

Dawn, 1 March 2008

**Carnage at slain officer's funeral: DSP killed in Lakki Marwat blast; 38 die in Mingora suicide attack**

MINGORA / LAKKI MARWAT, Feb 29: At least 38 people lost their lives when a suicide attacker blew himself up in Mingora on Friday during the funeral of a senior police officer who had been killed hours earlier in Lakki Marwat. Deputy Superintendent Police Javed Iqbal and three constables were killed in the roadside bomb blast in Lakki Marwat, some 300 kilometres south of Mingora

Dawn, 1 March 2008

**ANP names Amir Hoti for Frontier CM post**

PESHAWAR, Feb 29: The Awami National Party on Friday nominated Bacha Khan's great grandson Amir Haidar Khan Hoti for the post of chief minister in a coalition government with the PPP in the NWFP. Another serious contender for the job was ANP's former parliamentary leader in the NWFP assembly, Bashir Ahmed Bilour, who will retain his job. The party said the decision to nominate Mr Hoti for the CM's post had been taken unanimously

Dawn, 1 March 2008

**PML-Q facing problems in forming Balochistan govt**

QUETTA, Feb 29: Pakistan Muslim League-Q which has emerged as the largest single party in the Balochistan assembly is facing problems in nominating the leader of its parliamentary party. The differences in the party have forced PML's president Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain to intervene in the matter. All other parties have elected their parliamentary leaders and are engaged in negotiations for forming the government in Balochistan

Dawn, 2 March 2008

**Official election results notified: Way cleared for calling assembly session**

ISLAMABAD, March 1: The Election Commission on Saturday officially notified the results of the Feb 18 polls for all but 41 seats of national and provincial assemblies which were withheld on technical reasons, thus paving way for summoning the sessions of the newly-elected assemblies by as early as next week. The official notification of results is a pre-requisite for determining election on 70 seats reserved for women and minorities, after which the president and governors can convene inaugural sessions of the national and provincial assemblies

Dawn, 2 March 2008

**'Name for PM to be finalised by Asif and Fahim'**

LAHORE, March 1: Makhdoom Amin Fahim said on Saturday he had been nominated as party's candidate for the office of prime minister at a meeting at Naudero after the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. Talking to Dawn, he said Mr Asif Ali Zardari had also announced at the meeting that the party's central executive committee would take a decision

Dawn, 2 March 2008

### **Two killed, 24 injured in suicide attack**

KHAR, March 1: A security man and a civilian were killed and 24 other people were injured when a suicide bomber rammed his explosive-laden car into a Bajaur Levies vehicle near Jar village, some 10km from here, on Saturday. Besides a Levies man, one civilian Shah Wali Khan died and 24 people, including nine Levies personnel, were injured

The News, 2 March 2008

### **President sticks to his guns**

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf Saturday said that he was elected for five years by the parliament under the constitution and he would not allow anybody to create anarchy. He was talking to the PML-Q's newly elected members of the Punjab Assembly at the Presidential Camp Office

The News, 2 March 2008

### **Judges restoration by two-thirds majority acceptable**

ISLAMABAD: A top presidential aide said on Saturday President Pervez Musharraf would bow before the parliament's decision if it restores the deposed judges by a two-thirds majority. The top aide categorically denied that the Presidency was re-grouping to conspire against anyone

Daily Times, 2 March 2008

### **PML-Q to protect Pervez Musharraf: Pervaiz Elahi**

LAHORE: Punjab PML-Q President Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi said on Wednesday that his party had elected President Pervez Musharraf for a five-year term and would protect him from impeachment. Addressing a press conference after a parliamentary party meeting at his residence here, he indirectly hinted at support for the PPP if it wanted to form a government in Punjab without PML-N's support

Dawn, 3 March 2008

### **Tribal peace jirga attacked: 42 killed, 58 injured in Darra Adamkhel**

DARRA ADAMKHEL/ PESHAWAR, March 2: A powerful blast hit a tribal peace jirga near the Zarghunkhel checkpost in Darra Adamkhel on Sunday, killing at least 42 people and wounding another 58. The jirga of Zarghunkhel, Akhurwal, Sheraki, Bostikhel and Toor Chapper tribes had been convened to discuss the formation of a Lashkar to drive militants out of the area, sources said. It was not clear if the blast was the work of a suicide bomber, but local officials said that a teenager haddetonated explosives just after the meeting had ended

Dawn, 3 March 2008

### **PPP can work with Musharraf: Mukhtar**

LAHORE, March 2: Chaudhry Ahmed Mukhtar, one of the four PPP hopefuls for the office of prime minister, indicated here on Sunday that his party could work with President Pervez Musharraf, in view of the current crisis-like situation. ♦??One must be able to work with everyone, be it a political party or the president, ♦?? Mr Mukhtar told

Dawn

Dawn, 3 March 2008

**Coalition accord in two days: Nisar: PML-N against MQM's participation in govt**

ISLAMABAD, March 2: The Pakistan Muslim League-N on Sunday said the PPP, PML-N and ANP would finalise a power-sharing agreement in two days. He, however, added that his party would not be a part of any coalition with the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM). Addressing a press conference here, PML-N's Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said: "The president has made the Army House a hub of conspiracies against political parties by holding regular and unnecessary meetings with PML-Q leaders, which is an insult to the people's mandate."

