

The News, 1 May 2005

Stellar Pak role helps win back Yen loan (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: Japan Saturday announced resumption of the long-awaited Yen Loan Programme to Pakistan at the conclusion of visiting Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's meetings with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and President Pervez Musharraf. This is Koizumi's first visit to Pakistan. The announcement came in a joint statement issued after talks between the leadership of the two countries. It says taking into account the vital role Pakistan plays in the international community and the improvement in Pakistan's economy achieved through a number of domestic reforms, Japan has decided to extend new Yen loans amounting to about 16,400 million Yen (\$155.5 million or Rs9.3billion) to Pakistan. Out of this nearly 12,523 million Yen have been earmarked for Lower Chenab Canal System Rehabilitation Project and up to 3,839 million Yen for Load Dispatch System Up-gradation Project.

The News, 1 May 2005

Eight militants held in Gilgit

GILGIT: The Northern Areas police claim to have arrested four suspected militants involved in different cases of murder and bomb blasts that were committed in the preceding months following Jan 8 sectarian violence in Gilgit. A statement issued by the Police Department said police have arrested the "real" culprits involved in a blast on April 16 at a Naltar mosque and identified them as Yusuf Ali son of Ghulam Rasool and Safdar Abbas son of Asghar Ali residents of Lower Naltar but settled in Chilmisdas. It said the accused hurled two homemade devices into the mosque but one of them did not go off while three persons were injured.

Daily Times, 1 May 2005

Passengers list for 4th Kashmir bus given to IHK

MUZAFFARABAD: The deputy commissioner of Muzaffarabad has handed over the passengers' list of the fourth Kashmir bus to his counterpart in Held Kashmir. The fourth Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus will be leaving on May 20. Arrangements have been completed for the third bus departing on May 5. This is the first time that IHK civilian authorities have received the passengers' list. Previously, Indian army personnel used to receive the list from the deputy commissioner of Muzaffarabad. online

Dawn, 2 May 2005

Steps for safety of N-power plants

ISLAMABAD, May 1: The Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) has made it obligatory for licensees for nuclear power plants to prove that the probability of any release of radioactivity from their plants 'is not more than one in a million years'. Besides, the licensees would also have to ensure that the probability of any damage to the reactor core 'would not be more than one in a hundred thousand years', says an official announcement made by the PNRA on Sunday. These targets are to be met by all new N-power plants to be installed in the country. Meeting these targets would make the chances of such incidents as small as of getting someone killed by a meteor falling on earth, said Zaheer A. Baig, head of the PNRA's Information Services Directorate.

Dawn, 2 May 2005

AJK accountability law to be revised (Tariq Naqash)

MUZAFFARABAD, May 1: The AJK government has constituted a committee to recommend amendments to the state's accountability law in accordance with the constitution. "The committee has been established to review the controversial affairs and present (its) recommendations with regard to bringing the Ehtesab Bureau Act 2001 in conformity with the Interim Constitution of Azad Kashmir (Act 1974)," said a notification issued by the services and general administration department.

Dawn, 2 May 2005

Military operation in Waziristan (Amir Usman)

How would one interpret a statement by a US army general that another military operation was being contemplated in the tribal areas of Pakistan? Was it the result of a mutual agreement, which Pakistan has now chosen to deny, pressure on Pakistan to undertake another military operation in Waziristan, or blatant interference in our internal affairs? Lieutenant-General David Barno, the commander of the US forces in Afghanistan, recently declared at a press conference in Islamabad that "We (Pakistan and the US) collectively feel that there is need to undertake a military operation in North Waziristan to keep pressure on the terrorists net- works."

The News, 2 May 2005

Tribal Jirga calls for end to FCR

PESHAWAR: A three-day tribal Jirga concluded here Sunday amid calls for brining an end to military operation in tribal areas and replacement of "inhuman" sections of the Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR) with the Islamic Shariah. The Jirga adopted a number of resolutions asking the federal government to stop American bombardment on tribesmen in South Waziristan, violations of human rights in the tribal belt, giving all basic rights to the people of tribal areas, constitution of independent council for the areas and amendment in the FCR.

Dawn, 2 May 2005

Committee report on big dams delayed (Khaleeq Kiani)

ISLAMABAD, May 1: Chairman of the Technical Committee on Water Resources A.N.G. Abbasi has sought more time to finalize and submit a report on the issue of building large dams, it is learnt. Informed sources told Dawn on Sunday that the

government had given Mr Abbasi the deadline of April 30 for submitting the report so that a decision could be taken about big dams. Mr Abbasi, said the sources, met federal Minister for Water and Power Liaquat Ali Jatoi on Saturday and sought some more time. He informed the minister that he required time to fine-tune the report.

The News, 3 May 2005

Shaukat rules out mid-term polls

OKARA: Claiming complete stability and supremacy of law, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Monday ruled out mid-term elections in the country. Talking to newsmen at a lunch at the residence of Federal Defence Minister Rao Sikandar Iqbal, the PM said: "Question of holding mid-term elections does not arise while schedule for local bodies polls is already under process which will be announced soon." He said the country was achieving progress in all spheres of life due to realistic policies of the government. "There is political stability and constitutional institutions are working independently while the government is striving to make Pakistan a moderate and developed country", Aziz argued.

The News, 3 May 2005

Bilateralism fine for Kishan Ganga: FO (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday hoped that apprehensions it had over the Indian decision to construct Kishan Ganga hydroelectric power project would be allayed through bilateral talks. Foreign Office spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani told a weekly press briefing that an Indian delegation was arriving here on May 7 for talks on the project so that some solution could be arrived at. "Otherwise, in case there is a failure to resolve this issue bilaterally, obviously, Pakistan will have to move the World Bank as was seen in the case of the Baglihar Dam," he warned.

Daily Times, 3 May 2005

Pakistan tells US about border violations

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the US have agreed to increase cooperation against terrorism amid reports that Pakistan has again refused to send its troops to Iraq. Sources said on Monday that President Pervez Musharraf told the visiting US Central Command chief General John P Abizaid about Pakistan's concern on the violation of the Pakistan-Afghan border by US troops and their intrusion and search operations in Pakistan's border areas. "This is tantamount to calling our intent into question," Musharraf told Abizaid.

Dawn, 4 May 2005

Aziz leaves for Malaysia today (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, May 3: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz will leave for Kuala Lumpur, capital city of Malaysia, on Wednesday night aboard a special aircraft on the first leg of his Southeast Asian tour that will also take him to Brunei, Thailand and Singapore. The main focus of the eight-day tour is to develop economic and commercial linkages with Asean countries. In Kuala Lumpur, the prime minister will hold formal delegation-level talks with his Malaysian counterpart Abdullah Ahmed Badawi on Thursday. The two leaders will review all aspects of bilateral relations and discuss regional as well as global issues. Bilateral talks would cover cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, investment, culture, and tourism, foreign ministry officials said.

Dawn, 4 May 2005

China ready to join Pakistan, India, Iran: Gas pipeline construction

CHENGDU, May 3: China is prepared to join Pakistan, India and Iran in the construction of cross-border gas pipeline project. This was stated by China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) Assistant President Liao Yongyuan in an interview here at the CNPC's headquarters. "We are convinced that the Iran-India pipeline through Pakistan is of significant importance and will substantially benefit all three countries," he said, adding, China wishes to facilitate construction of this gigantic project. Liao said that China has already developed good partnership with Pakistan, India and Iran in the petroleum sector and wished to cooperate with them, making the project a reality. He hoped this offer would be received well by the respective countries, since China being a friendly neighbouring country could be in a better position to help in implementing the project on reasonable conditions.

Dawn, 4 May 2005

Pakistan seeks early completion of FTAs: Malaysia, Singapore (Mubarak Zeb Khan)

ISLAMABAD, May 3: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz will urge the leaders of Malaysia and Singapore for early completion of the proposed free trade agreements (FTA) during his visit to these countries. The prime minister will embark on a four-nation tour on Wednesday. The eight-day visit will take him to Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore and Thailand. Commerce Secretary Tasneem Noorani told Dawn on Tuesday that during the meetings of the prime minister with his Singaporean and Malaysian counterparts, the areas of mutual interest would be considered for inclusion in the FTAs to enhance cooperation in various fields and bilateral trade.

Dawn, 4 May 2005

IAEA seeks inclusion of Pakistan, India, Israel: N-disarmament talks

UNITED NATIONS, May 3: The chief of UN nuclear watchdog on Monday urged the inclusion of Israel, India and Pakistan — the three nations who are not a party to Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) — in talks on nuclear disarmament. Nuclear

disarmament can only succeed if it is universal," Mohamed ElBaradei, Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said at the opening session of the 2005 Review Conference of the states parties to the NPT. Although Mr ElBaradei has proposed the involvement of these three states not party to the NPT in disarmament discussions at earlier events also, it is the first time he has done so before a high-level global conference.

The News, 4 May 2005

Duty free food import from India allowed (Nadeem Malik)

ISLAMABAD: In a major decision on Tuesday, the government allowed duty free import of five essential food items through land route from India, including meat/live animals, potatoes, tomatoes, onion and garlic. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting of the Price Control Committee chaired by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz to review the price situation in the country and propose a strategy to overcome the inflationary pressure, particularly in foodstuff. The meeting reviewed the prices of some of the essential edible items in major regional capitals and decided to import the five basic kitchen items. Out of the 11 items reviewed by the Price Committee, nine items have 15-50 per cent higher prices in Islamabad, as compared to New Delhi.

The Nation, 4 May 2005

Just solution of Kashmir to be explored

ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz Tuesday said the government strictly believes on women empowerment and a number of steps have been taken to provide them employment openings in all fields. Talking about the Kashmir issue he hoped that a peaceful and just solution of the issue will be explored in result of the ongoing dialogue the two countries. While addressing the inaugural session of Fifth South Asia Regional Ministerial Conference organised by Ministry of Women Development here at Convention Centre, he said that the government has done a lot to ensure gender equality in all fields during the last five years but there is still need to do more in this regard.

The Nation, 4 May 2005

Balochistan body for deleting 30 items from concurrent list

ISLAMABAD - The Parliamentary Committee on Balochistan Tuesday unanimously agreed to delete 30 items from the concurrent list which will be devolved to provinces with the passage of constitutional amendments. There was a general consensus that the Council of Common Interest (CCI) should be made an effective body so that it could implement provincial autonomy, said an official handout issued after the meeting of parliamentary committee on Balochistan chaired by Ch. Shujat Hussain. It was suggested that an amendment may be made in the Constitution requiring a meeting of the CCI to be held at least once after every six months and there was a general feeling that strengthening provinces would mean strengthening the Federation.

The Nation, 4 May 2005

Provinces mull NFC 50:50 deal (Javed Mahmood)

LAHORE - All the four provinces are unwilling to accept the 50:50 formula for the distribution of resources under the proposed 6th National Finance Commission (NFC) award without studying it and knowing their share in it, it is learnt on Tuesday. In a recent informal meeting in Islamabad although the provinces welcomed President Pervez Musharraf's idea of NFC award's distribution on 50:50 basis, the representatives of the provincial governments, however, expressed their reservations that without studying the entire mechanism and ascertaining their actual share in it, they could not give their consent for the new mechanism, a source privy to the meeting told The Nation. Under the existing 5th NFC award the provinces are getting 63 per cent share while federal government is getting 37 percent and it is unclear as yet as to how much resources would be transferred to the provinces under the proposed framework of 50:50, he said.

Dawn, 4 May 2005

Construction of three dams in Balochistan approved (Saleem Shahid)

QUETTA, May 3: The Planning Commission of Pakistan has approved construction of three major dams and 200 delay action dams in different areas of Balochistan and decided to provide more funds for developing resources in the province. The three major dams include the Hingol dam in Lasbela district. The other two would be constructed in the remote areas of Kharan and Qila Abdullah. The deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, Dr Ikram Shiekh, said this while presiding over a high-level meeting here on Tuesday.

Daily Times, 5 May 2005

Prime minister meets president: Pakistan seeks full ASEAN membership

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Wednesday called on President General Pervez Musharraf and discussed matters of national importance, including economic development and the political situation in Pakistan. The two leaders met ahead of Mr Aziz's departure on a four-nation visit to the far eastern region, according to a press release. The prime minister took the president into confidence on his tour saying that his visit to Brunei Darus Salam, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia would not only help boost trade and economic ties with these countries but would also pave the way for Pakistan to become a complete ASEAN member.

The Nation, 5 May 2005

Indian trade barriers affecting exports identified (MEHTAB HAIDER)

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan has identified certain tariff and non-tariff barriers being imposed by India to marginalize its exports that includes higher tariffs, import bans, quotas, import licensing, restrictions through state monopolies, certification requirements, inter-provincial movement of goods, limited ports and inland customs posts. A document available with The Nation revealed that the Indian government has identified 159 specific commodities (including food preservations, milk powder, condensed milk, infant milk foods, colour dyes, steel, cement, electrical appliances and dry cell batteries) that the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) must certify before the products are allowed to enter the country.

Daily Times 5 May 2005

Top Qaeda leader caught (Shahzad Raza and Iqbal Khattak)

ISLAMABAD/peshawar: The government said on Wednesday that security forces had arrested Abu Farraj Al Libbi, the third most senior in the Al Qaeda hierarchy and mastermind behind two assassination attempts on President Pervez Musharraf. Interior Minister Aftab Khan Sherpao told reporters that Al Libbi, a Libyan, was arrested a few days ago. However, he did not say where Al Libbi was arrested from. He said the Al Qaeda operative had planned two assassination attempts on the president in December 2003. Sherpao refused to comment on the number of other Al Qaeda operatives reportedly arrested along with Al Libbi.

The Nation, 5 May 2005

MMA restarts anti-Musharraf drive

CHAKWAL - The MMA once again launched an anti-government and anti-Musharraf campaign by holding a public rally Wednesday for the revival of democracy in the country. The rally, attended by thousands of MMA workers and the general masses, demanded of Gen. Musharraf to immediately quit the office of president and announce general elections so that genuine leadership could emerge and sanctity of Constitution and parliament is restored. This demand was raised in a resolution unanimously passed on the occasion.

The News, 5 May 2005

Nine injured in Quetta tribal clash

QUETTA: At least nine people, including correspondent of daily Jang Osta Muhammad, were wounded when a clash took place between two rival armed tribesmen at Sariab road in Quetta Tuesday. The rival groups exchanged heavy fire with modern weapons against one another at Sariab road in front of the University of Balochistan Quetta. The exchange of fire was so intense that the police and law enforcement agencies could not stop it. The firing continued for more than ten minutes and the main Sariab Road presented a look like a battlefield.

The News, 5 May 2005

Gilgit violence: 148 suspects rounded up (Shabbir Ahmed Mir)

GILGIT: The local police have arrested 148 people allegedly involved in 127 cases of violence occurred in Gilgit after the slaying of a cleric on January 8, police said. "We have completed investigations into some cases and 98 suspects have been sent to judicial lockup," Raji Rehmat, superintendent of police in Gilgit, told a press briefing the other day. "Challans of 50 more alleged criminals have been submitted in the court," added Rehmat who was assisted by AIG Police Dilpazir Khan in the briefing.

Dawn, 5 May 2005

Kashmir bus set to roll for third time

SRINAGAR, May 4: Security forces checked for landmines on the eve of the third run of the trans-Kashmir bus slated for Thursday against a backdrop of surging violence in revolt-hit held Kashmir. Since the launch of the historic route April 7 meant to promote peace in the divided Himalayan region, over 100 militants have been killed in scores of clashes with troops in held Kashmir. It is the biggest number to be killed in a month in at least three years, police say, and comes as the nuclear-armed neighbours are engaged in a peace process they have declared "irreversible."

Dawn, 5 May 2005

Seven suspects held in Bajaur Agency (Anwarullah Khan)

KHAAR (Bajaur Agency), May 4: Army commandos and paramilitary forces arrested an Uzbek national and six other suspects, including Afghans, during a mid-night operation in the Mamond sub-division, some 15km from here on Wednesday. The suspects, including three local activists of an out-lawed religious organization, were taken to an undisclosed location for interrogation. The locals were identified as Maulana Gul Mohammad, Maulana Bashir Ahmad and another man, known as Hafiz. Names of the Afghans could not be ascertained. The Political Agent of Bajaur Agency, who had also taken part in the operation, while talking to journalists, confirmed the arrest of the Uzbek.

Dawn, 5 May 2005

ARD team leaves for Dera Bugti today (Amir Wasim)

ISLAMABAD, May 4: A delegation of the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) will leave for Sukkur here on Thursday on way to Dera Bugti to assess the Balochistan situation and express solidarity with the people of the province. Talking to Dawn here on Wednesday, ARD secretary-general Iqbal Zafar Jhagra said the 15-member delegation would be led by alliance's chairman Makhdoom Amin Fahim. The team would reach Sukkur on Thursday evening and Dera Bugti on Friday.

Dawn, 6 May 2005

Pakistan's bid for Asean role backed: FTA talks with Malaysia proceeding well (Qudssia Akhlaque)

KUALA LUMPUR, May 5: Malaysia on Thursday gave an emphatic endorsement to Pakistan's bid for a full dialogue partnership with the 10-state Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) of which the former is a key member. The assurance was held out to Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz by his Malaysian counterpart Abdullah Ahmed Badawi during their 40-minute one-to-one meeting at the latter's office in Putrajaya. "We welcome and support at international level Pakistan's more active role in Asean as full dialogue partner," Mr Badawi later declared explicitly at a joint press conference with Prime Minister Aziz. In an equally significant development the two sides decided to conclude the FTA-related early harvest agreement by July.

The Nation, 6 May 2005

Musharraf attack fugitive captured (Assad Hameed)

Islamabad - The operatives of a law enforcing unit Thursday once again got hold of a fleeing convict in General Pervez Musharraf attack case, informed sources in the security apparatus. The apprehended fugitive, Mushtaq Ahmed, a former technician in Pakistan Air Force (PAF), was on the run since he broke away from a detention cell in Chaklala air base following his conviction in connection with the first attack on motorcade of President General Pervez Musharraf in Rawalpindi on December 14, 2003. General Musharraf narrowly escaped the assassination plot at Jhanda Chichi bridge, courtesy a jamming device that delayed the explosion of a powerful C-4 explosive by fraction of a second which banged the bridge into pieces immediately after the President's motorcade passed over.

Daily Times, 6 May 2005

Dozens held in followup to Al Libbi's capture

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani security forces have rounded more than two-dozen Al Qaeda suspects after arresting Abu Farraj Farj Al Libbi, intelligence officials said on Thursday. "Raids are being carried out in several cities after Abu Farraj Farj Al Libbi's interrogation," a Pakistani intelligence official said. In swoops in Lahore and Peshawar, more than two-dozen other Al Qaeda suspects were netted, an official said. "In one raid last night, in Lahore, six men and two women were arrested," the official said, adding that automatic rifles and more than three-dozen hand grenades were seized. Al Libbi remained silent for hours after his capture this week before finally confessing his identity to his interrogators, whose findings were passed on to US officials, a second intelligence official said.

Dawn, 6 May 2005

Kasuri to visit Australia, New Zealand this month (Hanif Khalid)

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri will visit Australia and New Zealand from May 12 to 17. Kasuri will be the first foreign minister of Pakistan to visit these two countries. He will be in Australia from May 12 to 15, and in New Zealand from May 16 to 17, and will have meetings with the prime ministers and foreign ministers of the two countries. During these meetings, bilateral, regional and international issues will be discussed. The war against terrorism and its impact on Pakistani economy and social life as well as the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and its implementation in the region will also come under discussion.

Dawn, 6 May 2005

Talks on Amritsar-Lahore bus service from 10th

NEW DELHI: India and Pakistan will open talks next week on the launch of bus service between Amritsar and Lahore followed by parleys on contentious Siachen and Sir Creek issues. Technical-level talks between would be held for two days from May 10 in Lahore, Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna told reporters here on Thursday. The talks, which will also cover the issue of running a bus service to religious places in Pakistan like Nankana Sahib, will be held in pursuance of the desire expressed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf in a Joint Statement last month for early start of the service, he said.

Dawn, 6 May 2005

Chances of MMA-ARD cooperation exist: Fazl

LAHORE: Opposition Leader in National Assembly Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said despite differences, chances of cooperation between the MMA and the ARD still existed and he wished that both the alliances should chalk out a strategy to launch a joint struggle against dictatorship. He was talking to newsmen after inauguration of a shopping centre and laying foundation stone of extension of a mosque in Anarkali Lahore on Thursday evening. The function was marred by mismanagement as a large number of workers and others surrounded the opposition leader blocking journalists' access to him. Fazl said contacts between ARD and MMA still continued.

Daily Times, 6 May 2005

Public display of weapons banned in Waziristan (Iqbal Khattak)

PESHAWAR: Authorities on Thursday banned the display of weapons in North Waziristan Agency while forming two committees to buy heavy weapons from the tribesmen. A spokesman for the Federally Administered Tribal Areas Secretariat stated that after the ban on the display of firearms in North Waziristan Agency's main bazaars, the political administration had set up two committees to purchase heavy weapons from the tribesmen at market prices. "The public display of weapons in the

agency's main bazaar's has been banned under a disarmament campaign in the tribal areas.

