

Daily Times, 1 November 2005

Musharraf offers India help in bomb blasts investigation (Rana Qaisar)

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf on Monday offered India "unequivocal support for investigation" into the New Delhi bomb explosions and hoped that "this ghastly incident" would not have any negative impact on the ongoing peace process between the two countries. Addressing editors and senior journalists at his Camp Office in Rawalpindi, General Musharraf expressed shock over the bombs in the Indian capital. He said: "We stand with India and we are ready to cooperate in any investigation to find out the culprits behind this act." He condoled with the Indian government and the bereaved families over the loss of lives. He said he would speak to the Indian Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, and tell him that Pakistan would like to join the Indian investigation.

Daily Times, 1 November 2005

NWFP Assembly Opp walks out as govt tries to table Hasba Bill (Zakir Hassnain)

PESHAWAR: The opposition in the NWFP Assembly erupted in protest as the provincial law minister attempted to introduce the Hasba Bill on Monday, forcing the adjournment of the session till Tuesday. The treasury and opposition benches exchanged slogans of "Hasba Bill zindabad" and "Hasba Bill murdabad", and lawmakers hurled abuses and papers at one another as the house descended into chaos. The opposition did not allow the law minister to introduce the bill in the house. Abdul Akbar Khan, PPPP parliamentary leader, said the MMA government had ruined the reputation of the province and its people with this "unconstitutional" bill.

Daily Times, 1 November 2005

No shortage of funds and friends, says Musharraf (Rana Qaisar)

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf on Monday said he was confident of meeting the challenge posed by the October 8 earthquake, as there was no shortage of funds and friends to start the reconstruction and rehabilitation process. "We will meet the challenge of relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation. We have understood the issue in its totality, worked out a strategy and its implementation has begun," the president said while addressing editors and senior journalists at his Camp Office. Seeking media support, General Musharraf, who was dressed casually in brown shalwar kameez, said there was no room for despondency and cynicism. "The nation is united, the international community is supporting us financially and in kind and we are mobilising all our resources to meet this challenge," he said.

Dawn, 1 November 2005

Nato forces posing no security threat: PM (Iftikhar A. Khan)

ISLAMABAD, Oct 31: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has said that the presence of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Nato) forces in Pakistan does not pose a security threat to the country. "They are here to help us. Even if they are in uniform, it should not be a cause of concern," he told newsmen after addressing elected representatives from the quake-hit Mansehra. He said the Nato forces in Pakistan were serving the cause of humanity, adding that humanity transcends all boundaries. Pakistan is and will remain a sovereign country, he said.

Dawn, 1 November 2005

Support to Kashmiris pledged

MUZAFFARABAD, Oct 31: Pakistan said on Monday it would make special arrangements to give earthquake survivors easy access to held Kashmir, allaying concerns bureaucracy would hamper the

efforts of thousands to cross the border. Pakistan and India agreed at the weekend that five points along the Line of Control (LoC), would be opened from Nov 7 to allow earthquake relief and people from both sides to cross to see family and friends. They agreed that those wishing to travel would follow the same procedures as people who have used a cross-border bus service launched in March. But that process, which involves six applications forms, exchanges of lists of applicants from the two sides and then laborious checks, can take up to a month.

Daily Times, 2 November 2005

LoC will open for divided families only

SRINAGAR: Only Kashmiris who are members of families divided by the Line of Control will be allowed to cross the de-facto border when five crossing points are opened on November 7, the Kashmir Times reports. The newspaper says relief work at the five points will remain firmly in government hands. Though a public announcement of the modalities of the agreement to open the LoC has not been made – the Indian External Affairs Ministry is expected to make an announcement today - the paper has learnt that except for members of divided Kashmiri families who have undergone a security screening process, no other individual, political or non-political group, or non-government organisation will be allowed to approach the five points. An Indian defence spokesman said Hurriyat Conference leaders and NGOs intending to go to Azad Kashmir would not be allowed to cross the LoC. A political decision would have to be made at the top level of government to allow this, he said.

Daily Times, 2 November 2005

Plans to evacuate 100,000 people from Allai after volcano fears

BANA: Plans have been put in place to evacuate 100,000 people from Allai, the army has said. Since the catastrophic earthquake of October 8, the mountains in the region have been tipped by a cloud of blue smoke, which local people say they have never seen before. The reports from Allai, a community of some 150,000 people in the NWFP's Battagram district, are being taken seriously. The military ordered a seismic survey of the area a few days ago, and while the team has reported that volcanic activity is 'unlikely', the evacuation is still going ahead as a precaution. Locals believe that the mysterious smoke and a series of unexplained, loud blasts heard frequently in the area, sometimes at intervals of only a few hours, are the result of volcanic activity deep within the mountains.

Daily Times, 2 November 2005

Orphans won't be handed over to anyone: Musharraf

ISLAMABAD: A meeting held on Tuesday in Army House with President Pervez Musharraf in the chair approved several decisions about the rehabilitation of widows and children who lost their parents in the October 8 earthquake. Responsibility for the upbringing and education of the orphan children has been assigned to the Ministry for Social Welfare and Special Education while the duty of rehabilitating widows has been given to the Ministry of Women's Development. It was decided that all the quake-affected children and women would be registered. Addressing the meeting, President Musharraf said the government would mobilise all resources for the rehabilitation of children and widows and that orphan children would not be handed over to anyone.

The News, 3 October 2005

Quake death toll jumps to 73,276,69,260 injured; Islamabad launches fresh appeal for relief (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir)

ISLAMABAD: With the official death toll soaring to 73,276 and the number of seriously injured reaching

69,260 in the October 8 earthquake, Pakistan on Wednesday launched a fresh appeal for relief. The govt sought immediate provision of more tetanus vaccine, two air ambulances, two rehabilitation/prosthetic centres, four mobile operation theatres and hospitals for the quake-hit areas of Azad Kashmir and NWFP. The medical teams that are leaving Pakistan have been urged to donate their equipment for the benefit of local community.

The News, 3 November 2005

Nawaz allowed to take ailing son to UK (Muhammad Anis)

ISLAMABAD: The government on Wednesday decided to issue a passport to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif to take his ailing son, Hussain Nawaz, to London. Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed told a news conference here that President Gen Pervez Musharraf has asked Saudi authorities to allow Nawaz to travel to London. "The Saudi Home Ministry has been apprised of the government's decision," the minister said. The president, he said, has taken the decision purely on humanitarian grounds. "Similar decisions were taken in cases of Shahbaz Sharif and Asif Zardari," he said and added the same was being dealt with Hussain Nawaz, which shows the government has no personal grudge against any politician.

The News, 3 November 2005

Demilitarisation in interest of India, Pakistan: Kasuri (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: Demilitarisation on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) will be one step further to deal with the Kashmir problem and in the long run it will be in the interest of both Pakistan and India. And Islamabad has noted that New Delhi has not outright rejected this proposal. Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri has said in reference to President Pervez Musharraf's remarks, now named 'Iftar diplomacy'. At a press gathering-cum-Iftar on Monday, Musharraf had put forward this proposal, which he said would go a long way in providing relief to the people of Kashmir. During Ramazan last year, President Musharraf at a similar Iftar gathering had floated the idea of seven possible solutions for resolution of the Kashmir problem.

The News, 3 November 2005

Editorial: Second thoughts, Mr Natwar?