Dawn, 4 March 2008

**Lawmakers asked to reinstate judges or meet same fate**

LAHORE, March 2: Supreme Court Bar Association president Aitzaz Ahsan warned parliamentarians on Sunday that if they did not reinstate the deposed judges, they themselves could meet the same fate one day. He was addressing people who gathered outside his Zaman Park residence after his four-month detention ended after the last restraining order issued by the Punjab government had lapsed

The News, 4 March 2008

**ISPR, presidency deny resignation reports**

ISLAMABAD: The official spokesman of the Pakistan Army, the President's House and close aides of President Musharraf on Monday night refuted reports circulated by a private news agency that President Musharraf has been asked to resign and he may do so in two or three days

The News, 4 March 2008

**President, COAS discuss security situation**

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf lauded on Monday the role of Pakistan army in ensuring security during the general elections, as these polls were rated as one of the freest and fairest elections in the electoral history of the country

Dawn, 5 March 2008

**First suicide attack on naval institution: Two bombers strike war college in Lahore**

LAHORE, March 4: Two suicide bombers blew themselves up at the prestigious Navy War College on the Mall Road on Tuesday, killing four Navy employees and injuring 21 others, witnesses said. A war-related course was in progress in a lecture room adjacent to the parking lot when the bombers blew themselves up, a witness who was inside the college at the time of the blast told Dawn

The News, 6 March 2008

**PML-N to join cabinet as PPP backs judges issue**

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif has shown enormous flexibility in his tough stance of not allowing his MNAs to join the PPP-led government at the Centre. He has now authorised his top three negotiators to give the names for ministerial slots. Sources said this major shift occurred only to accommodate the old demand of Asif Zardari in exchange for his uncompromising support on the issue of restoration of judges. Nawaz decided to change his stance only after he got an assurance from Zardari that he would back the move to restore the judges

The News, 6 March 2008

### **58 independents join political parties**

ISLAMABAD: Fifty-eight independent members-elect for the National Assembly and the four provincial assemblies had joined different political parties by Tuesday evening, the deadline set by the election commission for them to join any party. According to the election commission, 11 MNAs-elect and 32 MPAs-elect from the Punjab, 13 MPAs-elect from the NWFP and two MPAs-elect from Balochistan have joined political parties. Out of the total 11 MNAs-elect who have joined any political party so far, seven have joined the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) and four the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N)

Dawn, 7 March 2008

### **"Army not distancing itself from president": Gen Kayani announces support for elected govt**

ISLAMABAD, March 6: Chief of the Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani announced on Thursday his institution's complete support for the elected government and the democratic process. However, he called for avoiding schism between various pillars of the state and dispelled a perception that the army was distancing itself from the president. He said the army would stay out of the political process and expressed the hope that it would not like to be dragged into any unnecessary controversy. He said the army stood behind the democratic process and was committed to playing its constitutional role in support of the elected government

Dawn, 7 March 2008

### **Three major parties short of two-thirds majority**

ISLAMABAD, March 6: The combined strength of PPP, PML-N and ANP in the newly-elected National Assembly is slightly short of the two-thirds majority. However, they may cross the two-thirds mark if they win the remaining 10 seats (whose results have not been announced because of litigation, polling termination and polling suspension) or secure the support of the JUI-F which has six seats. The number position became a little clear after the Election Commission announced at a press conference on Thursday details of the reserved seats for women and minorities allocated to different winning parties on a proportional basis

The News, 8 March 2008

### **US yearns for Pak capitulation**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has given them bases and logistic support as well as intelligence sharing but what the US is now demanding from Islamabad has shocked the Defence and

Foreign Ministries and the initial reaction has been a rejection of what are highly intrusive demands for the US military and auxiliary personnel in Pakistan

The News, 8 March 2008

**Zardari not hawkish on NSC, Army role**

ISLAMABAD: Co-chairman of Pakistan People's Party Asif Ali Zardari, while conceding the province of the Punjab to the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), has said that the National Security Council and the local governments are there to stay. He also did not rule out the role of the chief of the Army staff and the armed forces in the future set-up

The News, 8 March 2008

**NA, PA sessions next week: Musharraf**

JACOBABAD: Pakistan will continue its struggle against terrorism and extremism and will not back out from its commitment to root out the menace, President Pervez Musharraf said on Friday. The president was addressing the inaugural ceremony of water plant at the Jacobabad Water Supply Scheme. The scheme costs Rs 1.23 billion and fulfils the call of the people of Jacobabad that they had been making for the last 60 years

The News, 8 March 2008

**Judges issue finalised with PPP: Nawaz**

RAWALPINDI: PML-N chief Mian Nawaz Sharif has said that it has not yet been decided whether his party would become a part of the federal cabinet as the discussion process with the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is continuing. However, he said, the restoration of the judges had been agreed upon in principle while other matters would also be discussed

The News, 8 March 2008

**PPP, ANP hammer out power-sharing formula in NWFP**

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Awami National Party (ANP) on Wednesday finalised a power-sharing formula in NWFP and agreed to have a 21-member cabinet with two senior and 19 other ministers. ANP provincial president Afrasiab Khattak and PPP's Rahimdad Khan announced that their respective negotiating committees have reached an arrangement after prolonged discussions. Talking to reporters, they said the two parties would nominate one senior minister each while the speaker of the NWFP Assembly would be from the PPP and the deputy speaker from the ANP. The latter would have a total of 12 ministers while the former would get nine portfolios

The News, 9 March 2008

**Army cannot forget me, says Musharraf**

MULTAN: President Pervez Musharraf has asked the political parties to show wisdom and focus on achieving good governance. He also clarified that there were no differences between him and the Army. Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Multan PTV Centre at the Multan Radio Station here on Saturday, Musharraf asked the people to frustrate the designs of elements wanting to destabilise the country. He said the country

could not afford instability

The News, 9 March 2008

### **JUI sides with PPP-led coalition**

ISLAMABAD: The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal (JUI), in a major breakthrough, announced on Saturday to join the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to form coalition governments at the Centre and in Balochistan. "We have taken a decision, in principle, to join the national consensus coalition government with the Pakistan People's Party at the Centre as well as in Balochistan," said JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman while addressing a joint press conference with PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari here at the Zardari House, after holding an hour-long meeting

The News, 9 March 2008

### **How Musharraf will feel the heat in NA and outside**

ISLAMABAD: Anti-Musharraf political forces, especially the PML-N and the lawyers, have planned to intensify pressure on the president to quit by simultaneously making the new National Assembly and the streets too hot for him to handle. Leaders of the major parliamentary parties, PPP and PML-N, privately say that the new Lower House will keep springing surprises in an attempt to throw out of window the script being shrewdly prepared

Dawn, 9 March 2008

### **PPP-led govt in Balochistan on the cards**

QUETTA, March 8: A first-ever People's Party-led government in Balochistan became a distinct possibility after the number of MPAs-elect pledging support to the party reached 28 on Saturday. The party had won seven, out of the 51 general seats, in elections to the provincial assembly on Feb 18 while it bagged two seats reserved for women and one for minorities. The strength of the house is 65