The Statesman, 6 May 2005

Reshuffle in top Army hierarchy (Naveed Miraj)

ISLAMABAD: Lieutenant-General Khalid Munir has been named as the next commander of the Army Strategic Force as the incumbent commander of the force, Lt-General Ghulam Mustafa, is retiring in the next week, sources told the Statesman. The appointment of General Khalid will vacate the position of Quarter Master General at the GHQ which will be filled by Lt-General Afzal Muzzafar who is serving presently as corps commander Multan. Major General Syed Sabahat Hussain has been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General and appointed as corps commander Multan. General Sabahat was commissioned in the Guides Infantry, Frontier Force Regiment on November 14, 1971. He saw combat action during 1971 Indo-Pak war.

The Nation, 6 May 2005

Freed Pak embassy official returns

ISLAMABAD - Malik Javed, an official of Pakistani embassy in Iraq who was abducted last month, arrived back in Pakistan on Thursday. Javed, 48, received an emotional welcome from his family and Foreign Office officials as he touched down at Islamabad airport. Talking to the newsmen, he said that he was thankful to God Almighty for getting a new life. He said, "I am also thankful to the people of my country who prayed for my release." Javed was abducted on April 9 in Baghdad after he left his residence to pray at a mosque. His kidnappers later freed him and the Foreign Office said at the time that his release was unconditional.

Dawn, 6 May 2005

Manchhar Lake water release from today (Aziz Malik)

HYDERABAD, May 5: Kotri Barrage chief engineer Manzoor Ahmad Shaikh has said water from the Manchhar Lake will be released into the River Indus from Friday afternoon to protect embankments of the lake. He was talking to Dawn by telephone on Thursday. He said the committee which had to decide about the date and time and the quantum of water to be released from Manchhar into the Indus had recommended a ratio of 1:30 (1,000 cusecs of the Manchhar water to be mixed with 30,000 cusecs of the Indus). He, however, claimed that 40,000 cusecs of water was expected to reach the point of the river where the Manchhar water was to be released.

The Nation, 7 May 2005

Plot to kill Musharraf thwarted

ISLAMABAD (AFP) - The security forces have foiled a new plot by Al-Qaeda militants to assassinate President Pervez Musharraf, security sources said Friday. Seven conspirators were arrested in a number of raids in Punjab in late April, one week before the capture of Al-Qaeda number three Abu Faraj al-Libbi, the officials said. This is a spectacular achievement by Pakistan's security agency, said a top security official. First we smashed the gang plotting a new attack on Musharraf and then a week later we netted two Arabs including al-Libbi he said.

Daily Times, 7 May 2005

Investment not open to Indian firms until Kashmir settled: PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said on Friday that Pakistan, poised for economic growth of at least 7.5 percent this year, had removed all barriers to foreign investment, but Indian companies won't be welcome until the rivals dispute over the Kashmir region is resolved. The atmospherics between the two countries are getting better. But the economic relations have to move in tandem with progress on many issues including the core issue of Kashmir, he told a small group of journalists during his visit to Malaysia.

The News, 7 May 2005

Indian team arrives today to discuss Kishan Ganga issue (Munawar Hasan)

LAHORE: An eight-member delegation to hold decisive talks on controversial Kishan Ganga Hydro Electric Project being constructed in held Kashmir. Indian Commissioner for Indus Water D K Mehta will lead the team which will reach here on Saturday evening on four-day visit. Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Water Syed Jamait Ali Shah will lead 10-member Pakistani delegation during the talks. Officials of Wapda, Punjab Irrigation Department and federal government are part of Pakistani delegation. The Kishan Ganga project involves diversion of waters of one tributary of the river Jhelum to another which, according to Pakistan, is not permissible under the Indus Waters Treaty.

The Nation, 7 May 2005

Kasuri discusses SAARC meet dates with Natwar

ISLAMABAD - Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri on Friday telephoned his Indian counterpart Natwar Singh and discussed with him matters of mutual interest including the finalisation of dates for 13th SAARC Summit to be held in Dhaka. Both the Foreign Ministers exchanged views about the dates being discussed in this regard for the last quarter of 2005. According to a Foreign Office statement a meeting of the Council of Ministers will precede the Summit. Foreign Minister Kasuri as Chairman of the Council of Ministers of SAARC is holding consultations with other foreign ministers to finalise dates, which are acceptable to the members of the SAARC for holding the Summit during 2005.

Dawn, 7 May 2005

Centrifuge parts to be sent to IAEA: PM

KUALA LUMPUR, May 6: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said on Friday that Pakistan would, under certain conditions, send centrifuge parts for tests by the UN's atomic agency to help determine whether Iran has been secretly developing nuclear weapons. The parts could allow the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna to determine whether highly enriched uranium contamination found in Iran had originated there, or if it had come from Pakistan. Yes, we will send these parts under certain conditions, the prime minister said while talking to a group of journalists here. We have various discussions going on with the IAEA as part of a process which relates to the situation between Iran and various countries. We are willing to cooperate with them to come up with some credible solution to this problem.

Dawn, 7 May 2005

Steps to lure back refugees urged: UNHCR envoy meets Musharraf

ISLAMABAD, May 6: President Gen Pervez Musharraf on Friday reiterated the country's policy of maintaining strong bonds with Afghanistan and said that despite receiving limited assistance from the international community Pakistan had hosted a large number of Afghan refugees for over two decades. He said although most of the refugees were keen to go to their country but some Afghans had come back to Pakistan after visiting their homeland. The president was talking to visiting UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie who had called on him here.

Dawn, 7 May 2005

US army played no role in capturing al-Libbi

WASHINGTON, May 6: A senior American general has said that there was no US military involvement in capturing Al Qaeda's third-ranking leader Abu Faraj al-Libbi. I can tell you that there was no US military involvement in the Pakistani capture of al-Libbi. And in that regard, I think that the Pakistani people should be delighted that their security forces have completed such a sophisticated operation, Lt-Gen James Conway, the director of operations for the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a Thursday afternoon briefing at the Pentagon. He said that since al-Libbi tried to kill President Gen Pervez Musharraf twice, he was their number one terrorist, and now their commandos have taken him down and put him behind bars.

Daily Times, 7 May 2005

Pacts on hydropower and housing

KAULA LUMPUR: Pakistan and Malaysia on Friday signed two agreements for \$220 million for hydropower and housing. The agreements were signed between the private sectors of both the countries in the presence of Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. Ranhill Power Berhad, a Malaysian company, signed the agreement with Laraib Energy Limited of Pakistan to invest in a 79-megawatt New Bong Escape hydropower project in Pakistan, downstream of the Mangla Dam. The project will be developed on a build, operate and transfer basis (BOT) and will be transferred to the Pakistani government at the end of a 25-year power purchase agreement. The New Bong Escape hydropower project will be the first independent power producer (IPP) in Pakistan in the hydropower sector.

The Nation, 7 May 2005

Thousands rally against Qaeda hunt

MIRANSHAH (AFP) - Thousands of pro-Taliban tribesmen rallied against Pakistan's hunt for Al-Qaeda-linked militants here on Friday and torched effigies of US President George W. Bush. About 5,000 people attended the rally, called by the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) party to call for an end to the illegal military operation, they said. Down with the United States, shouted the protestors in Miranshah, the main town of the tribal North Waziristan region which borders Afghanistan. The rally took place just two days after Pakistan announced the capture of reputed Al-Qaeda number three Abu Faraj al-Libbi.

Daily Times, 7 May 2005

ARD demands independent inquiry into Dera Bugti killings (Azizullah Khan)

QUETTA: The Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) on Friday demanded an independent inquiry into the March 17 clashes in Dera Bugti where many people were killed, saying the alliance would soon meet to plan and adopt a joint strategy. The ARD delegation visited the area where Frontier Corp (FC) personnel and Bugti tribesmen clashed on March 17. They expressed their sorrow over the destruction, especially in the Hindu Mohalla where a large number of men, women and children were killed.

The News, 8 May 2005

Pak-US talks on F-16s sale conclude (Muhammad Saleh Zafar)

ISLAMABAD: A high-level defence team from the United States comprising experts from the Pentagon and Lockheed Martin Corporation, builders of the most modern multi-role F-16 fighter aircraft, concluded its discussions with the authorities concerned here to facilitate a deal for the supply of these planes to Pakistan. The team has now returned to the US. This was disclosed by Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States General (ret'd) Jehangir Karamat while exclusively talking to The News here Saturday. The US is expected to sign a deal regarding timing of the delivery and per-plane cost immediately after the receipt of approval from Congress where the issue is being discussed. The State Department has already put up a proposal to the Congress for approval.

Dawn, 8 May 2005

Navy orders Rs78 billion equipment from US (Arshad Sharif)

ISLAMABAD, May 7: Pakistan Navy has placed with the US an order for eight P3-C Orion aircraft, six Phalanx Close-In Weapon Systems and at least 60 Harpoon Missiles worth a total package of \$1.3 billion. According to sources, the Pentagon has notified the sale of the aircraft and equipment to the US Congress which is expected to approve it within next thirty days.

When asked if the payments would be made from the country's defence budget, an official said the deal would be paid from the US military assistance for Pakistan. According to the official, the eight P-3C aircraft with T-56 engines and associated equipment and services will cost \$970 million.

Dawn, 8 May 2005

Brunei to increase bilateral trade: Aziz holds talks with Bolkiah (Qudssia Akhlaque)

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, May 7: Pakistan and Brunei on Saturday resolved to enhance bilateral trade and economic cooperation and to start flights between the two countries. During their 45-minute meeting, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and Sultan of Brunei Hasannal Bolkiah reviewed all aspects of bilateral relations and discussed cooperation in various multilateral forums, including Asean, OIC and the UN. The sultan assured the prime minister of Brunei's support for Pakistan's bid for a full dialogue partnership status with the Asean. Mr Aziz later described his meeting as 'very productive' and said they had agreed to opening up of flights between Brunei and Pakistan.

The News, 8 May 2005

Kashmiris inclusion in talks a must: Kasuri

KASUR: Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri has expressed the hope that India will extend cooperation to the World Bank for the appointment of a neutral expert to solve the Baghliar dam issue in accordance with the Indus Waters Treaty. Talking to newsmen here on Saturday, Kasuri said Pakistan wanted comprehensive dialogue with India in order to solve all the issues, including the core issue of Kashmir. He emphasised that participation of the Kashmiri representatives was essential in the dialogue between the two countries. Kasuri said that after the settlement of issues with India, the Khokhrapar-Munabao, and Ganda Singh border would be opened like Wagah border.

The News, 8 May 2005

Rockets fired at military posts in North Waziristan

MIRALI: Unknown persons fired three rockets at joint Pakistan Army-Frontier Corps check-posts near the border with Afghanistan in North Waziristan tribal agency on Friday night but no loss to life and property was reported, tribal sources said. The rocket attacks happened on a day of intensive deployment of fresh troops in parts of North Waziristan. The deployment fuelled speculations about an impending military operation in the area. The movement of troops brought traffic in Mirali bazaar to a complete halt for half an hour from 2.30 to 3pm. The soldiers were transported in both military and private vehicles. Witnesses said the soldiers came from Bannu side and were headed for Miramshah, headquarters of North Waziristan.

The News, 8 May 2005

Problems of Darra arms makers to be resolved: Rashid

DARRA: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Sheikh Rashid Ahmad has assured local arms manufacturers to resolve their problems, saying he would raise the issues with the government soon. He made this assurance during his visit to the area on Saturday. He was received by MNA Dr Nasimurehman and other tribal leaders. Earlier, the local arms manufacturers apprised the minister of their problems. They said the ban on the issuance of fresh arms licenses had badly affected their businesses. Rashid assured them that he would discuss the issue with President Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz.

Dawn, 8 May 2005

Peshawar put on high alert: Four die in accidental blast

WANA, May 7: Four tribesmen were killed and one was injured on Saturday when a rocket they were trying to dismantle exploded in Wana, an official said. Meanwhile, the authorities in Peshawar have declared high security alert after saboteurs attacked two check posts of paramilitary forces near Miramshah on Friday night. The tribesmen had found an unexploded rocket in a forest near Lalayzai village, which blew up when they tried to dismantle it, a local administration official told AFP. The injured had been admitted to a hospital, he said. Our Correspondent from Miramshah adds: Miscreants fired missiles on Friday night at two check posts of paramilitary forces near the Pak-Afghan border.

Dawn, 8 May 2005

Checkpoints to be set up along KKH

GILGIT, May 7: The police officials of the Northern Areas and Kohistan district have agreed to set up police checkpoints at troubled points along the Karakoram Highway (KKH) from Basham to Khunjerab Pass, police sources said. They said that during the meeting it was also decided to establish at least 10 check points between Gilgit and Khunjerab Pass and the sites for the checkpoints had been surveyed recently. The police officials said the portion of KKH that passed through Diamer and Kohistan needed effective communication means including wireless sets and vehicles to guard the KKH. The Northern Areas police chief Sarmad Saeed said that he would provide these facilities to make the journey safe on the highway where at least nine people were killed by the miscreants after Jan 8.

Dawn, 9 May 2005

Deadline set to resolve dispute: Kishanganga project (Ahmad Fraz Khan)

LAHORE, May 8: Pakistan on Friday accepted an Indian proposal to set July 15 as deadline for resolving the Kishanganga hydropower project issue. On the first day of the third meeting on the project held here on Sunday, the Pakistani side called for an early deadline because it did not want 'talks to drag on indefinitely'. The Indian side was of the view that it needed some time to gather technical details of the project to address Pakistan's concerns. Therefore, it said, the deadline must be 'realistic'.

But Pakistan insisted that the process should not be allowed to drag on and the two countries must agree on a cut-off date for finding a solution. On its part, Pakistan wanted a deadline in the month of May or June. They, however, agreed to a deadline of July 15.

Dawn, 9 May 2005

Aziz arrives in Thailand, seeks help on Asean (Qudssia Akhlaque)

BANGKOK, May 8: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz arrived here Sunday afternoon on a three-day official visit of Thailand for bilateral discussions with his counterpart Thaksin Shinawatra and have an audience with the Thai King and Queen at Klai Kangwol Palace. On arrival at the air terminal headquarters of the Royal Thai Air Force by a special aircraft the prime minister was accorded a 19-gun salute and was received by Thai deputy Prime Minister Dr Surakiart Sathirathai. A long reception line included diplomats, cabinet members and representatives Thai of armed forces.

Dawn, 9 May 2005

400 militants massed across LoC, alleges India (Jawed Naqvi)

NEW DELHI, May 8: Indian reports on Sunday claiming that some 400 armed militants were massed across the Line of Control waiting for the snow to melt in the passes, have clouded recent official hints that Indian troop withdrawal from parts of the Valley was likely to happen soon, diplomatic observers said. Reports from Srinagar also said that the first week of May saw violence at its peak, claiming 52 lives, including top militant commanders and a senior army officer, and wounding several others across the strife-torn state.

Dawn, 9 May 2005

Washington confirms missile sales

WASHINGTON, May 8: The United States has confirmed the sale of some of the missiles from a package of \$1.3 billion of military equipment Pakistan has ordered. Dawn reported on Saturday that the order, placed by the Pakistan navy, includes eight P3-C Orion aircraft, six Phalanx close-in weapons systems and at least 60 Harpoon missiles. The purchase is part of the US military assistance for Pakistan announced in 2003. Confirming the report, the US Defence Security Cooperation Agency said that the United States has approved the sale of two sets of advanced missiles to Pakistan valued at a total of \$226 million. The agency notified Congress of two potential foreign military sales to Pakistan: \$180 million in Harpoon Block II missiles and \$46 million in AIM-9M-1/ 2 Sidewinder missiles.

Daily Times, 9 May 2005

'Truth drug' fails to get Libbi talking

LAHORE: Intelligence officials who have been questioning Abu Faraj al-Libbi, the senior Al Qaeda suspect arrested last week, cast doubt over claims by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz that the interrogation process was 'proceeding well.' The officials said al-Libbi, believed to be Al Qaeda's number three, has defied efforts to make him reveal valuable information about its senior hierarchy, despite coming under 'physical pressure' to do so. Over a dozen Al Qaeda targets were also arrested last week thanks to information stored on al-Libbi's satellite telephone. However, both American and Pakistani intelligence officials' hopes to get the whereabouts of Osama Bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri were dashed.

The Nation, 9 May 2005

Funds for religious seminaries withheld (MOEEN AZHAR)

LAHORE - The Federal Government has blocked funds for reforming seminaries throughout the country, allocated for the purpose on the orders of President Pervez Musharraf. Similarly it has been decided to close down Model Madaris set up to promote moderation after their failure to deliver the goods. All the four provinces have been informed in this regard. Moreover, the recommendations of National Finance Commission about moderation have been sent to all the four provinces and CM Ch Pervaiz Elahi, after reviewing the proposals, has forwarded them to Chief Secretary for implementation.

The Nation, 9 May 2005

MMA-ARD reach consensus against govt

SUKKUR (NNI) - Central leader of MMA Senator Hafiz Hussain Ahmed said MMA and ARD have reached on a three point agreement which will pave the way to start a joint campaign against government. Elaborating the three point at a news conference here Sunday, he said both the alliances agreed on the restoration of 1973 constitution in its real spirit, formation of independent election commission for holding of free and fair elections and non-acceptance of General Musharraf as President. Hafiz Hussain Ahmed showed the commitment for the continuation of joint struggle till the achievement of goal set by both the alliances MMA and ARD.

Dawn, 9 May 2005

Two killed in Mirali blast (Pazir Gul)

MIRAMSHAH, May 8: Two people were killed when a bomb in their car went off in the Mirali sub-division of North Waziristan on Saturday night, officials said. Tehsildar Maqsood Hassan told Dawn that the incident took place at Toorikhel, about four kilometres south of Mirali bazaar. The car was completely damaged. Mirali is situated 30km north of Miramshah, the regional headquarters of North Waziristan. He said that one of the dead had been identified as Samiullah Khan while the body of the other victim was badly mutilated and could not be identified. Investigations into the incident have been launched. Meanwhile, three paramilitary checkpoints came under missile attacks in the area on Saturday night. However, no one was injured, officials said.

Dawn, 10 May 2005

Kishanganga: Islamabad threatens to move WB (Ahmad Fraz Khan)

LAHORE, May 9: Pakistan on Monday threatened to invoke 'treaty mechanism' and take the Kishanganga Hydropower Project to the World Bank for arbitration if India failed to resolve the issue to Islamabad's satisfaction by July 15. The threat was delivered by Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Basin Treaty, Syed Jamaat Ali Shah, during the first round of talks on the second day of dialogue between the two countries. During the talks, the Pakistan delegation 'strongly objected' to its not being provided with sufficient information on the project. The two sides were discussing first of the six questions posed by Pakistan regarding the project modalities when the Indian side said it did not have the relevant information.

The Nation, 10 May 2005

Pakistan, Thailand to start FTA talks (Mehtab Haider)

BANGKOK - Thailand on Monday extended its full support to Pakistan's bid for its entry into ASEAN as Full Dialogue Partner and both the countries also agreed to initiate talks on Free Trade Area (FTA). 'There are no ifs and buts on this issue,' Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra categorically told a joint press conference with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz here at the Government House when a journalist asked him if India opposed Pakistan's bid for entering into ASEAN, how would you protect it.

The Nation, 10 May 2005

Farraj won't be handed over to US: Rashid

RAWALPINDI - Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Sh. Rashid Ahmad said that recently arrested al-Qaeda terrorist Abu Farraj would not be handed over to the United States as he was required in the cases of life attempts on President General Pervez Musharraf. He said that Abu Farraj was one of the top al-Qaeda operatives and was mastermind of the murder plots of President General Pervez Musharraf, adding that Pakistani law enforcement agencies were interrogating him.

The News, 10 May 2005

WB to increase assistance to Pakistan (Hanif Khalid)

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank Mission Thursday held talks here with Pakistan's economic managers led by the Prime Minister's Adviser on Finance, Economic Affairs and Revenue Dr Sulman Shah. After the meeting the adviser during a chat with this correspondent said that Pakistan would shortly finalize the government strategy paper for the next four years. This was follow up session of the Pakistan Development Forum with the World Bank delegation, which was led by the Vice President of the World Bank for our region.

The News, 10 May 2005

Indo-Pak joint naval exercises only after Kashmir solution: CNS (Muhammad Azeem Samar)

KARACHI: The Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), Admiral Shahid Karimullah, has said joint naval exercises with India could be conducted after resolution of the Kashmir issue. Talking to newsmen after attending the Bahria University's convocation here on Thursday, the naval chief disclosed that talks were on with India for cooperation in naval defence. However, he maintained that at this stage it was premature to say anything definite on the issue. He said substantial budgetary allocation had been made for the Pakistan Navy for the next 15 years' planning of the country's defence and owing to this, an increase in the Navy's budget would result in a strengthened PN within the coming 12 years, totally capable of defending the country.

Dawn, 10 May 2005

Recommendations sent to World Bank (Hasan Akhtar)

ISLAMABAD, May 9: Pakistan on Monday forwarded to the World Bank its recommendations for the panel of experts to be appointed to help resolve the Indo-Pakistan differences on the designs and impact of the Baglihar dam. Foreign office spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani told his weekly press briefing that upon examination of the panel proposed by the World Bank the Pakistani authorities had found that some of the experts were known at the international level for their professional competence and impartiality. Islamabad had submitted to the World Bank its recommendations accordingly on Monday, he added.