India couldn't have been faulted if it were guarded over President Musharraf's radical proposal at the weekend for the demilitarisation of both sides of Kashmir. But the country's chief diplomat was downright un-diplomatic on Tuesday. In an egregiously tactless remark, External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh said of Pakistan: "After all, they are in occupation of our areas." In the preceding sentence he had virtually dismissed demilitarisation by declaring that "it can't be done unilaterally." Then he complained that "every second day there is a statement from that side." If one of the reporters he was addressing in New Delhi was looking for a good illustration of the phrase "non sequitur," he or she must have left the press conference enlightened.

The News, 4 November 2005

Al-Qaeda suspect killed, other arrested in Quetta

ISLAMABAD: An al-Qaeda suspect was killed and another was arrested in a shootout in Quetta late on Tuesday. Intelligence officials are investigating if the arrested man in the same raid was a key member of al-Qaeda network in Europe, the officials said on Thursday. They said a third man, belonged to Jaish-e-Muhammad and was running a shop, which was also used as the office of the Jaish. "I can only confirm that there was an encounter, and our security forces arrested one suspected al-Qaeda terrorist while another was killed," Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad said adding that

identities of the arrested men would be confirmed after some time.

The News, 4 November 2005

Crisis brewing in PML (Rauf Klasra)

ISLAMABAD: Three members of a group of 17 parliamentarians of the ruling party told Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Monday in clear words that they would not contest the general elections of 2007 from the PML ticket as a protest against their humiliation by the top party leadership. When contacted by The News, one of the members of rebel group, MNA Riaz Hussain Pirzada, said he along with Mazhar Ahmed Qureshi and Ejaz Chaudhry met the prime minister to discuss the existing crisis within the ruling party.

The News, 4 November 2005

Pakistan wants permanent LoC softening: Kasuri

LAHORE: Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri has said Pakistan was interested in giving permanence to softening of the LoC in the wake of October 8 earthquake. He was talking to newsmen after visiting Mayo Hospital, where he saw to it that quake-hit people were being meted out quality treatment, besides distributing sweets among them. The foreign minister visited all the wards with the injured, mostly from Muzaffarabad.

Dawn, 4 November 2005

F-16 deal with US under active review (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Nov 3: The government is reviewing its F-16 fighter jets deal with the United States in the wake of the growing financial pressure to fund earthquake-related rescue and relief operations, well placed defence and diplomatic sources said. Pakistan is currently considering two options - either to buy fewer than the originally planned 75 planes or to import a previous version of the aircraft from a European country. It is believed that Belgium is being looked at as a possible market for purchase of an earlier version of F-16s. A military source indicated that an earlier version of F-16 deal could cost one-sixth of the price that Pakistan has agreed to pay to the US for the state-of-the-art F-16 fighter jets.

Dawn, 4 November 2005

AJK people to get 5,000 transistors (Tariq Naqash)

MUZAFFARABAD, Nov 3: Quake survivors in the capital of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) will shortly receive around 5,000 transistors from the organizers of a radio channel to keep themselves aware of relief and reconstruction-related activities as well as other precautionary measures, an AJK government official told Dawn. Dr Syed Asif Hussain, secretary information, tourism and information technology, said the radio sets were being provided mainly because most of the quake survivors had no access to any means of information.

Daily Times, 4 October 2005

330 MW Kishanganga Hydropower Project: Pakistan to make a last ditch effort (Khalid Mustafa)

ISLAMABAD: A water experts' team from Pakistan, led by Mr Syed Jamaat Ali Shah of the Pakistan Commission on Indus Water, is all set to leave for India on November 7 to make one last attempt to resolve the issue regarding the controversial Kishanganga Hydropower Project, a senior government official told Daily Times. The team will also conduct the site visit during their five-day visit. "This will be the last attempt by Pakistan to solve the dispute bilaterally at PCIW level and India's failure to allay Pakistan's concerns on the project would leave Pakistan no choice but to move the World Bank.

Pakistan will seek the appointment of neutral experts as with the Baglihar Hydropower Project.

The News, 6 November 2005

Quake damages estimating with world agencies: Shaukat Aziz

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said that Pakistan has started estimating damages of quake devastations with the coordination of world agencies including Asian Development Bank, World Bank and United Nation. While talking to a delegation Kuwait Red-Crescent Society in Islamabad Prime Minister said that reconstruction and rehabilitation process may take five years. Prime Minister invited the delegation was invited in donors conference to be held in Islamabad November 19. delegation informed prime minister that Red crescent society has set up field hospital in earthquake hit areas. Prime Minister thanked the delegation.

The News, 6 November 2005

Balakot-Kaghan Road opened for light traffic

BALAKOT: The road linking Balakot-Kaghan has been cleared open for light traffic. Hazara division Relief Commissioner, Major General Shakil Hussain told Geo that the 120 km long Balakot-Kaghan road was closed due to 253 major/minor landslides, which after clearing of the blocks has been opened for light traffic facilitating transportation of relief goods to Kaghan valley. Regarding relief works in Hazara division, Major General Shakil Hussain told that Pakistan Army has already reached every place of the division and now with the opening of this road NGOs would also have an easy access to these places. He told that the relief works in Hazara division was in progress with full swing, as Pakistan Army has set up camps all over at a distance of 5 km and tents were visible everywhere in the area. Major General Shakil told that 1,50,000 more tents were required in the area meeting the total requirements of the victims in this respect, according to an estimate.

The News, 6 November 2005

Tremors felt in Islamabad, Balakot, Muzaffarabad

KARACHI: Tremors were felt in Islamabad, Balakot, Muzaffarabad and adjoining areas in the early hours of Sunday, Geo TV reported. The Meteorological Office Islamabad said epicenter of the tremor, felt at 0712 was 200 km north east of Peshawar with intensity of above 6 on Richter Scale. The seismic graphic impressions were being examined by experts in Islamabad, Peshawar and Quetta. The tremors were also recorded early hours of Sunday at 0142 PST with intensity of 4.5 on Richter scale and 0404 PST with magnitude 4.3. Dozens of other tremors were also felt with negligible intensity.

The News, 6 November 2005

Relief centers ready at all 5 crossing points of LOC

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan today said it has made all arrangements to open five points along the LoC from Monday to permit quake-hit Kashmiris from both sides to cross over in accordance with the recent agreement reached with India. The five crossing points are ready to be opened and relief centers were set up to facilitate quake victims with proper shelter, medical camps and other relief goods, ISPR informed today. India and Pakistan agreed to open Nauseri-Tithwal, Chakoti-Uri, Hajjpir-Uri, Rawalakot-Poonch and Tattapani-Mendhar points along the LoC. The points were being opened for the first time in 58 years to enable people from both sides to meet and help with the reconstruction work.

Daily Times, 7 November 2005

Pakistan will delay buying F-16s, says Musharraf

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan will postpone the purchase of F-16 fighters from the United States so it can concentrate on helping the victims of last month's earthquake, said President Pervez Musharraf on Friday. "We are going to postpone the purchase because we want to bring maximum relief and construction efforts," Musharraf told reporters. The president, who toured earthquake-hit areas to mark the Muslim holiday of Eidul Fitr, insisted that delaying the purchase of the high-tech aircraft would not harm Pakistan's defences. "We should never do anything that would jeopardise our security," he added. Musharraf also accused the West of double standards for failing to meet the country's quake aid needs. He said the world had given less money than it had after the Indian Ocean Tsunami because there were no Westerners involved. "With the tsunami, I think if one compared realistically the damage here is much more, the magnitude of the calamity is much more," he told the BBC in an interview.