The News, 10 March 2008

### **NA resolution to restore judges in 30 days**

BHURBAN: In a historic development, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Sunday took a quantum leap towards democracy when both the party leaders Asif Ali Zardari and Mian Nawaz Sharif signed a summit declaration for the formation of a coalition government and restoration of the sacked judges within 30 days of the new government

The News, 10 March 2008

### **OPINION: Bhurban will change the course of history (Saheen Sehbai)**

The two men currently in control of Pakistan's political destiny are possessed. They both have a clear idea of what is wrong with the system and they both know how it can be corrected. They may appear to be at odds with each other on some issues, but deep inside, they are one, and have stayed so, ever since Benazir Bhutto was eliminated. They know that the survival of the political class in Pakistan is dependent on their unity of thought and action. Bhurban on Sunday proved this

The News, 10 March 2008

**200 militants surrender in Swat**

ISLAMABAD: The terrorists are on the run and about 200 militants have so far surrendered before the authorities in Swat. Talking in a television interview on Sunday, Caretaker Minister for Interior Lt-Gen (ret'd) Hamid Nawaz Khan said 422 people involved in terrorist activities were arrested from Swat. Besides, six tonnes of explosive material had also been recovered from the area, he added. The law enforcement agencies have averted 20 to 30 possible incidents of terrorism in Punjab and Sindh during Muharram and elections and also seized explosive material in huge quantity. Hamid Nawaz appreciated the law-enforcement agencies for ensuring peaceful conduct of the general election

The News, 10 March 2008

**OPINION: Challenges before the new MPs (Iqbal Haider)**

The path that lies ahead of our newly-elected members of assemblies is a landmine of challenges. One wrong step and it may well have disastrous consequences. The first such challenge awaiting the new batch of parliamentarians is one which they will have to confront before they are sworn in. They will have to decide under which constitution they will be taking oath. Consequent upon the proclamation of the purported emergency on November 3 by General Pervez Musharraf, the then constitution was ostensibly put in abeyance and later infected further with the unilateral amendments as per his own whims and fancies

Daily Times, 10 March 2008

**Editorial: Lawyers Movement remains significant force for change**

On Sunday, the lawyers' movement observed its first anniversary with a Black Flags Week. It began after the chief justice of the Supreme Court Justice, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, was dismissed by President Pervez Musharraf on March 9, 2007. The lawyers, as represented by a sensitive Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), took their stand on the basis of the demeaning spectacle of the judiciary being insulted by a uniformed general-cum-president. Not only was the government's method of getting rid of the chief justice palpably unjust, it was also unacceptably ham-handed

The News, 12 March 2008

**President summons NA session on 17th**

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday signed a summary to summon the National Assembly for its inaugural session on March 17, after a gap of almost a month following the general elections held on February 18. The lower house of parliament will meet for its opening session at 11:00 am at the Parliament House under the chairmanship of Speaker Chaudhry Amir Hussain. "President Pervez Musharraf signed the summary on Tuesday for the assembly's session on March 17, which was forwarded by the Prime Minister Secretariat," said presidential spokesman Maj-Gen (ret'd) Rashid Qureshi while talking to The News here

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The News, 12 March 2008

### **30 die as twin suicide blasts rock Lahore**

LAHORE: Two massive suicide car bombs on Tuesday ripped through the regional headquarters of the Federal Investigation Agency and an office of an advertising agency in Lahore, killing at least 30 people, including 16 FIA officials, and injuring over 200. The two blasts happened about seven minutes apart in different parts of the city. The first explosion completely tore the facade of the FIA building besides damaging scores of homes and dozens of cars and motorcycles in the neighbourhood

The News, 13 March 2008

### **Zardari, Fahim lock horns: Talks on PM issue make no headway**

ISLAMABAD: PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari and the party President Makhdoom Amin Fahim failed on Wednesday to make any headway over the issue of the party's nominee for the slot of the prime minister. According to sources, Zardari frankly told Fahim that he had not yet decided to nominate him as the prime minister.

The News, 13 March 2008

### **Impeachment could move up on agenda**

ISLAMABAD: Impeachment of President Pervez Musharraf may move to the top of the new PPP-PML-N government's agenda, even putting the restoration of the deposed judges behind if the "disturbing signals" from the Presidency do not stop, credible sources in both parties say

The News, 13 March 2008

### **All PCO 2000 judges do not want to come back**

ISLAMABAD: All the six honourable judges of the Supreme Court who had refused to take oath under General Musharraf's first PCO in 2000, do not want to return to the bench and have, thus, closed one chapter of this ongoing legal controversy

Daily Times, 13 March 2008

### **EDITORIAL: Unfortunate politics of premiership**

The senior vice-chairman of the PPP, Makhdoom Amin Fahim, has sent a legal notice to the PMLN leader Khwaja Muhammad Asif demanding a complete retraction and withdrawal of a defamatory statement about his alleged contacts with President Pervez Musharraf. Khwaja Asif, who was a part of the PMLN team that negotiated the bipartisan accord on forming coalition governments in Islamabad and Lahore, had made it public that his party didn't want him as prime minister because of his backdoor with President

Pervez Musharraf

Daily Times, 13 March 2008

**PML-N to join PPP-ANP coalition in NWFP**

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) decided in principle on Tuesday night that it would join the Awami National Party (ANP)-Pakistan People's Party (PPP) coalition government in the NWFP, PML-N Provincial President Pir Sabir Shah told Daily Times on Wednesday

The News, 17 March 2008

**13th NA meets today**

ISLAMABAD: The inaugural oath-taking session of the newly elected National Assembly will be held today (Monday) almost one month after the February 18 elections with new hopes for the future of democracy in the country and the rule of law

The News, 17 March 2008

**20 killed in S Waziristan missile strike**

WANA/ TANK: A cross-border missile attack on the house of a tribal elder left 20 people dead and five others injured in Pir Bagh area of Kot Shah Nawaz, south of the agency headquarters, Wana, in the restive South Waziristan Agency (SWA) on Sunday

