the ban. Violators of the ban can be punished for up to three years' imprisonment or a fine of Rs 40,000, or both.

Daily Times, 10 March 2006

**Pakistan will continue arming its forces**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will continue to develop and equip its armed forces with conventional and unconventional weapons, President General Pervez Musharraf said on Thursday. "However, Pakistan is not in an arms race in the region. But we will continue to maintain our credible minimum deterrence to safeguard the sovereignty of the country," Musharraf said at the opening of the National Engineering and Science Commission (NESCOM). The president said the establishment of NESCOM had been very fruitful and had paid quick dividends. He said NESCOM had evolved a methodology to integrate different technologies to configure and design weapons systems. "The design of the Shaheen-I, Shaheen-II, Ghauri-2 missiles makes the nation very proud."

The News, 10 March 2006

### **Pakistan, Jordan urge negotiated settlement**

AMMAN: Jordan and Pakistan on Thursday called for a negotiated settlement of Iran's nuclear crisis with the West and agreed to boost efforts against terrorism. "We would like to see the nuclear issue solved in a diplomatic manner. We have enough problems in the region," Jordanian Prime Minister Maaruf Bakhit told reporters at a joint news conference with Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. "All stakeholders should sit around and use all their diplomatic skills to solve this issue," said Shaukat, who was on a one-day visit to Amman. He added however that countries have the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The News, 10 March 2006

### **Pak economic superiority to beat India: Musharraf**

ISLAMABAD: President Gen Pervez Musharraf on Thursday said Pakistan would get an edge over India by achieving economic superiority rather than indulging in an arms race. Addressing the launching ceremony of Centre of Excellence for Advanced Training and Research for Strategic Needs at the Nescom Headquarters, he said they were well aware of their defence needs and would utilise all resources for making the defence of the country impregnable and would be making their weapons system more sophisticated. The president said Pakistan was a peace-loving country and wanted cordial and friendly relations with all its neighbours and also wanted to work for maintaining peace in the region. "In today's era it is not the weapon superiority that makes the country strong but strong economy and prosperity of the people that contribute to making the nation strong."

The News, 10 March 2006

### **Pakistan to mine, fence Afghan border: Sherpao**

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Sherpao on Thursday said the Afghan government having no writ in some of its bordering provinces, has started accusing Pakistan of cross border infiltration. He was talking to a delegation of elected councillors of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata). Sherpao said Afghan President Hamid Karzai had provided a bogus and outdated list of terrorists to President General Pervez Musharraf during his recent visit to Islamabad in which he claimed those terrorists were still in Pakistan.

Dawn, 10 March 2006

### **Pipeline talks next week**

NEW DELHI, March 9: Officials from India, Pakistan and Iran will meet in Tehran next week to discuss a pipeline project for the export of Iranian natural gas to South Asia, an Indian oil ministry official said. The 2,600-kilometre pipeline, valued at over \$7bn, was first proposed in 1994 but progress has been slowed by tensions between India and Pakistan. "Petroleum Secretary M.S. Srinivasan will lead the Indian delegation, which will arrive in Iran on Monday for three days of official talks," the official said. India, which imports 70 per cent of the oil it consumes, is keen to import natural gas to meet growing energy needs. The pipeline would supply gas from the massive South Pars offshore fields.

Dawn, 10 March 2006

### **NWFP asked to help recover Wapda arrears from Fata (Khaleeq Kiani)**

ISLAMABAD, March 9: The government has asked the governor and chief minister of the NWFP to take steps for the recovery of Rs35 billion electricity arrears from consumers in the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (Fata). Sources said that a meeting of the ministry of water and power and Wapda authorities on Thursday decided to take up the matter with President Gen Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz to prevail upon the NWFP leadership to recover the outstanding amount and facilitate the Tribal Electric Supply Company (Tesco) to install meters. The meeting, presided over by Minister for Water and Power Liaquat Ali Jatoi, was told that the sell off of the Peshawar Electric Supply Company (Pesco) would not be possible if its arrears were not cleared.

Daily Times, 11 March 2006

### **Opp won't contest polls under Musharraf: Qazi (Mohammad Imran)**

ISLAMABAD: Opposition parties will not contest the general elections if they are held in the presence of President General Pervez Musharraf because "his presence has worsened the country's situation", Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) President Qazi Hussain Ahmed told Daily Times on Friday. Qazi reached Islamabad on Friday after two-week house arrest at Mansoor, Lahore. He demanded that Musharraf resign from both the president and the chief of army staff slots. He criticised the foreign, economic and internal policies of Musharraf, saying that a war had started in Balochistan and North Waziristan "and the Army was killing Pakistanis" because of the government's wrong policies. If the government and Army want to end the war in North Waziristan, I am ready to play my role, he said. He said that he supported MMA MNA Maulana Mirajuddin's proposal that the government form a parliamentary committee to resolve the Waziristan problem.

Dawn, 11 March 2006

### **Musharraf renews demilitarisation, autonomy proposals**

ISLAMABAD, March 10: President Gen Pervez Musharraf said on Friday Pakistan's proposals for demilitarisation

and self-governance offered a practical solution to the Kashmir dispute. "An ultimate solution to the problem on these lines would make the Line of Control (LoC) irrelevant," he added. Speaking at a conference organised by a Washington-based think-tank, Pugwash, he urged the Indian leadership to come forward with a timely response to these suggestions for durable peace in South Asia. The president said he strongly believed that the environment had never been so conducive for the solution of this problem.

The Nation, 11 March 2006

**30 miscreants killed in North Waziristan** (Shamim Shahid, Shaiq Hussain and Haq Nawaz)

PESHAWAR/KHAJORI CHECK POST, Bajaur — At least 30 miscreants were killed when armed forces along with gunship helicopters attacked, what officials said, their den at the Madrassa of Maulana Sadiq Noor in Khattey Keley area of North Waziristan Agency Friday, reports said. "The operation, started at around 8.30pm, is still continuing with little resistance from inside the targeted compound," the reports said. There is no official confirmation of the operation as well as the casualties as yet. However, some officials requesting anonymity said about 30 miscreants were killed at the very outset of the operation. According to them, a huge cache of arms dumped inside the madrassa compound also caught fire due to heavy fire of gunshots. "Now frequent explosions can be heard in the surrounding areas." Some unconfirmed reports also suggested that the local population was also affected due to the continued operation as a number of houses closed to the madrassa were damaged.

Dawn, 11 March 2006

**Tribesmen held for laying mines** (Syed Irfan Raza)

ISLAMABAD, March 10: Security personnel have arrested several tribesmen for their alleged involvement in laying mines in strife-hit areas of Balochistan, a senior official of the interior ministry told Dawn on Friday. The official said that all those detained were members of the Bugti tribe. Now that outlaws' camps have been dismantled by security forces and Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti has fled the area, he said, "followers of the tribal chieftain" were planting landmines to further their anti-state agenda. In response to a question about Nawab Bugti, the official said that although the leader of the tribe had escaped, security forces were trying to find out where he had taken shelter. Meanwhile, Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao described Friday's landmine explosion in Balochistan as a "highly condemnable act".

The Nation, 11 March 2006

**Pak arms set to enter world market, Senate told**

ISLAMABAD: High-tech weapon and defence equipment from Pakistan were now set to enter the world market, Standing Committee Chairman Nisar Memon told the Senate on Friday. "Our defence industry is now competent in aircraft overhauling, rebuilding and modernising, naval shipbuilding, light arms and missile technologies," he said, while presenting a report on defence and defence production. Nisar said after attaining self-sufficiency in weapon manufacturing and subsequently exporting surplus production, the country is embarking on an ambitious plan to capture at least one per cent share of global arms market by 2007. "The export target of defence production is expected to rise to \$500 million during the next five years." He said the defence production showed remarkable achievement in the last three years, adding the Pakistan Ordnance Factory (POF) has not only enhanced production for the defence services but also supplied large quantities of weapons for the upkeep of the military arsenal.

Daily Times, 11 March 2006

**MMA secures 3 FATA seats** (Shahzad Raza and Irfan Ghauri)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-backed candidates lost three out of the four Senate seats of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in the backdrop of the government operation against militants there. Three candidates, backed by the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), obtained FATA Senate seats. PML-backed candidate from FATA, Abdul Razik, was declared successful through a draw after he secured equal number (five) of votes among five candidates. Rules dictate that only MNAs hailing from FATA can elect FATA. There were 39 contenders for the four vacant FATA seats. MMA-backed Maulana Saleh Shah, Maulana Hafiz Rashid and Maulana Abdul Rashid secured six votes each and were declared successful.

Dawn, 11 March 2006

**Erra chief rules out forced repatriation** (Iftikhar A. Khan)

ISLAMABAD, March 10: Chief Relief Commissioner Maj-Gen Farooq Ahmad Khan has ruled out forced relocation of quake survivors from relief camps. Addressing a press conference here on Friday, he dispelled an impression that all relief camps would be closed by March 31. "There is no deadline for this," he stressed and said a package of incentives including one-month ration, transport, blankets and tents were being offered to encourage voluntary repatriation. He said the Erra would distribute Rs8 billion among quake-affected people in the NWFP and Azad Kashmir for reconstruction of houses in the next few months. He said the quake-hit people had already received Rs25,000 and the second instalment of Rs75,000 would be paid over the next few weeks.

The News, 12 March 2006

### **15 bodies recovered in Miranshah**

MIR ALI: At least 15 bodies were recovered from Khattay Killay, 10 kilometres off Miranshah, headquarters of North Waziristan tribal agency, on Saturday as calm prevailed in the area shelled by the Pakistan Army on Friday night. Political authorities claim that 28 militants, including five foreigners, were killed in the operation wherein artillery and helicopter gunships were used against militants' positions. Political Agent Syed Zaheerul Islam told The News that the operation was launched following reports of presence of two most wanted clerics, Maulvi Abdul Khaliq and Maulvi Sadiq Noor, in the area. He said 28 militants were killed in the operation and five among them were foreigners.

Dawn, 12 March 2006

### **MMA condemns Fata operation** (Ahmed Hassan)

ISLAMABAD, March 11: The Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) on Saturday condemned in the strongest terms the killing of innocent people in the military operation against so-called saboteurs in the North and South Waziristan agencies, while the government defended the action on the grounds that it could not tolerate parallel governments at any cost. Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly and MMA secretary-general Maulana Fazlur Rahman challenged Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao to prove the killing of even a single foreigner in the whole operation in the North Waziristan Agency. According to Maulana Fazl, the country's armed forces were engaged on the western borders only to please the US whose military was getting bogged down in Afghanistan.

The News, 12 March 2006

### **Kite-flying ban puts a damper on Basant night till midnight** (Awais Saleem)

LAHORE: The usual colour and fervour of Basant night was somewhat lacking here Saturday but the kite-flyers still managed to fulfill their enthusiasm to a certain extent while playing hide and seek with the police authorities. Till midnight the ban was being fairly observed but afterwards it was free for all and the kite-flying activity was taking place in almost all the areas of the provincial metropolis. Apparently, the police personnel exhausted and the enthusiasm of the kite-lovers prevailed over the law. The fun-loving Lahorites and the people coming from other parts of the country and elsewhere in the world had gathered in the provincial metropolis in anticipation of the annual Basant gala but their spirits were slightly dampened because of the ban imposed by Punjab government at the eleventh hour.

The News, 12 March 2006

### **Final Baglihar project hearing deferred** (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir)

ISLAMABAD: India has succeeded in obtaining from the World Bank neutral expert another deferment of the final hearing on the contentious power project that India is building at Baglihar on the Chenab River near Jammu in southern part of occupied Kashmir in violation of the Indus Basin Treaty of 1960. It is the third time in less than two months that India has asked for delaying the hearing under the pretext that it is studying Pakistan's "comprehensive" response to an Indian explanation submitted by New Delhi late last year.

Daily Times, 13 March 2006

### **Mujadadi survives suicide attack, blames Pakistan**

KABUL: At least four people were killed in an assassination attempt on an ex-Afghan president, a roadside bomb killed three US soldiers and four Albanians were kidnapped in different parts of Afghanistan on Sunday. Two attackers and two bystanders were killed Sunday in the Afghan capital in a suicide car bombing targeting the head of the country's Senate, who escaped unharmed, the Afghan Interior Ministry said. "There was a suicide attack this morning. Four people have died. The attack targeted Sebghatullah Mujadidi, who was not hurt," said Yousuf Stanizai, the ministry spokesman. The dead were two attackers and two passers-by, one a young girl and the other an old man, Stanizai said.