Dawn, 7 November 2005

8 foreigners killed in Waziristan blast (Shafiq Ahmad)

PESHAWAR, Nov 6: Four suspected foreign militants and as many members of their family were killed, and their local facilitator was injured when an explosive device they were making went off in Mir Ali sub-division of North Waziristan Agency, officials told Dawn on Sunday. The incident took place at Mosaka village, about 200km from Miramshah, at around 1:30am on Saturday, said an official of the political administration. He said that the four militants, apparently Arabs, were making a bomb which exploded, blowing up the room of their mud compound and killing all the inmates — four men, a woman, and three minor girls. An official of the Inter-Service Public Relations in Peshawar said that a woman named Misbah had rented out the house to the Arab family. Misbah lived next door and was injured in the explosion, he said, adding that the house-owner escaped soon after the incident.

Daily Times, 7 November 2005

India-Pakistan LoC agreement: India opens only one point today

ISLAMABAD: India announced on Sunday that it would be able to open by today's (Monday) deadline only one of the five points along the Line of Control (LoC) that it had agreed to open in an agreement with Pakistan. However, the two countries will exchange trucks of relief goods on Monday in a largely symbolic gesture. The civilian exchange could take up to 10 days more to materialise. Pakistan said that it is unlikely that anyone will cross the LoC today because the two countries have not exchanged a list of travellers. "Because of holidays, no lists have been exchanged. We now expect them to be exchanged shortly," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam told news agencies. Asked if there could be no crossings on Monday as lists have not been exchanged, Aslam said: "I should think so," adding, "As far as Pakistan is concerned, we are ready to open crossing points on the five designated places at the Line of Control on Monday." An Indian military official in Jammu and Kashmir confirmed that no civilians will be allowed to cross on Monday, and that only relief supplies will be delivered across the Poonch-Rawalakot crossing.

Daily Times, 7 November 2005

NWFP ministers spend Eid in quake-hit areas

PESHAWAR: Several NWFP ministers and government officials spent Eid with the earthquake affected people. Sirajul Haq, the NWFP senior minister, led the Eid prayers in Balakot, where he delivered the Eid sermon at the devastated building of a school. He said that the nation was with the victims. Haq said that provincial and federal ministers and other government officials had observed Eid in the quake-hit areas, which was a proof that the nation shared the sorrow of their affected

countrymen. Nimatullah Khan, former Karachi nazim, provincial ministers Fazle Rabbani, Inayatullah Khan, Hafiz Hashmat Khan and MPA Sayyed Mazher Ali Qasim were also present on the occasion. Siraj inaugurated the Hira Tent School set up by the Al Khidmat Foundation at Sawwal Maazullah, where he also distributed gifts among children.

Daily Times, 7 November 2005

Govt denies jihadi groups 'cultivating' president's kin

ISLAMABAD: Spokesman for the President has denied a news item appearing in the Daily Times on Friday November 4th, which had reported that 'Jihadi groups' were trying to 'cultivate' a relative of the president for carrying out an attempt on his life. The spokesman stated that while threats exist to any leader of the president's stature, all necessary measures are in place to ensure protection.

Daily Times, 7 November 2005

No Indian-style nuclear deal for Pakistan (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: The United States has no intention of offering Pakistan the kind of nuclear cooperation deal it signed with India in July this year, according to Nicholas Burns, under secretary of state. Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Wednesday, Burns, who was in New Delhi two weeks ago, when asked if a similar deal may be demanded by Pakistan, replied, "We have an important relationship with Pakistan. We are not offering the same deal to Pakistan, for a variety of reasons. As said by Secretary (of State Condoleezza) Rice, it is necessary to dehyphenate our policy in South Asia. For a long term, it has been a zero sum nature of relationship in the region. It is time to have a full-blown relationship with Pakistan in counter-terrorism, but with India, we can have a separate relationship."

Daily Times, 7 November 2005

'Pakistan-US FTA would help quake recovery'

WASHINGTON: A free trade agreement (FTA) between Pakistan and the United States would help Pakistan cope with the impact of the devastating earthquake of October 8, said Ed Gillespie, former chairman of the Republican National Committee (RNC), on Saturday. "This is an important time to make the point (for a free trade deal) and thus we will help benefit Pakistan in the recovery," Gillespie told reporters at a fundraiser at the house of prominent Pakistani-American. "In the long term, it is an economic relationship that helps foster economic growth, and increases the quality of life for the people of Pakistan. In the short term, aid and funding is very important and critical to help rebuild infrastructure, meet needs for food and medicine, and supplies to the people devastated by the earthquake. But in the long term, it will have a lasting impact if a trade relationship that allows the people of Pakistan to provide goods and services in our market place," he said.

Daily Times, 8 November 2005

Kashmiris protest as LoC 'opens'

LINE OF CONTROL: Pakistani police fired tear gas to disperse Kashmiri villagers on Monday when some tried to cross into Indian territory during a ceremony at the Line of Control to exchange aid for victims of the October 8 earthquake. Hundreds of villagers on the Pakistani side of the Rawalakot-Punch crossing broke into a chant: "We want an independent Kashmir," and witnesses said at least two men clutching young boys in their arms tried to dash over to the Indian side. "Some enthusiasts tried to cross. It's a military zone and we fired tear gas as we didn't want anyone to lose a limb" to landmines, Pakistani Brigadier Tahir Naqvi, the area commander, told AP. Warning shots also seemed

to ring out, but a police officer denied that police fired anything but tear gas canisters, and there were no injuries reported. The men who tried to cross were arrested, witnesses said, and villagers dispersed and pulled back about 100 metres from the crossing.

Daily Times, 8 November 2005

UN says 100,000 quake victims without aid so far

GENEVA: More than 100,000 earthquake victims have still not received any form of aid, said the UN on Monday. The families not directly hit by the quake also are in jeopardy, especially in villages that have been isolated by landslides unleashed by the 7.6-magnitude tremor or its more than 1,000 aftershocks, the UN's World Food Program (WFP) said. About 70,000 families have homes intact but are unable to reach provisions they need ahead of the Himalayan region's fierce winter, said Farman Ullah, the WFP's senior food monitor. The officials warn of more deaths with the onset of winter and have asked those living in high-altitude hamlets to move to lower-lying areas to escape the cold and receive aid. According to the UN, aid agencies needed 42.4 million dollars immediately to help earthquake victims this month.

The News, 8 November 2005

India to discuss Kishanganga project

ISLAMABAD: As a last ditch effort, a Pakistani team of water experts left for India Monday to hold talks on the controversial Kishanganga hydropower project, a senior government official told The News. The team led by Syed Jamaat Ali Shah, chief of the Pakistan Commission on Indus Water, will also visit site of the project. "This will be Pakistan's last attempt to solve the dispute bilaterally at PCIW level as we have exhausted all the endeavours to settle the issue, but India seemed not moved to remove Pakistan's objections," the official said and added if India did not come with the resolve to allay Pakistan's concerns with regard to design of the Kishanganga hydropower project during the visit, Pakistan's Commission of Indus Water would recommend the government to move the World Bank to appoint neutral expert as it has already moved it in the case of Baglihar hydropower project.