Daily Times, 17 March 2008

**"Remember me as honest, frank person"**

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf said on Sunday that he hoped people would remember him as a "very frank, straightforward, honest and practical person" In an interview with Geo TV, he said he would like people to remember his presidency as one that was backed by "a person who has cared for the country, for the people and worked honestly and diligently for them"

Dawn, 17 March 2008

**US plane attacks Wana house with precision bombs: Foreign militants among nine killed**

WANA, March 16: At least nine people were killed and nine others wounded when a US plane hit a mud-compound in South Waziristan's regional headquarters of Wana on Sunday afternoon, a security official said. He said that the plane had hit the compound, barely one kilometre from the main regional market, with what appeared to be three precision bombs at around 3.10pm. The adjoining houses largely escaped the damage, the official said

Daily Times, 18 March 2008

**Record 192 newcomers in NA**

ISLAMABAD: Around 192 of the 328 members who won the general elections for seats in the National Assembly are newcomers, marking a record number of new faces in the lower house. The first-timers include 19 members from the NWFP, 77 from Punjab, 28 from Sindh, 11 from Balochistan and seven from the Federally Administered Tribal

Areas. However, results of 14 seats are still pending, because of litigation on 10 and postponement or termination of elections in four constituencies. app

Daily Times, 18 March 2008

**Editorial: Twin threats from Tribal Areas**

A bombing strike on Sunday near Wana in the tribal agency of South Waziristan has destroyed a house, killing, it is said, 20 people, most of them Arab "foreigners". Another version puts the death toll at much less but says the killed included Arabs, Central Asians and "non-locals" from Punjab. The "precision" strikes are variously described as having come from high-flying aircraft and from drones. The local "militants" hurriedly collected the charred remains of the bodies and buried them before the identity of those killed could be ascertained by the local population

News, 18 March 2008

**NA members take oath under 1973 Constitution**

ISLAMABAD: Amid high hopes for the revival of the judiciary and rule of law in the country, as many as 326 members of the newly elected National Assembly in the House of 342 members on Monday took oath as prescribed in the Third Schedule of the Constitution of 1973

News, 18 March 2008

**New parliament historical event: Musharraf**

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf on Monday termed the convening of the new parliament a historical event and expressed the confidence that Pakistan would continue to make progress on the path of democracy and economic growth

News, 18 March 2008

**A new crisis brewing for General Kayani**

ISLAMABAD: Despite the legal wrangling on the highly controversial action, the ball will be thrown into the court of Chief of Army Staff Gen Ashfaq Kayani if the Supreme Court calls the Army to its aid, apparently to subvert the restoration of the deposed judges by parliament. The Supreme Court action, some legal minds say, may spell disaster and chaos given the prevailing charged environment in favour of reinstatement of the sacked judges with two main winning parties having vowed to restore them

News, 18 March 2008

**Suicide bomber kills two cops in Swat**

MINGORA/PESHAWAR: A teenaged suicide bomber blew himself up inside the Mingora Police Lines, killing two policemen and injuring seven others, here on Monday. The suicide bombing carried out at 7pm resulted in on-the-spot fatalities of Lines Officer Toor Gul and Head Constable Inayat Khan. The injured included Liaqat Ali, Sardar Bahadar, Ali Murad, Janat Gul, Syed Nasir Ahmad, Shamsul Qamar and Aziz

News, 19 March 2008

**Fehmida set to make history as 'Madam Speaker'**

ISLAMABAD: The stage is set for the direct contest for the post of National Assembly

speaker on Wednesday between Dr Fehmida Mirza of the PPP and Sardar Israr Tareen, the opposition candidate. For the post of deputy speaker, the PPP-led alliance nominee, Faisal Karim Kundi, will contest Khusbakht Shujaat of the MQM. As the PPP, PML-N, ANP and JUI-F jointly have more than 229 members in the lower house, Dr Fehmida Mirza will make history by becoming the first female speaker of the National Assembly

News, 19 March 2008

### **NA resolution to restore deposed judges**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) has already got a draft resolution prepared by the respected constitutional guru, Fakhruddin G Ebrahim, to be adopted by the National Assembly for reinstating the pre-Nov 3 judiciary. A copy of the draft resolution, available with The News, pays tributes to the slain PPP leader Benazir Bhutto and others, who made the ultimate sacrifices for the supremacy of parliament in the country

Daily Times, 19 March 2008

### **Coalition agrees on power-sharing formula at Centre**

ISLAMABAD: The coalition partners forming the next government claimed on Tuesday that they had finally agreed on a unanimous power-sharing formula based on their proportionate strength in both houses of parliament. However, the incoming prime minister would announce the portfolios after consultations with the heads of the coalition parties, which include the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the Awami National Party (ANP), and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F)

Daily Times, 19 March 2008

### **Editorial: More history is yet to be made**

Editorial: More history is yet to be made The swearing in of the National Assembly on Monday was doubtlessly a history-making event. A planned coalition of four parties has already proclaimed its two-thirds majority in the House with a clear signal that they can amend the Constitution next year after the Senate elections to bring in whatever reforms they wish. The remarkable element in this act was the coming together of politicians who have flourished in the past on the basis of bitter rivalry rather than cooperation. This means, on the face of it, that the inherent political disadvantage ' and the advantage it gave to the presidency ' of a hung parliament has been eliminated

Nation, 19 March 2008

### **OPINION: Avoiding confrontation (Husain Haqqani)**

The opening session of Pakistan's newly elected National Assembly has raised hopes and revived fears about the country's return to democracy. The hopes are the result of unprecedented cooperation between the leaders of major political forces. The fears stem from Pakistan's chequered history of political manipulation by an over-arching establishment. A weakened General (retired) Pervez Musharraf is already warning against "confrontation" between the presidency and the newly elected parliament