Dawn, 10 May 2005

Naval exercise with France planned

ISLAMABAD, May 9: Pakistan Navy will conduct the second round of joint exercises with the French Navy after participating in the 'sea week' being held in the United States later this month, officials said on Monday. An official said the joint exercises with the French Navy would be the second in a month. Pakistan Navy ships conducted manoeuvre exercises of attack, interception, replenishment and air defence systems with the French Navy on their way to Jordan on May 4-5, the official said.

The News, 10 May 2005

Bugti tribesmen, FC trade fire again

QUETTA: Bugti tribesmen and Frontier Corps have exchanged small and heavy arms fire in Bekar area near Dera Bugti. However, no casualty was reported. According to reports, Bugtis and FC troops traded fire in Bekar area, some 70 miles north-east of Dera Bugti town late on Wednesday night. However there was no casualty. After the incident, the two sides took positions against each other. Situation is very tense in the area. When contacted Agha Shahid Bugti, general secretary of the Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP), told PPI here on Thursday that recently the paramilitary force established a check-post in Bekar

area which was being provided reinforcement.

Dawn, 10 May 2005

NFC: Sindh gives up demand (Khaleeq Kiani)

BHURBAN, May 9: Sindh has given up its demand for having revenue collection as one of the criteria for horizontal distribution of resources (among the provinces) under the Sixth National Finance Commission Award, apparently removing a major irritant. Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Dr Salman Shah told reporters that Sindh was now demanding that personal income tax collection should be given some weight in the resource distribution formula instead of total revenue collection which now seemed acceptable to other provinces.

Daily Times, 10 May 2005

Three bombs go off in Gwadar (Azizullah Khan)

QUETTA/KARACHI: Six explosions were reported around the border area between Sindh and Balochistan on Monday. There were three powerful explosions in Gwadar but no casualties were reported. Official sources said that two small bombs exploded near a police station, in a span of ten minutes. A third bomb also exploded near a government official's home. A powerful explosion also occurred in Quetta on Monday night. Police officials said that a locally made bomb was set off at Arbab Barkat Ali Road. No casualties were reported. House windows around the blast site shattered and it also caused a crater in the road. Nobody claimed responsibility for the blast.

The News, 11 May 2005

Libbi also involved in bid on PM's life: Sherpao (Muhammad Anis)

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao on Tuesday disclosed that arrested al-Qaeda leader Abu Faraj Al-Libbi was also involved in the attempt on the life of Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz last year. Talking to The News, Sherpao said Abu Faraj who was No 3 on the most-wanted al-Qaeda list, and Amjad Farooqi had close links and both were involved in murder attempt on Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. Shaukat Aziz narrowly escaped an attempt on his life in a suicide bomb attack, when he was leaving the venue of a public meeting in connection with by-election in Fateh Jang last year.

Daily Times, 11 May 2005

Kishanganga talks end inconclusively (Khawaja Naseer)

LAHORE: A three-day meeting of Indian and Pakistani experts over India's Kishanganga hydropower project ended inconclusively on Tuesday as Pakistan sought more information on the project. The meeting's last day ended at NESPAK House on Tuesday with Pakistan demanding fresh data on Kishanganga before the annual meeting of the two countries' water commissions in New Delhi on May 29. Sources told Daily Times that on Tuesday, Indian officials asked their Pakistani counterparts to initiate talks on the availability of water required by Pakistan for its downstream hydropower project on the banks of Neelum and Jhelum rivers.

The News, 11 May 2005

We're not against UNSC reforms: PM (Salim Bokhari)

BANGKOK: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said on Tuesday if permanent seats of the United Nations Security Council were increased as part of reforms discarding concerns of the smaller nations, it would be a blackest day in the history of the world body. Speaking to a select group of people at the Asian Institute of Technology here, where he also replied to questions from the audience, Shaukat said Pakistan was not against reforms. "We believe that the United Nations must be strengthened by introducing reforms so that it could adjust to new challenges and ground realities. But reforms should be introduced in an equitable manner based on justice," he added.

Daily Times, 11 May 2005

Ties with US not at the cost of national interest (Khalid Mustafa)

BANGKOK: Pakistan's relations with the United States are not at the cost of the national interest, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said on Tuesday. "Our relations with the US are based on mutual advantages and not at the expense of the national interest," Shaukat Aziz said during question hour after speaking on the topic "Pakistan's Vision in 21st Century" at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT). Earlier, addressing the participants of the AIT seminar, the prime minister said that Pakistan's nuclear deterrence would be maintained at a minimum level, saying that the nuclear capability guaranteed peace in the region.

Daily Times, 11 May 2005

Amritsar-Lahore bus service likely in August (Mohammad Imran)

ISLAMABAD: India and Pakistan have decided to start a bus service between Amritsar and Lahore in August. "Both countries have agreed to start the Amritsar-Lahore service in August, but a final decision will be made in the final round of talks today (Wednesday)," sources privy to the meeting told Daily Times on Tuesday. Both countries discussed the technical aspects of the bus service during talks held at the Communications Ministry. Sources said the first session of the talks was held in the morning and the second session from 4:00pm to 8:00pm to discuss other modalities for starting the bus.

The News, 11 May 2005

Pak-Afghan -UNHCR meeting tomorrow (Naveed Ahmad)

ISLAMABAD The seventh ministerial level meeting of the tripartite commission of Pakistan, Afghanistan and UNHCR is

meeting on Thursday (tomorrow) to discuss repatriation of the Afghan refugees. The commission to be attended by the Afghan and Pakistani ministers would take important decisions regarding the closure of Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan besides reviewing the situation in specific urban clusters. These clusters include Afghan populations in Rawalpindi, Peshawar and Islamabad. The Tripartite Commission on Voluntary Repatriation of Afghan Refugees has been set up under the agreement of March 17, 2003, between the governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan and the UNHCR.

The Nation, 11 May 2005

Kasuri leaves for Australia, New Zealand

ISLAMABAD - Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri left here Tuesday for an official visit to Australia and New Zealand to discuss bilateral ties as well as regional and international issues. This will be the first-ever visit by any foreign minister from Pakistan to the important countries of Asia and Pacific on a bilateral basis, said an official statement. "The visit will give an impetus to Pakistan's bilateral relations and promote mutually beneficial ties in political and economic spheres and is an expression of the growing engagement of Pakistan with the leading countries of the world," it added.

The News, 11 May 2005

Musharraf confirms contact with PPP (Rizwan Razi)

LAHORE: "Osama bin Laden is not in my pocket," said President Gen Pervez Musharraf, when reporters sought his comments on Tuesday on PPP chairperson Benazir Bhutto's statement that he knew al-Qaeda chief's whereabouts. He was talking to reporters after inaugurating a two-day conference titled SME Financing: Issues and Strategies, organised by the State Bank of Pakistan here Tuesday. Musharraf stressed the need for encouraging moderate and discouraging the extremist elements in the society. He confirmed that his government was in contact with all the political forces, especially the Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

The News, 11 May 2005

Shujaat, Jamali bury the hatchet (Asim Yasin)

ISLAMABAD: President Pakistan Muslim League Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain and former prime minister Mir Zafarullah Jamali on Tuesday moved quickly to bury the hatchet that had the potential of unsettling the applecart of their party. They chose the National Assembly to shake hands. Shujaat had said on Monday that Jamali was no more in the PML prompting Jamali to retort that he was "a born Leaguer whom nobody could remove from the party". On Tuesday, Shujaat went to Jamali's seat during the proceedings of the House and held a meeting with him for more than 15 minutes.

The News, 11 May 2005

Three dead in Karachi rocket explosion

KARACHI: At least three people were killed and two others wounded early on Tuesday when a rocket exploded, while it was being dismantled at a scrap shop in Baldia Town, police said. Bashir Khan, a junk collector, and a few others were trying to dismantle the rocket assuming it scrap at Samandar Khan's shop situated in Kabari Market, Ittihad Town in the Mouchko police jurisdiction, where it exploded. Mushtaq Shah, the DIG Operations, Karachi, told The News: "It was an accident due to lack of knowledge on the part of those who were trying to dismantle the rocket. We are investigating the matter from all aspects and after a proper investigation we will be able to give a precise comment."

The News, 11 May 2005

Opposition, treasury unite on desecration issue (Asim Yasin)

ISLAMABAD: President Pakistan Muslim League Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain informed the National Assembly on Tuesday that Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Gen (retd) Jehangir Karamat had been directed to take up issues of desecration of Holy Qur'aan at Guantanamo Bay and publication of derogatory cartoon in Washington Times with the US government. Speaking on the floor, Shujaat said he had directed Karamat to take up both the matters with the State Department to take stern action against the persons involved in the incidents.

The News, 11 May 2005

50% cigars, medicines fake in Pakistan: watch group

ISLAMABAD: An international watch group has revealed that Pakistan is one of the 13 countries of the world where manufacturing of counterfeit cigarettes, medicines and other goods of daily use is on the rise resulting in spread of horrible diseases. Pakistan has been put on top priority list by the watch groups which is worried over the disturbing trend of manufacturing of counterfeit cigarettes in particular and other goods of daily use in general. According to a recent report of two top watch groups of US and Europe separately dealing with the issues of cigarettes and medicines.

The Nation, 12 May 2005

Pak Consulate in Jalalabad torched

JALALABAD (AFP) - Afghan troops were deployed on the streets of an eastern city Wednesday after four people died and scores were wounded in riots sparked by reports that US soldiers had desecrated the Holy Quran at Guantanamo Bay. More than 70 people were hurt, including six policemen, while dozens of vehicles and some 20 government and private offices were damaged or set on fire, an interior ministry statement said. Police in Jalalabad opened fire earlier Wednesday to break up an enraged mob of several thousand people that torched the Governor's House, the Pakistani Consulate and several foreign aid agencies, police and witnesses said.

Daily Times, 12 May 2005

Libbi providing information about Al Qaeda: Sherpao

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao told reporters on Wednesday that Pakistani authorities had obtained valuable information about Al Qaeda by interrogating Abu Faraj Al-Libbi. Sherpao said the Al Qaeda leader had masterminded the suicide attack on Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in 2004 and the information garnered during questioning would soon be shared with the media. Libbi, Al Qaeda's No 3, was recently arrested in Mardan by security agencies. The Pakistan government has not yet decided to hand him over to the United States. The interior minister said Libbi was also involved in the two assassination attempts on President General Pervez Musharraf. shahzad raza

Daily Times, 12 May 2005

Pakistan and Singapore sign deal on terrorism

SINGAPORE: Singapore has supported Pakistan's proposed declaration on terrorism with the Association of South East Asian Nation (ASEAN). The combined declaration issued on Wednesday said, "Both prime ministers condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. They reaffirmed their commitment to continue cooperating in this regard. "The signing of the Pakistan-Singapore Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Combating Terrorism and other Trans-national Crimes was reflective of the commitment, it added.

Daily Times, 12 May 2005

Stopping human trafficking and narcotics: Pakistan and Greece ink cooperation agreement (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Greece have agreed to cooperate in efforts to control human trafficking, fight the spread of narcotics and organised crime, and support the war against terrorism. A nine-member delegation from Greece is visiting Pakistan. During a meeting in Islamabad on Wednesday, Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao and George Voulgarakis, Greek minister for public order, signed an agreement that called for these actions. The two parties have formed a coordination committee to implement the agreement. The Interior Ministry secretary will represent Pakistan in the committee.

Daily Times, 12 May 2005

Pakistan plans another road link with India (Zulfiqar Ghuman)

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan is considering opening another road link between Northern Areas of Pakistan and Ladakh (India) to boost tourism in the sub-continent and help the divided families of the area meet. This route has been proposed by the Baltistan Association of Adventure Tour Operators (BAATO) after its four-member visit to India in December 2004 in connection with the Annual Convention on Adventure Tourism organised by the Indian Association of Adventure Tourism in New Delhi.

The Nation, 12 May 2005

WB appoints expert on Baglihar issue

ISLAMABAD - After Islamabad moved a request over three months back, the World Bank Wednesday finally appointed Professor Raymond Lafitte of Switzerland as neutral expert to sort out the dispute between Pakistan and India over the Baglihar project. The neutral expert will not have any timeframe to give his after hearing arguments from both parties under the Indus Waters Treaty 1960. Pakistan has formally welcomed the appointment of Professor Raymond, who is a civil engineer and has a long experience in the field of water. "Pakistan welcomes the appointment of Raymond Lafitte as a neutral expert by the World Bank," what the Foreign Office said. Commissioner Pakistan's Commission of Indus Waters (PCIW) Syed Jamaat Ali Shah, when The Nation contacted, said neither the World Bank is bound to appoint the neutral expert under a timeframe nor he (expert) have any deadline to decide about the differences.

Daily Times, 12 May 2005

Lahore-Amritsar bus service agreed

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India on Wednesday agreed to start a bus service between Amritsar and Lahore but a protocol in this regard will be signed at a meeting between the officials of the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation and Punjab Roadways Department of India in New Delhi in two months. A joint communiqué was issued at the conclusion of talks on Wednesday according to which both sides have agreed to run one bus each every week. The Indian bus will depart for Lahore on Tuesday and return the next day while the Pakistani bus will leave for Amritsar on Friday and return on Saturday. The schedule will not clash with the existing Lahore-Delhi bus.

The Nation, 12 May 2005

PML top guns meet tomorrow to mend fences

ISLAMABAD - The top leadership of Pakistan Muslim League will hold an important meeting with party stalwarts to take them into confidence and quell the internal differences. The meeting which is due to be held tomorrow (Friday) will be attended by senior party leaders making dissenting noises such as Humayun Akhtar Khan and Salim Saifullah. The meeting is to be convened at a time when differences are brewing within the party ranks and reports of alternate leadership emerging from within the party are no longer a secret.

Daily Times, 12 May 2005

Nawaz and BB have no role in next polls

SARGODHA: President Pervez Musharraf said on Wednesday that the next general elections would be held in 2007 in which Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto, both former prime ministers and heads of two major political parties in Pakistan, would have

no political role. Addressing members of the National and Punjab assemblies from the ruling Pakistan Muslim League and ministers and district nazims from Sargodha division at Circuit House, President Musharraf said there was no external threat but the country was facing an internal threat from extremism. "Extremists are creating chaos to satisfy their false ego," he said. The president was briefed about several development projects in Sargodha division.

Daily Times, 12 May 2005

Thousands attend militant's funeral in Waziristan

MIRANSHAH: Chanting slogans against America, thousands of mourners gathered in a Pakistani border town on Wednesday to bury an Islamic militant they claimed was killed in a clash between Taliban militants and American forces inside Afghanistan, witnesses said. The US military, however, said it had no reports of fighting in the area of eastern Afghanistan where the Pakistani man, Akhtar Zaman, had purportedly died. The funeral was held in Sarobi, a town in the North Waziristan tribal region, opposite the Afghan province of Khost. Mourners also chanted slogans in support Taliban-led militants that have stepped resistance in Afghanistan in recent weeks.

Dawn, 13 May 2005

Militants planned parliament raid

MULTAN, May 12: Police have arrested two members of an outlawed group suspected of plotting a series of attacks, including one on parliament, an official said on Thursday. The men arrested in Multan belong to the banned Lashkar-i-Jhangvi. District Police Officer Sikandar Hayat told Reuters they were part of a network of up to 23 members who had been recruiting 'suicide attackers' for assaults on the National Assembly and Shias. "They had planned to make their way into the National Assembly and take the lawmakers hostage to press for their demands," Mr Hayat said.

The Nation, 13 May 2005

Qaeda danger reduced: Kasuri

CANBERRA (Agencies) - A top Al-Qaeda operative arrested in Pakistan will not be handed over to the United States at present, Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri said Thursday, while leaving open the possibility of a later transfer. Asked at a press conference if Al-Libbi would be handed over to the US, Kasuri said Pakistan had 'a very strong vested interest' given the attempts on the president's life. 'But we've had a track record, Pakistan, of sharing intelligence with all our friends, and we have very strong links with United States,' he said.

Daily Times, 13 May 2005

Pakistan and Australia could sign anti-terror deal: Kasuri

CANBERRA: President General Pervez Musharraf is likely to sign a counter terrorism pact with Australia next month during his visit here from June 13 to 16, the first ever by a Pakistani president, said Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri after meeting his Australian counterpart Alexander Downer on Thursday. Downer said he hoped the two countries would sign a memorandum of understanding on counter terrorism during Musharraf's visit.

The Statesman, 13 May 2005

Next Pak-US BIT meet in Washington

ISLAMABAD: The US and Pakistan have agreed to maintain continuing communications to work on outstanding issues and to meet for another round of negotiations in Washington this summer. As part of the broadened and strengthened bilateral economic relationship, representatives of the United States and Pakistan met May 10-12 in Islamabad for the second negotiating session for a Bilateral Investment Treaty.

The Nation, 13 May 2005

Work on Baglihar Dam continues

SRINAGAR (Agencies) - Building of a controversial power project in Indian-held Kashmir will continue despite opposition by Pakistan and the appointment of a neutral expert by the World Bank to sort things out, officials say. Pakistan, which fears the one-billion-dollar project could deprive its wheat-bowl state of Punjab of vital irrigation water, charges that the plant violates a 44-year-old water sharing treaty. But Indian Kashmir officials say the 450-megawatt Baglihar project on the Chenab River in south Kashmir does not contravene the pact and could go a long way to ending routine 12-hour blackouts plaguing the Himalayan state.

Daily Times, 13 May 2005

Indo-Pak Indus Basin bodies to resume talks by end May (Khawaja Naseer)

LAHORE: The Indo-Pak Indus Basin commissions agreed on Thursday to continue dialogue to remove Pakistan's objections to the construction of the Krishanganga hydroelectric power plant on Jhelum River. They signed a summary of the three-day meeting on Thursday. Jamat Ali Shah, Pakistan Indus Basin commissioner, told Daily Times, "We have decided to discuss the six technical objections raised by Pakistan at the next meeting, which will be held in the last week of May." He said that the meeting minutes were signed as required by an Indus Water Treaty provision. Shah said that of the six objections, three were on the project design and two on the diversion of Jhelum River.

The Statesman, 13 May 2005

Draft on Kishanganga project signed

LAHORE: Pakistan and India on Thursday signed draft prepared in the wake of talks on Kishanganga Hydropower Project.

The preparation of the draft was delayed by two days due to serious objections, raised by the respective parties on certain clauses. The three-day official talks ended on Tuesday but the experts continued their informal deliberations to reach a meaningful consensus on the draft. This delay also held up the return of Indian delegation to New Delhi. Pakistan Indus Water Basin Commissioner Syed Jamaat Ali Shah told reporters before signing the document that many things had to be kept in view before preparing the draft.

Dawn, 13 May 2005

Independent NFC sought by Sindh: Stand unchanged: minister

ISLAMABAD, May 12: Sindh has demanded an independent National Finance Commission (NFC) to give a just and fair award on the distribution of federal proceeds and has refused to give up its demand or reduce its share in the gas development surcharge (GDS). Sindh's Senior Minister for Finance Syed Sardar Ahmad told reporters here on Thursday that the provincial leadership would meet in Karachi on Friday to firm up its strategy on the NFC.

The Nation, 13 May 2005

Police arrest two LJ activists

Multan - Multan police Thursday claimed to have arrested two alleged sectarian terrorists belonging to banned outfit Lashkare Jhangvi, who are stated to be involved in suicide attacks on an imam bargah in Sialkot and Mochi Darwaza imam bargah. Police recovered five hand grenades from their possession. The arrests of the alleged terrorists namely Amir alias Shahzad and Kh Ibrahim were disclosed by the Multan DPO Sikandar Hayat during a press conference held here Thursday noon. The DPO told mediemen that the arrested terrorists during interrogation revealed they were involved in Sialkot and Lahore suicide attacks.

The Statesman, 13 May 2005

Bagzai refugee camp in NWA to be closed (Naveed Miraj)

ISLAMABAD: The seventh meeting of the Tripartite Commission here Thursday decided to close Bagzai Afghan Refugees Camp, located along Pakistan's border with Afghanistan in North Waziristan Agency, an official who attended the meeting revealed to the Statesman. Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) Yar Muhammad Rind, Minister for Repatriation and Refugees of Afghanistan, Muhammad Azam Dadfar and UNHCR Country Representative Guenet Guebre-Christos headed their respective delegations in the meeting of the Commission in Islamabad. As many as 14,000 Afghan refugees are living in the Bagzai camp which would be shifted inside Afghanistan. The meeting took a decision in the wake of difficulties being faced by the Pakistani security organisations and by the US-led international coalition troops to operate against the militants respectively inside Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The News, 14 May 2005

France to extend help to Pakistan in N-tech (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir)

ISLAMABAD: France is engaged in discussions with Pakistan about cooperation in nuclear technology after a lapse of about 30 years. As the confidence increases, Paris will be prepared to provide assistance to Islamabad to meet its power needs. The two countries re-established contacts in a multilateral interaction held in Paris recently where representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) were also present. French Ambassador to Pakistan Pierre Charasse disclosed this to The News in an exclusive interview covering wide range of issues here.