Daily Times, 8 November 2005

NWFP's traders suffered Rs 1 billion loss from quake

PESHAWAR: The October 8 earthquake has caused a loss of Rs 1 billion to small and medium entrepreneurs (SMEs) in NWFP, according to an economic survey by the Small and Medium Entrepreneurs Development Authority (SMEDA). The quake caused major cracks in commercial plazas while shops and residential buildings were badly damaged, the survey said. Stores, hotels, banks and commercial plazas were completely destroyed a few places, causing losses estimated at Rs 110 million to SMEs. Public sector buildings in Mansehra district – particularly schools and health facilities – were damaged by the quake. The area's poultry farms were also damaged in the earthquake. The survey assessed losses of around Rs 20 million in the city. The quake has completely destroyed markets, bazaars and livestock in Balakot, the survey said. "About 1,500 shops have been completely destroyed," it said.

Daily Times, 8 November 2005

JKLF will help quake victims on both sides of LoC

LAHORE: Muhammad Yasin Malik, chairman of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), on Monday said that his party would use its resources for the rehabilitation of October 8 earthquake victims on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC). Addressing leaders of the JKLF Punjab chapter

before leaving for New Delhi, Yasin Malik paid tribute to the Pakistani nation for their support to the people of Azad Kashmir during the natural calamity and said that the earthquake had proved that Kashmir was not only a political issue but a human issue too. He added that divided Kashmiri families could not help each other because of the LoC. The JKLF chairman directed the party's Punjab leadership to reorganise the party on war footings and make all efforts to expedite the rehabilitation process of the calamity-stricken people.

Daily Times, 8 November 2005

NATO in Pakistan only for relief

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain said a NATO relief contingent and not NATO forces had arrived in Pakistan, and it had no business other than relief activities. Talking at Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam's Darul Shafqat, he said the line of control was opened for relief activities and not for resolution of the Kashmir issue. He said political parties were being contacted for an all parties' conference and they should rise above political differences and unite for earthquake victims' rehabilitation. He said he should not be called the ruling party's president but a worker for humanity. He said when the opposition leaders thanked him on Eid at Bagh, he told them to thank the nation that was united to help the earthquake victims, the army that was constantly active in relief work, and also the 'non-believers' for their relief efforts.

The News, 8 November 2005

Dutch businessman defends nuclear exports to Pakistan

THE HAGUE: A Dutch businessman and friend of the father of Pakistan's atomic bomb has admitted he shipped equipment used for uranium enrichment to Pakistan, according to Dutch public television. But Henk Slebos, who befriended Abdul Qadeer Khan when they were students at Delft in western Holland in the 1960s, denied the exports were illegal, said the producers of a documentary to be broadcast on Monday night. Slebos, charged with an employee over the illegal export between 1999 and 2002 of parts for a nuclear centrifuge, faces an 18-month jail sentence and a 100,000-euro fine. "Who defines this illegality? The countries that have nuclear arms, therefore the United States," Slebos is quoted telling the television programme. Dutch and American intelligence services were aware of Khan's activities, Slebos told the programme.

The News, 8 November 2005

Pakistan seeks \$2bn for emergency requirements

ISLAMABAD: Alarm bells were rung loud and clear in Geneva when Assistant Secretary Relief Coordination Yvette Stevens said that UN had so far only 15 per cent of the funds it needs desperately to meet immediate emergency requirements for quake-hit Pakistan. "International community's presence is rapidly being stepped up in Mansehra, Muzaffarabad, Bagh, Balakot, and Batagram," she said. Stevens told the meeting that the UN had so far been drawing on its operational resources and had emptied its warehouses. She appealed to the world community to commit more funds — \$49.2 million — immediately for the next two to three weeks and replenish the UN disaster relief reserves. Ambassador Masood Khan, Pakistan's permanent representative to the United Nations, told 'The News' that he addressed an Information Meeting convened by UN in Geneva and pointed out that if strong and timely interventions were not made, twice as many people could die of cold, hunger and injury as killed by the earthquake itself.

The News, 10 November 2005

Second LoC crossing point opens

ON THE LINE OF CONTROL: Pakistan and India on Wednesday exchanged almost identical relief aid for earthquake survivors in a symbolic gesture after opening a second crossing point on their tightly guarded frontier in Kashmir. Army commanders and government officials from the two sides met at the Line of Control (LoC) and shook hands before declaring the crossing point open. Pakistani porters dressed in green and Indian porters dressed in blue then began passing relief materials from hand to hand in both directions over the crossing, which links Kaman Post in Occupied Kashmir with Chakhoti in Azad Kashmir. "Relief has been exchanged for Kashmiri villagers affected by the quake on both sides of the border," said Shafiq Ahmed, the Pakistani government official in charge of his side's relief camp. " (On Monday) we took relief, now we exchanged it. It is a good beginning. We hope that this will go on. In the coming days more relief materials will be exchanged. Today's relief mainly consisted of food items, tents and blankets."

Daily Times, 10 November 2005

Pakistani suicide bomber arrested

KHOST: Afghan and US forces have arrested a suspected would be suicide bomber who is allegedly from the neighbouring Pakistani tribal region, local officials said on Wednesday. "In a joint operation on Tuesday we arrested a Pakistani national who was attempting to carry out a suicide attack in Khost city," said Abdul Ghafar, top intelligence official in the violence-plagued eastern province. Ghafar said the suspect came from the tribal region of Waziristan. Waziristan is known to be a hub of Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants. He said the suspect was also connected to an incident last month in Khost when security forces seized an empty car filled with explosives that they said was to be used in an attack. afp

The News, 10 November 2005

Cholera feared in quake camps

MUZAFFARABAD: Hundreds of earthquake victims in Azad Kashmir have acute diarrhoea and doctors are investigating whether they are cases of cholera, the World Health Organisation and the United Nations said on Wednesday. Aid workers are urgently trying to improve water supplies and sanitation at the cramped refugee camps where the survivors fell sick in the devastated regional capital Muzaffarabad, WHO technical officer Rachel Lavy told AFP. "In one camp we visited yesterday there were 55 cases of diarrhoea and there are so many spontaneous camps that we believe there are hundreds of others," Lavy said as she headed to one of the camps. "Acute watery diarrhoea fits very closely with the definition of cholera. That is one of the things it can be," Lavy said, adding however that there were other waterborne diseases that could cause similar types of diarrhoea. "We are treating it as suspicious but we don't have laboratory guidance at this stage," she said.

The News, 10 November 2005

Reconstruction in three years, says PM (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir)

ISLAMABAD: The government has shortened its timeframe for reconstruction of earthquake devastated areas from five to three years, said Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in a news conference here Wednesday. He said the World Bank has come to terms with the government for evolving estimates about the losses and rebuilding. The prime minister chaired several meetings despite the fact that today was a holiday. Compensation for the deceased persons would be paid by November 30 and the registration process for them will be completed by the end of the month. The claims have been sought from the affected persons about their properties and the procedure for this purpose has been announced. It has been decided that in the NWFP death should be reported in the relevant police

stations or the Tehsil Municipal Office (TMO) on the prescribed forms. In Azad Kashmir a survey is going on but unreported deaths should be registered with Assistant Commissioners of every sub-division on prescribed forms.

The News, 10 November 2005

Pakistani abducted, harassed in New Delhi (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: Roshan Ali, 19-year old son of Pakistani staffer Asghar Ali at the Pakistan High Commission, was abducted and harassed by unknown persons in New Delhi in the evening of November 8, said Foreign Office. He was later released after being thrown out of a vehicle around midnight. Pakistan has demanded a thorough investigation with a view to ensuring that such deplorable incidents do not occur again. "We have put up a strong protest with the acting Indian High Commissioner TCA Raghavan who was summoned and told that Pakistan condemned such a premeditated and cowardly act," a spokesperson at the Foreign Office told the media.