Daily Times, 13 March 2006

### **Pakistani Qaeda suspect held in Afghanistan**

JALALABAD: Afghan security forces have captured a Pakistani national suspected of links with Al-Qaeda and Taliban militants in eastern Afghanistan, an official said on Sunday. The man, identified as Haji Nader was captured on Thursday after authorities received intelligence that the man was crossing the border into the eastern province of Kunar, said Mohammad Hassan Farahi, local security director. He said there was "strong and trusted intelligence" that the man was involved in several anti-government operations and that he was entering Afghanistan to train militants. According to intelligence sources in the capital Kabul, the suspect is from Dir district of NWFP. AFP

The News, 13 March 2006

### **Record trippings occur as Lahorites defy kite ban**

LAHORE: The Lahore Electric Supply Company recorded an unprecedented number of trippings on Sunday as

the Lahorites defied the ban on kite-flying with impunity. Lesco officials said that there were 2,100 trippings on last Saturday and Sunday, when kite-flying was not banned. However, on Saturday and Sunday, when there was a ban on kite-flying, trippings were recorded at 2,400, showing how the Lahorites treated the ban. Besides kite-flying with metal wires, the Lesco system was hit by stray bullets, a new phenomenon in the city. A number of live wires fell down after stray bullets hit them, said a Lesco spokesman. He said the tripping and damage was so severe that the company had to call back its field staff on monitoring duty to repair the system.

Daily Times, 13 March 2006

**Pakistan needs Musharraf in 2 offices: Arbab** (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: The international situation requires that President General Pervez Musharraf keep both offices (the presidency and chief of army staff) beyond 2007, said Sindh Chief Minister Arbab Ghulam Rahim on Sunday. The international situation does not favour the country and Musharraf has to keep both offices, Arbab told reporters in the Parliament lobby. There had been politicians in the past who had kept two office during their time, he said. "There is no harm in a person holding more than one office." Shaukat Aziz's performance as prime minister had been excellent and he should be reelected in the 2007 elections, said the chief minister. Pakistan Muslim League leaders will nominate the party's candidate for prime minister, he said. He added that he was willing to offer Shaukat Aziz many more Sindhi constituencies to contest the 2007 elections.

Daily Times, 13 March 2006

**Kites fly in Punjab government's face** (Noshad Ali)

LAHORE: Lahoris celebrated Basant with traditional zeal flying colourful kites, displaying fireworks and dancing on their roofs, totally ignoring Punjab government's ban on kite flying and the police's crackdown against some unfortunate citizens. Gloom hung over the city until late on Saturday night as Lahoris waited for an announcement of ban relaxation, but the party was sparked off after fireworks display at Haveli Asif Jah led people of nearby areas to think the ban had been lifted. By 1am, the festival was on in all parts of Lahore and overjoyed citizens began serious aerial firing.

The News, 14 March 2006

**Peshawar-Jalalabad bus service begins tomorrow** (Mohammad Ali Khan)

PESHAWAR: As tension persists at government levels of Pakistan and Afghanistan, Peshawar-Jalalabad bus service would commence tomorrow (Wednesday) paving the way for enhancing people-to-people contact between the two neighbouring countries. The first-ever bus from Jalalabad would reach here on March 15, while a similar bus from Peshawar would leave for Jalalabad on March 17 as per an agreement inked between Pak-Afghan authorities last month in Islamabad. The bus service, initially, would be operated on trial basis for a period of one month. If succeeded, then formal service would begin by April 15, a senior official told The News. The government has allowed a private transport group to daily operate five buses; each having 36 seats, on the international route, while a bus of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) would ply on alternative routes. Moreover, six buses from Afghan side would operate as per the similar schedule, the official said.

Daily Times, 14 March 2006

**Poor security blocks investment: US** (Rana Qaisar)

ISLAMABAD: The United States said on Monday the security situation in Balochistan was "an impediment" to investment in Pakistan and opposed a gas pipeline from Iran to Pakistan. "The security situation needs to be improved as it is an impediment to investment. Until there is an improvement, substantial investment is not possible," US Energy Secretary Samuel W Bodman told journalists when asked about foreign investment in a gas pipeline project from Turkmenistan. Bodman, who arrived in Islamabad for talks on US cooperation in Pakistan's energy sector, did not support the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project, saying: "Our country has significant problems with Iran. They are working on nuclear weapons and we are trying to prevent it, so it is impossible to support a contractual agreement."

The News, 14 March 2006

**Pakistan offers nuclear parks to US** (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir & Naveed Ahmad)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has proposed to the United States to build nuclear parks in the country for US entrepreneurs to establish nuclear power plants like IPPs, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said on Monday. This would resolve the problem of safeguards on the one hand, while enabling Pakistan to get cheaper power for its rapidly growing power needs on the other, he said, while speaking at a news conference at the Prime Minister House after meeting visiting US Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman. Shaukat announced that Pakistan and the United States had agreed to set up a joint working group to discuss the Pak energy requirements by working together. "Islamabad is dispatching its team of experts within 30 days to the US to take part in the working group's inaugural meeting," he added.

Daily Times, 14 March 2006

### **Afghans warned to leave N Waziristan**

MIRANSHAH: All Afghan refugees here have to evacuate the area as soon as possible, warned the top government official in North Waziristan in a radio broadcast on Monday. Political Agent Zaheerul Islam said that Afghans had been given deadlines to leave two or three times last year but had not done so. "Now they are not Afghan refugees but foreigners and must leave North Waziristan immediately," he said. Severe action will be taken if they don't do so, he added, without elaborating. Many of Afghans in North Waziristan have built homes and set up businesses in the area. Others work as farm labourers.

Daily Times, 14 March 2006

### **Canadian PM due today**

ISLAMABAD: Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper will arrive in the capital for a one day visit today (Tuesday). He will hold a meeting with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and discuss with him issues of bilateral, regional and international importance. They will also discuss cooperation in war against terrorism, trade, investment and other walks of life. Aziz and his Canadian counterpart will address a joint press conference after their meeting. The PM will apprise the Canadian leader on problems faced by the Pakistani community in Canada, Iran nuclear crisis and the situation in Afghanistan. Nuclear cooperation will also come under discussion since Canada is a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Online

Dawn, 14 March 2006

### **MMA offers mediation on Balochistan**

QUETTA, March 13: MMA leader Hafiz Hussain Ahmed has stressed the need for peacefully resolving the Balochistan issue and called for a ceasefire in Dera Bugti and Kohlu areas. The MMA's deputy parliamentary leader in the National Assembly was speaking at the press club here on Monday. Hafiz Hussain Ahmed announced that the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal would help mediate to end the conflict and prevent the loss of innocent lives in the confrontation. MMA leader pointed out that both the government and tribal chieftains in Dera Bugti and Kohlu were blaming each other for planting landmines, and said that the unending confrontation would result in nothing but loss of precious human lives on both sides.

Daily Times, 14 March 2006

### **Kites continue to fly free** (Noshad Ali)

LAHORE: Lahoris continued to defy the Punjab government's kite flying ban as Basant festivity continued on Monday. Rehmanpura resident Shehzad Butt said he was not breaking the law although he loved flying kites, but people had been violating the ban and enjoying the sport since Basant night. "It's going on like it does every year - power tripping, aerial gunfire and kite flying," he said. Daily Times observed widespread kite flying in the Walled City, Misri Shah, Shadbagh, Kasur Pura, Bund Road, Sherankot, Scheme Mor, Allama Iqbal Town, Ashiqabad, Shah Kamal, Samanabad, Ichhra, Mozang, Rajgarh, Rehmanpura, Wahdat Colony, Muslim Town, Makkah Colony, Mughalpur, Baghbanpura, Shalimar and Garhi Shahu.

Daily Times, 15 March 2006

### **Karzai says world unsafe without Pakistan's help**

KABUL: Afghan President Hamid Karzai on Tuesday demanded Pakistan's full cooperation in the fight against terrorism, saying that without Islamabad's help the world would never be safe. The Afghan leader said at a media conference with visiting Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper that the world must unite against militancy because "terrorism can affect any one, anytime and anywhere". "Pakistan and Afghanistan are the central pieces in this war against terror and unless there is sincere, intense, systematic cooperation from all sides, the world would not be safe," Karzai said. "Therefore it is extremely important that our brothers in Pakistan join us in the most intense manner — that is the need of the hour in the fight against terrorism," he said.

The News, 15 March 2006

### **20 Afghan DPs arrested in N Waziristan**

MIR ALI: The authorities arrested 20 Afghan refugees at different check posts in North Waziristan Tuesday after having ordered all the refugees to leave the tribal agency. There are an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 Afghan refugees in North Waziristan. The refugees were not given any time to quit as a crackdown on them started straightaway. However, eyewitnesses saw a number of refugees selling vegetables and fruits on pushcarts in Miranshah on Tuesday as only those refugees passing through checkpoints on the roads were being checked and netted. It isn't known whether the arrested refugees would be deported to Afghanistan or given some time to pack their belongings and leave North Waziristan. Fearing arrest, many Afghan refugees were now staying at home in Miranshah, Mir Ali and other towns.

Daily Times, 15 March 2006

### **Assassination bid on President Musharraf: Death for PAF man upheld**

ISLAMABAD: Mushtaq Ahmed, a man convicted of plotting to assassinate President General Pervez Musharraf,

on Tuesday filed an instant appeal in the Supreme Court after the Lahore High Court upheld his death sentence. Ahmed, who was in the Pakistan Air Force, was to be sent to gallows in the wee hours of Wednesday (today) after the dismissal of his appeal by the LHC's Rawalpindi bench on Tuesday. He moved the Supreme Court by filing an instant appeal which would be heard by the chief justice of Pakistan today (Wednesday). His execution has been stayed until the disposal of his appeal in the Supreme Court. staff report

Daily Times, 15 March 2006

### **Jalalabad bus to run today**

PESHAWAR: The first-ever passenger bus between Afghanistan and Pakistan is set to run today from Jalalabad to Peshawar. Nicknamed the '303 bus service' by officials from both sides, the service will only transport government officials on its maiden run. The Afghanistan Consul General in Peshawar Abdul Khaliq Farahi told Daily Times that the bus from Afghanistan will leave Jalalabad for Peshawar today, and a Pakistani bus will make the opposite journey on March 17. "The bus service is another step in building trust and developing the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Both are important Muslim nations of the region," he said. Farahi said that 17 senior Afghan officials of Jalalabad's transport section will be part of the first trip

Daily Times, 15 March 2006

### **Musharraf to inaugurate Basha-Diamer Dam tomorrow**

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf will inaugurate the Basha-Diamer Dam tomorrow (Thursday). Sources in the President's House said that all arrangements have been finalised for the president's visit to inaugurate the dam. Musharraf is scheduled to address the gathering after laying the foundation stone of the dam. NWFP Governor Khalilur Rehman and the Peshawar corps commander will accompany the president.

Daily Times, 16 March 2006

### **Pak-Afghan bus arrives**

PESHAWAR: An ageing Afghan bus with President Hamid Karzai's portrait on its windscreen and the three-colour national flag was received with traditional Khattak dance at the Torkham border check-post on the first run of the bus service between Afghanistan and Pakistan on Wednesday. An agreement to begin a bus service was signed last month amid increasingly tense diplomatic relations between Kabul and Islamabad over allegations and counter-allegations of abetting terrorism. The bus, decorated with banners saying "Pak-Afghan Dosti bus Zindabad", carried 23 Afghans.

Dawn, 16 March 2006

### **India's claim on Gilgit, Baltistan rebutted (Qudssia Akhlaque)**

ISLAMABAD, March 15: Pakistan Foreign Office on Wednesday rebutted a statement made by the Spokesperson of Indian Ministry of External Affairs claiming that Gilgit-Baltistan "is an integral part of India". Rejecting the Indian claim the Foreign Office Spokesperson pointed to several resolutions of the UN Security Council and the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan, regarding the State of Jammu and Kashmir being a disputed territory. She underscored that its final status is yet to be determined. The UN Security Council since 1948 has adopted 18 resolutions on the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Nation, 16 March 2006

### **FATA to be purged of terrorists**

RAWALPINDI (APP) - President Musharraf on Wednesday expressed a firm commitment to establish writ of the government in tribal areas and vowed to realise rapid socio-economic development of the people. he President was speaking at a meeting he chaired to review general security situation with particular reference to the federally administered tribal areas. In his remarks, the President emphasised on the need for continuation of processes till the enunciated objective are achieved, the writ of the government established, the miscreants are brought to justice and foreign elements fomenting trouble are ousted.

Daily Times, 16 March 2006

### **Help fight Taliban sincerely, Afghan FM tells Pakistan**

KUALA LUMPUR: Afghanistan's foreign minister urged Pakistan on Wednesday to demonstrate consistency and sincerity in its policy of helping to defeat Taliban and Al Qaeda militants. Abdullah Abdullah, who is visiting Malaysia to attract investment to help rebuild his war-shattered country's economy, said that relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan in the area of security had to move forward in a more robust manner. "But what is needed is a policy of consistency and continuity and sincerity that will help us overcome this challenge," said Abdullah. The comments come days after a suicide car bomb attack aimed at a former Afghan president who blamed Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence agency for the attack.

Daily Times, 16 March 2006

### **Operation in tribal areas will continue (Shahzad Raza)**

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf on Monday reiterated his commitment to flushing out foreign militants from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. No one will be allowed to use Pakistani soil to carry out terrorist activities, the president said at a meeting that reviewed security and development programmes in FATA. Foreign and local "miscreants" are a major hurdle to the development of FATA, he said. The operation against "miscreants" will continue till its logical end, he said. He said local tribal elders should be encouraged to help the government flush out foreign terrorists. He said health and education facilities in the tribal areas must be improved and tribal people must be given jobs.