The News, 14 May 2005

Pak-Sri Lanka free trade from June 12

ISLAMABAD: The recently concluded Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Pakistan and Sri Lanka will be operational from June 12 this year. This was announced after conclusion of the 9th Session of the Pakistan and Sri Lanka Joint Economic Commission here on Friday. Minister for Commerce Humayun Akhtar Khan and his Sri Lankan counterpart Jeyaraj Fernandopulle exchanged documents, confirming completion of necessary constitutional and domestic legal procedures for the effective implementation of the FTA. Under the agreement, Sri Lanka and Pakistan have agreed to offer preferential market access to each other's exports by way of granting tariff concessions.

The News, 14 May 2005

US, Pakistan discuss investment treaty (Nadeem Malik)

ISLAMABAD: The United States and Pakistan have agreed to iron out outstanding irritants to finalize the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT). The representatives of the United States and Pakistan met May 10-12 in Islamabad for the second negotiating session for a Bilateral Investment Treaty. The two sides agreed to maintain continuing communications to work on outstanding issues and to meet for another round of negotiations in Washington this summer, a statement of the US embassy said. The standard BITs are two-way obligations, which are designed to protect and encourage cross-border investment by ensuring equal treatment for foreign and local investors, guarantees regarding cross-border fund transfer, assurances against expropriation and mechanisms for dispute settlement.

Dawn, 14 May 2005

'Turkey's EU entry to benefit Pakistan'

ISLAMABAD, May 13: Senator Mushahid Hussain here on Friday said Turkey had made successful transformation to civilian administration after prolonged military rule. The country also made harmonious shift to neo-Islamic but secular ethos, said Mr Hussain, who is secretary-general of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League and chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on

Foreign Relations. Mr Hussain wished good luck to Turkey in its negotiations for entry into the European Union and termed it "a test case in the relationship between Muslim countries and the Christian West".

Dawn, 14 May 2005

NA assails sacrilege, demands US probe (Raja Asghar)

ISLAMABAD, May 13: Translating a fiery debate into a milder resolution, the National Assembly on Friday condemned the reported sacrilege of the holy Quran at a US prison and called for an inquiry to bring the guilty to justice. A poorly-attended sitting of the lower house unanimously passed the compromise resolution agreed between the ruling and opposition parties after a three-day debate marked by religious fervour and severe criticism of the United States and Pakistan's role in the so-called war against terrorism. The demand for apology contained in an opposition draft of the resolution was dropped from the final text because of government objections, opposition sources said.

Dawn, 14 May 2005

PML remains united as ever: Shujaat

ISLAMABAD, May 13: The heads of various factions comprising the ruling Pakistan Muslim League met here on Friday to vent their reservations about the party's organization and exchanged views on issues to be discussed in the central executive committee's meeting to be held on Saturday. PML president Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain said after the meeting that those who were spreading stories about differences in the PML would not succeed in their design as the party 'remains united as ever'. Chaudhry Shujaat later called on Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and discussed with him the organizational matters of the party, the forthcoming meeting of the central working committee and the ongoing National Assembly session.

Dawn, 14 May 2005

'Al Libbi to be tried under ATA'

ISLAMABAD, May 13: Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao said on Friday said that Al Qaeda leader Abu Faraj Al Libbi would be tried under the Anti-Terrorism Act. The minister told journalists after the graduation ceremony of the Federal Investigation Agency's anti-trafficking unit at FIA headquarters that Al Libbi's extradition had not been demanded by any country. Mr Sherpao said Al Libbi was involved in many terrorism cases in the country, therefore, he would be tried under its laws.

The News, 14 May 2005

Runaway terrorist to blame for agony of Pak prisoners (Rauf Klasra)

ISLAMABAD: A recent revolt by tribal warrior, Abdullah Mehsud, against the security forces in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) after his release from Guantanamo Bay prison served to seal the fate of the remaining 35 prisoners, who were similarly released by the Americans, but are currently in jail at home. The current detention of the 35 prisoners is premised on a secret law that gives sweeping powers to Interior Ministry to detain only "Indian agents" operating within Pakistan for a period of one year without producing them before any court.

The Nation, 14 May 2005

Pakistan, India set for 'Kashmir quickie' (Shaiq Hussain)

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and India are set to start fresh efforts, mainly through secret diplomacy, to get quick results and solve the thorny Kashmir dispute as the formal talks on this issue over the last one year always faced bottlenecks in one form or the other. The officials said that the informal talks had proved to be much more fruitful in terms of results. They added that from now onwards, the two sides would focus more on back channel talks than the formal negotiations and they would be held regularly in coming months to reach a negotiated settlement to Kashmir problem.

Dawn, 15 May 2005

Dissenting voices 'silenced': Shujaat

ISLAMABAD, May 14: The senior leadership of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML) at a crucial meeting on Saturday discussed differences in the party ranks over the issue of the local council elections and organizational matters and decided to set up a task force to address the issue. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and heads of the merged factions were among the 41 leaders, representing the four provinces, who attended the meeting which was dubbed as the Central Executive Committee, though no formal announcement about the CEC has ever been made. PML president Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain told a press conference later that dissenting voices in the party had been 'silenced' as the dissidents had said 'sorry' to him after getting prompt response to their complaints.

Dawn, 15 May 2005

Four blasts rock Gwadar

QUETTA, May 14: Four powerful explosions in Gwadar rocked the newly-constructed port area on Saturday night, official sources said. The first blast occurred near the General Post Office, smashing its windowpanes as well as those of nearby government buildings. The second device, planted by unknown persons near the Gwadar port area, went off with a big bang, forcing law-enforcing agencies to rush to the scene. After 10 minutes, another explosion was heard in the same area. The fourth device exploded near the Gwadar Fish Harbour at around 11.30pm, causing panic among fishermen sleeping in anchored launches.

Dawn, 15 May 2005

Al Qaeda, Taliban products of establishment, says ANP

MANSEHRA, May 14: Central president of the Awami National Party, Asfandiyar Wali Khan, has said that Al Qaeda and Taliban are not the products of Pukhtun society, but are the brainchild of the establishment in Pakistan. At the second leg of his visit to Hazara, he was speaking at the District Bar Association in the Bar Room here on Saturday. He said the language that Gen Pervez Musharraf was using against Baloch leaders had been used by Gen Yahya against Bengali leadership in 1971. The ANP leader said national reconciliation was the need to save the country from the threats posed to its solidarity.

Dawn, 15 May 2005

Call to purge govt depts of sectarianism

GILGIT, May 14: The ruling Pakistan Muslim League Northern Areas President Abdul Wahid has alleged that some government employees are indulging in sectarian-oriented politics in the area and there is no check on their undesirable activities. He called for purging the government departments of such elements to restore peace in the region. Talking to reporters Mr Wahid said no action had been taken so far against the government employees who spearheaded the election campaigns of the sectarian groups in October last year and thus had gained firm roots in the local politics.

Dawn, 15 May 2005

Aga Khan, Musharraf to visit Northern Areas

GILGIT, May 14: Prince Karim Agha Khan and President Gen Pervez Musharraf will visit the Northern Areas in the last week of this month, sources told Dawn. Northern Areas administration and the District Council in a meeting reviewed preparations and arrangements for the visit. The meeting was presided over by Chief Secretary Nadeem Manzoor. Chairman District Council Gilgit Muhammad Hussain was given a briefing about the visit and preparations for a public gathering.

The News, 15 May 2005

Mystery of al-Qaeda man killed by CIA (Rahimullah Yusufzai)

PESHAWAR: The claim by the US intelligence officials and sections of the American media that a missile fired by a CIA predator aircraft over Pakistan earlier this week killed senior al-Qaeda operative Haitham al-Yemeni was apparently a reference to an incident near Mir Ali in North Waziristan on the night of May 8. The government has denied the claim that the man was killed in Pakistani territory. Information Minister Shaikh Rashid Ahmad issued the denial and at the same time was quoted as saying that the incident could have taken place in neighbouring Afghanistan. In the incident at 2am on May 8, a mysterious explosion in a wide-bodied car near Khushali village on Khaisoor Road south of Mir Ali town killed two persons.

Daily Times, 15 May 2005

Enlightened moderation?: Mixed citizens rally violently dispersed by police (Waqar Gillani and Aayan Ali)

LAHORE: A police contingent laid into a gathering of women and men organised by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and the Joint Action Committee for Peoples Rights which had congregated on the Main Boulevard in Gulberg to stage a "mixed-marathon" to test the enlightened-moderation" claims of the government, and swept about 40 of them to the police station. Asma Jahangir, the chairperson of the HRCP, and Iqbal Haider, the secretary-general, were among those who were brutally dragged into police vans and held for a couple of hours at local police stations.

Daily Times, 15 May 2005

4 bomb explosions rock Gwadar (Azizullah Khan)

QUETTA: Four explosions in a short span of half an hour shook the coastal city of Gwadar late on Saturday. However, no loss of life was reported. Nor did any group claim responsibility. Two bombs exploded in the fish harbour area at around 10:30pm. Another near the office of the paramilitary forces and the fourth near a post office. Chinese companies are working on a deep seaport project in Gwadar. The port was scheduled to open in early April but was postponed for undisclosed reasons. Police constable Shaukat said that police had cordoned off the area and started investigations.

The Nation, 16 May 2005

Musharraf steps in to unite PML (Umar Cheema)

ISLAMABAD - At a time when senior PML leaders meet President Musharraf today to iron out their party differences, former prime minister Mir Zafarullah Jamali Sunday came hard over Shaukat Aziz government and PML top leadership for their inability to deliver the masses. Jamali who is also part of that PML delegation meeting Musharraf today (Monday), said the people sitting at PM secretariat and PML secretariat are taking decision without consulting their colleagues and office-bearers. He said the party has been failed to come up to the expectations of President Musharraf whereas Ejaz-ul-Haq and Salim Saifullah have vowed to expose those elements responsible for poor performance of the PML during their today's meeting.

Daily Times, 16 May 2005

Fatwa forbidding suicide attacks tomorrow: minister (Hasan Mansoor)

KARACHI: The government has got a fatwa (decree) signed by religious scholars of all Islamic sects declaring suicide attacks on places of worship forbidden in Islam. "The fatwa has been signed by hundreds of religious scholars of all sects and will be announced on Tuesday," Dr Aamer Liaquat Hussain, minister of state for religious affairs, told Daily Times. President Pervez Musharraf had assigned Dr Hussain to get a 'comprehensive decree' from clerics of all Islamic sects in an attempt to develop harmony among people of various sects and religions.

Daily Times, 16 May 2005

Pakistan expects to get SCO observer status

BEIJING: Pakistan hopes to get "observer status" with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a key regional security grouping. Pakistan applied for SCO's membership around five years ago, and the application has been under consideration since. "Initially, we expect to join this important body as an observer by the end of this year, before having full membership", a senior Pakistani official told reporters on Sunday. Pakistan is confident that member countries China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will support Pakistan's request for participation in SCO's activities.

The Nation, 16 May 2005

Pakistan obtained \$10b foreign loans (Javed Mahmood)

LAHORE - Pakistan has obtained about \$10 billion worth foreign loans in last four and a half years, The Nation learnt on Sunday. Besides the loans, the country raised \$1.10 billion debt from the international financial markets by offering Euro and 'Sukuk' bonds in the last couple of years. Data collected by The Nation revealed that Pakistan obtained \$1.60 billion foreign loans in 2000-01, \$2.316 billion in 2001-02, \$1.55 billion in 2002-03, \$1.242 billion in 2003-04 and \$2 billion in July-December period of 2004-05. Meanwhile, the government also introduced Euro bonds worth \$500 million and Sukuk bonds amounting to \$600 million in international market.

Daily Times, 16 May 2005

South Asian parliament proposed (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: Floating the idea of a South Asian parliament, the South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA) on Sunday urged South Asian countries to follow the European model of first creating inter-state economic dependencies and then moving ahead with plans of political cooperation. The demand was made at the inaugural session of SAFMA Parliamentary Forum: South Asian Parliament, with its theme being 'Evolving South Asian Fraternity'. Pakistan would put forward the idea of forming the South Asian Parliamentary Forum at the upcoming SAARC Speakers' Conference, National Assembly (NA) Speaker Chaudhry Amir Hussain told participants.

The Nation, 16 May 2005

Pakistan, India 'agree' on US-backed Kashmir plan (Shaiq Hussain)

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and India are engaged in serious discussion on American roadmap for Kashmir, prepared by US-based Kashmir Study Group, with official quarters here saying the South Asian nuclear rivals have agreed to strive for solution to the core issue in accordance with this plan. Farooq Kathwari, a Srinagar-born naturalized American furniture tycoon who heads the Kashmir Study Group (KSG), has made several visits to Islamabad and New Delhi in recent months to discuss his plan for Kashmir. The plan recommends soft Kashmir borders with free access between the two sides while leaving the Line of Control undisturbed.

The Nation, 16 May 2005

Al-Yemeni was killed in Pakistan, US officials (Iftikhar Ali)

NEW YORK: - Despite Pakistan's denials, American officials are asserting that al-Qaeda leader Haitham al-Yemeni was killed last week by a missile fired from an unmanned CIA-operated drone in Toorikhel, a suburb of Mirali in North Waziristan bordering Afghanistan. The U.S. team was hoping Haitham al-Yemeni would lead them to al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, the Post said in a dispatch from Washington. But after Pakistani authorities early this month captured another al Qaeda leader, Abu Faraj al-Libbi, CIA officials became concerned that al-Yemeni would go into hiding and decided to try to kill him instead, said the counterterrorism experts.

The News, 16 May 2005

Bugti for joint Baloch platform (Muhammad Ejaz Khan)

QUETTA: Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) chief Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti on Sunday offered to dissolve his party to form a joint political platform for the Baloch people. "If National Party, Baloch Haq Tawar, Balochistan National Party and other groups and personalities dissolve their political and individual entities for the formation of the platform that would be highly appreciated," Bugti said, while addressing a press conference at Quetta Press Club by telephone from Dera Bugti. JWP Secretary General Agha Shahid Bugti, Senator Amanullah Kinrani and others were present at the press conference.

Dawn, 16 May 2005

Arms seized (Saleem Shahid)

QUETTA, May 15: The Makran Scouts seized a large quantity of drugs and illegal arms and ammunition from Balecha area, close to Pak-Iran border in Makran, on Sunday. According to the Frontier Corps sources, the Makran Scouts, acting on a tip, cordoned off Balecha area along Pak-Iran border and launched a search operation during which drugs and arms were recovered. The consignment, dumped under ground, included 325 kg hashish, 60 kg heroin, 107 rockets, 3 SMGs and rounds of 12.7 MM. No arrest was, however, made. Meanwhile CID police also recovered 10 hand grenades, 6 AK-47 rifles and several thousands of rounds during a raid in Kuchlak on Sunday night and arrested accused Ali Ahmed.

Daily Times, 16 May 2005

PM says military spending draining regions' resources (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: Emphasising peace and people's welfare, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Sunday said growing military expenditure in South Asia had drained the region's valuable resources. "We are engaged in an elusive search for security and disputes and tension have dissipated our creativity," he said in his speech at a reception hosted in honour of the South Asian

Free Media Association (SAFMA) delegates. Aziz stressed strategic restraint and the avoidance of an arms race in the region, calling for regional peace and political and economic stability.

Daily Times, 16 May 2005

Resolve NSC issue or I will resign, threatens NWFP CM (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: Akram Khan Durrani, NWFP chief minister, has threatened to resign if the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) does not resolve the issue of his participating in National Security Council (NSC) meetings. Hafiz Hussain Ahmed, MMA deputy parliamentary leader, told Daily Times on Sunday that the federal government had stopped giving out development funds to MPAs and local government representatives in the NWFP. He said the chief minister was being criticised by the MPAs, local government representatives of his province and provincial party leaders for failing to complete development work in the NWFP.

Daily Times, 17 May 2005

'Britain to sell Type-23 ships to Pakistan'

LONDON: Chief of the Naval Staff Shahid Karimullah said on Monday that Britain had offered to sell three Type-23 ships to Pakistan. Britain showed its interest in selling the ships and "we have also shown interest" in purchasing them, said Admiral Karimullah after talking with his British counterpart Admiral First Sea Lord Sir Alan West. Pakistan's High Commissioner to Britain Dr Maleeha Lodhi also attended the talks. "Now we are going to discuss the funding and price and after that is completed then a final decision could be taken," said Karimullah. Replying to a question, he said the focus of his discussion with West was basically on "the training aspect because the Pakistan Navy is mostly trained by the Royal Navy."

The News, 17 May 2005

Pakistan ready to bat for ME peace (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: As Chairman Executive Committee of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and President of Palestinian National Authority Mahmoud Abbas arrives in Islamabad on May 19. He is arriving in Islamabad on a daylong visit as part of his tour of Asian countries. "Pakistan has consistently extended unequivocal and unreserved support to the Palestinian cause, the fundamental elements of which are a total withdrawal of Israel from occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and restitution of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people including their right to self-determination and an independent homeland, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital," announced Foreign Office spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani at a weekly press briefing.

Dawn, 17 May 2005

Refugee camps in Waziristan to be closed next month

ISLAMABAD, May 16: The government has announced that it will close Afghan refugee camps in North Waziristan on June 15, offering Afghan residents the choice of voluntary repatriation or relocation, said a press release. Pakistan asked the UNHCR and Afghan government to approach the World Food Programme in Afghanistan to provide food rations of additional three months as an incentive for the refugees to return from the North West Frontier Agency and Federally Administered Tribal Areas, which include North Waziristan. The announcement came during a recent quarterly meeting of the Tripartite Commission comprising the United Nations High Commission on Refugees and the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Pakistani delegation said that it expected to soon announce the closure of other refugee camps in the FATA and authorities this year planned to close the refugee camp of Katcha Ghari in Peshawar, which had been partially cleared two years ago.

The News, 17 May 2005

Musharraf urges Leaguers to show political sagacity (Shakil Shaikh)

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf on Monday emphasised the importance of political sagacity and unity for translating economic development into tangible benefits for the common man. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz also expressed similar views. "The elected representatives have a vital role to play in realising the objective of sustainable socio-economic progress at the grassroots level," said Musharraf in his address to senior Pakistan Muslim League leaders who gathered at the Aiwan-e-Sadr at the invitation of the president.

The News, 17 May 2005

Soft borders no solution to Kashmir issue: president

LONDON: President Pervez Musharraf has said "soft borders" are not a solution to the lingering Jammu and Kashmir dispute but could be a step towards confidence building between Pakistan and India. "Many magazines and articles I read from the Indian side, some of them misrepresent this soft as meaning a solution. I don't see this as a solution at all. This may be a step towards confidence building, which could facilitate a solution," he was quoted as saying by one of the leading British dailies Financial Times in an interview here on Monday.

The News, 17 May 2005

'Afghan militants attack from Pakistan'

KABUL: Afghan militants are still launching attacks from neighbouring Pakistan despite the Pakistani military's battle against militants, a US army officer said on Monday. "My base, where I live, is in Khost province, and I will say, absolutely, there are insurgents coming across the border from Pakistan attacking into Khost, then returning back into Pakistan," Col Gary Cheek told a news conference. Cheek is commander of about 4,000 US-led troops in 16 eastern Afghan provinces, including Khost.

He commended the Pakistani military for operations, launched more than a year ago, to clear militants from the rugged Waziristan region bordering Afghanistan.

The News, 17 May 2005

Terror suspect arrested from Shabqadar (Javed Aziz Khan)

PESHAWAR: Law-enforcement agencies have arrested three persons from a house in Shabqadar, 35 kilometres from Peshawar, for their alleged links with terrorists. The arrests were made when the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) along with personnel of other law-enforcement agencies carried out a raid in Ghani Koroona in Shabqadar. The detained alleged associate of the terrorist network, identified as Shehzad, had rented the house a month back. However, two other persons, the owner of the building Mujib and another local, were also there when the law-enforcers conducted the raid. The two villagers, it was said, were released soon after their arrest while Shehzad has been shifted to some unknown place.

Daily Times, 17 May 2005

N Waziristan a serious challenge (Iqbal Khattak)

PESHAWAR: North Waziristan is a more serious challenge to the military in flushing out remnants of Al Qaeda and the Taliban than neighbouring South Waziristan, officials and tribal elders told Daily Times on Monday. Speaking on condition of anonymity, officials said that North Waziristan was a stronger base for militants due to the presence of a large number of seminaries and because around 70 percent of the local population supported jihadi elements. "It [North Waziristan] is a totally different case as far as the war on terror in the tribal belt is concerned," they said.

Daily Times, 17 May 2005

Sunni cleric wounded in attack

KARACHI: Two unidentified gunmen shot a Sunni cleric in the face Monday but he survived the attack in the city, police said. Mohammed Sheikh, 55, was hit by two bullets from a pistol during the attack inside his office in downtown Karachi, said Shahzad Waheed, a Karachi police official. Sheikh, who teaches the Quran at the International Islamic Propagation Center was in a stable condition at a hospital, Waheed said. Witnesses reported that the two assailants fled on a motorcycle after the shooting, Waheed said. A motive for the attack was not immediately clear and Waheed said police were investigating

Daily Times, 17 May 2005

Religious Ministry will oppose Madrassa Reforms Board (Mohammad Imran)

ISLAMABAD: The Religious Affairs Ministry will oppose the prime minister secretariat's recent decision to form a Madarassa Reforms Board under the chairmanship of Federal Education Minister Javed Asharaf Qazi to restructure religious seminaries. "The Religious Affairs Ministry has decided to oppose the Madarassa Reforms Board and will send a summary to Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz asking for this issue to come under the ministry's domain," sources told Daily Times on Monday. They added that the summary would be sent to the prime minister secretariat in the last week of this month because Federal Religious Affairs Minister Ejazul Haq was abroad.