The News, 10 November 2005

WB wants Pakistan to import electricity from Tajikistan

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank has proposed Pakistan to import electricity from Tajikistan through Kabul as it will benefit the war ravaged country Afghanistan. Alatair J Mckechine, World Bank's Country Director for Afghanistan has floated this proposal to government of Pakistan in a meeting with top officials of Ministry of Water and Power two days back. "In the meeting the World Bank has also communicated that it will fund the proposed project of importing electricity from Tajiksitan in laying the power transmission lines and setting up of grid stations, an official who attended the meeting told The News. The World Bank has also desired to hold donors conference to ensure funds for the project of paramount importance in Islamabad sometime in first or second week of January. Under the proposed plan, Tajikistan wants to export 1000 MW of electricity to Pakistan through two proposed points Wah Khan and Kabul, but World Bank wants Pakistan to import electricity through Kabul to Peshawar.

The News, 10 November 2005

Jl to continue relief work (Muhammad Anis)

ISLAMABAD: Accusing President Gen Pervez Musharraf of killing national and religious spirit during the crisis, Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami, Qazi Hussain Ahmed on Wednesday pledged to continue Jamaat's relief activities till complete rehabilitation of earthquake affected people. Addressing a press conference here at residence of Mian Muhammad Aslam MNA, JI Amir said that Gen Musharraf continued to promote his secular agenda during the relief activities and killed the much-needed national and religious spirit. Earlier, JI Amir also presided over a meeting of central leadership of Jamaat-e-Islami and its Al Khidmat Foundation with the single point agenda of reviewing relief work for quake-affected people. Qazi said that Jamaat and Al Khidmat Foundation workers would not leave quake hit people alone unless they are fully rehabilitated. "Instead of advising people to seek mercy of Almighty Allah and work with national spirit, Gen Musharraf is projecting role of India and Israel in relief activities," the JI leader said.

The News, 9 November 2005

UN calls for urgent opening of LoC

GENEVA: Roads crossing the Line of Control (LoC) must be opened rapidly to get vital aid to thousands of homeless survivors of the South Asian earthquake before winter sets in, the UN food aid agency WFP said on Tuesday. "We have desperate need for much wider access to hundreds of

thousands of people in remote valleys and on high plateaux in Azad Kashmir, near the demarcation line," WFP spokeswoman Christiane Berthiaume told a news briefing. "If we could establish a land route from India (held Kashmir), it would allow us to save thousands of lives," she said. The Rome-based World Food Programme is taking a leading role in the financially strapped UN effort to distribute supplies and tents in the quake area before the severe Himalayan winter grips the region. "With the winter coming on rapidly, it is crucial to get to these people rapidly. Many of them have had no help at all since the quake struck a month ago," Berthiaume said, adding "We are in a race against the clock to get food stocks in place.

Daily Times, 9 November 2005

NATO's presence in Pakistan as a relief group creating doubt, says Rabbani

LAHORE: The presence of NATO forces in Pakistan as a relief group is creating doubts amongst the people because the government did not take them into confidence in this regard, said Mian Raza Rabbani, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) parliamentary leader in the Senate, while addressing a press conference on Tuesday. Flanked by Qasim Zia, Naveed Chaudhry and Farooq Naik, Rabbani said that NATO had always worked for peace and never as a relief force anywhere in the world. "What makes NATO's presence in Pakistan doubtful is the modus operandi for calling it into the earthquake-hit areas," added Rabbani. He said the government did not take the cabinet or parliament into confidence and called in NATO secretly. "When people said Pakistan needed Berlin-type airlift, a NATO official said that there was a big difference between Germany and Pakistan and his statements reflect a philosophy that white men are more precious than Asian men," he said.

The News, 9 November 2005

Musharraf hails troops role in relief, rescue operations (Shakil Shaikh)

RAWALPINDI: President Gen Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday instructed senior military commanders to render all necessary assistance to the AJK and the NWFP governments in quick disbursement of compensation money. Addressing the 93rd corps commanders conference at the General Headquarters (GHQ) here, Musharraf minced no words in paying rich tributes to the Army troops engaged in round-the-clock relief work in earthquake-hit areas of NWFP and AJK since October 8. The president, who visited the affected areas several times and held a series of meetings at the highest level, exhorted all ranks to continue relief and rescue operations with the same zeal and enthusiasm. He appreciated the prompt response of the Army in reaching out to the marooned people for relief and rescue operation and continuing the same with zeal and zest despite criticism from certain quarters. President Musharraf also asked the corps commanders to render helping hand and provide logistic base to the National Volunteers Movement in picking the pace so as to accomplish the set objectives.

The Nation, 9 November 2005

Pak skips US list of religious freedom violators

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States on Tuesday renewed its blacklist of eight countries considered violators of religious freedoms, turning back requests to add Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, officials said. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice extended the designation of US ally Saudi Arabia as a 'country of particular concern' as well as that of China, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, Vietnam, Eritrea and Sudan, the officials said. Countries face government sanctions on various fronts 180 days after being included in the blacklist. The announcement was made along with the separate release of the State Department's seventh annual report on international religious freedom which took several US foes and friends alike to task for a lack of progress. The report branded Myanmar, China,

North Korea and Cuba as countries using "totalitarian or authoritarian actions to control religious belief or practice? but removed Vietnam from the list, citing 'significant' progress.

Daily Times, 9 November 2005

UN optimistic about relief efforts in quake-hit areas (Irfan Ghauri)

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations has expressed optimism over relief efforts for the first time since the October 8 earthquake as the world has started fulfilling its pledges. Speaking at a news conference on Tuesday, exactly one month after the devastating quake that killed more than 73,000 people, UN Resident Coordinator Jan Vandemoortele said that in response to the world body's flash appeal of \$550 million, \$134 million was pledged, of which \$85 million has so far been contributed through the UN. "It is not a mission impossible. It is doable, but has not yet been done," Vandemoortele said. "There is a sense of cautious optimism now. The message that we need money is still there," said another UN representative. He said that the situation on the ground has improved a lot due to effective coordination with the Pakistan government, foreign military organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Vandemoortele said that the UN had fixed five priorities for November: camp management, heating facilities, sanitation, and food and nutrition to all affected people.

Dawn, 9 November 2005

S. Arabia promises 'unlimited' help

ISLAMABAD, Nov 8: Saudi Arabia on Tuesday assured Pakistan of unlimited help for rehabilitation of quake-devastated areas in Azad Kashmir and the NWFP. "We will provide...whatsoever is required by the government of Pakistan in the rehabilitation process," Saudi Vice-Minister for Interior Prince Ahmad bin Abdul Aziz told a news conference at the National Database Registration Authority (Nadra) headquarters here. Prince Ahmad, who is younger brother of King Abdullah, had taken an aerial view of the devastated areas during his three-visit to Pakistan to assess the magnitude of damage and requirement for rehabilitation. In reply to a question, he said Saudi Arabia condemned terrorism. "Islam is a religion of peace and it rejects terrorism in all its forms and manifestations."