Dawn, 19 March 2008

### **Formula envisages 40-strong cabinet**

ISLAMABAD, March 18: The partners in the coming coalition government the PPP, PML-N, ANP and JUI-F on Tuesday worked out a formula for power-sharing but left the crucial details, like the number of ministers and distribution of portfolios, to the new prime minister. A meeting of the consultation committee of the four parties held at the Parliament House also decided to consider the numerical strength of the coalition partners in the Senate. Under the agreed formula, the PPP will get 20 ministries and the PML-N 15 on basis of their numerical strength in the National Assembly. Two ministries will go to the ANP and one to the JUI-F. The JUI-F will get an additional ministry because of its larger number of seats in Senate

Daily Times, 20 March 2008

### **NA elects first female speaker with 2/3rds majority**

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly (NA) elected its first female speaker on Wednesday, as Pakistan People's Party MNA Fehmida Mirza made history after winning more than two-thirds of the total votes. Dr Mirza was nominated for the position by the PPP-led would-be ruling coalition that includes the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the Awami National Party and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl. She won with 249 votes (21 more than the two-thirds majority of 228) against the 70 votes garnered by her opponent, Sardar Israr Tareen, in the 342-member National Assembly

Daily Times, 20 March 2008

### **Musharraf delays Sarabjit's execution**

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf has delayed by 30 days the execution of Sarabjit Singh, an Indian convicted of conducting blasts that killed four people in Lahore in 1990. 'The president has delayed Singh's execution, scheduled for April 1, after the Indian government and the convict's family pleaded him for mercy,' Foreign Office spokesman Muhammad Sadiq said

Daily Times, 20 March 2008

### **Editorial: Statesmanship all round**

On the eve of the announcement of the name of the PPP's candidate for the post of prime minister of Pakistan, one has come to the culminating point of the relationship that developed between President Pervez Musharraf and the PPP chairperson Ms Benazir Bhutto. As the custodian of the policy pursued by her, Mr Asif Ali Zardari has steadily followed the dictates of his wife's political vision and has aligned his party with the PMLN to acquire a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly and be poised to balance the power wielded by President Musharraf after the Senate elections are held next year

News, 20 March 2008

### **Editorial: Writing on the wall**

Wednesday's historic election of the country's first female speaker of parliament is as clear a signal as can be for President Pervez Musharraf and his loyalists that they should put an end to their schemes and machinations to subvert the mandate that the people of Pakistan delivered on Feb 18. The joint PPP-PML-N-ANP nominee, Dr Fehmida Mirza,

got 249 votes out of a total of 324 votes cast means that the new ruling coalition will enjoy a comfortable two-thirds majority in the lower house - of almost 20 seats. In fact, five votes were declared invalid and votes from 18 seats were not forthcoming, mostly because of lingering electoral disputes or poll postponements in the constituencies concerned. The magic number for achieving a two-thirds majority in parliament is 228, for a house of 342, and this means that the writing is very much on the wall for the president and his now rag-tag King's Party - whose joint nominee managed to obtain a mere 70 votes (and this includes over 20, thanks to the MQM)

Nation, 20 March 2008

**Opinion: Army mustn't be dragged into politics (Aziz-ud-Din Ahmad)**

Some had hailed, others shown disbelief while still others decided to wait and see when Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani promised to keep the army out of politics and turn it into a purely professional organisation. Now comes a crucial moment for the general to stand by his promise. President Musharraf seems to be hell bent on provoking a crisis by taking on the new government, about to be inducted within the next few days, over the issue of the deposed judges

Daily Times, 21 March 2008

**Election of PM on Monday**

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf on Thursday summoned a special session of the National Assembly on March 24 (Monday) to elect the new prime minister of the country. "The president has been pleased to summon the National Assembly on Monday, March 24, at 4pm for ascertainment of the member who commands the confidence of the majority of members of the assembly," Musharraf's spokesman Major General (r) Rashid Qureshi told AFP. The president has summoned the session under Clause (1) of Article 54 of the Constitution. According to NA sources, the president summoned the session on the request of Caretaker Prime Minister Mohammadmian Soomro

Daily Times, 21 March 2008

**Suicide car bomb kills five troops in Wana**

WANA: A suicide car bomber killed five and injured nine soldiers when he rammed his explosives-laden jeep into one of the gates of the main army base in South Waziristan on Thursday. "Five soldiers were killed and nine others received injuries when a suicide bomber attacked the base," military spokesman Major General Athar Abbas told Daily Times by phone. "Some soldiers were busy doing maintenance work when the bomber attacked," he added

Dawn, 21 March 2008

**PPP to head Balochistan government, says JUI-F**

ISLAMABAD, March 20: The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is set to head the coalition government in Balochistan after its partner JUI-F on Thursday withdrew its claim to the offices of the chief minister and speaker of the provincial assembly. JUI-F leader Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri told Dawn that his party had decided to support the PPP's nominees for the posts in the larger interest of the people of the province. He said the PPP had agreed that the deputy speaker of the Balochistan Assembly would be from

the JUI-F

News, 21 March 2008

**Opinion: Do not hang Sarabjit (Farhatullah Babar)**

Three issues need examination: the possibility of miscarriage of justice, the larger issue of the death penalty itself and the timing of the execution. According to the record, an Indian national was arrested in August 1990 near the Kasur border for trespassing. After nine days he was produced before a magistrate as "Manjit Singh," an alleged RAW agent who had set off a series of bomb blasts in Lahore, Multan and Faisalabad

Daily Times, 21 March 2008

**Editorial: The challenges are history-making too!**

As the National Assembly in Islamabad made history by electing its first lady speaker, Dr Fehmida Mirza, with a two-thirds majority on Wednesday, Pakistan Electric Power Company (PEPCO) too made history by announcing that the country will hit its worst energy crisis, not in 2008, but in 2009, when electricity shortfall will peak to 4500MW, forcing a load-shedding schedule of 18 hours. Will the parliament stand up to the challenge or will the coalition government, as one leader of the Lawyers' Movement, Justice (Retd) Wajihuddin Ahmad says, "fall in two years"?