Daily Times, 17 May 2005

NA passes PEMRA bill

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Monday passed the Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Bill -2005, giving sweeping powers to the authority amid criticism by the Opposition calling it a black law. The bill was presented to the house by the National Assembly Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting. The bill empowers PEMRA to seize operations by any licensee or his equipment and premises without warrants, and increases the fine from Rs 1 million to Rs 10 million. The equipment, however, will be returned to a valid licence holder after the authority imposes penalty.

The News, 18 May 2005

Libbi confesses to twin attacks on president (Mazhar Tufail)

ISLAMABAD: Abu al-Faraj al-Libbi, dubbed as No 3 in al-Qaeda network by US counter-terrorism experts, has confessed to masterminding two assassination attempts on President Pervez Musharraf, sources privy to the investigation told The News on Tuesday. They say al-Libbi, arrested two weeks ago in Mardan, has told Pakistani interrogators that he worked with a group of Pakistani militants belonging to different Jihadi groups to carry out suicide bombings to assassinate President Musharraf in Rawalpindi in December 2003. Musharraf narrowly escaped on Christmas Day in the second attempt, which killed 17 people, including the two suicide bombers. One bomber was identified as Muhammad Jameel, an activist of Jaish-i-Muhammad, a Kashmiri militant outfit, and another was said to be Afghan.

The Nation, 18 May 2005

Suicide bombing declared un-Islamic (Raja Riaz)

LAHORE - A group of ulema have declared suicide bombing and indiscriminate killings of the Muslims at worship places in an Islamic country haram (forbidden). However, the same would not be applicable in Muslim territories/countries occupied by the non-Muslim forces. The fatwa (religious decree) was announced at a Jamia Islamia (religious seminary) located in Aitchison Housing Scheme, Lahore. The Chairman, Central Moon-Sighting Committee, Mufti Muneebur Rehman, announced the fatwa (decree), signed by 58 religious leaders in the presence of seven scholars from different Islamic schools of thought.

Daily Times, 18 May 2005

Pakistan achieving 8.35% GDP by June 30 (Khalid Mustafa)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will achieve a gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of 8.35 percent by June 30 this year against the targeted 6.6 percent, showing an increase of 26.51 percent, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz told participants of a daylong meeting of the Annual Plan Coordination Committee (APCC) on Tuesday. Aziz said this was the first time since 1984-85 that the country's GDP growth rate had crossed the eight percent mark. "Pakistan is likely to be among the top five Asian countries with regard to the output of GDP growth," he said.

The Nation, 18 May 2005

NA witnesses division over marathon issue (Umar Cheema)

ISLAMABAD - The National Assembly Tuesday witnessed a clear division in liberals and conservatives over marathon race whereas its proceedings were marred due to short of quorum and opposition walkout.

Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians and Mutahidda Majlis-e-Amal held separate walkout of the House to protest the Speaker's behaviour who had refused to allow criticism of President Musharraf for stepping into PML affairs to iron out their differences. The Speaker, shortly before adjourning the session for 10am today, justified the Musharraf-PML leaders meeting saying that since the Parliament has approved the bill allowing him to hold President-COAS office, he can convene such meeting and interact with the party office-bearers.

Daily Times, 18 May 2005

Musharraf calls for judicious spending of ADB loan

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday stressed the need for speedy and inexpensive justice to the people and directed the Finance Ministry to release funds for the Access to Justice programme promptly. The president was given a comprehensive briefing on the implementation of the programme with the \$350 million Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan, to bring about judicial reforms in the country. The president highlighted the need for an environment conducive to addressing public grievances and adoption of modern techniques for the purpose.

Daily Times, 18 May 2005

Pakistan and UK emphasise cooperation

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan and the United Kingdom have expressed their desire to enhance cooperation in various fields. This was discussed during a meeting between a visiting UK defence delegation led by Sir Kevin R Tebbitt, permanent under secretary at the Ministry of Defence and Defence Minister Rao Sikandar Iqbal on Tuesday. The minister told the delegation that Pakistan and the UK enjoyed excellent relations, which needed to be strengthened further. He said the measures initiated by President General Pervez Musharraf were for the country's economic and political stability. He highlighted Pakistan's role in combating drug trafficking and the war against terrorism. app

The News, 18 May 2005

Four killed in Hub gunbattle (A H Khanzada)

KARACHI: Three suspected gangsters and the SHO Kalakot police station were killed and 22 others, including 16 law-enforcers, injured in a fierce encounter between a criminal gang of Lyari and a joint team of police and Rangers in Balochistan's industrial city of Hub in the early hours of Tuesday. The injured also included TPO Lyari, two DSPs, a Pakistan Rangers Major and five civilians. Acting on a tip-off that the most wanted outlaw, Rehman alias Dakait, along with his accomplices, was hiding in a house owned by an influential politician of Balochistan at the Sakran road, Hub, a police party comprising Lyari police, Industrial Crimes Unit (ICU) and Pakistan Rangers raided the house, but the outlaw managed to escape under the cover of heavy fire.

The Nation, 18 May 2005

Chaudhrys, Patriots set for another showdown (Mubashir Hassan)

LAHORE - After the famous Okara incident that once created ripples in the ruling coalition, the Chaudhrys and the Patriots are heading for yet another showdown over the issue of new Okara Nazim. Political pundits apprehend that another confrontation between these two ruling partners is likely as Defence Minister Rao Sikander Iqbal intends to bring his brother Maj. (Retd) Rao Zafar Iqbal as District Nazim, while local Okara leadership of PML backed by Chaudharys would either like to retain present incumbent Sajjad Haider or field another candidate against that of Rao family. The Patriots led by Rao Sikander, want support of PML for Okara nazimship, but latter is not likely to oblige them unless there is a nod from the Presidency.

Dawn, 19 May 2005

Accord on defence signed with UK

ISLAMABAD, May 18: Pakistan and the United Kingdom on Wednesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to increase defence collaboration between the two countries. A press release issued by the defence ministry said the MoU was signed by Secretary of Defence Production Lt-Gen (retd) Ali Mohammad Jan Orakzai and UK's permanent Under-Secretary of State for Defence Sir Kevin R Tebbitt. According to the press release, the MoU will help open up new avenues in the area of defence cooperation between Pakistan and the UK and facilitate procurement of defence equipment and transfer of technology.

Dawn, 19 May 2005

Man planting bomb killed in Turbat

QUETTA, May 18: A man was killed and another injured when an explosive devise which they intended to plant near the city site office of the Mirani dam project in Turbat township went off on Wednesday night. Another explosion was reported from

Nushki town. "Yes, one saboteur died and the other suffered injuries. Sources said that the two were trying to plant the device to blow up the site office of a construction company which was working on the Mirani dam project. The device went off killing the saboteur who was carrying the bomb while the other received injuries and was arrested.

Dawn, 19 May 2005

UK national held for Al Qaeda links

PESHAWAR, May 18: The authorities have arrested a British national suspected of holding links with the Al Qaeda terror network, officials said on Wednesday. The man, who identified himself as Shehzad, was arrested four days ago from the small town of Shabqadar, some 25 kilometres north of Peshawar, a security official told AFP requesting anonymity. The secret service agents arrested him with the help of the anti-terrorism police force during a raid on a house and recovered computer and compact discs from the room, he said.

Dawn, 19 May 2005

6 of a tribe killed near Sukkur

SUKKUR, May 18: Six people belonging to the Lakhan tribe were gunned down and three others injured by Mahar tribesmen near Numaish More, in the jurisdiction of C-Area police station here on Wednesday morning. The Lakhan tribesmen, belonging to Jafferabad, were on their way to the Sessions Court, Sukkur, for hearing of a case. When they reached near Numaish More, armed gunmen belonging to Mahar tribe, sprayed bullets killing six of them and injuring three others. They fled after committing the crime.

Daily Times, 19 May 2005

Agro growth to cut poverty: Musharraf

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf said on Wednesday that the 7.5 percent agricultural growth achieved this year bade well for Pakistan's economy and vowed to encourage a higher growth rate in agriculture to alleviate poverty and sustain development. Addressing a meeting to review the progress made in the Rs 66 billion project for brick-lining watercourses countrywide, the president said that due to the hard work put in by farmers and the government's agriculture-friendly policies, robust growth had been witnessed in agriculture, which formed the backbone of Pakistan's economy.

Daily Times, 19 May 2005

2 Qaeda suspects caught in Lahore

LAHORE: Intelligence agents arrested two members of outlawed Sunni militant group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi in a raid at a hotel here on Wednesday and one of the men is believed to be a fund-raiser for Al Qaeda, an intelligence official said. The official identified one suspect as Mohammed Khaliq (42) and the other as Maulvi Mohammed Sadiq; wanted by the police for a suspected role in the killing of an Iranian diplomat in 1992. Police would not confirm the arrests. The official said agents also seized Rs 900,000 from the hotel room where the two men were captured.

Daily Times, 19 May 2005

Water policy will focus on conservation (Khalid Mustafa)

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to develop a Groundwater Regulatory Framework for the provinces to improve ground water irrigation and avoid excessive pumping, reveals the latest draft of the National Water Policy that has been put to the cabinet for approval. Groundwater Management Acts will bar excessive pumping of water and help improve the poor quality of ground water in some areas. The four federating units will also be encouraged to prepare a groundwater Atlas for each Canal Command and sub-basin.

The News, 19 May 2005

'PML-Q heading for organizational changes'

NOWSHERA: Following the PML-Q workers' convention near here in Manki Sharif, the party's provincial general secretary Mushtaq Ghani said the party is set to hold elections for the NWFP chapter and undergo organizational changes. Talking to The News, he said the PML central president Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain would soon announce a list of around 300 party councillors who would elect the new office-bearers. He said 250 councillors would be from the PML while the remaining 50 would come from allied parties that had merged with the PML.

The News, 19 May 2005

Gwadar port will not be used for military purpose: CNS

LONDON: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Shahid Karimullah has said the Gwadar port will not be used for strategic or military purpose because it is designed to promote strategic economic interests of the country. In an interview with a TV channel late on Tuesday, he said China could also utilise Gwadar port for its commercial purposes. "Once it is completed it would help promote trade to and from Central Asian Republics," he added. The CNS said that the Pakistan Navy had the Jinnah Naval Port, which was 100 miles east of Gwadar, hence the perception in the West that Gwadar could be used for military purposes was incorrect.

The Nation, 19 May 2005

MPs can't speak against Army (DILSHAD AZEEM)

ISLAMABAD - Speaker National Assembly Chaudhry Amir Hussain Wednesday upheld his ruling on barring the MPs from

speaking against armed forces and also asked the government to submit a detailed reply on the current situation at Okara military farms. MNA Chaudhry Manzoor of PPP-P, while speaking on a point of order, claimed that the situation at Okara military farms is extremely dangerous and a clash between the army personnel and tenants can take place at any moment. "The current standstill at Okara may lead to a Sui-like situation."

The Nation, 20 May 2005

Abbas seeks Musharraf help on Palestine (Shaiq Hussain)

ISLAMABAD - Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas Thursday sought President Musharraf's influence and good offices for the resolution of Palestinian conflict. Palestinian President, who reached here from China on his first visit to Pakistan, held formal talks with President General Pervez Musharraf. Talking to the newsmen after his meeting with President Musharraf, the Palestinian President Mehmoud Abbas sought the influence of Pakistani President for the resolution of Palestine issue saying that General Pervez Musharraf enjoys international respect.

The Nation, 20 May 2005

Pak to back EU over Iran N-issue: Kasuri

FOREIGN Minister Khursheed Mehmood Kasuri has said Pakistan wants a peaceful negotiated solution to the Iranian nuclear issue and backs efforts by the European Union, reports Geo TV channel. He was addressing a Press conference at the State Guest House in Karachi on Thursday.

He said that Pakistan was extremely concerned on the issue as Iran was a neighbour and brotherly country, and Pakistan wanted a peaceful negotiated solution to be arrived at through negotiations. He said the issue between Iran and the EU needed to take into account the international rights and obligations of all parties.

Dawn, 20 May 2005

Efforts on to settle NFC issue: Aziz

ISLAMABAD, May 19: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz admitted on Thursday that there were difficulties in the finalization of the NFC award before the budget but vowed to continue efforts to bring provinces closer to a consensus formula. Talking to MMA's deputy parliamentary leader Hafiz Hussain Ahmed, who had called on him at the prime minister's house along with legislators from Balochistan, Mr Aziz agreed that the provinces should have worked out a formula before the budget. Talking to Dawn after the 35-minute meeting, the MMA leader said that constitutional issues, including restoration of parliament's sovereignty and powers of the prime minister, had come under discussion.

Dawn, 20 May 2005

Kasuri says time ripe for Kashmir solution

KUALA LUMPUR, May 19: The time is ripe for a deal between Pakistan and India on Kashmir and the two countries should seize the opportunity to end the long-running dispute, Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri said on Thursday. "At the moment conditions are particularly propitious," he told reporters during a stopover here on his way home from visits to Australia and New Zealand. "Both leaders have to show courage and take difficult decisions and the fact there are peace constituencies in both countries should be a help to them," Mr Kasuri said. Mr Kasuri said a major confidence-building measure in the search for a solution to the Kashmir issue would be an agreement on the disputed Siachen glacier in talks beginning on May 25.

Dawn, 20 May 2005

Draft water policy placed before cabinet (Khaleeq Kiani)

ISLAMABAD, May 19: The draft National Water Policy seeking the setting up of a permanent National Water Council led by the prime minister to take decisions on water-related issues and inter-provincial conflicts has been submitted to the federal cabinet for approval. An official statement of the ministry of water and power said that the draft policy had been submitted to the cabinet for placing it before the next meeting for approval to ensure sustainable utilisation of water resources. Information gathered by Dawn suggests the policy envisages comprehensive reorganisation of water sector institutions through their mergers.

The News, 20 May 2005

Decision on gas pipeline by Dec 31: PM

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Thursday said Pakistan would take a final decision by Dec 31 on a gas pipeline project. Talking informally to newsmen here, Shaukat said Pakistan was weighing three options to import gas from Iran, Turkmenistan or Qatar. "December 31, is the deadline for a decision on gas pipeline project," he added. The prime minister said the Indian petroleum minister has been invited by his Pakistani counterpart in early June for talks on the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project. "The petroleum ministers from Qatar and Turkmenistan have already visited Pakistan to discuss the matter," he said, adding that Pakistan had already offered India an "energy corridor" to get gas either from Iran or Turkmenistan.

The News, 20 May 2005

Pakistan, India resume Siachen talks on 26th (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir)

ISLAMABAD: The talks on Siachen resuming on May 26 (Thursday) in Rawalpindi could prove to be the biggest test for the

confidence-building measures (CBM) between Pakistan and India. Pakistan will impress upon India to disengage troops on the highest battlefield of the world on the positions held prior to the Simla agreement of 1972. Defence Secretary Lt-Gen (ret'd) Tariq Waseem Ghazi for the first time will lead host country's delegation in the talks while the Indian side will be led by its Defence Secretary Ajay Vikram Singh, who is reaching here on Wednesday.

Statesman, 20 May 2005

Pak, China to establish trade zone at Khunjrab

BEIJING: Pakistan and China have agreed to establish a joint frontier free trade zone for promoting mutually beneficial cooperative partnership, said Sardar Muhammad Idrees, NWFP Minister for Local Government and Urban Development who is visiting China at the 11-member official delegation. As per the initial plan, the zone will be covering 10,000 square meters and will include 100 stalls, 50 each for Pakistan and China. It will be located at Khunjrab dry port, within Tashikurgan County. The Minister told APP that he held useful talks with the Chinese officials for exploring new avenues of cooperation in the economic sector.

Statesman, 20 May 2005

Finger-printing of Afghan refugees starts (Akhtar Amin)

PESHAWAR: To improve the law and order situation, reduce crime ratio and restrict the movement of foreign militants and identified Afghan criminals involved in various terrorist acts in the country, the government has started finger-printing and photographing the Afghan refugees in the country. Well-placed source from the law department revealed this to the Statesman here on Thursday. The decision to this effect had been taken at a high-level meeting presided over by President General Pervez Musharraf a few months back in Islamabad.

The Statesman, 21 May 2005

Japanese PM arrives in Islamabad

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi arrived in Islamabad this morning for two-day official visit of Pakistan. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz received his Japanese counterpart. Japan and Pakistan will ink various agreements including technical and grant assistance. The Japanese Prime Minister would meet President General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and would discuss bilateral, regional and international issues including Japan's bid for permanent seat at the United Nation's Security Council (UNSC).

Daily Times, 21 May 2005

Six arrested for Qaeda link

MULTAN/PESHAWAR: Police arrested six militants in separate raids for allegedly sheltering Al Qaeda fugitives and planning rocket attacks against the army, police and security officials said Friday. The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said three of the suspects were captured this week in Multan. The three are said to be members of the banned Hizbul Mujahideen outfit. The officials said that Ali Sher, Hafiz Ijaz Ahmed and Pir Muhammad Jamil were captured this week during a raid in Multan. "I confirm that these people sheltered some Arab Al Qaeda men in recent months. They are in our custody and we are questioning them," one security official said.

Daily Times, 21 May 2005

Pakistan's 71 F-16s likely to be outmatched by India's 126 (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: Pakistan is expected to order 18 to 71 F-16 Falcon combat aircraft from the United States, as compared with 126 F-16s - or potentially F/A-18E/F Super Hornets - that could be offered for sale to India, according to Congressional Research Service (CRS). In a report released on Thursday, CRS said, "Some believe that this sale is being considered, in part, to reward the Pakistani government for the role it has played in support of US-led anti-terrorism efforts ... If completed, such sales would have implications for political-military relations among the United States, Pakistan, and India; for combat aircraft proliferation; and for the US defence industrial base."

Dawn, 21 May 2005

India calls for joint power projects

SRINAGAR, May 20: Held Kashmir's chief minister on Friday urged India and Pakistan to cooperate on developing hydroelectric power in the divided Kashmir in a bid to avert further rows over power development in the territory. The two sides are at odds over a 450-megawatt hydroelectric project on the Chenab River in south Kashmir that Pakistan charges violates a decades-old water treaty between the nations. "This Baglihar project does not amount to any violation of the Indus Water Treaty, Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed said in a statement. "The way to end this mistrust and apprehension is to have joint ventures in hydroelectric power", he added.

Dawn, 21 May 2005

Srinagar-Leh highway cleared

ZOJILA PASS, May 20: Indian engineers reopened a highway in held Kashmir on Friday that is a lifeline to troops deployed in the frigid wastes of the world's highest battlefield after months of snow clearing. The 435-kilometre Srinagar-Leh highway was cut off six months ago when avalanches and heavy snow blocked the route built after India and Pakistan fought their first war over disputed Kashmir in 1947-1948. Military trucks rolled along the highway which winds through the 3,508-metre high Zojilla Pass after it was reopened to tens of thousands of Indian troops deployed in the disputed Himalayan territory.—AFP

Daily Times, 21 May 2005

Marathon for Civil Liberties: We'll run, says HRCP

LAHORE: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) and Joint Action Committee (JAC) for Peoples Right's have announced they will hold the 'Marathon for Civil Liberties' today (Saturday). The mixed-marathon is scheduled from Liberty Roundabout to Kalma Chowk at 5:00pm. HRCP chairperson Asma Jehangir vowed on Friday to hold another marathon on Saturday despite a ban on women competing in foot races, saying "we will not accept any black laws." Asma made her remarks less than a week after police detained dozens of human rights activists to stop them from holding a race.

The News, 21 May 2005

'100 foreigners still hiding in Waziristan' (Sailab Mahsud)

TANK: During his visit to South Waziristan on Friday, Corps Commander Peshawar Lt-Gen Safdar Hussain said around 100 foreign militants, still hiding in the area, were no longer able to plan and execute terrorist attacks. Talking to reporters at Barwand and Amzaray Naray in a mountainous area inhabited by Mahsud sub-tribes, he said the foreigners were scattered and on the run. "We are hunting them. They cannot operate now," he declared. Earlier addressing tribesmen, the corps commander said terrorism had been effectively dealt with in South Waziristan and those seeking to create a wedge between the Pakistan Army and the tribal people had been defeated.

Dawn, 21 May 2005

Musharraf says now is time to settle disputes: Call to seize 'fleeting moment' (Raja Asghar)

ISLAMABAD, May 20: President Pervez Musharraf said on Friday that Pakistan and India must seize a 'fleeting moment' available to them to solve their disputes and a possible solution of the Kashmir dispute could make borders irrelevant. In a speech to parliamentarians from South Asian countries at the end of a six-day conference, he said India-Pakistan disputes should better be settled during his and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's tenures because of a 'complete understanding' existing between them. President Musharraf said he felt 'extremely optimistic' about the future of peace process after his talks with the Indian leadership during a visit to New Delhi last month, because of sincerity of intentions between the two sides.