The News, 9 November 2005

\$9.5m of \$2bn world pledges received so far (Ansar Abbasi)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has so far received a paltry sum of less than \$ 10 million in cash for earthquake relief operation from the world capitals against over \$ 2 billion pledges, it is learnt. A government spokesman when contacted on Tuesday reluctantly confirmed to The News that only \$ 9.5 million had so far been transferred to the country's kitty by the world capitals. "Some of the countries are contacting their embassies in Islamabad to get to know the procedure for the transfer of pledged money," said spokesman of the Economic Affairs Division Ameer Tariq Zaman when contacted by The News. He expected that more money would come sooner than later but confirmed that till Tuesday only \$ 9.5 million had been transferred in cash to Pakistan.

Daily Times, 9 November 2005

WB to lend NWFP \$90m

PESHAWAR: The World Bank (WB) has pledged to give NWFP \$90 million in soft loans in the last months of this year under the Structural Adjustment Credit III (SAC III) programme after the provincial government met most the bank's conditions. SAC-III has now been renamed Developmental Policy Credit (DPC). A WB mission called on NWFP Senior Minister Sirajul Haq at the Peshawar Civil Secretariat on Saturday to discuss the loans and expressed their satisfaction over the provincial

government's steps to improve social infrastructure in the province. They also informed him of the bank's decision to provide the loan tranche by November or December. WB representative Paul Wade acknowledged that it was encouraging that 80 percent of the bank's conditions had been met. He added that full compliance with the bank's conditions would prompt the bank to release the bulk of the loan. He said that it was decided that a soft loan under the DPC would be released in the last months of 2005. Haq welcomed the bank's decision and said that his government had enacted policies that would ensure maximum productivity. staff report

Dawn, 9 November 2005

Quake toll exceeds 87,000: WB

WASHINGTON, Nov 8: The death toll in earthquake has jumped to 87,350 after a new count of the dead in Pakistan, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank reported on Tuesday. According to these reports, Pakistan's official toll jumped by 13,000 ? from 73,000 to 86,000 ?- and might increase further. India has reported 1,350 deaths in occupied Kashmir. The increase in death toll followed the discovery of more bodies in Mansehra and Azad Kashmir from the areas previously inaccessible to assessment teams due to landslides. The report points out that UN workers are still racing to bring shelter to the 350,000 most desperate survivors one month after the disaster. But one month after the quake, there is barely enough money to keep relief helicopters flying, and no talk of rebuilding. The UN stepped up its appeals for more money, urging donors to be as generous as with other recent disasters.

Dawn, 9 November 2005

Police team finds 'no evidence' in Sonia case (Nasir Iqbal)

ISLAMABAD, Nov 8: A police team investigating the allegation of rape of Sonia Naz has found 'no evidence' to establish the charge against the accused police officials. The Supreme Court, which had ordered the Punjab Inspector-General Police to hold the inquiry, expressed dissatisfaction over the finding and asked the team to collect more evidence. "The members of the inquiry team spent most of the time in investigating us rather the accused,? Ms Naz told Dawn after the team submitted the inquiry report to the court on Tuesday. She accused the Punjab government of protecting the offenders. "The federal government and the Supreme Court provided me justice, but the Punjab government is out to protect its police officers,? she said, adding that her telephone was being taped. The apex court was hearing an application of a local lawyer Zulfikar Ahmed Bhutta who had pleaded that a suo motu cognizance should be initiated against police excesses towards Ms Naz.

The News, 9 November 2005

Muttahida shuts relief camps in quake areas

KARACHI: The Muttahida Qaumi Movement announced late on Tuesday night that it was abandoning all its relief work in earthquake-hit areas of Azad Kashmir and NFWP, following attacks by Jamat-e-Islami workers, enjoying support and protection from the 'establishment'. A statement issued by the coordination committee member, Mohammad Anwar from London said the party had ordered all its volunteers, doctors and para-medical staff, working there since October 8 to return to Islamabad. The party complained that its protestations to the president and the prime minister for protection had remained unresponded till well past midnight of November 8.

The News, 9 November 2005

Opening of LoC points Kashmir-specific CBM: Kasuri

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri said that the government was not on the

defensive regarding the problems being faced by Kashmiris on either side, who want to cross the Line of Control to meet in grief with their families on the other side. "The opening up of the LoC at five points is indeed a Kashmiri specific Confidence Building Measure (CBM) and in time it will help the people of Kashmir to meet with each other and share their grief," Kasuri told The News on his way to Dhaka to attend the SAARC summit. Eyebrows were raised when asked why the government of Pakistan acted belatedly in announcing the names and areas of those who will be responsible to issue these forms. It is apparent that there is absolutely no coordination with too many agencies involved. On the ground there are local authorities, Ministry of Interior and finally Ministry of Foreign Affairs which exchanges the list of those wishing to cross the LoC from Azad Kashmir.

The Frontier Post, 9 November 2005

Gilgit Peace Jirgah presents 16-points

GILGIT (Online): Peace Jirgah of Gilgit has presented 16-point recommendations to the government for the establishment of peace and calm in the city. The meeting of the Gilgit peace Jirgah was held here on previous day under the chair of speaker Northern Areas Legislative Council Malik Mohammad Maskeen. The Jirgah asked the government to reopen the sealed central mosques of the city from November 13 and use of loudspeaker should be confined only for Azan purposes. The peace Jirgah also demanded the release of detained Ulemas. Several other recommendations aimed for the restoration of peace and tranquility in the Gilgit were presented by the Jirgah. It is also recalled that severe violence erupted in Gilgit few weeks ago and curfew was imposed there.

The Frontier Post, 9 November 2005

Pak-India to sign shipping protocol

KARACHI (Online): Minister for Ports and Shipping Babar Khan Ghauri has informed Pakistan and India will soon sign accord to boost bilateral ties in shipping sector. "We welcome India's nod to sign shipping protocol between two countries?, said the Minister while talking to a private TV channel here on Tuesday. He said that signing of said agreement between two countries will prove beneficial for Pakistan's shipping industries. The step would also enhance ties between Pakistan and India, Ghauri added.

Daily Times, 11 November 2005

Musharraf set to reveal reconstruction plan on 19th

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf on Thursday said he would unfold a plan for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of earthquake-hit areas at the November 19 donors' conference in Islamabad. Musharraf said the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) was compiling data on damages from city and district level. He said he would reveal the plan based on ERRA's data at the conference. "I appeal to people and countries to contribute to the Presidential Relief Fund (PRF) or sponsor the construction of any house, school, college or perhaps an entire village," he added. He said no country could handle a disaster of this magnitude alone. "In the disaster of such level, there will be shortcomings but with the help of the people we have done what no other country could have done," he added.

Dawn, 11 November 2005

Aziz leaves for BD today with Saarc proposals (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Nov 10: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, who leaves for Dhaka on Friday to lead Pakistan's delegation at the 13th Saarc summit, will carry with him several proposals for revitalizing the seven-

nation South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation. The two-day summit will open on Saturday. The summit will focus on evolving a vision for the Third Decade of Saarc and the prime minister is expected to share with other South Asian leaders Pakistan's vision for the grouping before handing over the chairmanship to Bangladesh. According to sources, prominent themes incorporated in Pakistan's vision are: evolving mechanisms for confidence-building measures, preventive diplomacy, peaceful settlement of disputes and setting up of a Saarc Regional Forum to discuss security issues. Pakistan has already circulated concept papers among member states on certain steps required to make the Saarc process more vibrant and meaningful.