Daily Times, 21 March 2008

**Spy agencies destroying explosive data**

Spy agencies destroying explosive data ISLAMABAD: Critical intelligence data and material, including explosive tape recordings of the top-most government, opposition and media persons, are being destroyed by spy agencies to avoid getting caught after the change of government, a senior spy has revealed. "It's time for some of the intelligence agencies to fritter away their dirty work before the incoming masters wash the dirty linen they have collected, in public," he said. The senior spy, associated with the Intelligence Bureau, told this correspondent in a chance meeting on Wednesday that the IB was busy these days destroying the dirty work

News, 21 March 2008

**Opinion: Musharraf should give up (Shafqat Mahmood)**

It is sad that a respected figure like Makhdoom Amin Fahim has allowed himself to be exploited. He surely realises that in the end there is no entitlement in a democracy greater than the will of the majority. Whatever the circumstances leading to it, it is the parliamentary party of the majority coalition that will choose its candidate for the office of prime minister. If it opts for someone other than Makhdoom Sahib, he should gracefully accept it, despite a great deal of personal hurt. Any other course would only amount to playing in the hands of Musharraf

Nation, 21 March 2008

**Opinion: A PM for three months (M.A. Niazi)**

This Yousaf Raza Gillani, who is he? The PPP has not been really more than a political vehicle for the Bhuttos, so it is not used to building up figures other than them to be prime minister, but when a coalition is formed, when a coalition government is to be

headed up for some time until Asif can be found a seat in the National Assembly, a non-Bhutto must be found, but is bound to be something of a mystery. But Yousaf Raza is not much of a mystery. He is from Multan, and from the Gillani family, which is descended from Syed Abdul Qadir, who was both a Hassani and Hussaini Syed (from his mother), of Gilan

News, 23 March 2008

### **Gilani wins the race for PM**

Gilani wins the race for PM ISLAMABAD: The PPP finally nominated Makhdoom Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani for the prime ministerial slot, election for which will be held in the National Assembly on Monday. This was done after prolonged consultations with the coalition partners. The announcement took 34 days after the elections on February 18

News, 23 March 2008

### **Provincial assemblies summoned**

KARACHI: The governors of NWFP, Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab on Saturday convened sessions of the provincial assemblies on April 2, 5, 7 and 9 for administering oath to the newly-elected members. This will be followed by filing of nomination papers for the slots of speakers and deputy speakers following which the assemblies' sessions would be prorogued to meet again for electing leaders of the house of the four provincial assemblies

News, 23 March 2008

### **New govt to talk to militants: NYT**

ISLAMABAD: Faced with a sharp escalation of suicide bombings in urban areas, the leaders of Pakistan's new coalition government say they will negotiate with the militants believed to be orchestrating the attacks, and will use military force only as a last resort, the New York Times reported on Saturday. That talk has alarmed American officials, who fear it reflects a softening stance toward the militants just as President Pervez Musharraf has given the Bush administration a freer hand to strike at militants using pilot-less Predator drones

News, 23 March 2008

### **Nawaz wants end to military action in Fata**

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief Mian Nawaz Sharif on Saturday said the war on terror policy needed to be reviewed and the Army action in the tribal areas must come to an end. Talking to reporters at the residence of PTI chairman Imran Khan, Nawaz Sharif said the new parliament would work as an institution having full authority and carry out legislative work according to the wishes and aspirations of the people

Daily Times, 23 March 2008

### **Editorial: The PPP-MQM reconciliation**

Perhaps the greatest blessing that fell to the share of Pakistan on the day of the Birthday of the Prophet PBUH was the understanding reached between the PPP and the MQM. The significance of this coming together of the two big parties of Sindh will become clear

with the passage of time. Mr Asif Ali Zardari, the architect of this new relationship, made it very clear why he wanted the MQM riding together with his party: he wanted urban and rural Sindh to live in peace, with mutual cooperation added, to save the national economy from being jeopardised by political disorder

Daily Times, 23 March 2008

**Opinion: Between hope and fear (Dr Hasan-Askari Rizvi)**

In case the new government delays the restoration of the judges, it will face street agitation by the lawyers. Will it use the coercive apparatus of the state to neutralise the lawyers in the streets? Pakistan is celebrating Republic Day, March 23, at a time when the country is moving towards a democratic political order. The latest phase of this process began in March 2007 when civil society and political parties challenged President Pervez Musharraf's efforts to get rid of the Chief Justice of Pakistan. The developments that followed produced an electoral triumph for the political forces that rejected Musharraf's centralised authoritarian rule

Dawn, 23 March 2008

**Would-be premier: a profile**

SYED Yusuf Raza Gilani, a member of an influential political family of Multan, started his political career in 1978 after the death of father Makhdoom Alamdar Hussain Gilani, who was a signatory to the Pakistan Resolution. In 1988 elections, he defeated the then Punjab chief minister Nawaz Sharif on PPP ticket. In 1990, again on a PPP ticket, he was elected an MNA after defeating Makhdoom Hamid Raza Gilani, a former federal minister. In 1993, he defeated Malik Sikander Hayat Bosan and later became Speaker of the National Assembly. Mr Gilani contested the election in 1997 on a PPP ticket, but the party did not win a single seat in Punjab. He was jailed in 2001 over charges of misuse of his authority by giving jobs to undeserving people in the National Assembly Secretariat when he was the speaker. He spent six years in jail and could not contest the 2002 elections.

News, 24 March 2008

**Gilani is PM for five years, assures Zardari**

ISLAMABAD: PPP Co-chairperson Asif Ali Zardari has categorically said that the Makhdoom from Multan will be the new PPP prime minister for five years and not for three months. He has already briefed his coalition partners about the reasons which forced him to nominate Makhdoom Yousuf Raza Gilani rather than the Makhdoom from Hala, Amin Fahim. He informed them that he himself is not interested in the job and will not make a Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain out of Gilani

News, 24 March 2008

**Deposed CJ to be freed on Tuesday**

ISLAMABAD: The security forces deployed in front of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry's house in the Judges Enclave in Islamabad will be removed on Tuesday evening, marking the symbolic end of an era when absolute power was enjoyed by one man for eight years, five months and 13 days

Daily Times, 24 March 2008

**'Era of real democracy has begun': Musharraf urges new govt to ensure political stability**

ISLAMABAD: Reiterating his commitment to support and work with the future government, President Musharraf on Sunday urged it to maintain political stability in the country. He said the three-phase programme initiated eight years ago was now nearing culmination, with new governments in place at the Centre and in the provinces.