The News, 16 March 2006

#### **Pak credit rating improves: Ashfaq**

ISLAMABAD: The world famous credit company Moody's has said that Pakistan's credit rating is stable and B positive. The company expected that the national development percentage would be about seven per cent. This was stated by Adviser to Prime Minister Dr Ashfaq Ahmed while talking to PTV. He said that Mauris visited Pakistan in November. They saw our rating stable. And also watched Pakistan's economy. They reached the conclusion that Pakistan's economy has improved onward from November. So they declared it from stable to positive outlook.

Daily Times, 16 March 2006

#### **Has Bugti 'fled to Iran'**

LAHORE: Bugti tribe chief Nawab Akbar Bugti has fled to Iran, Aaj television channel reported on Wednesday. Bugti, who is also chief of the Jamhoori Watan Party, left for Zahidan in Iran one week ago through Kharan, the channel quoted sources close to Bugti as saying. Official sources did not confirm the report, but a secret investigation is underway to ascertain how Bugti managed to flee to Iran, the channel reported. Officially, authorities denied that the government had anything to do with Bugti's departure, but privately sources told Aaj that the government had indeed allowed Bugti to leave. The sources close to Bugti could not say if the tribal chief would remain in Iran or move on to another country.

The News, 16 March 2006

#### **Kashmir militants seek inclusion in peace talks**

HELD SRINAGAR: Hizb-ul-Mujahideen commander Misbah-ud-Din Ghazi said the freedom struggle in held Kashmir would not end until India and Pakistan included the militants in peace talks, a news agency reported on Wednesday. The comments by Ghazi are the first by a militant leader suggesting the freedom fighters would consider playing a role in the peace process that was launched in January 2004 to end decades of enmity over the region between India and Pakistan. According to Kashmir's Current News Service, Ghazi said: "The talks to resolve Kashmir cannot begin without (Hizb-ul-Mujahideen) being at the forefront. Until the militants are brought into the negotiations, the armed insurgency is the only way to take the Kashmir struggle to a logical conclusion."

Daily Times, 16 March 2006

#### **Punjab won't compromise on water distribution: Cheema** (Qamar Jabbar)

LAHORE: Punjab Irrigation Minister Amir Sultan Cheema on Wednesday assured the Punjab Assembly that the province would not compromise with other provinces over the distribution of irrigation water and that it (the Punjab) would get its share of water at all cost. Replying to a point of order raised by the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal's (MMA) Chaudhry Asghar Ali Gujjar over the shortage of water and probable reduction in Punjab's share, Cheema said that because of dry weather the water level in Mangla and Tarbela Dams had decreased to a dead level, but this did not mean that there would be a water shortage in the Punjab.

The News, 16 March 2006

#### **Sherpao urges HR bodies to visit Balochistan** (Fasihur Rehman Khan)

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao on Wednesday urged the human rights activists and organisations to visit Balochistan and see how the miscreants were killing innocent civilians. "I strongly refute and contest the false claims by some people that FC or security agencies have laid any landmines in any area of Balochistan. This is the work of miscreants," the interior minister told the Senate which started its proceedings two hours late as saner elements from the treasury and opposition benches finally defused Chairman Mohammadmian Soomro-Safdar Abbasi row through "no looser -- no winner" tried and tested formula.

Daily Times, 16 March 2006

#### **Chinese firm withdraws from Thar power project** (Fida Hussain)

ISLAMABAD: The government suffered a serious setback over the development of Thar coal reserves as the Chinese company contracted with coal-powered electricity generation has backed out due to a row over power tariff between the company and Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), the Daily Times has learnt. "Shenhua, the Chinese company, has backed out of the project," said a senior government official. "This will deprive us of the facility of generating 600 megawatts of electricity through coal-fired power plants," the official

said.

Daily Times, 17 March 2006

### **H5N1 bird flu strain likely in Pakistan**

KARACHI: Pakistan authorities said Thursday there was a high probability that an outbreak of bird flu detected in chickens last month was the deadly H5N1 strain. Fresh samples of infected chickens have been sent to British laboratory to test the presence of bird flu. "There is an 80 percent probability of H5N1 presence in the country after confirmation of H5 strain both at home and from the UK laboratory," Food Agriculture and Livestock ministry spokesman Dr Mohammad Afzal said. "We are not confirming it until laboratory tests come out," he said. The Pakistan government said it had ordered protective measures appropriate for the H5N1 virus that has killed nearly 100 people in Asia and Turkey since 2003.

Dawn, 17 March 2006

### **\$37-40bn FDI in energy sector sought** (Khaleeq Kiani)

ISLAMABAD, March 16: Pakistan is trying to attract \$37-40 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) in the energy sector to offset looming energy shortages as a result of 10 per cent annual increase in energy needs. Informed sources told Dawn on Thursday that the government had initiated a soft campaign to attract direct investment for seven energy projects. These projects are estimated to be completed in five to seven years. This will be in addition to the ongoing efforts to attract investments in the oil and gas exploration sector and development and privatisation of energy sector units, including oil and gas and power generation and distribution.

The News, 17 March 2006

### **WB terms Pak economic situation positive**

ISLAMABAD: A high level World Bank Mission headed by its Vice-President, Praful C Patel, held a meeting here on Thursday with Pakistan officials lead by Dr Salman Shah, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Economic Affairs. Ministers of State for Finance Omar Ayub Khan and Hina Rabbani Khar, Secretary Finance, Tanvir Ali Agha and Chairman CBR M Abdullah Yousaf also attended the meeting. Patel said the bank's assessment about Pakistan's economic situation is very positive and the foundation is robust. Despite variable factors including earthquake, the economic base is solid and the private entrepreneurship is flourishing.

Daily Times, 17 March 2006

### **IPI talks end with no deal on pipeline**

TEHRAN: Talks between Pakistan, Iran and India on building a new gas pipeline to Southeast Asia ended on Thursday without any agreement and a new round of negotiations is scheduled for late April in Pakistan. "Iran made a proposal on the gas price that we must examine," India's Petroleum Secretary MS Srinivasan told reporters in his televised remarks. Iran's state news agency confirmed Tehran had proposed a price for gas, but India and Pakistan said they needed time for consultations. The next round of talks is scheduled for Islamabad on April 30.

The News, 17 March 2006

### **33 Pakistanis languishing in Amritsar jail**

MULTAN: About 33 Pakistanis are languishing in an Amritsar jail in India despite having completed their sentences, one of the prisoners said in his letter to his brother. Nazir Ahmed of Khanewal said his brother, Abdul Rasheed, stated in the letter that he and 32 other Pakistanis were languishing in the Amritsar prison. They have informed the Pakistani High Commission in Delhi through jail authorities of their ordeal, but to no avail. Rasheed said they were produced before the Pakistani High Commission after the completion of their sentences and their papers were also handed over to the high commissioner.

Daily Times, 17 March 2006

### **China to invest more in Pakistan**

ISLAMABAD: The Chinese government will continue encouraging its public and private sectors to take part in projects in Pakistan, said Mrs Liu Yingjun, Deputy Director-General in the ministry of commerce of China. She is now visiting Pakistan with a six-member delegation., She met Board of Investment Secretary Jahangir Bashir on Thursday. According to a statement, Bashir briefed the delegation about the economic and investment policies of the government. He said Pakistan provides the most friendly environment to foreign investors, which is evident from the fact that over 600 multinational companies are operating in Pakistan and not a single company, which came here, has gone back.

The News, 18 March 2006

### **Trial bus arrives in Jalalabad**

PESHAWAR: The first trial bus Friday arrived in Jalalabad from Peshawar carrying 52 passengers including government officials. The bus left Peshawar city at 10:00am with a team of government officials led by director

transport NWFP, Sajid Khan, besides passengers and journalists. After leaving the provincial capital of Frontier, the bus was seen off at Pak-Afghan border at Torkhum. The bus and its Pakistani passengers were scheduled to return in the evening the same day. Earlier a bus from Jalalabad crossed Torkhum on Wednesday with Afghan passengers and officials. The regular bus service between the two destinations would start from April 15. Daily six vehicles would travel between Peshawar and Jalalabad and the service would later be extended to Kabul as well. The bus service between the two neighbouring countries was suspended 27 years ago. Agencies Add: Dual immigration documents were arranged for drivers and other staff of the bus service.

The Nation, 18 March 2006

#### **Pakistan to ask India to rein in its Afghan consulates (SHAIQ HUSSAIN)**

ISLAMABAD Pakistan will formally ask India to restrain its consulates in Afghanistan from interfering in restive tribal belt of Waziristan which it believes have been supplying militants with caches of arms besides extending financial assistance. 'All the required information about the involvement of India in fomenting unrest in the North and South Waziristan has been collected and now it will be formally tabled before India,' said an official here on Friday while requesting anonymity. He said that Pakistan's concern over the issue had already been conveyed to the Afghan government with a strong protest. Waziristan is in the grip of violence and especially the Northern region has recently witnessed fierce clashes between the security forces and the militants popularly known as local Taliban supported by some foreign miscreants.

The News, 18 March 2006

#### **Indo-US N-deal to upset balance of power: Musharraf**

BAHAWALPUR: President Pervez Musharraf says Indo-US nuclear deal is disturbing for Pakistan as it would upset the balance of power in the region. Addressing Army Jawans at Darbar Mahal here on Friday, the president said Pakistan is fulfilling its defence needs with Chinese cooperation. He said the country's nuclear arsenals are in safe hands and there is no need to worry about it. About general elections, Musharraf said the polls would be held in time and urged the public to reject conservatives and elect moderate politicians in the elections to highlight Pakistan's version of enlightened moderation. The president pointed out that Pakistan Army was playing a positive role in promoting democracy in the country. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri said that the civilian nuclear energy deal between its arch rival India and the United States would wreck international agreements to stop the spread of nuclear weapons.

Dawn, 18 March 2006

#### **Military operations opposed**

ISLAMABAD, March 17: Members of the Senate on Friday severely criticised the continuing military operations in Balochistan and tribal areas and called for promoting dialogue and jirgas to resolve the problems and foil the designs of foreign forces aimed at destabilising the country. The house suspended the question hour and started a debate on the situation in Waziristan and Balochistan on a motion moved by Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal's Maulana Gul Nasib Khan and Jamhoori Watan Party's Shahid Hassan Bugti. The debate will continue on Monday. Earlier, the issues of delays in the start of house proceedings, need to announce a panel of chairmen for the year and addressing the situation in Hangu were raised by Chaudhry Anwar Bhinder, Prof Khurshid and Abbas Kumaili through points of order. Chairman Mohammedman Soomro agreed that a fresh panel of chairmen ought to be announced and promised to look into the matter.

Dawn, 18 March 2006

#### **Tribal areas to be developed: PM**

ISLAMABAD, March 17: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said on Friday that the government was committed to socio-economic development of tribal areas and had been increasing its share in uplift funds to improve facilities of health, education, roads, etc., in the region. This he said while presiding over a meeting that discussed plans of the ministry of states and frontier regions. He said people of tribal areas had rendered several sacrifices for the security and stability of the country and they deserved commendation from the nation. He said the writ of the government would be established in tribal areas at all costs and anyone trying to jeopardise peace would be dealt with an iron hand. Repatriation of over two million Afghan refugees came under review and it was noted that an improved situation in Afghanistan would help these refugees return home gradually.

The News, 18 March 2006

#### **Cabinet reshuffle in two weeks: PM (Khalid Mustafa)**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Friday announced Rs 5 billion Khushhal Pakistan Fund for grassroots level projects to improve quality and standard of life of the low income groups. Addressing a press conference at the Prime Minister House, Shaukat Aziz said the programme was designed to transfer the benefits of growth to the people at Tehsil and district levels by making interventions all over the country to improve the standard of life of the people and strengthen rural productivity and income generation. The Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK will conduct a survey of the entire country at the district and Tehsil levels to prepare a standard profile of each district. After analysing the activities of the related organisations, gaps

will be identified to decide upon exact areas of intervention, which have the potential to make immediate and maximum impact on the basis of the least developed areas getting maximum funds.

Daily Times, 20 March 2006

**Pakistan not serious about Kashmir solution: Narayanan, India ready to talk to militants** (Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: India said on Sunday that it was considering entering into dialogue with militant commanders, including United Jihad Council Chairman Syed Salahuddin, to resolve the Kashmir issue. National Security Advisor MK Narayanan was speaking during an interview with a private Indian television channel. He explained the move by saying that Pakistan had not shown itself to be serious about finding a solution to Kashmir and that New Delhi found Islamabad's proposals "confusing". "Pakistani suggestions will not lead us forward." Narayanan said that rendering the Line of Control a permanent border was feasible provided there was political will. He said a "give and take" principle could be invoked if Pakistan was serious about resolving the issue of the disputed territory.