Dawn, 11 November 2005

Pakistan seeks consensus on UNSC reform (Masood Haider)

UNITED NATIONS Nov 10: Pakistan has warned the world community that a proposal for Security Council reform that is adopted by a divisive vote may not be materialised because it will not get ratification by two-thirds of the UN members. Addressing, on Thursday, the UN General Assembly considering the "question of equitable representation in the Security Council? Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN Munir Akram called for "consensus or widest possible agreement" among the member states. He said that reform of Security Council "impinges on national security interest of every member state and any precipitate move to secure a decision by a vote would revive regional tensions and resurrect divisions within the organization. " Mr Akram said that any decision without consensus" would eclipse and possibly derail rest of the UN reform agenda." "It could halt the heartening progress we are making, or expect to make, on the establishment of a Peace building commission on terrorism, the Human Rights Council and, most importantly, implementation of development agenda," Akram said in the charged debate in the UNGA.

Daily Times, 11 November 2005

ADB to provide \$300m loan for relief efforts

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will procure and approve an emergency loan of \$300 million, which include \$80 million grant, for rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in earthquake-hit areas. This would be in addition to \$100 Million package for budgetary support. The loan would be soft loan, payable in 40 years with ten years of grace period. This was informed by an ADB Fact Finding Mission comprising Transport Specialist Fernando Garcia, Senior Economic Adviser Edward Hague Stroem and Human Development Economist Leah Gutierrez in a meeting with Dr Salman Shah, prime minister's adviser on Finance and Economic Affairs and Lt Gen Mohammad Zubair, Chairman ERRA, on Thursday. The ADB mission discussed the quantum of emergency assistance to be extended in the form of loan and grants for various relief aid. app

Daily Times, 11 November 2005

India arrests two Pakistanis for espionage

JALANDHAR: Two Pakistani nationals have been arrested for gathering sensitive information about Indian military installations, the police said on Thursday. On a tip from the military intelligence, the district police arrested on Wednesday a Pakistani near a military hospital in Jalandhar Cantonment. He was identified as Khurram Shehzad Ali alias Junaid Alam, a resident of Okara area of Pakistan, Senior Superintendent of Police Ishwar Singh said. During preliminary interrogation, the police learnt that Khurram had come into the country around six months ago on the pretext of watching the Indo-Pakistan cricket series at Mohali and failed to return to his country. He was then involved in gathering information of military importance, an official release quoting the SSP said.

Daily Times, 12 November 2005

200 Marines in Pakistan

TOKYO: Roughly 200 US Marines stationed on the southern Japan island of Okinawa have been deployed to Pakistan to help with recovery following the devastating earthquake that struck northern Pakistan a month ago, a spokesman said on Friday. The Marines flew out of Kadena Air Base on Okinawa aboard a commercial airliner late on Thursday, said 2nd Lt Clinton Gebke, a spokesman for the 3rd Marines Expeditionary Unit. The length of their humanitarian mission had not yet been determined. Gebke said the troops would be primarily tasked with medical assistance, and would take a surgical group and mobile laboratory with them. They would have beds for up to 90 patients, he said.
ap

The Nation, 12 November 2005

Passport to Nawaz unconditional

ISLAMABAD - PML-N Acting Parliamentary Party Leader in national assembly, Chaudhry Nisar, who recently returned from Jeddah, Friday claimed that issuance of passports to Sharif family was unconditional, and that they would apply for US and UK visas today (Saturday). "It's purely a private visit and Mian Nawaz Sharif doesn't have any programme for the time being to come to Pakistan during the treatment of his son at UK and US," Chaudhry Nisar told newsmen here at Parliament House after national assembly proceedings. In response to a question, he avoided to disclose about the particular ailment Nawaz Sharif's son, Hassan Nawaz, was suffering from, for the medical treatment of which he is not only required to visit UK but also America.

The Nation, 12 November 2005

Pak, India agree on Saarc expansion (Arif Nizami)

Dhaka - Pakistan is wholeheartedly supporting Afghanistan's bid to be a full member of the SAARC, and without linking the two issues, it is also supporting China's bid to be granted observer status in the South Asian regional organisation. In a manner of speaking it is the first time that Pakistan and its arch rival India are in agreement on the issue of expanding SAARC. Reportedly it is Nepal and the host Bangladesh who are linking the issue of the induction of Afghanistan in SAARC with the question of granting observer status to China. Islamabad, which is in favour of both the Chinese and Afghan requests is not in favour of linking the two issues together.

Daily Times, 12 November 2005

Musharraf vows timely relief

RAWALPINDI: President Pervez Musharraf on Friday reaffirmed his resolve to take all possible steps to give relief to quake survivors. Chairing a meeting to review the pace of ongoing relief operations on Friday, the president vowed that the government would do everything possible for the early rehabilitation of quake-victims. The AJK president and PM and the NWFP CM briefed on the relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation process. The EAD secretary and the chairman of the Earthquake Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Authority made presentations on various options over rehabilitation in the earthquake-affected areas. sana

Daily Times, 12 November 2005

India, Pakistan make no headway on Kishanganga (Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: India and Pakistan on Friday failed to make any headway to resolve differences over the controversial Kishanganga hydropower project being constructed in Baramulla. An eight-member Pakistani delegation, led by Indus Water Commissioner Syed Jamaat Ali Shah, returned here on Thursday after visiting the project site. Indian Commissioner DK Mehta, along with a team of officials, accompanied the Pakistani delegation to Gurez and Bandipora. The visit was preceded by two-day special talks on Kishanganga Dam and the bilateral Permanent Indus Commission's annual meeting. After the conclusion of talks, the Pakistani delegation said they were not "satisfied" with India's answers to their objections and their "differences" remained. Shah told Daily Times that the delegation was returning with disappointment.

Daily Times, 12 November 2005

Half of Pakistan's quake dead are children, says UNICEF

MUZAFFARABAD: Children are likely to make up half of the 74,000 people who died in the South Asian quake, the United Nations said Friday, confirming fears that the disaster had claimed a "lost generation." "We estimate that half of the casualties were children, but many more were injured," UNICEF representative for Pakistan Omar Abdi told the Integrated Regional Information Networks, a UN-funded news agency. "The data hasn't been registered yet. But half of the population of Pakistan is under 18 so we would estimate out of those people who have died, half of them are children," Abdi added. The October 8 quake hit at the start of a school day and there were immediate fears that children could make up the bulk of the casualties when it became clear that thousands of schools had collapsed.

Daily Times, 12 November 2005

Pakistan will purchase 6 SAAB aircraft

LAHORE: Mounting media and public pressure notwithstanding, Pakistan will go ahead with the purchase of six SAAB early warning system aircraft from Sweden, a Defence Ministry source told Daily Times on Friday. The \$1 billion deal for the aircraft was signed with Swedish companies SAAB and Ericsson on October 19, roughly two weeks after the October 8 earthquake that struck northern Pakistan. In face of overwhelming reconstruction costs and limited foreign assistance, President Pervez Musharraf said this week that the F-16 aircraft deal with the US would be postponed. "Though the deal was signed after the earthquake, it was negotiated much earlier. Also, Pakistan will not have to pay the full amount now, as the payment schedule ends in 2010," the source added. However, the source said Pakistan was bound to pay 15 percent or \$150 million as down payment by April 2006.