Dawn, 21 May 2005

President denies second term claim

ISLAMABAD, May 20: President Pervez Musharraf on Friday denied a minister's statement that he would seek another term of office after the present one expires in 2007. "This is a personal opinion and not my opinion, and I have never said anything in this regard," he said when asked to comment on Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed's statement on the matter. "I haven't thought future beyond that," Gen Musharraf said in reply to a question after his speech to the concluding session of a six-day Safma conference. The president parried a question on whether he would give up his army uniform in 2007 and contest the presidential election as a civilian.

Dawn, 21 May 2005

Budget deficit 3.2pc likely: No foreign aid to be sought (Ihtashamul Haque)

ISLAMABAD, May 20: The government has decided not to seek any direct foreign assistance to fund the next budget which is likely to show a deficit of 3.2 per cent of the GDP. "We plan to contain budget deficit at 3.2 per cent of the GDP and would use \$1 billion Sukuk and Eurobonds funds to meet the requirement of foreign financing for the new budget," Minister of State for Finance Omar Ayub Khan said. Talking to Dawn, the minister said that the budget would lay stress on the 'Khushhal Pakistan Programme' for improving the infrastructure in rural areas.

The News, 22 May 2005

Guantanamo detainees shifted to Punjab jails (Rauf Klasra)

ISLAMABAD: As many as 18 prisoners, who were repatriated from Guantanamo Bay and detained at Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi for the last eight months on charges of being "Indian agents", were in a dramatic move shifted to three district jails of the Punjab on Friday amid tight security. A jail official confirmed that some prisoners reached Sahiwal Jail after 22 hours uninterrupted journey that virtually broke the nerves of these captives. A top jail source confirmed to this scribe that these detainees were now being kept in "solitary confinement" and not given proper medical treatment as many of them were seriously ill and needed immediate hospitalisation.

Dawn, 22 May 2005

AI seeks information on torture, weapons (Mohammad Asghar)

RAWALPINDI, May 21: Human rights watchdog Amnesty International is probing Pakistan's alleged involvement in the global supply of equipment that could inflict torture and aid inhuman treatment of prisoners, Dawn has learnt. An official source said that Amnesty International is also examining legislative and administrative mechanisms by which the government controls or prohibits the manufacture and export of such equipment at the local, regional and international levels. Amnesty is also interested in finding out more about Pakistan's domestic legislation and export control policy and practice in the areas of electro-shock weapons and stun weapons, he said.

Dawn, 22 May 2005

Consensus emerges for Saarc summit (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, May 21: There are positive indications that the twice-postponed 13th summit of the South Asian Association for

Regional Cooperation (Saarc) will now be held in mid-November, diplomatic sources told Dawn on Saturday. According to these sources, consensus among the seven Saarc member states is moving decisively towards convening of the summit in Dhaka in November. It is learnt that most of the member states, including India, have indicated their preference for the summit in November instead of September when most countries will be busy preparing for the UN General Assembly session.

Daily Times, 22 May 2005

Swiss court summons Benazir and Zardari

ISLAMABAD: The examining magistrate in Geneva has summoned Benazir Bhutto, Asif Zardari and their agent Jens Schlegelmilch on June 15, 2005 in the Swiss money laundering case. The Pakistan government has also been invited to attend the hearing in the SGS case, a press release said on Saturday. If convicted, the accused can face five-year imprisonment and a fine up to 1 million Swiss francs.

Daily Times, 22 May 2005

Dam committee chief resigns under political pressure (Khalid Mustafa)

ISLAMABAD: ANG Abbasi, chairman of the Technical Committee on Water Resources (TCWR), has resigned before completing the much-awaited report on the future of large dams on the Indus River, which he had to give to President Pervez Musharraf. A senior official at Prime Minister's Secretariat told Daily Times on Saturday that Abbasi resigned because of pressure from Sindhi nationalists who did not want him to submit a report favouring Kalabagh Dam on the Indus. He said Abbasi submitted his resignation to President Musharraf, with one copy sent to the prime minister.

Daily Times, 22 May 2005

Controversial remarks about ISI

ISLAMABAD: After his hard-hitting comments against the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Dr Aamir Liaquat Hussain, minister of state for religious affairs, is in London and there are reports that he might lose his ministerial slot. Sources told Daily Times on Saturday that Altaf Hussain, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) leader, had summoned Dr Aamir to London to explain his comments. Readers may recall that Dr Aamir gave an interview to Daily Times in which he had made remarks on "an ISI within the ISI", which were later strongly denied by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), and Dr Aamir was reprimanded by President Pervez Musharraf for his comments. However, Dr Farooq Sattar, MQM parliamentary leader in the National Assembly, said Dr Aamir's visit to London was a routine matter.

The News, 22 May 2005

NFC Award: president may intervene (Hanif Khalid)

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf may intervene for evolving consensus on the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, as the provincial chief ministers will meet him here in a couple of days, it has been learnt. It is also learnt that Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has called the four chief ministers to the federal capital on May 26 to discuss a formula for distribution of taxes being collected by the federal government, as the prime minister is going to chair five important meetings next week.

Dawn, 22 May 2005

Marathon for civil liberties held in Lahore (Amjad Mahmood)

LAHORE, May 21: The Joint Action Committee for People's Rights managed to organize a mixed 'Marathon for Civil Liberties' here on Saturday as the administration decided not to intervene or stop the event by force. But the route of the run was changed under a 'contingency plan' from Liberty Chowk to Qadhafi Stadium instead of Kalma Chowk. Heavy contingents of police had been deployed at both gates of the stadium to prevent any untoward incident as activists of the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal and Shabab-i-Millli were present at the Liberty Chowk and on Ferozepur Road to forcibly prevent the marathon from taking place.

The Nation, 22 May 2005

No future role of Shujaat, says Pagaro (Imtiaz Ali)

KARACHI - Pir Pagaro, spiritual leader of Hurs and PML (F) chief on Saturday said that there will be no future political role of Ch Shujaat Husain. The PML would remain but it would not be of Ch. Shujaat, Pagaro said while talking to the newsmen at his residence after meeting with former Prime Minister Zafarullah Jamali. He said that there was only one PML that was ours. He said that they would approach Election Commission of Pakistan for preventing any other party from using name of PML. 'Ch. Shujaat should seek forgiveness from Almighty Allah', Pagaro suggested.

Daily Times, 23 May 2005

Iran wants Pakistan Army to man gas line

NEW DELHI: Pakistani armed forces may be given a contract for the security of the 760-kilometre stretch of the Iran-India gas pipeline transiting through Pakistan for an annual fee of \$100 million, Online quoted a senior government official as saying on Sunday. The fee would be in addition to the transit fee Islamabad would earn for allowing the \$4.16 billion pipeline to pass through its territory. At the meeting of the task force on the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline in Tehran from May 2 to 4, Iran had proposed, "the entire security of the pipeline be handed over to the Pakistan armed forces for a fee of \$100 million per year," the official said. In the same meeting, Tehran rejected India's demand for a delivered price of \$2.25 per million British thermal units (mBtu) for the gas to be imported through the 2,600-km line.

The Nation, 23 May 2005

Five NWA tribals killed in US raid (HAJI MUJTABA)

MIRANSHAH - The US-led troops killed at least five tribesmen belonging to Lawara Mandi of North Waziristan Agency overnight Sunday here in their operation against suspected terrorists in the border areas. The military action was reportedly launched in retaliation following an attack on the camp of US-led troops at Peepli area of Afghanistan's Paktika province late Saturday night. A number of US, allied and Afghan soldiers were either killed or wounded in that attack, reports said. The alleged militants had attacked the camp of the US-led forces with missiles and rockets at Peepli area of Paktika province, bordering North Waziristan Agency. Three vehicles were destroyed in the attack besides a number of troops either killed or wounded, reports said.

The Nation, 23 May 2005

Focus on Pak-India peace as Rocca arrives tomorrow (SHAIQ HUSSAIN)

ISLAMABAD - US Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca, who arrives here Tuesday (tomorrow) on an official visit, will hold talks with top Pakistani leadership on bilateral ties besides regional and global issues. However, the focus of her discussions would be the Indo-Pak peace process. The top US official, who arrives here two days ahead of Pakistan-India talks on Siachen to be followed by negotiations on Sir Creek, would meet President General Pervez Musharraf, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri and other senior officials. According to diplomatic sources, the US Assistant Secretary of State would discuss in detail with authorities here various aspects of Pakistan, India peace process and especially the upcoming talks on Siachen and Sir Creek.

The Nation, 23 May 2005

No mention of KBD or Bhasha in water policy (DILSHAD AZEEM)

ISLAMABAD- The National Water Policy is still pending before the cabinet for a formal approval to the construction of two mega water dams, however, it does not mention the name of Kalabagh or Bhasha dams, sources told The Nation here on Sunday. "The policy says that two major water reservoirs, preferably the projects of which designing have been completed, should be constructed by initiating work immediately," the sources said while referring to the contents of the policy. The feasibility of Kalabagh and Bhasha dams, having 13-14 Million Acre Feet (MAF) water storage capacity, has already been completed by the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) as both are feasible for the construction.

The Nation, 23 May 2005

PM forms body to resolve intra-coalition disputes

ISLAMABAD - The lack of coordination among the allied parties sitting in government, is the main cause of quorum problem during the National Assembly proceedings as well as other contentious issues. PM Shaukat Aziz formed a three-member committee to resolve intra-coalition disputes and the matters dealing with the legislative business of the NA. The committee formed almost three-month back, comprised PML President Chaudhry Shujat Hussain, MQM Parliamentary Leader Dr Farooq Sattar and President of Pakistan People's Party (Regd) Aftab Sherpao. Since then a single meeting held with the Prime Minister that had the presence of all of its members. In the 2nd meeting Dr. Farooq Sattar was not present in the country while third meeting has yet to take place.

The Nation, 23 May 2005

Pagaro may control Sindh PML (UMAR CHEEMA)

ISLAMABAD - In the first phase of his efforts to wrest control of the PML, Pir Pagaro is trying to bring in his top aide, Nadir Leghari, as secretary general Sindh in place of Imtiaz Sheikh. Sheikh, the incumbent secretary general backed by Chaudhry Shujat, has lost political battle against Chief Minister Sindh Dr. Arbab Ghulam Rahim who first sacked him from his cabinet and later forced the central leadership to remove him from the party office. Despite efforts the central leadership has failed to help Sheikh in retaining the party office in provincial chapter; hence he is now being offered the office of senior vice president at the center, senior party sources told The Nation.

The Nation, 23 May 2005

PML set to defy ban on rallies (RANA FAWAD)

LAHORE - Contrary to the government's stance that it will not allow any political party or group to carry out any political activity on the City's roads, the ruling Pakistan Muslim League has announced to hold a big public gathering at Shalimar Chowk on May 24 (tomorrow) where CM Ch Pervaiz Elahi, District Nazim Amer Mahmood and other leaders will address. When contacted, City District Mian Amer was not available for comments. It may be mentioned here that the issue came under media focus when the district government refused to allow the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan to hold a mini marathon from Liberty Market Chowk to Kalma Chowk first on May 14 and then on May 21. Mian Amer is on record saying that the government will not allow any party or organisation to hold political activities anywhere in the city except Minar-e-Pakistan so that the citizens do not face any inconvenience.

Dawn, 23 May 2005

Army gets work on Mangla restarted (Ahmad Fraz Khan)

LAHORE, May 22: Intervention by the 'army authorities' has helped restart work on the raising of Mangla Dam, which remained suspended for six months due to a dispute on cost of material between the contractor and the lessee of land around the dam. According to sources in the Ministry of Water and Power, the army authorities met at the GHQ last Tuesday and took serious note of delay in the completion of the project. After the meeting, they instructed the contractor to start excavating material from all available sources without bothering about the cost which would be decided later. The instructions were passed on to the contractor on Thursday, and he has restarted work.

Dawn, 23 May 2005

Centre rejects provinces' plea for bank borrowing (Khaleeq Kiani)

ISLAMABAD, May 22: The federal government is reported to have turned down the provinces' request to be allowed to borrow from the market to pay back Rs137 billion development loans they owe to the federation. The loans carry about 17-18 per cent interest. The commercial banks are ready to lend at 45 per cent mark-up to the provinces. Under the constitution, the provinces cannot borrow directly from the banking sector without permission from the centre. Sources in the finance ministry told Dawn that all the four provincial governments had taken up the issue - both individually and jointly and also as part of discussions on National Finance Commission award - with the federal government in recent days.

Dawn, 23 May 2005

Sindh formula to benefit all provinces, says minister

KARACHI, May 22: Sindh's Senior Minister for Finance Syed Sardar Ahmed said on Sunday that all the provinces would get substantial increase in their shares if they accepted the formula proposed by Sindh for the National Finance Commission award. Talking to journalists at the Governor's House, the senior minister of Sindh said he had written a letter explaining the formula to the finance ministers of Punjab, the NWFP and Balochistan. Sardar Ahmed said he had also talked to them on telephone, however, no response in writing had been received so far. He dispelled the impression that the Sindh government had changed its stance of multiple criteria for the distribution of national resources among the provinces and said: "We stand by it."

Daily Times, 23 May 2005

470 Pakistanis stranded in Kuwait

LAHORE: Hundreds of Pakistanis in Kuwait are living in horrible conditions, many near starvation, reported Geo news channel. The men had gone to Kuwait after recruiting agencies promised them steady work but are struggling to eke out an existence without a job. The channel reported that 470 men left for Kuwait, courtesy of visas provided by various recruiting companies, and were jobless eight months after arriving there. It added that most of them were starving and had complained that the Pakistani Embassy was unhelpful and ignorant of their situation.

The Nation, 23 May 2005

Thousands to rally on May 27 to protest sacrilege (DILSHAD AZEEM)

ISLAMABAD - MMA President Qazi Hussain Ahmed Sunday disclosed that one hundred thousand Muslims carrying copies of Holy Quran would stage a demonstration in Islamabad as a part of worldwide rallies on May 27 to protest desecration of the holy book by US soldiers at Guantanamo Bay. "Every participant of the rally will hold a copy of Holy Quran and there will be no party flag in the demonstration," Qazi Hussain Ahmed told an Ulema convention, which he presided here. The religious scholars from across the country attended the convention.

Daily Times, 24 May 2005

Official confirms targeted killings in Pakistan by US forces (Khalid Hasan)

Washington: The cooperation between Pakistani and American governments in operations against Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters in Pak-Afghan border areas appears to be close enough to involve targeted killings in Pakistani territory. There are also clear indications that the interrogation of terrorists or terrorism suspects held by Pakistan is undertaken by the two sides jointly. While Pakistani government spokesmen have been issuing flat denials of such reports, US responses tend to leave the matter open. Daily Times has now obtained the transcript of an interview given to CNN's Wolf Blitzer by US national security adviser Stephen Hadley, a careful reading of which conveys the distinct impression that US operations over Pakistani territory have taken place and, further, that suspects held by Pakistan are being jointly interrogated by US and Pakistan.

Daily Times, 24 May 2005

Gitmo detainees quizzed about ISI networks (Maqbool Ahmed)

KARACHI: Three Pakistani prisoners who returned from Guantanamo Bay in September last year recently told a joint interrogation team (JIT) of several intelligence agencies that the Americans were curious about the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and wanted information on the agency's networks in Afghanistan and Iran. They also corroborated reports that US interrogators desecrated the Quran. According to documents obtained by Daily Times, Military Intelligence (MI), Intelligence Bureau (IB), ISI, Special Investigation Group (SIG) and Sindh Police personnel conducted the joint interrogation of Abid Raza (s/o Mohammad Hussain), Mohammad Anwar (s/o Mohammad Yameen) and Mohammad Ilyas in Karachi, Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas prisons from April 18 to May 10 this year.

The Nation, 24 May 2005

2 Arabs held on alleged links with Qaeda

PESHAWAR (Online) - Security forces have arrested two people on their alleged links with Al-Qaeda from adjoining area of Charsadda on Monday. The arrested accused reportedly offered tough resistance to security forces however the security forces managed to arrest them. The security forces launched operation against some four Arab families early on Monday morning in Dosehra, an adjoining are of Charsadda. The exchange of fire between security forces and Arab suspects went on for about three hours and taking advantage of the firing two suspects managed to flee. The security forces arrested two of the four suspects besides arresting members of the Arab families.

Dawn, 24 May 2005

Pakistan invites APHC leaders (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, May 23: The government has formally invited the entire leadership of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) to travel to Pakistan on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus scheduled for June 2. "They (APHC leaders) have been extended an invitation by Pakistan government and they are welcome to visit any part of the country, Islamabad, Rawalpindi or AJK," Foreign Office spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani announced at his weekly news briefing on Monday. He pointed out that on arrival in Muzaffarabad the Hurriyat leaders would be granted permission to travel to any place in Pakistan, making it clear that no visas or passports would be required.

Statesman, 24 May 2005

PM says no to LoC as permanent border (Naveed Miraj)

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has said Pakistan and India will have to show political will to resolve all outstanding issues including Kashmir to ensure better future of the South Asian region. Inaugurating the 36th meeting of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council in Islamabad Monday, he said: "We will never accept any proposal of turning existing ceasefire line between the 'two Kashmir's' as permanent or international border. "Pakistan, he said, is committed to promoting peace and stability in the region and it has demonstrated courage and flexibility for just resolution of the Kashmir issue which lies at the heart of the peace process.

Dawn, 24 May 2005

WB sets conditions for credit

ISLAMABAD, May 23: The World Bank on Monday set a series of five major conditions to consider approval of a \$350 million second phase of the Poverty Reduction Support Credit (PRSC-II) for Pakistan. The conditionalities are broad-based covering almost all areas, from governance to legislation, reforms in water and power sectors and implementation of decisions of the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra). "The World Bank has clearly told the government that unless these conditions are met, the executive board of the World Bank scheduled to meet in July 2005 would not consider the PRSC-II," said a senior government official.

Dawn, 24 May 2005

Imtiaz quits Sindh PML post (Nasir Iqbal and Shamim ur Rahman)

ISLAMABAD/KARACHI, May 23: Nadir Akmal Leghari on Monday replaced Imtiaz Sheikh as general-secretary of Pakistan Muslim League Sindh after the latter resigned from the senior post amid corruption controversy. Mr Leghari has been appointed as new general-secretary on the recommendation of the party's provincial president and Chief Minister Arbab Ghulam Rahim. This was announced by PML president Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain at his residence here.

Dawn, 24 May 2005

PML ministers, MPAs form group: MMA's attitude in Balochistan criticized

QUETTA, May 23: Five ministers in Balochistan's cabinet and six MPAs, all belonging to the Pakistan Muslim League, on Monday announced forming a separate group and pledged efforts to restore their party's status as the senior partner in the coalition with the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal and the Balochistan National Party (Awami). The PML members discussed at length the MMA's attitude towards the PML and expressed dissatisfaction over it. The meeting that continued for several hours observed that since the formation of the government two and a half years ago the MMA had not taken members of other coalition partners into confidence on issues like distribution of development funds and projects.

Dawn, 24 May 2005

Irregularity in award of contract questioned: Mangla Dam raising project (Arshad Sharif)

ISLAMABAD, May 23: The Senate standing committee on water and power on Monday expressed concern over the irregularity in the award of contract for the Rs64-billion-Mangla Dam raising project and asked the Wapda to submit a report to the committee. Chairman of the standing committee, Senator Hafiz Abdul Malik Qadri presided over the meeting. "The contract was given to a firm in which former cabinet minister, Razzak Dawood, holds shares," said Senator Dr Abdullah Riar, when asked about owners of the firm. Wapda Chairman Tariq Hameed found it hard to explain a number of questions raised by the committee over irregularities in the contract given by his predecessor, Lt-Gen (retired) Zulfikar Ali Khan.

Daily Times, 24 May 2005

CII will review Hudood laws (Mohammad Imran)

ISLAMABAD: The Council of Islamic Ideology is reviewing Hudood laws in the light of reports by the Justice (r) Nasir Aslam Zahid Commission, Justice (r) Majida Rizvi Commission and Women's Aid, an NGO of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, said CII chairman Dr Khalid Masud on Monday. "The CII is reviewing the basic structure of the Hudood Ordinance for better legislation in light of the three reports because it is necessary to change it," Masud told reporters. Refusing to comment on demands on the repeal of Hudood laws, the CII chairman said the CII wanted to adopt a definite position on the issue after consulting every school of thought.

Dawn, 25 May 2005

Economic ties, peace process top agenda: Rocca arrives today (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, May 24: US Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca is scheduled to arrive here on Wednesday morning for consultations with the Pakistani leadership on a host of bilateral issues as well as key regional and global developments. Ms

Rocca will call on Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz later in the day. Her first official engagement during the three-day trip will be delegation-level talks at the foreign ministry which will be led by Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohammad Khan from the Pakistan side. She will later call on Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri. On Thursday, Ms Rocca will call on President Gen Pervez Musharraf.

The News, 25 May 2005

Musharraf opposed to deadlines for UN reforms

ISLAMABAD: Saying that Pakistan was opposed to expansion in the permanent category of the Security Council, President Gen Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday emphasised that the United Nations reforms should be advanced through a consensus approach and without any arbitrary deadlines. The already existing inequities in the Security Council should not be reinforced by expanding centres of privilege in the permanent category, the president said during a meeting with Ali Alatas, Adviser to the President of Indonesia and Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, who called on him.