Daily Times, 20 March 2006

**7 die in DI Khan blast** (Javed Afridi)

PESHAWAR: Two bomb blasts killed seven people and injured five others at Kotli Imam, Dera Ismail Khan, on Sunday. An explosion, suspected to be a remote-controlled bomb, targeted a police van patrolling the area. Six of the eight occupants and a passerby died instantly. The injured were taken to District Headquarters Teaching Hospital, DI Khan, and are in critical condition. Another blast in the same area four hours later caused no damage. Authorities blamed the explosions on militants reacting against the ongoing army operation in North and South Waziristan. NWFP Governor Khalilur Rehman condemned the blasts calling them "inhuman acts". The government will not be browbeaten through such cowardly acts and will continue trying to rid society of terrorism and extremism, an official release quoted him as saying.

The Frontier Post, 20 March 2006

**Ulema-o-Mashaikh will play role to solve issues of Balochistan, Waziristan**

QUETTA: Ulema-o-Mashaikh Pakistan Muslim League will play an important role to redress the current issues of Balochistan and Waziristan, said Pir of Zakori Dr Khalid Raza at a pres conference here on Sunday. He said Balochistan's problem could only be solved if sincere and positive dialogues are held between government and the concerned people. He said if Nawab Akbar Bugti sincerely acts upon the recommendation of the parliamentary committee then peace will prevail in Balochistan. He said Balochistan has a great significance for Pakistan while Baloch people sacrificed their lives for freedom. He said Balochistan is biggest province of Pakistan and it is facing big problems in the field of education, health and others. He said people also lack in basic facilities that causing great hardships for them to lead a peaceful and better life. Pir Zakori said it's the prime duty and responsibility of the government to provide al basic and eminent facilities to the people at their doorsteps.

Daily Times, 20 March 2006

**Afghan FM says Osama, Zawahri and Mulla Omar all in Pakistan** (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: Afghan Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah claimed here on Sunday that Osama Bin Laden, Ayman Zawahiri and Mulla Omar are all together and in Pakistan, where other Al Qaeda figures have been found and apprehended. Asked by CNN where Osama Bin Laden is, Abdullah replied that according to his country's intelligence, the Al Qaeda leader is "outside Afghanistan and he might be in the same place where other members of Al Qaeda have been arrested." He added that Ayman Zawahiri was also in the same place where Bin Laden was. Asked pointblank if he was in Pakistan, the foreign minister replied that it was "more likely." To the question where Mulla Omar was, he replied that all these "friends" should be found together.

Daily Times, 20 March 2006

**3 Punjabi picnickers killed in Balochistan**

QUETTA: Unidentified men on Sunday fired upon three men picnicking in Balochistan's Pir Ghaib area. Two men were killed and one has been critically injured. Government spokesman Raziq Bugti said that the assailants had interrogated the men before shooting them. The militants ascertained whether they were Punjabis and then shot them, he said. Innocent people should not be targeted by anyone having a grudge against the government, he added. "All circles should condemn the attack." Also, unidentified men attacked a Frontier Corps checkpoint in Karmo Wadh, near Sibi. No casualty was reported. FC personnel retaliated and are searching for the men, said sources. Bugti said that he had no information about the incident.

The News, 20 March 2006

**Exodus from tribal areas puts criminals in command** (Ikram Hoti)

ISLAMABAD: The exodus from the violence-stricken Wana and Miranshah areas has led to a surge in criminal activities both in the adjoining tribal areas and in settled areas, particularly the comparatively peaceful Malakand Agency where criminals have received a shot in the arm in the shape of outlaws from Taliban ranks arriving in the hundreds. Their criminal activities are gaining momentum, with a number of kidnappings having happened over

the past fortnight, the most prominent among them the abduction of Pervaiz Khattak, brother of Tariq Hameed Khattak, former ANP MPA from Nowsehra.

Daily Times, 20 March 2006

#### **India, Pakistan trade crosses \$1 billion mark**

NEW DELHI: Bilateral trade between Pakistan and India almost doubled to cross the one billion dollar mark this year, an industry body said on Sunday. The 400 million dollar increase in the year ending March 2006 was attributed to the launch of a South Asian Free Trade Area Agreement (SAFTA) and the opening of rail and road links last year, the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry said in a statement. "The establishment of relations along with SAFTA has brought changes in customs tariffs and reduced trade-related barriers, leading to restoration of direct trade linkages and reducing the transaction costs," said the statement quoted by the Press Trust of India news agency. Following the January 2004 Indo-Pak peace talks, Pakistan scrapped import duties on 13 commodities from India, including garlic, onions, potatoes, tomatoes and livestock, that were scarce in its local markets.

Daily Times, 21 March 2006

#### **FO asks India to be serious about peace**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday asked India to 'engage seriously' in the composite dialogue process and put forward proposals which could lead to an amicable resolution of the Kashmir dispute. Pakistan is making an earnest effort to find a solution to the Kashmir issue, which is at the heart of the bad blood between the two countries, and for this purpose, Islamabad has floated numerous proposals including self-rule, demilitarisation and joint administration, Foreign Office spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said at a weekly press briefing. She said many Kashmiri leaders supported the proposals Pakistan made. She hoped that India would put forward its own proposals. However, Kashmiris will not accept any solution based on the status quo, she said.

Daily Times, 21 March 2006

#### **Afghan interference to blame for Waziristan violence: ANP**

ISLAMABAD: Afghan interference in North and South Waziristan is to blame for the deteriorating law and order situation in the tribal region, Asfandiyar Wali, parliamentary leader of the Awami National Party, said in a debate on the Balochistan and Waziristan issues in the Senate on Monday. Supporters of Gulbadin Hekmatyar have been moving around freely in Bajaur Agency for the last year and a half, Wali said. "The spill-over from North Waziristan is visible in Tank and Dera Ismail Khan districts of the NWFP," he added.

Daily Times, 21 March 2006

#### **Radio tower blown up in Wana**

WANA: Suspected militants on Monday blew up the transmission tower of Radio Pakistan in South Waziristan, officials said. Humayun Khan, the senior producer, told Daily Times a bomb went off at 1:10am on Monday, destroying the tower and halting the service. The radio station was set up last year to broadcast six hours of programmes in Pushto everyday. Officials hope the service will be restored in three to four days.

Daily Times, 21 March 2006

#### **Elections may be postponed for a year, says Shujaat**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain has said the next general elections may be delayed owing to the situation in Waziristan and Balochistan. Talking to a foreign radio, he said the government wanted to hold elections in 2007 but they may be delayed due to worsening law and order situation in Waziristan and Balochistan.

Daily Times, 21 March 2006

#### **Pakistan needs to target Taliban, says Abdullah**

WASHINGTON: Pakistan needs to do more to combat Taliban elements on its territory, said Afghan Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah here Monday. Pakistan's efforts against Al Qaeda have been much appreciated but it needs to treat the Taliban the same way, Abdullah said, during a talk at the conservative Heritage Foundation think tank here. Extremist elements in northwest Pakistan are recruiting, training and sending groups of Taliban to Afghanistan, he said. "We don't make a distinction between foreign Al Qaeda, or Taliban who are involved in terrorist action. That is what is expected so we try to convince (Pakistan) that this is in their best interest," he added.

The Statesman, 21 March 2006

#### **NWFP Assembly wants end to mly operation in FATA (Abid Jan Razarwal)**

PESHAWAR: NWFP Assembly Monday passed a resolution by a majority vote asking the federal government to immediately stop military operation in Waziristan. The resolution, moved by ANP parliamentary leader of Bashir Ahmad Bilour, was supported by MMA, PML(N), PPP and other legislators while the MPAs of PLQ(Q) and PPP

(Sherpao) voted against the resolution. Earlier, in an adjournment motion moved by Abdul Akbar Khan, parliamentary leader of PPP, heated debate was witnessed in the House about military operation in FATA and law and order situation in the country.

Daily Times, 22 March 2006

**Pak-US trade will grow: Bush**

WASHINGTON: US President George W Bush has said the US is "trying to negotiate" an investment treaty with Pakistan, "with the hopes of being able to eventually develop more trade with Pakistan". He said that he believed that trade helps nations develop stability, and that "prosperity is achieved through trade". In a question-and-answer session following his address to the Cleveland Club, Ohio, Bush said it was "very important" for the US "to stay engaged with Pakistan and encourage them". "It's a positive development for America to be a friend of Pakistan, and it's a positive development for Pakistan for America to be a friend of India. It's an important accomplishment in order to help keep the peace," Bush said, referring to his recent visit to Pakistan, Afghanistan and India.

Daily Times, 22 March 2006

**Musharraf first to know about US surveillance plans** (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: Long before the American media or public knew about the secret, warrant-less surveillance programme initiated by President George Bush as part of his anti-terrorism measures, President Pervez Musharraf was told about it, and by Bush himself. A little-noticed passage in Bob Woodward's book Bush at War, unearthed by the Washington Post on Tuesday recounts a meeting between Bush and Musharraf at the Waldorf Towers hotel in New York in November 2001. Bush started by talking about plans for a quick victory in Afghanistan but then turned to another topic, according to Woodward (page 303). He writes, "He (Bush) had become fascinated with the ability of the National Security Agency to intercept phone calls and other communications worldwide.

The News, 22 March 2006

**Tripartite commission to hear Pak-Afghan grievances next month** (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Afghanistan will hear grievances against each other in a tripartite commission meeting to be held in Rawalpindi in the middle of the next month. Pakistan, the US and Afghanistan will discuss in the meeting the difficulties they are facing in the execution of their tasks. Well-placed sources have revealed to The News that the Afghan foreign minister's interview aired by an American TV channel, in which he talked about the alleged presence of Taliban/al-Qaeda training camps on Pakistan's soil, has been ignored. Though both countries agreed through the courtesy of a third country to calm the situation and avoid talking through media, Abdullah Abdullah, who is risking his job in the wake of a reshuffle of the Afghan cabinet, has defied the understanding and spoke for the sake of the strong New Delhi lobby support, proving assertive in Kabul these days.

Daily Times, 22 March 2006

**Taliban control Waziristan**

LAHORE: Pakistani Taliban have taken control of most of North and South Waziristan, enforcing strict social edicts such as a ban on the sale of music and films and shaving of beards in the tribal agencies, the Guardian reports. Militants collect taxes from passing vehicles at new checkpoints, and last week an Islamic court was established in Wana, the headquarters of South Waziristan, to replace the traditional jirga, says the British newspaper. The military deployed 70,000 troops to Waziristan two years ago to rein in the militants. But the campaign is faltering. An army assault against an alleged Al Qaeda training camp outside Miranshah on March 1 left more than 100 dead. Since declaring a curfew in Miranshah, government troops have regained control. But some people are worried. "The so-called war on terror is going badly," said one diplomat. Analysts say the Pakistani Taliban is a loose alliance of tribal militia operating under radical clerics. Many are angered by heavy-handed attacks against suspected Al Qaeda hideouts, which are thought to have killed hundreds of civilians over the last two years

Daily Times, 22 March 2006

**India and Pakistan consider SAARC police** (Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: Top investigation officials of India and Pakistan began two-day's of technical level talks here on Tuesday for the first time in 17 years. A four-member Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) team, led by its Director General Tariq Pervez, held talks with Indian counterparts in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). CBI's Director Vijay Shankar led the Indian delegation. A statement issued by CBI headquarters said the deliberations focused on institutionalising cooperation in tackling human trafficking and counterfeit currency. Both sides also discussed the possibility of appointment of nodal officers in both countries for quick exchange of information on criminal matters.

Daily Times, 22 March 2006

### **Pakistan tests cruise missile**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday conducted the second test of its cruise missile Hatf-VII (Babur). "All phases of the planned trajectory were extremely successful and the missile impacted with pinpoint accuracy," Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement. The Babur cruise missile, which has been indigenously developed, was tested for the first time in August 2005. The missile, which was tested in the ground-launch version on Tuesday, will also be capable of being placed in submarines and on surface ships. The low-flying and terrain-hugging Babur missile has near stealth capabilities, high manoeuvrability, pinpoint accuracy and radar avoidance features, said the ISPR statement. It has a range of 500 kilometres and can carry all types of warheads.

Daily Times, 22 March 2006

### **US assistance to quake-affected areas is 'just beginning'**

ISLAMABAD: The United States on Tuesday said that its assistance to the quake-hit areas was "just beginning" and that it was committed to the long-term reconstruction and rebuilding efforts. Addressing a joint press conference the US Chairman of the joint Chiefs of Staff General Peter Pace, Commander of the Disaster Assistance Centre Rear Admiral Michael LeFever, Federal Relief Commissioner General Farooq Ahmed Khan and US Ambassador to Pakistan Ryan C Crocker, described their cooperation as "incredible and a successful partnership" to help the people in need. "We have committed \$200 million over several years to help rebuild the quake hit areas and as President Musharraf says, to build it better," Crocker told reporters gathered at the helipad of the Cabinet's Emergency Relief Cell.

Daily Times, 23 March 2006

### **Musharraf open to talks on Waziristan and Balochistan**

RAWALPINDI: The government has kept open the door to negotiations for a political solution to the troubles in Balochistan and Waziristan, but it will not allow "miscreants" to blackmail the state, President Gen Pervez Musharraf said in a meeting with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Wednesday. The government will not allow the "miscreants" in Balochistan and the tribal areas to challenge the writ of the government and attack security forces, the president said in the meeting at Army House. However, he added that talks were still possible, "but we will not let them blackmail us". He praised the government effort to develop the tribal belt, saying all available resources should be used for this purpose. Gen Musharraf condemned Kabul's accusations that Pakistan is sheltering Taliban militants who are responsible for violence in Afghanistan. Pakistan has deployed 80,000 troops on the border with Afghanistan to stop the infiltration of terrorists, so the Afghan accusations were particularly hurtful.