Daily Times, 24 March 2008

**Editorial: Gillani: premier for five years**

The PPP finally nominated Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani as its candidate for premiership late Saturday and he is one prime minister for whose majority in the National Assembly elaborate arrangements have been made by the ruling coalition. He is expected to win with an overwhelming majority and take oath on Tuesday. Apart from presiding over the largest cabinet in history - expected to be 70-strong in three phases - he will have the most harmonious conditions for stewarding the centre-province relations. The PPP says he will rule for five years, which gives one an inkling of what kind of politics Pakistan will have in the coming days

Nation, 24 March 2008

**Opinion: Future political and legal contours (Dr Farooq Hassan)**

The PPP and the PML(N) won the highest and second highest number of seats respectively in February's elections to the annoyance of Musharraf. He had hoped that the King's party, the PML(Q) and allies would sweep the polls. Since he had access to the intelligence reports from the three of premier spy agencies of the country, it is equally clear that all their predictions and presumably perpetration to produce that kind of a result proved false

News, 26 March 2008

**Musharraf administers oath to Gilani**

ISLAMABAD: Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani took oath as the country's 23rd prime minister on Tuesday. President Pervez Musharraf administered oath to the newly elected prime minister at Aiwan-e-Sadr at an impressive ceremony attended by prominent political leaders and high-ranking military and civil personalities

News, 26 March 2008

**Pakistan not to play into US hands, says Nawaz**

ISLAMABAD: PML-N Quaid Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday said the new government would review Pakistan's role in the war on terror after holding a debate in parliament. He said the government does not want its people to be made targets of missiles and rockets in exchange of giving peace to others

News, 26 March 2008

**Nawaz advised to soften anti-Musharraf stand**

LAHORE: US officials have asked PML-N Quaid Mian Nawaz Sharif to soften his stand on President Pervez Musharraf as their government feels comfortable getting along with

the man atop the hill, The News has learnt

News, 26 March 2008

**Editorial: A clear message**

Top leaders of all the main political parties in the new parliament, including even the staunch ally of President Pervez Musharraf, the PML-Q, stayed away from the oath-taking ceremony of Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani at the presidency on Tuesday in their first collective act of defiance and rejection of a president they would all like to fade into history. The otherwise dignified ceremony ended on slogans in favour of Benazir Bhutto and her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, ostensibly to snub the president. The attendance of the second tier of PPP leadership was symbolic while the PML-N and the ANP were altogether absent. Even Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain opted not to be there for their own reasons. As for the PPP leaders who were there, they are known to have a reputation of being soft towards the presidency and have in the past interacted with it at various levels

Daily Times, 26 March 2008

**Solving the judicial crisis (Ijaz Hussain)**

Aitzaz Ahsan, President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, has given an ultimatum to Parliament to restore the deposed judges within 30 days, failing which he has threatened to take to the streets, a plan that includes a march on Army House. Civil society has supported the move and the public at large appears to approve of it

Nation, 26 March 2008

**Uqab test successful (S.M. Hali)**

March 20, 2008 will go down as a red-letter day for Pakistan's indigenous defence industry as it conducted the successful test flight of a pilotless plane. Flight data from the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) named "Uqab", indicates that all design parameters have been successfully validated, said the ISPR in a statement. "The performance of UAV can be compared to any modern state-of-the-art UAV in its category," the statement said, adding that the flight test was preceded by a series of trials last year. Pakistan Army Chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, who witnessed the test along with senior armed forces officers and scientists, congratulated the scientists and engineers on their "outstanding success." It was termed a great stride towards Pakistan's technical prowess in this field

Daily Times, 26 March 2008

**Editorial: What are the first things to do?**

Speaking in the National Assembly after being elected prime minister with a two-thirds majority in the house on Monday, Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani ordered the release from detention of all the deposed judges of the higher judiciary. He then requested the judges to refrain from agitation and let the parliament be the judge of what is to be done in respect of their restoration. The first priority of the new National Assembly had to be the judges case because the two mainstream parties in the ruling coalition had given themselves one month in which to decide the matter

News, 27 March 2008

**Tribal elders tell US only talks can end militancy**

PESHAWAR: Elders of the Khyber Tribal Agency on Wednesday urged the US administration to stop seeking military solution to militancy in the tribal areas and suggested adopting traditional means of Jirga to end the resistance. A group of 11 tribal elders led by Malik Darya Khan met US Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte and Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher in Landikotal Cantonment. They told the US officials that the centuries-old Jirga system was still effective in the tribal territory, which provided remedy for every trouble, including the scourge of terrorism

News, 27 March 2008

**Bush clears way for \$300m aid to Pakistan**

WASHINGTON: US President George W Bush has decided to waive a domestic law for Pakistan to pump in \$300 million security assistance in the country amid stepped up efforts by Washington to bring its new civilian government on board in the "war on terror". Bush has decided to exempt Pakistan from a law that restricts funding to the countries where the legitimate head of the state has been deposed in a military coup with a view to facilitating the transition to democratic rule, the White House said, adding it was important to efforts of the US to respond to, deter, or prevent acts of international terrorism

News, 27 March 2008

**WB highlights factors behind strife in Balochistan**

ISLAMABAD: The challenges of internal strife are further exacerbated by the delicate situation on Pakistan's western border with limited economic opportunities, lagging social indicators and large gender gaps, as Balochistan is the poorest of Pakistan's four provinces, said the World Bank. The latest report, titled Balochistan: developing public-private-partnership for education service delivery, says that the overall literacy rate in Balochistan, at 38 per cent (20 per cent for females), compares unfavourably with the Pakistan average at 54 per cent (42 per cent for females)

Daily Times, 27 March 2008

**Editorial: American 'interference' and our rage**

The visit to Islamabad of the US Deputy Secretary of State Mr John Negroponte and Assistant Secretary of State Mr Richard Boucher even before the installation of a new government has enraged the media in Pakistan. Throwing all care for objectivity to the winds, TV anchors and editorial writers have vented their anger at the "hegemonic pressure tactics" of Washington and rebuked those Pakistani leaders who met the two Americans for having no concern for the "sovereignty of Pakistan" which was being thus violated. There was almost a negative consensus on the precipitate visit among those who rushed to comment