The Nation, 25 May 2005

Geelani refuses to visit Pakistan

LAHORE - All Parties Hurriyat Conference central leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, while reacting to an invitation by Islamabad to visit Pakistan and Azad Kashmir, has made an excuse to accept this invitation and decided not to come to Pakistan on June 2. Talking to The Nation on Tuesday, Syed Ali Geelani said: 'I want to meet Pakistanis, but the question arises in which capacity we have been invited to make a visit to Pakistan. I think that we are being called as Indian citizens and not as Pakistanis or Kashmiris,' he added. He further said: 'We too want to tour Pakistan and see it prosper, develop and progress. We wish to be part of Pakistan but this is not an appropriate way to call us to that country,' he added.

The Nation, 25 May 2005

Indian team due today for Siachen talks

ISLAMABAD - An Indian delegation, headed by its secretary defence, is arriving here today on a three-day official visit to hold talks on troops withdrawal from Siachen, the world's highest battlefield. The Indian secretary defence will hold talks, already scheduled for May 26-27, with his Pakistani counterpart Lt General (ret'd) Tariq Waseem Ghazi and other officials on the Siachen issue, said an official statement issued here on Tuesday. The visit of Indian delegation is part of the ongoing composite dialogue process between Pakistan and India, it added.

Daily Times, 25 May 2005

ARD may block 2007 elections (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: The Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy will block 2007 general elections if Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif are not allowed to participate in the elections, said Zafar Iqbal Jhagra, the ARD secretary general, on Tuesday. He said the general elections would be invalid and a waste of time in the absence of popular leaders. He said keeping the popular leaders away from the election process would be considered pre-poll rigging by the government. Referring to Article 15 of the Constitution, he said it was the right of every Pakistani to live in their country.

Daily Times, 25 May 2005

Government considers issuing passport to Nawaz Sharif

ISLAMABAD: The government is contemplating allowing former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to proceed to London subject to his solemn pledge to keep out of political activity. Official sources have told Daily Times the former prime minister, who is also supreme leader of his own faction of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), was informed through the Saudi authorities that his request for a passport could be accepted if he cooperated with the Pakistani government. According to PML-N sources, Nawaz had repeatedly asked the Saudi authorities to help him obtain a passport from the Government of Pakistan.

Dawn, 25 May 2005

ARD plans meeting on Balochistan

ISLAMABAD, May 24: The opposition Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD) will organize a "Balochistan conference" in Islamabad to work out a political solution to crisis in the province. This was announced by the alliance's secretary general Iqbal Zafar Jhagra after a meeting of the ARD leadership here on Tuesday. He said all political parties belonging to Balochistan province would be invited to the conference, adding that its date would be announced later. Mr Jhagra demanded withdrawal of troops from Balochistan, and said: "Military operations are no solution to the problems being faced by the people of Balochistan."

Dawn, 25 May 2005

2 foreigners held for links with Al Qaeda

ISLAMABAD, May 24: Pakistani security forces have arrested an Egyptian and another foreigner suspected of links to Al Qaeda, the information minister said on Tuesday. The suspects were arrested on Monday near Charsadda, in North West Frontier Province near the border with Afghanistan and about 140 km northwest of Islamabad. "They are both foreigners," Sheikh Rashid Ahmed told Reuters. He said the identity of the suspects was being established but it appeared that neither was a senior figure in Osama bin Laden's network. An intelligence official said one of the suspects had identified himself as Ahmed and said he came from Egypt.

Daily Times, 25 May 2005

Amnesty International's annual human rights report: Pakistan used 'war on terror' to arrest political protesters

LONDON: Deaths and disappearances increased in South Asia in 2004 and were fuelled by separatist conflicts and corruption, said London-based Amnesty International in its annual human rights report released on Wednesday. Amnesty International said that Pakistan's military-led government used emergency powers aimed at combating terrorism to arrest journalists and political protesters. It also noted continued violence against women including a spate of "honour killings" approved by quasi-judicial tribal councils.

Dawn, 26 May 2005

Invitation accepted by APHC: Kashmiri leaders due on June 2, JKLF undecided (Jawed Naqvi)

NEW DELHI, May 25: Kashmir's spiritual leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said on Wednesday that he would travel to Azad Kashmir by bus on June 2 along with other leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference. "This is more a humanitarian need than a political issue," the Mirwaiz told Dawn from Srinagar. He said while four executive members of the APHC would travel with him, the names of some more delegates would be announced on Thursday. Jamaat-i-Islami leader and Hurriyat's former head Syed Ali Shah Geelani said he had called a meeting of his Tehreek-i-Hurriyat of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday and another meeting with former members of the APHC before deciding whether to travel to Pakistan.

Dawn, 26 May 2005

Optimism as Siachen talks begin today

ISLAMABAD, May 25: India and Pakistan dialogue on the Siachen issue begins here on Thursday amid guarded optimism of some forward movement on the two-decade old conflict over the world's highest battlefield. This will be the ninth bilateral meeting on the Siachen issue and third under the composite dialogue framework agreed between the foreign secretaries of the two countries in 1997. Siachen is one of the eight issues on the composite dialogue agenda. The last round of talks on Siachen were held in Delhi in August 2004 but remained inconclusive. The two-day talks, to be led by the defence secretaries of the two countries, will take place at the Defence Ministry in Rawalpindi. An eight-member Indian delegation headed by Defense Secretary Ajay Vikram Singh arrived here on Wednesday night on a special aircraft from Delhi.

Daily Times, 26 May 2005

Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline talks from June 5

ISLAMABAD: Indian Oil Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar is due in Pakistan on June 5 to develop a common strategy with Pakistan for negotiating gas prices with Iran at their respective borders under the proposed 2600-kilometre Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project, a senior government official told Daily Times. On a 4-day official visit, the Indian minister is scheduled to discuss commercial, legal and security aspects of the proposed gas pipeline also known as "Peace Pipeline". India wants the gas delivery at its border through the proposed pipeline for \$2.52 per million British thermal units including the transit fee to Pakistan and the fee to the Pakistan armed forces for pipeline's security.

Dawn, 26 May 2005

Relief pledged for common man: Cabinet discusses budget proposals

ISLAMABAD, May 25: The federal cabinet on Wednesday decided to provide maximum relief to the common man and the salaried class by enhancing pay and perks as recommended by the pay and pension committee. The cabinet met here with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in the chair and discussed proposals for the 2005-06 budget which would be presented in the National Assembly on June 6. It noted that the country had attained sufficient economic growth and its benefits should be passed on to the common man through certain measures.

The Nation, 26 May 2005

Pakistan, US resolve to enhance cooperation (SHAIQ HUSSAIN)

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and the United States on Wednesday resolved to enhance cooperation in defence, trade and economic sectors, while reaffirming their pledge to continue with their joint fight against terrorism. US Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca, who arrived here on a three-day visit on Wednesday morning, held formal talks with Foreign Secretary Riaz Muhammad Khan at the Foreign Office on Pak-US relations, Indo-Pak peace process, Iraq and Afghanistan, nuclear proliferation and US-Iran standoff over Tehran's nuclear programme. Later, the top US diplomat also called on Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and discussed with him bilateral relations including defence, economic and trade ties as well as the regional situation, officials said.

Daily Times, 26 May 2005

Provinces meet today to discuss NFC award

LAHORE: Finance ministers of the four provinces will meet in Islamabad on Thursday to discuss ways to resolve issues related to the Sixth NFC Award, APP reported on Wednesday. "This is going to be an informal meeting, at the invitation of the finance minister of Balochistan," Punjab Finance Minister Hasnain Bahadur Dareshak told reporters at the inauguration ceremony of Pakistan Millennium Development Goals Report-2004. Dareshak said Punjab would oppose any resource-sharing proposal that might aggravate the problem of economic disparity in society. About the net profit from the Ghazi-Barotha hydroelectric power (hydel) project for Punjab, he said that an arbitrary committee had been formed whose recommendations formulated for the NWFP net hydel profit would be followed in Punjab as well.

The News, 26 May 2005

9 killed in Waziristan blasts, blood feuds

TANK: Nine persons were killed and four sustained injuries in South Waziristan and North Waziristan in separate incidents including a bomb explosion that targeted the home of family seen as opponent of tribal militants. The bloodiest incident occurred in Bandkhel village near Makeen in an area of South Waziristan inhabited by Mahsud tribe, in which a woman and five children were killed when unknown people lobbed an explosive device into the home of one Resham Khan Abdullai on the night between Tuesday and Wednesday. His daughter-in-law, son and daughter were killed along with his nephew and niece and another relative.

Daily Times, 26 May 2005

Up to Rs 15b raise in defence spending?

ISLAMABAD: An extra Rs 12 to 15 billion will be allocated to defence in the next budget and the sum needed to buy F-16 aircraft will also be included in the upcoming budget, Online quoted sources as saying on Wednesday. Defence spending was Rs 193.79 billion in the 2004-05 budget, which would be increased to Rs 208 billion, sources said. They said a separate sum would be reserved to buy F-16 fighter jets from the United States. The US government has already announced that it would sell these aircraft to Pakistan. Military sources said that Pakistan would also buy modern supersonic aircraft from the US and its details were being worked out. Sources said these purchases aimed to meet the armed forces' defence requirements and maintain the balance of power in the region.

Dawn, 26 May 2005

Resignation of Abbasi not accepted by president

ISLAMABAD, May 25: The resignation of A. N. G. Abbasi, chairman of technical committee on water resources, has not been accepted by President General Pervez Musharraf and he has been asked to complete his report without accepting pressure from anyone. Talking to Dawn after his meeting with the president on Wednesday, Mr Abbasi said: "The meeting was very positive, and the president has directed me to continue with my work." The chairman of the technical committee, however, refused to comment on reasons for his resignation, nor did he respond to a question if the president had entertained the objections raised by some members of the committee.

The Nation, 27 May 2005

Pak ships join US navy parade (IFTIKHAR ALI)

NEW YORK - For the first time, two Pakistan Navy ships _ Tippu Sultan and Moawin _ took part Wednesday in a spectacular parade of US ships on a cold, damp and wind-swept morning. The Tippu Sultan, a British-built frigate and Moawin, a support ship, sailed into the New York harbour earlier in the day to a warm welcome by US Navy. Chief of Staff Vice Admiral Farooq Rashid had flown in here from Islamabad ahead of the battle ships' arrival to join his seafaring men. The Pakistani battle ships are participating in a week-long celebrations of Fleet Week, an annual event during which US Navy displays its assets and military prowess. They will also take part in US memorial day celebrations.

The Nation, 27 May 2005

Pak delivers centrifuges to IAEA

CENTRIFUGE components and uranium samples were flown from Pakistan to Vienna and handed over to the IAEA at its main laboratory, where they will be compared with suspicious traces of enriched uranium discovered in 2003 in Iran, reported a private TV channel and BBC on Thursday. The samples were delivered by a team of Pakistani scientists, who will cooperate with IAEA and outside experts to determine whether they match the traces found in Iran, officials with the agency said. "Both Pakistan and the IAEA are cooperating, and testing and analysis of the samples are underway," said Mark Gwozdecky, the IAEA's chief spokesman, in a phone interview from Vienna. The spokesman told the BBC that the investigation was not against Pakistan's nuclear programme, but only to establish whether or not Iran had an active uranium enrichment programme.

Dawn, 27 May 2005

'Pakistan's observer status in SCO soon'

BEIJING, May 26: China on Thursday hoped that Pakistan would soon get 'Observer status' in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a key regional security grouping. A spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Ministry Kong Quan told reporters at the weekly news briefing that China favours enlargement of SCO and its maximum cooperation with other regional groups in addressing various regional and international issues including terrorism. Pakistan has already shown its intention to join the SCO, he said adding, "we hope the member countries will reach consensus at an early date for bringing new members in its fold." Pakistan has applied for SCO's membership about five years back and up till now its application was pending for consideration.

The Nation, 27 May 2005

Italy/Pakistan-led group slams G-4's approach on UNSC expansion (IFTIKHAR ALI)

UNITED NATIONS: - A group of states seeking expansion of the Security Council in the non-permanent category said Thursday that a draft resolution circulated by the Group of Four - India, Brazil, Germany and Japan - calling for six new permanent members was "contrary to the UN Charter's principle of sovereign equality" Formally commenting on the G-4 proposal of May 16 that includes a timeframe for voting in a 3-stage process, the Italy/Pakistan-led "Uniting for

Consensus" (UFC) group called it a contradiction with their (G-4) expressed desire for a constructive dialogue in order achieve "broadest possible agreement."

The Nation, 27 May 2005

Pakistan seeks 75 new F-16 jets (IFTIKHAR ALI)

NEW YORK - Pakistan has asked about buying 75 new F-16C/D fighters since the Bush administration approved the sale of super sophisticated jets, a senior US military official said Wednesday, according to media reports. Lt Gen Jeffrey Kohler, head of the Defence Security Cooperation Agency, which runs US government-to-government arms sales, said Pakistan also has asked about buying eleven used F-16s. Asked for comments by The Nation, Mohammad Sadiq, deputy chief of mission at the Pakistan Embassy in Washington, said that no decision has been made in this regard, but confirmed that negotiations on a number of fronts, including prices, were taking place.

The Nation, 27 May 2005

Islamabad, Delhi mull ways to solve Siachen issue

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) - Pakistan and India Thursday exchanged ideas on ending a two-decade-old military standoff on Siachen, as senior defence officials began a two-day meeting here. The delegations, led by Indian Defence Secretary Aji Vikram Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Tariq Waseem Ghazi, met for three hours in the opening session in a 'cordial and friendly atmosphere,' Foreign Office statement said. 'Ideas were exchanged by both sides for a peaceful resolution of the Siachen dispute,' Foreign Ministry spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani said, without elaborating. The talks were to resume Friday and lead to a joint statement.

The Nation, 27 May 2005

India puts caveat against travel of Kashmiri leaders (FAIZUL HAQUE)

New Delhi - Despite much ado about Kashmiri separatists proposed travel across the Line of Control on the invitation of President Pervez Musharraf, it may not be an easy going for them as India has readied its own caveat opposing their movement in Pakistan beyond Azad Kashmir. On the travel plan of the leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, India has said Thursday that if the Hurriyat leaders visited other parts of the Pakistan it would be contrary to the understanding reached between the two countries.

The Nation, 27 May 2005

PPP-P may accept Musharraf in uniform (Mubashir Hassan)

LAHORE - The PPP-P has shown its willingness to accept Musharraf in uniform on condition of forming a government of national consensus by holding general elections within a specific time frame. Senior PPP leader and former federal minister for commerce, Ch Ahmad Mukhtar said this in an interview with The Nation on Thursday. The politician from Gujrat hinted at accepting Musharraf in uniform for a specific period of time if he (Musharraf) agreed on establishing a national government having the mandate to hold free and fair elections, for which, he said, a time frame may be fixed by evolving consensus. About composition of a proposed government of national consensus, Ahmad Mukhtar said the PPP-P would have no objection if the ruling PML and the PPP (Patriots) were also taken on board along with other religio-political parties.

The News, 27 May 2005

Holy Qur'aan desecration: Musharraf demands punishment to perpetrators

ISLAMABAD: President Gen Pervez Musharraf on Thursday said the people of Pakistan were deeply dismayed by the reported desecration of the Holy Qur'aan at Guantanamo Bay and called for full inquiry to bring to justice the perpetrators of this shameful act. The president was speaking to US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Christian Rocca, who is currently visiting Pakistan for periodic bilateral consultations. Rocca assured the president that the US government was investigating these allegations and those responsible would be held accountable.

Daily Times, 27 May 2005

Qaeda suspect held in Multan

MULTAN: Military Intelligence and Elite Police personnel arrested a suspected Al Qaeda operative from Multan Railway Station on May 25, witnesses told Daily Times on Thursday. They said intelligence and police personnel encircled the station several minutes before the Rawalpindi-bound 7-Up Tezgam arrived from Karachi. The moment the train stopped at Platform 3, police personnel entered the last car and caught the suspect, witnesses said, adding that they threw a sheet over his head and took him away. Several passengers told reporters that they could not board any train because law enforcement personnel asked all passengers on Platform 3 to leave before the train's arrival and asked railway staff not to let anyone onto the platform.

Dawn, 27 May 2005

Three provinces agree on new NFC formula

ISLAMABAD, May 26: Three provinces — Punjab, Balochistan and the NWFP — agreed on Thursday to give up population or multi-factor formula for horizontal distribution of net proceeds of the federal divisible pool and set a new principle of percentages based on shares they were already getting, including grants. Under this mechanism, Balochistan should get 8.73 per cent, the NWFP 15 per cent, Sindh 24 per cent and the remaining will go Punjab. Describing the new formula as a major breakthrough, they said it would end stalemate on the NFC award.

Dawn, 28 May 2005

Suicide blast at shrine; 20 killed (Mohammad Asghar)

ISLAMABAD, May 27: Twenty people, including a suspected suicide bomber, were killed and nearly 100 others injured in a powerful explosion during a crowded Majlis at the Bari Imam shrine here on Friday, police and hospital authorities said. Casualty figures may rise as 12 of the injured were said to be in critical condition in different hospitals of Islamabad. Seven of the critically wounded were operated upon at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Security guards and witnesses said that some 8,000 to 10,000 followers of both Sunni and Shia sects were attending the Majlis when a bearded man of medium height and dark complexion walked up to the stage and blew himself up.

The News, 28 May 2005

Pakistan, Cuba discuss G-4 resolution

HAVANA: Pakistan and Cuba have agreed that voting on the G-4's framework resolution, which is yet to be tabled, would prove divisive and counterproductive for the world body, sources said. Cuba was also concerned about the possible bickering and confrontation if the G-4 framework resolution for the UNSC expansion came up for voting. The discussion took place the other day during a meeting of the Pakistan's special presidential envoy with Vice Foreign Minister of Cuba Abelardo Moreno at the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Nasim Zehra, the special presidential envoy and a political analyst, reiterated that Pakistan and Cuba enjoyed a history of close cooperation and friendship especially on international issues, faced by the developing countries. She said Pakistan and Cuba must work for enhancing cooperation in the future.

Dawn, 28 May 2005

Army to take over control of PTCL if talks fail

KARACHI, May 27: The army is set to take over sensitive installations of the Pakistan Telecommunications Company in the event of a breakdown of talks between the utility's management and protesting workers. Sources in the police department said that intelligence agencies had chalked out a plan for the army to seize control of the PTCL's installations, notably the gateway exchange, if the negotiations broke down. Various unions of the PTCL have been demanding that the company should not be privatized, new pay-scales should be introduced and contractual employees should be regularized. They have threatened to resort to 'extreme measures' if their demands are not met.

Dawn, 28 May 2005

Acceptance would have resulted in Anarchy: SC: Petitions against 17th amendment (Nasir Iqbal)

ISLAMABAD, May 27: The Supreme Court on Friday ruled that acceptance of petitions against the 17th constitutional amendment and the dual office of President Pervez Musharraf would have resulted in total anarchy, with the government ceasing to function. The president, the prime minister, governors, chief ministers, parliament, provincial assemblies, three services chiefs and judges of the superior judiciary appointed by the president, all would have ceased to function and total anarchy would have prevailed, the Supreme Court observed while justifying its rejection of a total of six petitions challenging the 17th Constitutional amendment and the dual office of President Pervez Musharraf.

The Nation, 28 May 2005

Rigid Indian stance deadlocks Siachen talks

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) - Talks between Pakistan and India to break their two-decade-old stand-off on Siachen glacier, the world's highest battlefield, ended in apparent deadlock Friday, officials said. Neither of the nuclear-armed rivals was prepared to give way despite hopes that two days of meetings between top defence officials might resolve the row over the 21,000-foot high ice field, the officials said. An official joint statement issued at the end of the talks said the two sides had agreed to 'continue their discussions to resolve the Siachen issue in a peaceful manner.' 'The two sides held frank and constructive discussions with a view to taking the process forward. They expressed satisfaction at the ceasefire currently in place since November 2003 and agreed to its continuation,' it said.

Dawn, 28 May 2005

WB expert on Baglihar starts talks on June 9

ISLAMABAD, May 27: World Bank's neutral expert, Professor Raymond Lafitte, will hold his first meeting with India and Pakistan in Paris on June 9-10 to address differences between the two nations on Baglihar dam project being constructed by New Delhi on the Chenab River in occupied Kashmir. Government sources here told Dawn that the neutral expert had asked the two countries to send their teams to the meeting to finalize procedure of the proceedings during the two-day meeting. The sources said authorities in Islamabad had received Professor Lafitte's notice on Friday. The same had also been sent to India, they said.

Dawn, 28 May 2005

AJK premier wants Kashmir air service

ISLAMABAD, May 27: Pakistan will ask India to allow air travel between Muzaffarabad in Azad Kashmir and Srinagar in held Kashmir to facilitate Kashmiris' travel in the disputed region, it has been reliably learnt. Informed sources told Dawn that the proposal had been made by AJK Prime Minister Sardar Sikandar Hayat to the National Economic Council (NEC) which met here on Friday with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in the chair. According to sources, the AJK prime minister told the meeting that a 48-minute flight could connect the two capitals of the disputed territory and air strips for small aircraft in both the capitals were already available in good condition.