Daily Times, 23 March 2006

### **CII wants all borders sealed, FATA under state control (Mohammad Imran)**

ISLAMABAD: The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) has made 22 recommendations to the government on how to end terrorism in the country, along with the recommendation that incidents of terrorism should not be dubbed as jihad. These proposals were compiled by the CII in its recent report, based on the findings and recommendations of a dialogue titled 'Islam and Terrorism' which was attended by a number of scholars and experts. The CII recommended that all camps training militants or terrorists should be shut down immediately. It says that an overall review of intelligence organisations including the Federal Investigation Agency, the Intelligence Bureau, Inter-Services Intelligence and Military Intelligence should be conducted and these organisations should be strengthened to eliminate the political-backing of terrorists. It recommended that all Muslim countries adopt a joint strategy to combat terrorism and a special committee of experts on terrorism be formed at the Organisation of the Islamic Conference level.

Daily Times, 23 March 2006

### **Durrani in, Karamat out (Khalid Hasan)**

WASHINGTON: Jehangir Karamat, Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, is being replaced by retired general of the Pakistan Army Mahmood Durrani. The formal announcement from the Foreign Office is expected to be made when the agreement 'the request to the host government to accept the nominated person as ambassador and plenipotentiary' which has already been sent to the US government is approved and received back in Islamabad. It is not clear why Ambassador Karamat, who took up his post on a two-year contract, which is normal, around a year and a half ago is returning home.

Daily Times, 23 March 2006

### **Tensions running high in Hangu**

HANGU: Shops and business centres remained closed here and tensions ran high some 40 days after the bombing of an Ashura procession that killed 45 people. Shias and Sunnis have not reached a peace agreement and a 12-member government committee was talking with both sects towards this end, official sources told Daily Times on Wednesday. They said there was little hope that normalcy would return to the city, devastated by post-bombing violence. Inspector General Police (NWFP) Riffat Pasha visited the area to appraise the security situation. The law and order situation was very tense, he added.

Daily Times, 23 March 2006

**Nankana-Amritsar bus to ply despite mismanagement** (Ali Waqar)

LAHORE: The first ever Amritsar-Nankana Sahib bus service between India and Pakistan is scheduled for tomorrow morning (March 24) despite Pakistani mismanagement of the bus terminal in Nankana, sources told Daily Times on Wednesday. The bus service has already been delayed thrice because the bus terminal in Nankana was not ready. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh would see off Indian commuters on March 24, while the bus from Nankana to Amritsar would ply on March 28, sources added.

Dawn, 23 March 2006

**Cleric killed, exchange blown up in S. Waziristan** (Dilawar Khan Wazir)

WANA, March 22: A pro-government cleric was killed by gunmen in the Laddah subdivision of the South Waziristan Agency on Wednesday and a telephone exchange was blown up in the Shakai area. Witnesses told Dawn that the car of the pro-government cleric, Maulana Sibghatullah, was ambushed at Laddah, about 70 km south of here. The attackers, who were masked, killed Maulana Sibghatullah and took away with them three other people who were in the car. It may be mentioned that the cleric had been associated with the Taliban in the past. However, during the unrest in the agency he dissociated himself from the group and entered into an agreement with the government.

Dawn, 23 March 2006

**Accord with India to jointly fight crime: Dealing with Interpol references** (Jawed Naqvi)

NEW DELHI, March 22: India and Pakistan agreed on Wednesday to jointly fight human trafficking, counterfeit currency trade and illegal immigration amid indications that the mandate for their criminal investigators, meeting after 17 years, could eventually cover organised crime. After two days of landmark talks between the heads of India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) a joint statement indicated that both sides were serious about expeditiously dealing with Interpol references.

The Nation, 23 March 2006

**Afghan forces kill 17 Pakistanis**

SPIN BOLDAK (AFP) - At least 21 suspected Taliban and two civilians were killed in violence blamed on militants in insurgency-hit southern Afghanistan, officials said Wednesday. Afghan troops killed 17 suspected Taliban insurgents who crossed the mountainous border from neighbouring Pakistan to Kandahar province on Tuesday night, a provincial governor said.

Daily Times, 24 March 2006

**Musharraf sends stern warning to terrorists** (Mohammed Rizwan)

LAHORE: President General Pervez Musharraf has warned terrorists and extremists in Pakistan that they will be eliminated. "I warn those foreign terrorists in Waziristan to leave otherwise we'll finish them off," he said in a speech to a large crowd at Minar-e-Pakistan on the occasion of Pakistan Day. "I also warn those religious extremists who burnt down The Mall on February 14 to refrain from such activities in future as destruction and arson will not be tolerated anymore." The president also appealed to the people of NWFP to support the operation against the terrorists. "If people stand by the Pakistan Army in Waziristan, I assure them that law and order will be restored in the area," he said. Gen Musharraf also took the opportunity to slam "the politicians sitting in London", referring to former prime ministers Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto.

The News, 24 March 2006

**Protest lodged with Kabul over killing of Pak civilians** (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan dipped further to an all-time low after Islamabad sent out a strong protest over the unwarranted and cold-blooded murder of 16 Pakistani civilians by Afghan forces on Tuesday, dubbing them as Taliban insurgents. Afghan border commander Abdur Razzaq Noorzai had claimed on Wednesday that his forces had killed 17 suspected Taliban insurgents after they had crossed the border from Pakistan on Tuesday night. Two Taliban commanders Shin Noorzai and Mulla Atta Jan were among those killed in the gun battle with soldiers in Shiro Obay, a village near Spin Boldak, he had said.

Daily Times, 24 March 2006

**Ministry wants army action in FATA cut** (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: The Interior Ministry has advised President Pervez Musharraf to deploy army troops against foreign militants hiding in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) only as a last resort and rely on paramilitary forces instead. A senior Interior Ministry official told Daily Times that during meetings with the president on FATA, the ministry opposed frequent army operations against militants in the tribal areas. The president was advised that the Frontier Constabulary and Levies should be made responsible for taking action against militants in Waziristan and other troubled tribal areas. The ministry called for continuing the dialogue process to find out a political solution to the conflict. It proposed that pro-government tribal elders be encouraged to gain support for

the government from tribal people.

Daily Times, 24 March 2006

**Only 22% of NWFP madrassas registered** (Akhtar Amin)

PESHAWAR: There are 4,680 Madrassas in NWFP out of which only 1,077 have registered. Of the rest, 3,031 have refused to register and 572 have not responded to the government, the NWFP government executive summary report said. The executive summary on NWFP madrassas by the School and Literacy Department stated that 22 percent of religious institutions are registered, 65 per cent are not registered and 12 percent have not even responded to government notices asking them to register. The province has 885 Madrassahs for female students as well. There are 183,140 full time enrolled students in these institutions, irrespective of their age group out of which 153,226 are boys and 29,914 girls, the report said.

Daily Times, 24 March 2006

**Nankana Sahib-Amritsar bus to make maiden voyage today**

LAHORE: The Nankana Sahib-Amritsar bus service, the fourth transport link between Pakistan and India, will become operational from today (Friday). The first bus, passing from India into Pakistan, will be inaugurated at Amritsar by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Pakistan's Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Ijaz-ul-Haq is scheduled to receive the first passengers at Wagha border. Also in attendance will be Punjab Tourism Minister Aslam Iqbal, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) representatives, Punjab government senior officials and the Lahore District Coordination Officer.

Dawn, 25 March 2006

**Positive move, needs bold steps: Islamabad: Kashmir is core issue** (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, March 24: Pakistan on Friday gave a measured response to Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's 'peace offering' with a pointed reminder that the Kashmir dispute had been the root-cause of strained relations between the two countries and it needed to be resolved. She termed the peace offer as 'positive' but called for bold steps by both countries leaders to resolve outstanding issues, including Kashmir. On the Indian premier's reference to 'ground realities' in his address at the flagging off the Nankana Sahib-Amritsar bus service earlier in the day, Foreign Office spokesperson Tasnim Aslam said it was a ground reality that the Line of Control (LoC) was part of the problem and not a solution to the Kashmir issue. She underlined that the status quo and an LoC-based solution were unacceptable to Pakistan as well as Kashmiris. "It is in view of the ground realities and the unrealised vast potential of the peoples of South Asia that Pakistan has been always emphasizing the need for building confidence and resolving problems, specially the Jammu and Kashmir dispute which has been at the heart of conflict, mistrust and hostility and which has bedevilled ties between the two countries for such a long time," the FO spokesperson said.

Dawn, 25 March 2006

**First bus from Amritsar arrives** (Mansoor Malik)

LAHORE, March 24: The first Amritsar-Nankana Sahib bus on Friday crossed over to the Pakistani side of the Wagah border carrying 20 officials and passengers each amidst drum beats marking the fourth road-link between Pakistan and India. The inaugural bus was seen off by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh from Amritsar. At the Wagah border, the bus was received by Federal Religious Affairs Minister Ijazul Haq along with Punjab Tourism Minister Mian Aslam Iqbal, Transport Minister Rana Shamshad, Lahore District Nazim Mian Amer Mahmood and other officials. The passengers were garlanded and showered with rose petals. A large number of schoolchildren stood on both sides of the road outside Wagah border limits to greet the Indian guests. They were carrying the national flags of Pakistan and India.

Daily Times 25 March 2006

**Military airdrops pamphlets linking militants to Hindus and Jews**

TANK: Pakistan's military airdropped pamphlets this week over towns in restive tribal regions near the Afghan border urging tribesmen to shun "foreign terrorists", saying they were part of a Hindu and Jewish plot. The pamphlets were dropped over Wana, the main town in South Waziristan, and Miranshah in North Waziristan as part of a campaign to win support among tribesmen who have shown sympathy for both Taliban and remnants of al Qaeda living among them. A Reuters reporter in Tank, a town close to the boundary with the semi-autonomous tribal agency of South Waziristan, obtained one of the pamphlets, bearing the sign-off "Well Wishers, Pakistan's Armed Forces".

The Statesman, 25 March 2006

**20 militants killed in NWA clash** (Javed Noor)

MIRAN SHAH: At least 20 alleged militants and a soldier were killed in a clash in North Waziristan Agency on Friday. The forces backed by helicopter gunships clashed with militants near the Afghan border after they attacked a security check post in Tut Naray village, about 35 kilometers west of Miran Shah. One soldier was

killed and five others injured in the attack. Security forces tracked down the alleged attackers and killed 20 alleged miscreants. ISPR spokesman Maj. Gen. Shaukat Sultan said no bodies were discovered and the reports were based on information obtained from various security sources in the region. He said the battle took place at about 3 a.m. and the militants later retreated, leaving behind weapons. He said the ground was stained with blood. Sultan would not give any other details and only said efforts were underway to determine who the attackers were. Agencies add: Political Agent Syed Zaheerul Islam also said that 20 miscreants were killed in the fighting, although he didn't offer any evidence to back up his claim.

The Statesman 25 March 2006

#### **No state within state will be allowed: PM**

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz Friday said issue of Balochistan won't be resolved through bullets nor the government would allow any state to form state within state. The prime minister, speaking at gold medals awarding ceremony to workers of Pakistan Movement here, said the government was struggling to settle Balochistan issue through dialogue. He said further peace in the province is reestablishing by dint of government's crackdown. "The ongoing action is aimed to establish peace in the area." The prime minister said: "Pakistan's defence capability will not be abated; however, Pakistan wants peace and it is only happens through power." Nuclear programme was key pillar of the country's defence, he said.

Daily Times, 26 March 2006

#### **India plans meeting of Azad, Sikandar (Iftikhar Gilani)**

NEW DELHI: The Indian establishment is working on arranging the first-ever bilateral meeting of the heads of government of Indian and Pakistani-controlled Kashmir. The move appears to be a follow-up of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's speech on Friday at the inauguration of the Amritsar-Nankana Sahib bus service. Singh said then that he envisaged a situation where the two parts of Kashmir work out cooperative, consultative mechanisms to maximise the gains of cooperation in solving problems of social and economic development of the region with the active encouragement of the governments of India and Pakistan. Kashmir analysts also point to Singh's suggestion that 'both sides should begin a dialogue with the people in their areas of control to improve quality of governances to give the people on both sides a greater chance of leading a life of dignity and self-respect'.

Daily Times, 26 March 2006

#### **Four Frontier MPAs resign**

PESHAWAR: Four members of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazl) resigned from the NWFP Assembly on Saturday on the directions of their party. Addressing a news conference in Peshawar, Qari Fayyazur Rehman, the provincial JUI-F president, said his party had expelled the four MPAs ? Yasmin Khalid, Rukhsana Raz, Dildar Ahmad and minority member Gor Saran Lal ? for violating the party discipline. He said the party took the action because the expelled members didn't vote for their party's candidates in the Senate election. He said another Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal provincial leader, Mufti Kifaitullah, was also suspended for three years on his ? irresponsible behaviour? in the Senate election. The NWFP Assembly speaker has accepted the resignations and issued a notification in this regard.