News, 28 March 2008

**US not pressurising Pakistan: Negroponte**

KARACHI: US Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte on Thursday dispelled the impression that the United States was exerting pressure on Pakistan to carry out activities

that only served the US interest and said his country wanted to deal with the problem of terrorism in a way that was beneficial to both the countries

News, 28 March 2008

**Who says this is our war? (Ayaz Amir)**

It isn't and never was and if our newly-inducted political leadership is dumb enough to swallow all the fiction about the so-called 'war on terror' that our American friends (friends?) seem keen to push down its throat, God help us. This is George Bush's war. This is the war, or a front in the war, orchestrated by those strategic crazies going by the name of neocons, the same geniuses who wanted to reshape the world ♦?? beginning with the reshaping of the Middle East ♦?? and gave their own people, the American people, two un-winnable wars: in Iraq and, wait for it, Afghanistan.

Dawn, 28 March 2008

**Two IB men trailing Al Qaeda shot dead**

KARACHI, March 27: Two officers of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) believed to be involved in anti-Al Qaeda operations were gunned down on Thursday on a busy street near Regal Chowk, in Saddar, witnesses and police said. They said Inspector Mohammed Ibrahim and Sub-inspector Fazalur Rahman, posted at the IB's anti-terrorism section (ATS), were shot dead on Frere Road at around 7:20pm by two attackers who came on a motorbike Honda-125

Dawn, 28 March 2008

**Accord on 23-member cabinet reached**

ISLAMABAD, March 27: The Pakistan Democratic Alliance (PDA) has agreed to form a preliminary cabinet of 23 ministers which will be later expanded to accommodate more people from coalition partners, it is learnt. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) sources told APP that a meeting of the joint committee of coalition partners on Thursday finalised modalities for the distribution of federal cabinet slots and an announcement was expected soon

Daily Times, 29 March 2008

**115-member NWFP assembly sworn in : Frontier PA for UN probe into BB's murder**

PESHAWAR: One hundred and fifteen members elected to the NWFP assembly took oath under the 1973 Constitution at the inaugural provincial assembly session on Friday. Shortly thereafter, the assembly unanimously passed a resolution demanding a United Nations investigation into former premier Benazir Bhutto's assassination

Daily Times, 29 March 2008

**Editorial: Deciding the 'fate' of President Musharraf**

The US Deputy Secretary of State, John D Negroponte, whose visit has aroused so much media anger in Pakistan, has put forward his country's policy on President Pervez Musharraf, saying that it is for Pakistanis to decide his future. At a briefing in Karachi on Thursday, he said: 'Mr Musharraf is the president of your country. The US will respect

whatever Pakistanis decide about their president. Certainly the US administration has no desire to interfere in Pakistan's political arrangements'

Dawn, 29 March 2008

### **Parties finally clinch deal on key ministries**

ISLAMABAD, March 28: The ruling coalition partners have finally agreed on the distribution of ministries and a formal announcement is expected 'in a couple of days'. In the first phase, sources said on Friday, up to 23 ministers were expected to take oath - 10 from the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), nine from the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N), two from Awami National Party (ANP) and one each from Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-F (JUI-F) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata)

The News, 29 March 2008

### **Six killed in Parachinar ambulance ambush**

PARACHINAR: At least six people, including a woman, were killed and two others sustained serious injuries when unidentified gunmen opened indiscriminate fire at an ambulance near here on Thursday

Dawn, 30 March 2008

### **Gilani wins unanimous trust vote**

ISLAMABAD, March 29: Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani on Saturday secured a historic unanimous trust vote from the National Assembly and then unveiled his coalition government's priorities, including war on terrorism, an austerity drive, increased electricity generation and repeal of some controversial laws. But what was dubbed as the programme for the first 100 days of his administration contained no immediate relief from people's hardships because of food inflation and acute shortages of electricity and water for which he said there was no immediate solution

Dawn, 30 March 2008

### **ANP gets in touch with local Taliban**

PESHAWAR, March 29: The Awami National Party and the local Taliban have formally made contacts to negotiate peace and find a solution to the growing militancy in the NWFP and tribal areas. The ANP has already expressed its desire of bringing all hostile quarters to the negotiating table to work out a lasting solution to the war-like situation along the Durand Line and in some settled districts of the province. The local Taliban had welcomed the ANP's move, sources told Dawn

Dawn, 30 March 2008

### **Opinion: Dangers of democracy (Kunwar Idris)**

PAKISTAN is about to witness once again the 'dawn of democracy' just as it had in the past at intervals of ten years or so only to make way for longer dictatorships. Sixty years of independence thus stand divided, almost equally, between the two. Which of the two periods ♦?? elective or authoritarian ♦?? was more caring or less troublesome? On this point, in the historical perspective, people's opinion remains divided just as was the loyalty of their leaders at the relevant time

News, 30 March 2008

**'Dosti Bus' hijacked, released in Khyber Agency**

LANDIKOTAL: A Pak-Afghan 'Dosti' (Friendship) Bus carrying 47 passengers, including 42 Afghans and five crewmembers, was hijacked on Saturday by armed tribesmen but the vehicle was returned and hostages freed after a Jirga held talks with the hijackers. Sources said the vehicle (LRO-9788) was on its way to Jalalabad from Peshawar when Sultankhel tribesmen in Khyber Agency allegedly intercepted the vehicle on Peshawar-Torkham Highway and took it to an undisclosed location. It was second incident of its kind within three days

News, 30 March 2008

**Editorial: PM's package**

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani's historic and unanimous vote of confidence from the National Assembly on Saturday gave the new democratic order a huge boost, sending all the right messages to the relevant quarters that the political parties of the country are now grown up and mature enough to run the affairs of the state without interference and uncalled for bullying by the establishment. Mr Gilani became one of the few politicians of Pakistan who have ever received such an across-the-board support of the political spectrum. Conversely he also has now the added burden to take everybody along on this new democratic path so that the institution of parliament entrenches itself strongly and deeply in the national polity.