Dawn, 28 May 2005

US apology sought for desecration

ISLAMABAD, May 27: Big rallies were held all over the country on Friday on Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal's call for a day of worldwide protests against the desecration of the Holy Quran by US personnel in the Guantanamo Bay detention centre. Processions and meetings were held in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta and other cities and towns. Protesters everywhere demanded an unqualified apology for the outrage from the US as a minimum remedy. Thousands of people attended a big rally at the Jinnah Avenue in Islamabad, which was led by MMA president Qazi Hussain Ahmed. The protesters were first gathered at Aabpara Square from where they marched up to the Jinnah Avenue.

Daily Times, 28 May 2005

Tribal elders pledge not to shelter militants

KHAR: Elders of the Mohmand tribe on Friday pledged to deny shelter to Al Qaeda-linked militants while signing a "peace agreement" with Bajaur Agency's political administration, a senior official said. Under the agreement, the administration reserved the right to take action against the tribe under Frontier Crimes Regulation if presence of foreign militants was reported in their areas. Talking to Daily Times, Fahim Wazir said the Mohmand tribe pledged not to provide shelter to foreign militants or any anti-social elements in their areas. "Influential elders of the tribe pledged to support the government in maintaining peace in the agency. staff report

The Nation, 29 May 2005

Iran anxious to get nukes: Musharraf

BERLIN (AFP) - Iran is very anxious to obtain a nuclear bomb, President Pervez said in an interview published Saturday, while stating his opposition to any preventive attack on the fellow-Muslim nation. Asked by Germany's Der Spiegel weekly how to prevent Iran from developing a military nuclear programme, Musharraf said: 'I do not know. They are very anxious to have the bomb.' But a preventive war against Tehran would lead to 'a disaster considering the current state of the world,' Musharraf said. 'It would provoke a rebellion in the Muslim world. Why open up new fronts?' he was quoted by the weekly as saying. Musharraf insisted that Pakistan, which already has nuclear weapons, was against proliferation. Unlike Pakistan, which said it developed its offensive nuclear programme because it shares a border with nuclear-armed archrival India, 'Iran does not have common borders with Israel,' he said.

The News, 29 May 2005

No high value target in tribal area: Army

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: As many as 306 terrorists were killed while 700 arrested by the security forces in around 50 anti-terrorist operations carried out in North and South Waziristan agencies. This was stated by Director General ISPR Major General Shaukat Sultan and General Officer Commanding and in-charge Anti-Terrorist Operations Major General Niaz Muhammad Khattak while briefing mediapersons who undertook a daylong visit to different parts of South Waziristan agency Saturday. Those terrorists who were killed during the operations also included around 100 foreigners, they said. The security forces of the country also suffered 250 casualties during these operations which were carried out from March 2004 till December 2004, they said.

Dawn, 29 May 2005

Each other's point of view understood: Pakistan-India Sir Creek talks (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, May 28: Pakistan and India held first round of two-day talks on the Sir Creek issue in a cordial and friendly atmosphere in Rawalpindi on Saturday. Both sides deliberated upon the issue and understood each other's point of view is how a statement issued by the defence ministry later summed up the talks that went on for about three-and-a-half hours. The talks on the maritime dispute relate to the demarcation of the maritime boundary and the land boundary. While Pakistan maintains that the boundary should start with the Eastern Bank on the basis of the Resolution Map of 1914 and the green dotted line indicated in that map, India says it should run through the middle of Sir Creek.

The Nation, 29 May 2005

Islamabad, Delhi trade talks in August (MEHTAB HAIDER)

ISLAMABAD - The commerce secretaries of Pakistan and India will hold talks on trade-related issues in August this year in New Delhi as a part of the second round of composite dialogue, currently under way between the two South Asian nuclear rivals. "The secretary-level talks on trade-related issues between India and Pakistan will be held in New Delhi in August 2005," an official told The Nation here on Saturday. He said the IMF, World Bank and State Bank of Pakistan had prepared reports on tariff and non-tariff barriers being imposed by India to marginalise Pakistan's exports and other countries, the important points of which would be conveyed to the Indian side in the upcoming round of bilateral talks.

The Nation, 29 May 2005

ISI chief in Washington

NEW YORK - The head of Inter-services Intelligence (ISI), Lt-Gen Ashfaq Kiani, is in Washington on official visit to the United States, it was learnt here Saturday. During his visit, he is expected to meet with senior US officials and representatives of think-tanks. Pakistan Embassy official declined to give details of his programme, but Gen. Kiani, who arrived in Washington on Thursday, is understood to have met some think-tank representative Friday.

The Nation, 29 May 2005

Security forces deployed at PTCL installations

Heavy contingents of police, Rangers, Frontier Constabulary and other law-enforcing agencies have been deployed at all the telephone exchanges of the Pakistan Telecommunication Ltd. (PTCL) for security of the PTCL's installations as the company's employees continue their strike. The Ranger troops were deployed at all of Karachi's telephone exchanges after 7pm, while the Frontier Constabulary has been called up to guard the company's installations at the telephone exchanges in NWFP. Frontier Constabulary has been deputed on the request of PTCL General Manager Yousaf Afridi.

Dawn, 29 May 2005

OIC must work for prosperity, says Aziz

ISLAMABAD, May 28: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Saturday urged the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) to focus efforts on poverty eradication, human development for peace and prosperity in the world and project Islam as a peaceful religion. Inaugurating a two-day meeting of the OIC Commission of Eminent Persons at a local hotel, the prime minister said the OIC countries should face the challenges being faced by the Ummah and take effective, practical and comprehensive steps to overcome them. It is the second and final meeting of the OIC Commission of Eminent Persons.

Dawn, 29 May 2005

Rockets fired on Kohlu, Turbat

QUETTA, May 28: Kohlu was rocked when unknown men fired five rockets at the township on Saturday night. "Rockets exploded on the outskirts of Kohlu town causing no casualty," an official said. Sources said the rockets fired from nearby mountains with brief intervals exploded in open places but windowpanes of some government offices and houses were smashed. Frontier Corps personnel deployed in the area returned fire. They targeted the positions of the attackers and an exchange of fire continued for some time. The assailants escaped in the mountains.

Dawn, 29 May 2005

Meeting on bus service held along LoC

MUZAFFARABAD, May 28: Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Indian authorities on Saturday met along the Line of Control to discuss issues relating to the 5th trans-Kashmir bus, scheduled to roll out on June 2. The Indian authorities also handed over five new names of prospective travellers from held Kashmir to Muzaffarabad deputy commissioner Liaqat Hussain for clearance and verification. However, there were no names of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders who have shown willingness to travel to Muzaffarabad on the invitation of Pakistan government. "The meeting was held to sort out some practical issues which we discussed with each other before the (launch of) bus service," Mr Hussain told Dawn.

The Nation, 29 May 2005

India lets APHC leaders visit Islamabad, Lahore (SIKANDAR LODHI)

LAHORE - The leaders of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) have been finally cleared by the Indian government to visit both Islamabad and Lahore, after reaching Muzaffarabad. Considering the above development a schedule of visit to the two cities has been chalked out for their engagements in Islamabad and Lahore. The visiting APHC delegation comprising of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Yasin Malik, and Shabbir Shah, will arrive in Muzaffarabad on June 2. After a two-day stay, they will reach Islamabad on June 4, where they will have separate meetings with President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz.

The Nation, 30 May 2005

Iran asks Musharraf to explain nukes comment

TEHRAN (AFP) - Iran on Sunday asked President Pervez Musharraf to explain his claim that Tehran was keen to obtain a nuclear bomb, a statement that was at odds with the clerical regime's repeated denials. In an interview with Germany's Der Spiegel magazine published on Saturday, Musharraf was quoted as saying that Iran was 'very anxious to have the bomb'- something Iran said it hoped was a misquote. 'We hope that the Pakistanis explain that this report was distorted,' Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told reporters.

The News, 30 May 2005

US official says Pakistan wants to buy 75 new F-16s (Kaleem Omar)

KARACHI: Pakistan has inquired about buying 75 new F-16C/D Falcon fighter aircraft after the Bush administration announced it would resume sales, said US Defence Security Cooperation Agency head Air Force Lt-General Jeffrey Kohler on Wednesday. Kohler told reporters in Washington that Pakistan had also asked about buying 11 used F-16s. Earlier press reports said Pakistan was seeking to buy only 24 F-16s. But the numbers cited by Kohler suggest that Pakistan wants to make the F-16 a mainstay of its combat aircraft fleet. As part of the Pakistan Air Force's fleet modernisation programme, Pakistan is also buying the JF-17 Thunder light fighter aircraft jointly developed by China and Pakistan.

Dawn, 30 May 2005

OIC needs reform, says Musharraf

RAWALPINDI, May 29: President Gen Pervez Musharraf on Sunday stressed the importance of reforming the Organization of Islamic Conference into a vibrant organization capable of meeting political and economic challenges confronting the Muslim world. Speaking to the OIC Commission of Eminent Persons, the president said the Muslim world should go for socio-economic development and the Western powers should help resolve political disputes affecting the Muslims. In their two-day deliberations here, members of the commission finalized their recommendations on President Musharraf's strategy of

enlightened moderation, the restructuring of the OIC and a plan of action for the Muslim world.

Dawn, 30 May 2005

Pakistani, French ships collide (Masood Haider)

NEW YORK, May 29: A French naval ship collided with a Pakistani ship in New York harbour. The collision caused minor damage to both vessels as they arrived to participate in the Fleet Week festivities, events officials said. No injuries were reported. The Jean Bart, the French ship, collided with the Moawin, the Pakistani vessel, off Stapleton Pier, the organizers said in a news release. The French frigate struck the port side of the Pakistani support ship, which was already moored, the organizers said. There was visible damage across 30 feet of the French vessel's hull, the organizers said. The Pakistani ship was only superficially damaged. The ships were among eight international military vessels attending Fleet Week, a celebration of the US Navy and Marine Corps held every year in New York.

Dawn, 30 May 2005

Restrictions do not apply to APHC leaders: FO

ISLAMABAD, May 29: Foreign Office Spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani on Sunday sounded confident that All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leaders would board the June 2 bus for Muzaffarabad and made it clear that they would travel beyond AJK. Talking to Dawn Mr Jilani said the APHC leaders by virtue of their special status could travel beyond AJK, adding that the understanding between Pakistan and India that the travel permit issued to passengers travelling by the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus would be valid for only AJK was not applicable to them. Our point of view is that the APHC leaders fall in a special category and cannot be equated with ordinary passengers and can travel anywhere in Pakistan once they arrive in Muzaffarabad, the spokesman maintained when asked to comment on his Indian counterpart's statement that under the agreement between the two governments the Kashmiri leaders cannot go beyond AJK.

Dawn, 30 May 2005

Expert on Baglihar calls meeting on June 9

ISLAMABAD, May 29: A neutral expert appointed by the World Bank to look into a dispute between Pakistan and India over the Baglihar Dam project will hold his first meeting with the two sides on June 9. Raymond Lafitte will hold his first meeting with India and Pakistan in Paris on June 9-10 to address differences between the two nations on the project being constructed by New Delhi on the Chenab River in Jammu and Kashmir. Lafitte has asked the two countries to send their teams to the meeting to finalise mode of proceedings, sources said. They said the Pakistan government has received a letter from Lafitte who has sent a letter of similar nature to the Indian government.

Dawn, 30 May 2005

HIV/Aids drugs to be imported from India (Ashfaq Yusufzai)

PESHAWAR, May 29: Pakistan will begin importing anti-retroviral drugs from India for HIV/Aids from July, officials said. "Orders have been placed with an Indian firm and the drugs would be made available to patients suffering from HIV/Aids from next month in selected health facilities in the provinces, Islamabad and AJK," they said. They said that drugs manufactured by multinational pharmaceutical companies were extremely expensive and the government was unable to purchase them. Anti-retroviral drugs were also manufactured by South Africa and Brazil, but they had placed a ban on drug export. "There are certain reasons that the two countries are not exporting the drugs.

The Nation 30 May 2005

Singh welcomes Musharraf's proposal

INDIAN Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said the peace process between Pakistan and India is on track and hoped that the two countries would be able to resolve all outstanding issues amicably, report Doordarshan and BBC. Addressing a Press conference in Simla on Sunday at the end of his two-day visit to Himachal Pradesh, Premier Singh welcomed President Pervez Musharraf's proposal to demilitarise a part of Kashmir and give it autonomy. Musharraf had made this proposal about 10 days ago as a possible solution to the Kashmir dispute. Singh said the two nations were moving in the right direction and hoped to solve the problems amicably. He said the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service was a good beginning and if required, the frequency of the service could be increased.

The Nation 30 May 2005

Sir Creek talks end without any headway (SHAIQ HUSSAIN)

ISLAMABAD - The two-day talks between Pakistan and India on Sir Creek ended on Sunday without any progress as the South Asian nuclear rivals failed to iron out differences over the coastal strip off Gujarat coast. "The talks were held in a frank and cordial atmosphere and the two sides exchanged views on various issues involved," said a joint press statement issued here after the talks held at Defense Ministry in Rawalpindi. Additional Surveyor General Maj. General M Gopal Rao headed the Indian delegation whereas Rear Admiral Ahsanul Haq Chaudhry, Additional Secretary of Pakistan's Ministry of Defence, led the Pakistani side in the two-day talks. According to statement, the two sides agreed to continue their discussions aimed at an early resolution of the issue for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

Dawn, 30 May 2005

Sindh responsible for NFC delay: Durrani

PESHAWAR, May 29: NWFP Chief Minister Akram Durrani has held Sindh responsible for the delay in reaching a consensus on the National Finance Commission award. Talking to reporters after inaugurating an IT exhibition, Brainstorm 2005, here the

chief minister said by causing a delay in the finalization of the NFC award, Sindh was not setting a good precedent. Mr Durrani said he would soon speak to his counterpart from Sindh and try to persuade him to agree to a consensus formula on the NFC. Regretting the Sindh finance minister's absence from the NFC-related meeting, he said the Sindh official should have attended the meeting and presented his views on the subject.

Dawn, 30 May 2005

Govt's tribal ally gunned down (Dilawar Khan Wazir)

WANA, May 29: Suspected militants on Sunday killed a key tribal ally of the government in the restive South Waziristan tribal region along with his cousin and bodyguard, witnesses and a senior government official said. Ex-senator and former federal minister Faridullah Khan was ambushed a short while after he had left South Waziristan's regional headquarters Wana after attending a media briefing by GOC, Wana, Maj-Gen Niaz Khattak. Two others accompanying the chief of Ahmadzai Wazir tribe in the whole of South Waziristan were wounded. One of them is stated to be in critical condition, official sources told Dawn.

Dawn, 30 May 2005

UNHCR plans refugee verification process

PESHAWAR, May 29: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will undertake a process of verification of Afghan refugees in the North Waziristan Agency as the government has announced to close down all camps in the area, officials said. A senior official in the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR) said that the government had agreed to allow UN agency's workers to visit the tribal region to conduct a verification campaign before closing down the camps. About 52,000 Afghans are still residing in various camps in the agency and some Afghan elders had refused to leave, owing to insecurity and lack of job opportunities in Afghanistan.

The Nation, 31 May 2005

Five killed in Karachi blast (Imtiaz Ali)

KARACHI - A suicide bomber blew himself at Medinat-ul-Ilm mosque in Gulshan-e-Iqbal during Maghrabain prayers on Monday. Moments earlier, one of his accomplices was shot, and another wounded by police while the gun-battle left a cop dead. The explosion killed the bomber as well as two worshippers and injured at least 16 others. At least one of the injured is said to be in a critical condition. The attack triggered a wave of protest in the entire vicinity, as a mob torched about 20 vehicles, three filling stations and a KFC outlet. The shops in the area were shuttered and traffic was blocked. The protestors pelted stones at the vehicles and burnt tyres on roads.

Dawn, 31 May 2005

Jl naib amir kidnapped, shot dead

KARACHI, May 30: Naib Amir of the Karachi Jamaat-i-Islami Aslam Mujahid was killed here on Monday. Police said Mr Mujahid, with other people, was returning from the funeral of a JI worker when unknown persons opened fire at them near Babar Mor to create panic. Later, when on the way home, Aslam Mujahid stopped his car at Landhi No. 4, and other occupants of the car disembarked, around 25 to 30 armed men encircled his car and took him away at gunpoint with the car. Several hours later, the bullet riddled body of Aslam Mujahid, 40, was found in his car at Landhi No.6. Police said

The News, 31 May 2005

Sindh MMA leader assassinated

KARACHI: Body of Muhammad Aslam Mujahid, a former member National Assembly, and provincial leader of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal was found lying near the Landhi Degree College on Monday with four bullet wounds, police said. Aslam Mujahid, who was also Naib Ameer of Jama'at-e-Islami Karachi, was kidnapped by about 40 to 45 unidentified gunmen who had intercepted him, while he along with one of his friends Rana Shakil and driver Nadir, was going to attend the funeral of Jamal Tahir, a local JI leader, who was shot dead late on Sunday night in Landhi. Rana Shakil told the police that when they reached near Vita Chowrangi, about 40 to 45 persons armed with automatic weapons intercepted them and roughed them up.

The Nation, 31 May 2005

Musharraf breaks NFC deadlock (MEHTAB HAIDER)

ISLAMABAD - After listening views of the four provinces on the NFC Award, President Musharraf Monday promised to come up with a solution acceptable to all stakeholders for resolving the lingering row over resource distribution formula, sources told The Nation. General Musharraf's initiative, which could not yield any positive results in Monday's meeting, managed to get provinces' willingness to accept the solution President Musharraf comes up within next few days. When the journalists asked the NWFP Finance Minister about President's authority to resolve the row among provinces over the NFC Award, Sirajul Haq said the Constitution does not give powers to the President for taking decision on the NFC Award. But being President of the country, he can help provinces for evolving consensus on the NFC Award, he added.

Dawn, 31 May 2005

Kashmiri leaders to visit Islamabad: FO (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, May 30: Pakistan said on Monday warm welcome awaited the All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders on their arrival in Muzaffarabad aboard the June 2 trans-Kashmir bus and declared the Kashmiri leaders would also visit Islamabad and other cities. "A majority of the Hurriyat leaders has decided to come and it is a good beginning," Foreign Office spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani said at his weekly news briefing here on Monday. "They will be accorded very warm welcome."

he added and made it clear the Kashmiri leaders would also visit Islamabad and other cities.

Dawn, 31 May 2005

Team on water leaves for Delhi

LAHORE, May 30: A seven-member delegation of Indus Water Commissioner of Pakistan left here on Monday for New Delhi to hold talks on the Kishanganga Hydropower Project. Led by Jamaat Ali Shah, Pakistan commissioner on Indus Basin Water Treaty, the team would seek explanation on dam design and other relevant data. The previous round of talk, held at Lahore in the first week of May, broke down.

Dawn, 31 May 2005

Canada shares Pakistan's stand on UN reforms

ISLAMABAD, May 30: Canada shares Pakistan's views on United Nations reforms and its concern over the proposed expansion of the Security Council, Canadian High Commissioner Margaret Hubber said here. "Canada's policy on the issue is the same as that of Pakistan," the Canadian envoy told APP in an interview. She welcomed Pakistan-India rapprochement and suggested that the two South Asian neighbours follow the voices of their people and promote bilateral relations. The envoy called for accelerating the dialogue process of peace between the two countries.

The News, 31 May 2005

Saadat flies by F-16 deterrence value (Shakil Shaikh)

ISLAMABAD: The US would complete the process of approving Pakistan's request for 75 multifaceted F-16 Fighting Falcons by September or October, hoped Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Kaleem Saadat here Monday. "It's not a done deal either way....we want 75 advanced version Falcons of which 50 to 55 must be Cs and Ds class and others may be used but upgraded ones," he said., He was giving an interview to The News/Jang panel comprising Fahd Hussain (Editor, The News, Rawalpindi), Shakil Shaikh (Chief Reporter, The News, Rawalpindi), Hanif Khalid (Chief Reporter Daily Jang) and Rana Ghulam Qader (Staff Report Daily Jang) at his Air Headquarters office.

Dawn, 31 May 2005

Accord in Bajaur to curb terrorists

KHAAR (Bajaur Agency), May 30: Political administration of the Bajaur Agency and Mamond tribesmen have reached a fresh agreement on denying shelter to terror suspects and Al Qaeda activists in the area. According to the agreement, tribesmen would take action against people who provided shelter to Al Qaeda militants or helped terror suspects. The tribe would also impose a fine of Rs5 million on those found guilty of harbouring foreign terrorists, besides expelling them from the agency area along with their families. All actions to be taken against the protectors of terrorists would be in accordance with tribal customs and traditions.

The Statesman, 31 May 2005

Camel jockeys to start returning from June 15

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Interior, Senator Shehzad Waseem, has said that the kids kidnapped from Pakistan to be used as camel jockeys in Gulf States will start returning to Pakistan on June 15. Addressing as chief guest at showcase ceremony of Project Citizen Pakistan, arranged by Centre for Civic Education (CCE) Pakistan, here on Monday, he said that due to the efforts of the government the return of these children has been made possible and number of kids have been saved from being abused in the cruel game.