Daily Times, 26 March 2006

#### **57 suspected militants arrested in raid on Marri camp**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani Police Saturday arrested nearly 60 tribesmen suspected of involvement in attacks on security forces and government installations in Balochistan, police said. The police detained some 57 suspects including 24 arrested in a raid on a camp run by rebels from the Marri tribe near the provincial capital Quetta, city police officer Mujibur Rehman said. The 33 other men were picked up during raids at different neighbourhoods just outside Quetta, Rehman said. On Friday two people were killed when their motorbike struck a landmine, which authorities said was planted by insurgents near the town of Sui, 280 kilometres southeast of Quetta. Also on Friday rebels fired several rockets at security forces deployed in the town of Loti near Dera Bugti, without causing any casualties. afp

Daily Times, 26 March 2006

#### **4 FC men injured in Waziristan**

MIRANSHAH: Suspected militants ambushed vehicles carrying police officers in a remote northwestern region of Pakistan near the Afghan border on Saturday, injuring four of them, a security official said. The attack happened on a road between Mir Ali and Miran Shah in the North Waziristan tribal region, a day after the military said it had killed between 15 to 20 militants. The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said the injured officers had been transported to a hospital, where two of them were in critical condition.

Daily Times, 26 March 2006

#### **Tribesmen attack Afghan Consulate**

QUETTA: Up to 450 relatives of the 16 Pakistani tribesmen killed by Afghan security forces held a protest rally outside the Afghan Consulate in Quetta on Saturday, police said. Condemning the killings and demanding that those responsible be punished, the protestors threw stones at the Consulate and tore down and burned a picture of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, displayed at the gate of the building. The crowd chanted "Down with Karzai and Death to Afghanistan", before being baton-charged by police, according to witnesses. Local area police chief Zahid Afaq said that no one had been injured during the protest. Islamabad has already registered a complaint with Kabul over last Tuesday's killings.

The News, 26 March 2006

### **Real democracy introduced: Musharraf**

JHELUM: President Pervez Musharraf on Saturday said his government has introduced real democracy in the country as people have been empowered politically and economically and the country has been put on the path of high economic growth. "Democracy essentially means empowerment of people, progress of the country and freedom of expression - what else does democracy mean?" he said. He said the people of Pakistan have been politically and economically empowered at the grassroots level and the country was progressing in all spheres. "Women today enjoy unprecedented representation at all tiers of governance, the minorities have been politically strengthened and the electronic media is working vibrantly and enjoying complete freedom of expression - this is democracy," he said commenting on the statement of some politicians living abroad.

Daily Times, 27 March 2006

### **30,000 posts for Baloch, says Aziz**

QUETTA: The government has approved 30,000 new posts in various departments, including the police and Frontier Corps in Balochistan, to be filled over the next two years to boost employment in the province, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said on Sunday. "We will also try to provide jobs to Balochistan youth in various departments of the federal government, more than their fixed quota," he said at a press conference at the Chief Minister's Secretariat here. However, Aziz added that the public sector alone could not eradicate unemployment in the province. The private sector can make profitable investments in the mining, fisheries, agriculture, tourism, minerals, and livestock sectors in Balochistan and this would boost employment, he said.

Daily Times, 27 March 2006

### **Bombs set off near Jam Yousaf's home**

DERA BUGTI: Suspected tribesmen set off two bombs near the home of the chief minister of Balochistan on Sunday, but there were no casualties. The bombs shattered windows and damaged a perimeter wall at Chief Minister Jam Muhammad Yousaf's home in Lasbela, about 450 kilometres southeast of Quetta, local police official Mohammed Afzal said. Yousaf was not at home when the explosion occurred, Afzal said. Suspected tribal militants also attacked a mountaintop military post, triggering a gun battle that left two attackers and a soldier dead, officials said. Another attacker was killed when his motorcycle hit a landmine as he tried to escape after the shootout near Sui, Dera Bugti District Coordination Officer Abdul Samad Lasi said. Two soldiers were reported injured in the gunfight.

Daily Times, 27 March 2006

### **Afghanistan protests attack on consulate**

KABUL: Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry summoned the Pakistani ambassador on Sunday after its consulate was attacked during a protest over the killing of 16 men by Afghan security forces. The ministry 'strongly condemned' the Saturday attack on the Quetta consulate, spokesman Naveed Moez said. He said Pakistan was asked "to take all necessary measures to ensure the security of the embassy, the consulate and other missions of the government of Afghanistan and their personnel in Pakistan and prevent the occurrence of such attacks again". About 450 protestors hurled stones at the consulate, chanted slogans against Afghan President Hamid Karzai and tore a picture of him from the gate before being dispersed by police, witnesses said.

The News, 27 March 2006

### **Two miscreants, FC man killed in Dera Bugti firefight** (Muhammad Ejaz Khan)

QUETTA: Four persons, including two suspected miscreants and a soldier of Frontier Corps (FC), were killed in two different incidents in the Loti area of Dera Bugti on Sunday while two bombs exploded near the residence of the Balochistan chief minister in Lasbela. Two alleged assailants were killed in a gunfight with security forces in Loti while a motorcyclist was killed in a landmine blast in the same area. Security forces and some armed men traded fire on Sunday morning in Loti after the armed men attacked a military check-post erected to provide security to a caravan of the Rahija Bugti tribesmen who were returning to their hometown from parts of the Punjab. The gunbattle occurred hours before the caravan was to pass through the area.

The News, 27 March 2006

### **PM vows to establish writ of state**

QUETTA: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said on Sunday that the government would ensure the writ of the state all over the country, including Balochistan, at all costs and no compromise would be made on integrity and sovereignty of the country. The government believes in dialogue and strives to sort out all issues amicably, but it would not allow anybody to create a state within the state," the prime minister told a news conference at the Balochistan Chief Minister Secretariat. He categorically said the government would not allow anybody to impede the development process and create law and order situation in Balochistan. "Solution of all issues through consensus is the best option but an atmosphere of dialogue should be created so that talks could be held," he added. The prime minister was upbeat that the law and order problems would be overcome. The law-enforcement agencies, including the Frontier Corps and police, are playing an important role in maintaining law and order in the province, he said. "No government can tolerate killing of innocent civilians and attacks on vital national installations," he said, adding that steps were being taken to ensure the writ of the government. He warned that the elements creating law and order problems would be dealt with iron hand.

The Statesman, 28 March 2006

#### **Anti-terror drive in country's interest, says Musharraf**

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf has said that Islam is compatible with modernity as modernisation means access to good education, civic government, development, justice and democracy. He said Muslims do not have to become westernised in order to become modernised. In a recent interview with Beliefnet.com, the president emphasised that the Muslims can have modernisation. "We have our own culture; we have our own history. We are proud of that. We must be modern; we must have modernity, which means civic government, a good system of administration, justice, good education and democracy. "All these features are characteristic of modernisation, and that we can have as Muslims," he remarked. The president spelt out his views and vision on some of the key questions of the day in the interview with the widely-visited website. Pakistan, he stressed, is most important to him and said the counter-terror drive is in the country's interest. "I am a victim of assassination attempts, but I believe in what I am doing because I am doing it for Pakistan." Speaking about Pakistan's pivotal role in the Islamic renaissance he said the country is a leading member.

Dawn, 28 March 2006

#### **Musharraf asked to quit offices before polls**

RAWALPINDI, March 27: Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) president Qazi Hussain Ahmad on Monday called upon President General Pervez Musharraf to relinquish the offices of president and army chief before the 2007 election. Speaking at a convention of the MMA leadership of Punjab's northern districts at the Rawalpindi Press Club, he said an all-party conference had reached the conclusion that Gen Musharraf must leave both the offices. The MMA leader warned that the combined opposition would mobilise the masses and stage a sit-in in Islamabad if Gen Musharraf failed to quit both the offices. He reiterated the MMA's demands for an independent election commission, restoration of the 1973 Constitution in its original form and an interim consensus government before the election. He criticised President Musharraf over the sacrilegious cartoons issue. Speaking on the occasion, Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidri said the MMA would repeal the 17th amendment if it came to power.

Dawn, 28 March 2006

#### **Develop N-energy but other sources too: Nobel laureates (Jonaid Iqbal)**

ISLAMABAD, March 27: Nobel Laureate Charles Townes told a panel discussion on "science and society" here on Monday that Pakistan must concentrate on developing nuclear energy to meet its power needs beyond 2030. Prof Townes and two other Nobel laureates, Ivar Giaever and Gerardus't Hooft, have been invited by the government to interact with Pakistani students and scholars and the panel discussion was the last item on their first day's engagements. The question posed to the panel was how best Pakistan could be developed into a prosperous, industrialised and just society keeping in view our resource-constrained economy. Professors Giaever and Hooft agreed with Prof Townes' view about nuclear energy in general but stressed that Pakistan should also tap unconventional sources like solar and wind energy. Prof Giaever reminded that nuclear energy had generated political issues and generally people were scared of nuclear energy plants. But Prof Turner asserted that nuclear energy could be made safe. Nuclear physicist and peace activist Prof Pervez Hoodbhoy said Pakistan needed "to go into social questions also such as the distribution of wealth and power in its feudal society". Prof N.M. Butt presented the possibilities nano-technology offers. "May be its progress throws up correct remedies within the next 10 to 15 years," he said hopefully.

Dawn, 28 March 2006

#### **Editorial: More for Balochistan**

BALUCHISTAN should have received priority in economic development much earlier than it is getting now. That this was not done has cost the country dearly. The political fallout from the lack of development has often led to violence. The attention now being paid to Balochistan's economic development can give results provided both the government and those demanding more rights for the province show sincerity to the cause of the Baloch people... On Sunday, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz announced a new economic package providing for 30,000 jobs for the Baloch, besides more funding - Rs 2.9 billion for district nazims, a debt relief of Rs 2.5 billion, a grant of Rs 800

million, and an additional six billion rupees under the National Finance Award. At his press conference, the prime minister coupled his economic offer with a warning to 'saboteurs' that the government would not allow its writ to be challenged. His warning could not be more timely, for on the same day there were three acts of terrorism...The three incidents go to show the extent of violence in the province... Those resorting to violence and subversion ought to know that this will not promote Balochistan's cause. By such criminal acts they are losing the sympathy of the people in the other three provinces who genuinely believe that Balochistan so far has had a raw deal and that the government should make sincere efforts to ameliorate the lot of the Baloch people by meeting their just demands. While work on the 'mega' projects must proceed with speed, the government must continue to talk to all sections of the Baloch leadership... At the same time, the government should ensure the safety of those who have returned to their homes in the Sui area...

Daily Times, 28 March 2006

**Mufti and Pir's supporters fight it out: Five dead, 25 injured in Bara carnage** (Ghafar Ali)

PESHAWAR: Followers of Mufti Munir Shakir and Pir Saifur Rehman were involved in a gunfight in the Sur Dhand area of Bara in Khyber Agency on Monday, in which at least five people were killed and 25 injured. Sources told Daily Times that the gunfight was still underway till the filing of this report. Reports from Bara suggest that the group of Mufti's supporters asked Badshah Jee, an Afghan refugee and follower of the Pir, to vacate his house at Sur Dhand and hand over weapons to them. Badshah Jee, however, did not comply and the Mufti Group moved to occupy his house by force. Both the groups used heavy weapons against each other, which led to considerable bloodshed on both sides.

Daily Times, 28 March 2006

**Pakistan deports 69 Afghans arrested in North Waziristan**

MIRANSHAH: Sixty-nine Afghans detained in a crackdown against suspected militants in North Waziristan were freed on Monday and returned home, an official said. Authorities detained 150 Afghans in North Waziristan on suspicion of fighting alongside local militants in battles earlier this month against security forces in the region, a local government official said. Afghans had been ordered to return home or face punishment following the violence, which killed scores of militants and at least eight soldiers. On Monday, the 69 refugees among those arrested were released after they were cleared of involvement in the fighting by the government, the local government official said. They were driven by security forces in several pickup trucks to Ghulam Khan, a border crossing with Afghanistan and released inside Afghan territory, he said. "They were told not to return," the Afghan official said.

Daily Times, 28 March 2006

**Editorial: Islamabad's Balochistan policy is shaping up**

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz was in Quetta and announced the creation of 30,000 posts in various government departments, including the police and Frontier Corps to boost employment in Balochistan...Suddenly, Islamabad realises that if Balochistan is to underpin its grand designs of a new port and a trade route to West and Central Asia, it cannot go on treating the province in the cavalier manner it has been doing until now. But this also means bringing it into the ambit of the federation, a difficult proposition after the decades of neglect... However, after some initial bumbling, Islamabad seems to have found its rhythm and is now embarked on a policy that seeks to deal with law and order on the one hand and the genuine grievances of the province on the other. The salient features of this policy can be put down as follows: ensure through the presence of paramilitary troops and the army that miscreants are put down; if the sardars continue to refuse to negotiate, disengage from them and put the squeeze; bring back to the province those who were forced to leave because they rubbed the sardars the wrong way; and create employment opportunities for the people of Balochistan and give them a sense of participation in governance... There is vast scope for the private sector to come in and invest in mining, fisheries, agriculture, tourism, minerals, and livestock in Balochistan... But this also means that non-Baloch will settle in Balochistan just like any Pakistani can settle anywhere in Pakistan... The argument that there should be a dialogue under a democratic dispensation ignores the fact that democratic governments either left Balochistan alone or when they tried to tackle the situation - Mr Bhutto and Ms Bhutto in her second tenure- they found that the use of force was an important ingredient of any progress. We can debate the merits or otherwise of a policy but one thing must be clear: Balochistan is not a problem that can be brushed under the carpet any longer.

The Statesman, 28 March 2006

**US Consulate closed after threats**

PESHAWAR: The US Consulate in Peshawar was closed on Monday for an indefinite period. "The decision to close the consulate was taken after threats and the foreign staffers have been moved to an undisclosed place," a staffer of the consulate said. A spokesman for the US embassy also confirmed the closure of the consulate. The spokesman said that the decision to close the consulate was taken after threats. Meanwhile, Foreign Office Spokesperson Tasneem Aslam told a television channel he was unaware of the development. "I don't have any information in this regard," she said. She, however, said, "If this had happened, they (US Consulate) must have informed our protocol office before taking the decision." Anti-US sentiments were running high after US attack in

Bajaur Agency and North Waziristan Agency. Anti-US demonstration were also being held in province after publication of blasphemous caricatures.

The Nation, 28 March 2006

### **Editorial: Preparing for elections**

Yesterday's Nation carried three different news-items underlining the need for holding free and fair general elections in the country in 2007. The Bush administration has asked the National Democratic Institute of International Affairs, a US agency that monitors elections worldwide, to consult Pakistan's opposition parties to know their concerns about the matter and convey them to the government to help the electoral process to be above board. And according to reports, the NDI has already started making contacts with the PPP and plans to do extensive monitoring when the polls are held. Another story is about Mian Nawaz Sharif's address at his party's central working committee meeting in London, in which he expressed his determination to get back to Pakistan; for the "time had come to get rid of dictatorship." ... Although the general elections are more than a year away, the contesting political parties, including the government party, have started making strategies with a view to winning seats. Therefore, it is about time a framework of the electoral process acceptable to both the opposition and government was laid down so that there is little scope to challenge its fairness after the results are announced.... Unfair polls deny the people their rightful choice, causing resentment and possibly disturbance of peaceful conditions. ... We hope the authorities here would ensure the conduct of fair polls.

Daily Times, 29 March 2006

### **President, PM resolve to control inflation**

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz resolved to take action to control the rising prices of sugar and flour at a meeting on Tuesday, Online reports. The president and prime minister also discussed economic development, poverty alleviation and a reshuffle in the federal cabinet at the meeting in Army House, Rawalpindi. Aziz told Musharraf that a special committee had been set up to recommend price control strategies to the provincial and district governments. They said that controlling inflation was essential to the process of the fruits of economic prosperity reaching the common man. The president said the government was taking pragmatic measures to curb inflation and ensure the supply of essential commodities like sugar. He said that stern action would be taken against hoarders and adulterators "who are playing with both the pockets and lives of the poor". The two agreed that the return of evicted tribesmen to Dera Bugti and Sui was a significant event in the effort to restore normalcy to the area. They resolved to provide the people of Balochistan plenty of opportunities to improve their standard of living at the same time as defeating those who oppose the development of the province.

Daily Times, 29 March 2006

### **19 more die in Bara clashes**

BARA: Another 19 people were killed in Khyber Agency on Tuesday morning in clashes between supporters of rival clerics, security officials said. The fighting erupted on Monday after supporters of Mufti Shakir tried to knock down a house which belonged to a supporter of his rival Afghan cleric Pir Saifullah Rehman. Five people were killed in those clashes, most of them supporters of Shakir, whose group calls themselves Lashkar-e-Islamia. Local sources here said Shakir's supporters again attacked the house of the Rehman supporter, Badshah Gul, at around 4:45am on Tuesday, killing 19 people, including 16 Afghans. Gul's family was forced out of the house one by one and shot dead, and the house was then burnt down, the sources said. "Most of the bodies were mutilated and beyond recognition," said Amir Muhammad, a resident of Bara. FATA security chief Sikandar Qayyum said that the situation in Bara was still tense. A meeting chaired by NWFP Governor Khalilur Rehman decided to call in security forces to restore order, Qayyum told a press conference. On Monday, Shakir's supporters also took several women and children hostage, an intelligence official told Reuters.

Daily Times, 29 March 2006

### **EDITORIAL: Taliban, Pakistan and modernity**

President Pervez Musharraf has stated that Islam is compatible with modernity as modernisation means access to good education, civic government, development, justice and democracy, and not mere Westernisation of society. Just as his words were being digested by the nation, the "local Taliban" in South Waziristan executed a 25-year-old man under their idea of "Islamic" law or sharia. The "Taliban" had announced their government under the sharia earlier this month although the government has been in denial... Other more ironic things happened the same day President Musharraf delivered himself of the wisdom about Islam and modernity. A Muslim convert to Christianity in Afghanistan was saved by subterfuge (it was said he was mentally sick and therefore couldn't be held accountable under any law for converting to Christianity) by the Kabul government from being done to death, triggering protests from the Islamists who wanted him killed. The clerical view in Pakistan that appeared in the press, too, wanted the man killed... Pakistan has all sorts of laws it cannot implement because they are completely out of tune with our times, but one idea that it has thankfully not made into a law is death for converting away from Islam... It was tacitly accepted by the TV channel that let Mufti Munib shoot off his mouth that Pakistan was not "truly Islamic"... Pakistan is signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which

has an article allowing freedom of religion including conversion. The clergy has been demanding that death be awarded to those who convert out of Islam... On the other hand, Mufti Munib's fatwa that no one should be forcibly converted to Islam is belied by cases where non-Muslims have converted simply to avoid discrimination and a second-class status... The Islam that Allama Iqbal envisioned was in line with modern times. (He was opposed to the enforcement of hudood and abolition of riba.) These days the clergy - dominant by reason of its high public profile - is clear that democracy is not permissible under Islam. The MMA may be seeking pure democracy by ousting Pervez Musharraf but the dominant parties inside it favour a sharia of the Taliban. Some of the laws in force in Pakistan - for instance, the Blasphemy Law and the law of cutting hands and stoning to death - already fly in the face of modernity. We have to do much yet to enter the 21st century because we missed the bus in the 20th.

Dawn, 29 March 2006

**25 killed as followers of clerics in Bara clash (Ibrahim Shinwari)**

LANDI KOTAL, March 28: Twenty-five people were killed and as many injured in fierce gunbattles between followers of two religious groups in Bara. The clashes at Sur Dand area in Khyber Agency started on Monday when supporters of cleric Mufti Munir Shakir laid siege to the house of a staunch follower of rival cleric Pir Saifur Rehman and took a serious turn on Tuesday. Mufti Shakir and Pir Rehman ran illegal FM radio channels and the clerics, who used abusive language against each other in sermons on their channels, had left the tribal region some time ago under the government pressure. Officials claimed the two were orchestrating violence to pressurise the administration into allowing their return to the region. The officials said the clash started when workers of Lashkar-i-Islam, formed by Mufti Shakir's supporters, asked inmates of the house of Bacha Jee, the follower of Pir Saifur Rehman, to surrender, which they refused. In the ensuing gunbattle, which lasted eight hours, seven Lashkar men were killed and 25 others injured.

Dawn, 29 March 2006

**Fierce fighting in Marri district: Pirkoh gas well set on fire (Saleem Shahid )**

QUETTA, March 28: At least one person is reported to have been killed in heavy fighting between paramilitary forces and militants in Kohlu district on Tuesday. Sources said that security forces had launched the attack using helicopter gunships to eliminate hideouts of Marri militants. They said that a 10-year-old boy, Mohammed Ali, was killed in the attack in the Kahan area while his mother and younger brother were injured. "Helicopter gunships shelled different areas throughout the day," an elder of the Marri tribe said on telephone. He also claimed that some jet fighters had also bombed the areas. He said that heavy weapons were being used in the attack in Tartani, Bhambhoor, Peshi, Parai and Nal areas, adding that security forces had suffered heavy casualties in Fazal Chal and Karmo-Wadh, where armed tribesmen had returned fire. Official sources confirmed clashes between paramilitary forces in different areas of the troubled district but denied suffering any casualty in the fresh action. Meanwhile, Dera Bugti nazim Kazim Bugti said that a gas well in the Pirkoh field had been set on fire, adding that the well had been damaged by militants two weeks ago.

The Frontier Post, 29 March 2006

**One killed, 17 injured in Peshawar blast (Abdul Hakeem Mohmand )**

PESHAWAR: One killed and as many as 17 others were injured when a huge bomb exploded in Khyber Bazar, one of the busiest place in Peshawar on Tuesday. According to details, the blast was caused by the explosives planted at a black colour Honda motorcycle parked in front of Haroon Mansion at about 5:10pm. The injured were rushed to nearby Lady Reading Hospital (LRH) hospital while Mohammad Sher a police constable of Mardan lost his breath in the hospital and other 17 including Usman, Sikandar, Sher Hassan, Abdul Latif, Mohammad Asif, Muftiullah, Mohammad Daud, Sheryar, Khanam Ullah, Muslim Khan, Dawad Khan, Sayed Mohammad, Muhammad Sher, Daud, Zarawar, Maqbal and Javed Maseh received minor and major injuries and two of them was also reported to be critical. Most of the injured were Afghan refugees, who were running small businesses in the area.

Daily Times, 30 March 2006

**Musharraf pledges to develop Balochistan**

GWADAR: President Gen Pervez Musharraf inaugurated a Rs 100 million gas supply project of Sui Southern Gas Company Ltd at Gwadar on Wednesday and held it up as a sign of the progress the government was making in developing Balochistan. "I have a dream for you and trust me that I will make all efforts to realise this dream of bringing prosperity and development to your province," he said. "We are striving to take the people forward and provide jobs. I ask you to also get education and skills to ensure that you can compete in the mainstream for jobs," he added. He asked Ports and Shipping Minister Babar Khan Ghouri to prefer locals in hiring at the new port, even if they do not meet some of the minimum requirements. The president said the government will provide Rs 3 billion for development projects in 29 districts of Balochistan. "It is now the duty of each nazim of every district to provide me with the details of development projects in their respective areas. The list of these projects will be in my office and I will personally monitor progress on these to ensure their completion," he said. Musharraf

said the government was planning to supply gas to each of the 110 districts of the country by 2007.

Daily Times, 30 March 2006

### **Govt attacks radio station in Khyber Agency**

PESHAWAR: Paramilitary forces on Wednesday launched an operation against cleric Mufti Munir Shakir's supporters in Khyber Agency after a tribal jirga (council) failed to convince the latter to shut down an illegal FM radio station, security sources told Daily Times. Soldiers fired mortar shells on the radio station to shut it down, sources added. Earlier, more than 50 families left Khyber Agency on Wednesday after the government warned that action against Shakir was imminent. Bara Administrator Shafirullah served notice asking 750 families to leave their homes for safer places because "action against the renegade cleric will take place soon". A security official told Daily Times that the government had identified two sites to attack. However, he declined to say whether Shakir or his rival cleric Shafiullah Rehman's group would be targeted first.

Daily Times, 30 March 2006

### **Pakistan rejects report on N-help to Saudis**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday rejected as "fabricated" a German magazine report that said Saudi Arabia was working secretly on a nuclear programme with help from Pakistani experts. "It is a fabricated story and motivated by vicious intentions," Foreign Office Spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said. Citing Western security sources, German magazine Cicero in its latest edition, says that during the Haj pilgrimages to Mecca in 2003 through 2005, Pakistani scientists posed as pilgrims to come to Saudi Arabia in aircraft sponsored by the oil-rich kingdom. Between October 2004 and January 2005, some of them took the opportunity to "disappear" from their hotel rooms, sometimes for up to three weeks, German security expert Udo Ulfkotte told the magazine.

Daily Times, 30 March 2006

### **'Tribal areas must be free of foreigners'**(Zakir Hassnain)

PESHAWAR: Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) on Wednesday demanded the expulsion of all foreign militants from FATA and an end to their infiltration into Afghanistan. The party also demanded an end to parallel governments in the tribal areas, saying that the tribesmen should be given the right to elect jirgas and these jirgas should be given all the administrative powers. The PkMAP made these demands at a party seminar that was organised to discuss the current situation in the tribal areas. Senator Raza Muhammad Raza, PkMAP central information secretary, said that situation in tribal areas had become dangerous and the country's integrity and solidarity was at stake. He said that foreign terrorists belonging to Al Qaeda gained a foothold in tribal areas during the Afghan jihad. He said that the Afghan jihad was fought as a proxy war between the former Soviet Union and the US. He said that the terrorists in Pakistani tribal areas and Afghanistan were the remnants of that war. He alleged that intelligence agencies were sheltering and using the foreigners hiding in the tribal areas. He said that target killings carried out by the security agencies had forced a number of tribal people, including elders, intellectuals, teachers and journalists, to leave Waziristan. "Innocent people are being killed and the operation has been spread to Bajaur, Swat and Bara," he said.

Daily Times, 30 March 2006

### **EDITORIAL: 'Outsiders'in Pakistan's 'badlands'**

The violence anticipated in the Khyber Agency for the last year and a half has broken out into a war. Two armies have clashed and left behind 24 dead in Bara, while the federal government, which looks after the area, has practically looked on to see which brand of Islam wins in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Supporters of one faction have been attacking the supporters of their rival, putting everything to sack and killing anyone who resists. Both the armies are led by "outsiders", one from Afghanistan and the other from sectarian Hangu in the NWFP... The NWFP governor, Khalil ur Rehman, who is in charge of the area on behalf of the federal government, has finally sent in security forces numbering 8,000 to restore order... During this "waiting" period the factions have built their militias and armed and entrenched themselves in castle-like strongholds... The two men at the heart of the problem are Pir Saif ur Rehman -who arrived in the area some time ago to set up his "mystical" order among the predominantly Deobandi local population - and Mufti Munir Shakir, a tough Deobandi who hates the Shias and raised hell in Hangu before he was made to flee from there. Some people say the war in Bara is a Deobandi-Barelvi war. Even if the two orders are not directly involved, it is clearly a conflict between two approaches to Islam. That Peshawar and Islamabad took so long to grasp this fact is quite shocking. What did the government do when Mufti Shakir set up his FM radio and organised his Lashkar-e-Islami? Nothing. What did it do when "foreigner" Pir Saif ur Rehman began converting the local population and becoming rich with the gold ornaments that the believing women of Bara gave him in return for his "miracles"? Nothing. Now Bara is divided between the two warring men of God. They have set up their opposed jurisdictions in the area... Today there is disorder in the seven "agencies"(Bajaur, Khyber, Kurram, Mohmand, Orakzai, North Waziristan and South Waziristan). And it is catching on in other parts of Pakistan too. Shockingly, only 30 percent of Pakistan appears to be under normal law and order, if you add Balochistan, where only five percent of the province is policed, and the "katcha" of Sindh, stretching for 850 kilometres from Kashmore to the sea, where dacoits rule. The "outsiders" problem is related directly to the question of jurisdiction of state. For far too long the

state has allowed a vast territory to remain in a kind of administrative limbo... The government says it wants to re-establish the state's jurisdiction in these areas. But the bitter truth is that the lawlessness of Pakistan's "badlands" has spread to the settled areas and people in urban Pakistan are increasingly resorting to violence while the police and the lower courts, allowed to deteriorate in performance, simply stand aside and watch

The News, 30 March 2006

### **PM to review sugar crisis in Sindh** (Azfar-ul-Ashfaque)

KARACHI: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz will review the ongoing sugar crisis in Sindh at a meeting to be held here on Thursday (today), it is learnt. Informed sources told The News that the prime minister would arrive in the metropolis in the morning on a daylong visit. He is scheduled to chair a high-level meeting at the Sindh Governor House in which the prevailing sugar crisis would be reviewed at length. The sources said the Sindh Food department would be giving a presentation to the prime minister regarding availability of sugar in the province and measures being taken by the provincial government in collaboration with the federal government to meet the shortfall. The sources said the department would inform the prime minister that although there was a sugar crisis in Sindh but it was not like what people were facing in other provinces of the country.

The News, 30 March 2006

### **Plain Words**

M B Naqvi

The writer is a veteran journalist and freelance columnist.

The Pakistan government has cautiously welcomed the purported offer by the Indian PM Manmohan Singh of a treaty of peace, security and friendship while inaugurating another bus service between India and Pakistan, though it has reiterated its ancient Kashmir-first stance: unless the old dispute over Kashmir is resolved, further advances in other fields are not realistic. Basically, there is no change: India offers step by step improvement in bilateral ties; Pakistan subordinates everything to Kashmir.... Which new issues have arisen? It is the qualitative change in the bilateral balance of power. There is the cumulative effect of the still accelerating arms race... The fact is that both are nuclear powers; both are still making more atomic weapons. Why else would they go on testing missiles if not to adapt them to newer shaped weapons? Implications of this need being understood... War now is out of the question -- unless either party takes leave of its senses. Surviving a nuclear war with India is not possible. Nothing is worth a nuclear war. That alters the perspective. Pakistan cannot now wrest Kashmir or force solutions of its choice. Military approach is simply not feasible. A new approach is unavoidable. Fighting India legalistically in the UN is now wholly fruitless. Foreign power's mediation is again totally out; foreigners now want Pakistanis to stop being a nuisance. Similarly Pakistan's refusal to accord India with MFN status or observing trade or cultural contacts serves only to isolate and hurt Pakistan. Friendship with America will not now yield support over Kashmir... Other peaceful means of persuading India to be more forthcoming have to be found: it means offering it something that will be of real utility to India for which reason it will like to accommodate Pakistan to whatever extent may be useful to it. What of Kashmir then?...What remains possible and desirable is to create conditions in which Kashmiris can get the substance of azadi by creating conditions in which India would cede it. What legal shape it will take can be left to the good sense of the Indians and Kashmiris. Pakistanis, as freedom lovers and friendly outsiders, should only encourage and when asked advise.. Meanwhile Pakistan and India can agree upon a modus vivendi being suggested by America. That is probably the only workable recourse today... For whose benefit is Pakistan to be run? Well, Pakistan must be run for the maximum benefit to the maximum number of Pakistanis. The current supremacy of the army is a disgrace for Pakistanis. That has to end once and for all... This is the way to keep peace within either state and also among them. Let's accept the people as the supreme masters for whose benefit states must be run by governments that are established by law and freely elected by the people.

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The Statesman, 31 March 2006

### **Pak gradually shifting its focus to heavy industry: Musharraf**

KARACHI: President Pervez Musharraf said Thursday Pakistan will gradually shift its focus from agriculture and textile to heavy industry and engineering sector to achieve a quantum jump in the country's exports. He was speaking at the ground breaking ceremony of US \$130 million state-of-the-art steel making Tuwairqi Steel Mills (TSM) over an area of 220 acres at Port Qasim. The production capacity of the TSM can be expanded to 1.5 million tons and subsequently to 3 million tons in future. Sindh Governor Dr Ishratul Ibad, Chief Minister Dr Arbab Rahim, Industry Minister Jahangir Tareen, Saudi Ambassador in Pakistan Ali S Awadh Asseri and senior civil and military official and members of diplomatic corp were also present on the occasion. The president said going into heavy industry and engineering sector is the future of Pakistan. "Since we are in the process of enhancing our exports it becomes very clear that the country should go into heavy industry and engineering sector which is 60 percent of world trade", he added. Musharraf noted that only six percent of world trade was in the textile sector and added that this was the reason why country's exports were not at desired high level. "If we want to enhance our exports we have to go into heavy industry and engineering sector", he observed. Referring to the training programme of Al-Tuwairqi Group for Pakistani engineers and technicians, he said that was the real transfer of

technology and enhancing the quality of manpower in Pakistan.

The Statesman, 31 March 2006

### **2 killed in Miran Shah**

MIRAN SHAH: At least two persons were killed and four others seriously injured in clashes between security forces and miscreants in Miran Shah on Thursday. Officials and eyewitness said fierce clashes erupted between security forces and miscreants resulting in the death of two innocent villagers whereas four others sustained serious injuries in mortar firing. On the other hand, no report has been confirmed yet regarding any major loss of miscreants in the incident till filing of this report. Meanwhile, General Officer Commanding Miran Shah Maj-Gen Akram Sahi said Army had taken full control of Pak-Afghan border areas and foreign militants had been flushed out from Miran Shah and the surrounding areas. Talking to a private television channel Thursday Sahi said situation was normal in the area. "Army is holding full control of Pak-Afghan borders and no one could cross over the border illegally from either side. The steps taken in this respect are proving effective," he added. - Online

The Statesman, 31 March 2006

### **EDITORIAL: Manmohan's offer has nothing new**

Mohammad A. Suhail

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's latest offer of a peace and friendship treaty sounds hollow as he has failed to present any clear idea about the removal of the confrontational aspect of the Indo-Pak relations, Kashmir, which is at the heart of the problem and has soured relations between the two countries for over half a century... He also spoke of the possibility of meaningful solutions of Siachen, Sir Creek and water issues, but fought shy of giving a distinct road map on the settlement of Kashmir without which even the much-touted economic benefits to the people of both the countries would remain a distant dream. Singh wants Pakistan not to insist on linking Kashmir solution with the normalisation of relations in other fields, such as business and trade, culture, sports and other people-to-people contacts. On the other hand, he also gave some indications that India is willing to enter into an open-ended discussion on the issue of Kashmir. He expressed India's preference for adopting a step-by-step approach, which many believe means stretching out Kashmir talks from one meeting to another without finding a permanent solution to the problem to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned... But that had never worked in the past. It is mind-boggling how it could work in the future, bringing the likely peace dividends that Manmohan Singh has in mind for one billion-plus people of the two countries...But in order to restore the self respect and dignity of the people of Kashmir, there is a dire need for New Delhi to seriously address those issues that could really have a meaningful effect on their lives... It is in this background that Pakistan's Foreign Office has declared in unequivocal terms that friendship and peace treaty with India is possible only after the peaceful resolution of the festering dispute that has caused three major wars between the two countries. For this purpose, Pakistan has been steadfast in emphasising the need for getting the Kashmir issue out of the way by reaching a just settlement so that the people of South Asia could reap the benefits of peace and prosperity in the region and move together in pursuit of a common objective of getting rid of poverty, ignorance and disease that still afflict millions of people in the two countries...In this backdrop, it can be safely asserted that sidetracking the real issue and avoiding a permanent solution in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people on whatever pretext would be a grave mistake...

The Dawn, 31 March 2006

### **Aziz sees \$3bn FDI this year**

KARACHI, March 30: Pakistan is likely to get about \$3 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) during the current year, the highest-ever in the country's history. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz was speaking as the chief guest at a dinner hosted for delegates and participants of the Expo Pakistan 2006 at Governor House here on Thursday. The event was inaugurated by President General Pervez Musharraf at the Expo Centre Karachi on Wednesday. The prime minister said: "This year we expect to get about \$3 billion in foreign direct investment, which will be the highest-ever in the history of Pakistan." He said the figure still did not do justice with the country's full potential, adding that Pakistan could attract much more foreign investment. Greater access to open market combined with fast economic growth and an aggressive privatisation programme was likely to spur the inflow of foreign investment, Prime Minister Aziz said. He appreciated investment coming in from the Middle East, specially member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, as well as from South East Asian countries in addition to funds from Europe and North America. The prime minister said the varied sources of investment showed the present richness of Pakistan's investment profile.

Daily Times, 31 March 2006

### **Hizbul Mujahedeen offers ceasefire if India includes them in talks**

SRINAGAR: A Pakistan-based rebel group fighting India over Kashmir said a ceasefire was possible if New Delhi recognised such groups as parties to the dispute, according to a report published on Thursday. "Not only Hizbul Mujahedeen but also the entire militant leadership would consider (a) truce if the Indian government acknowledges the disputed and tripartite nature of the Kashmir issue," Hizbul supreme commander Syed Salahudin told the Kashmir News Service in a telephone interview from Pakistan. Salahudin - who is also the

chairman of the Pakistan-based Kashmiri militant alliance, the United Jihad Council - wanted talks between India, Pakistan and Kashmiris before agreeing to a ceasefire. New Delhi has met moderate Kashmiri separatist groups in the past year as part of an effort to discuss the dispute and reduce violence. At least 44,000 people have been killed since the insurgency was launched in 1989. But Salahudin said those talks have not helped. "The dialogue process initiated by the moderate leadership has so far failed to produce any breakthrough in terms of Kashmir resolution," he said. Salahudin, who tops the security force list of most wanted militants, said violence would decline as the dialogue process moves forward.

The Nation, 31 March 2006

**EDITORIAL: Dealing with opposition**

Inaugurating the Gwadar gas pipeline project General Musharraf said that the days of a few chieftains opposing the development projects are numbered. There can be no two opinions about the country in general and Balochistan in particular being in dire need of development at an accelerated pace... What is more the development project, from its conception to its physical completion, should be kept transparent... The large scale acquisition of land by outsiders could have been avoided and the perception of the local population turning into minority removed with the type of safeguards adopted in a number of federal countries in similar situations. Instead of turning the sardars into heroes by holding them entirely responsible for public unrest that has expressed itself in numerous protest marches and shut downs, the government should take measures to end the feeling of deprivation. As far as the influx of weapons from Afghanistan is concerned, the best way to stop this is by requiring Kabul and the US led alliance to ensure these are not smuggled from Afghanistan. What is more Islamabad should ensure that those guarding the country's borders perform their duties well... The common man has to see real improvement in his life to be convinced of performance. The best way to deal with those opposed to the government's policies is not to malign them, threaten them with elimination or disallow them to return to the country but to improve the government's own record. The right way to gain people's confidence is to address their grievances, stop the vested interest from artificially raising prices, fulfil its promises to provide jobs and take gas, electricity and water to every village by 2007.