Daily Times, 12 November 2005

World Bank sanctions more money for relief in Pakistan (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: Supplemental financing of \$200 million for Pakistan was approved on Thursday by the World Bank's board of directors, while an additional package of \$270 million is expected to be presented for the board's approval sometime next week, Dina Umali-Deininger, acting WB vice president for the South Asia region, told an earthquake fund-raising event. The WB has already provided \$470 million in "immediate relief" for the victims of the devastating October earthquake. The event, held at World Bank headquarters, was organised by the Committee for Global Relief (CGR), in association with the School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS). Most of the work involved in making arrangements and raising money was done by a three-member student committee made up of one student from Pakistan and the other two from India and Sri Lanka.

Dawn, 12 November 2005

Pakistan-India joint fund-raiser held

WASHINGTON, Nov 11: At the first Pakistan-India joint fund-raiser for the earthquake victims, the World Bank announced a \$200 million supplemental financing to help Pakistan cope with the disaster. Speaking at the fund-raiser on Thursday night at the World Bank atrium, WB's acting vice-president for South Asia, Dina Umali-Deininger, said an additional support of \$270 million for Pakistan was awaiting approval. She said the request for supplemental financing was approved at a meeting of the board of governors on Thursday, while the request for additional assistance would be presented before the board next week and it would hopefully be approved. On Oct 25, the World Bank announced a package of \$470 million to assist Pakistan in the reconstruction of the areas devastated by last month's earthquake.

Dawn, 12 November 2005

Aziz, Singh to discuss Kashmir: Riaz

DHAKA, Nov 11: Leaders of Pakistan and India will discuss the Kashmir peace process on the sidelines of a regional summit in the Bangladesh capital this weekend, a senior Pakistani official said on Friday. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will meet Pakistan premier Shaukat Aziz for talks on Saturday on the sidelines of the Saarc summit, said Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohammed Khan. As in "almost all meetings, especially those at summit level, Kashmir is expected to come up for discussion," Mr Khan told reporters. Notably, India hinted the recent bombings in its capital that killed 62 people were carried out by militants with possible links to Pakistan. Mr Khan said Pakistan condemned the blasts and promised to assist India's investigation in any way it could. But he said this depended on "solid evidence provided to us" and none had yet been forthcoming from India. AFP Qudssia Akhlaque adds from Islamabad: Kashmir and terrorism will be major talking points between Prime Minister Aziz and Dr Singh, it is learnt.

The News, 12 November 2005

India plays dirty over Saarc role for China (Fahd Husain)

DHAKA: Pakistan said on Friday it was fully backing the requests of Afghanistan and China to be associated with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) even as disagreements within the existing member states clouded the outcome of the final decision on the issue. On the eve of the 13th Saarc summit here in the Bangladesh capital, Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohammad Khan told journalists that Pakistan had circulated the requests by Afghanistan and China to the six other member states, but some delegations had raised a few technical issues. The matter was discussed by the standing committee comprising senior officials, which had recommended it to the council of ministers. Afghanistan has formally moved a request to be inducted as the eighth member of the regional grouping. Its application is strongly supported by Pakistan and India, and it was widely believed that a consensus would be arrived among the existing members to accept Afghanistan's request.

The News, 12 November 2005

Pro-govt tribal elder shot dead near Wana (Sailab Mahsud)

TANK: An influential pro-government tribesman was shot dead by unknown people near Wana in South Waziristan on Friday while a Captain and Havaldar of the Pakistan Army were wounded in a roadside bomb explosion in Shakai area. Tribal sources said Allah Khan alias Allahgai, who was an active member pro-government Amn (Peace) Committee that backed military operations last year against tribal and foreign militants in Wana, was fired at as he walked home after disembarking from a

passenger wagon at his village, Oucha Khwara, near Kaloosha in Azam Warsak area. Armed men who were riding a car had chased the wagon before shooting Allah Khan dead and making good their escape.

Dawn, 13 November 2005

Probe begins into Gilgit violence

GILGIT, Nov 12: The investigation tribunal comprising Northern Areas Chief Court members Sahib Khan and Muzaffar Ali has started to investigate the causes that led to the killing last month in Gilgit in which at least 12 persons including two personnel of the rangers were killed in the gunfight between the security forces and angry mobs on Oct 13. The sources said the tribunal has started functioning formally where witnesses, government officials and general public have been invited to record their statements about the killings. They said that the tribunal would submit its report within four weeks and would frame suggestions about how to forestall such disturbances in future.

The Nation, 13 November 2005

US team leaves for Pakistan

WASHINGTON (APP) : A US Presidential delegation led by Ms Karen Hughes, Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy, embarks on a three-day (November 13-15) visit of the earthquake hit region from Sunday to "survey the devastation" and "assess relief and reconstruction needs." President George Bush had announced the designation of the Delegation "to survey the South Asian earthquake devastation and assess relief and reconstruction needs." Members of the Presidential Delegation are: Mr Jim Kelly, former Chairman and CEO of United Parcel Service of America, Inc; Ms Anne Mulcahy, Chairman and CEO of Xerox Corporation; Mr Hank McKinnell, Jr, PhD, Chairman and CEO of Pfizer, Inc; and, Mr Sandy Weill, Chairman of Citigroup, Inc, the announcement added.

The Nation, 13 November 2005

Pak has no vaccine to combat bird flu (Shazia Zahir)

KARACHI - As the entire world is taking precautions to avert the impending bird flu disaster, there has been little progress in importing and administering anti-bird flu vaccine. The countries like the USA, Europe, China and India have already booked the vaccine up to 2007 and Pakistan might not get vaccine if bird flu virus attacks the country. With the advent of winter, thousands of migratory birds will start arriving in Pakistan to hatch and breed and there is a strong possibility that they would import this deadly virus. Endangering parts of Europe, China and the US, the birds are now migrating to the wetlands of Punjab, Sindh and Rann of Kutch, where they would be staying till the freezing cold in Siberia ends.

The Nation, 13 November 2005

Basha dam feasible: Wapda

LAHORE (PR): There is no doubt about the feasibility of Basha - Diamer Dam project and the site of the dam is also not being changed. This was clarified by WAPDA spokesperson while commenting on a news item, captioned "Bhasha site in seismic zone" published in daily The Nation dated November 11, 2005. The spokesperson said that the maximum acceleration due to October 8 earthquakes at Basha Dam site recorded by Strong Motion Accelerographs (SMAs) installed at the site was 0.11g. It is pertinent to mention that the maximum credible earthquake considered for Basha site is 0.4g.

Daily Times, 14 November 2005

'Several PML members want to go to PML-N'

LAHORE: Several Pakistan Muslim League (PML) members are negotiating with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) to join the party, claimed PML-N leaders on Sunday. PML members had contacted the PML-N because of the ruling party's indifferent attitude, said PML-leaders Khawaja Saad Rafique, Malik Pervaiz, Sardar Ayyaz Sadiq, Khawaja Ahmad Hassan, Sheikh Rohail Asghar, Zaeem Qadri and Naseer Ahmad Bhutta at a press conference. Haji Noor Muhammad Bhatti, Ghulam Hussain Bhatti, Ramzan Siddique Bhatti, Iftikhar Bhatti and Dr Abdur Razaq of the union council falling in the constituency of NA-127, announced joining the PML-N at the press conference.

Daily Times, 14 November 2005

Tribal clashes the biggest problem in Balochistan

KARACHI: Maulana Abdul Wasey, senior provincial minister of Balochistan, said on Sunday that tribal clashes were the biggest problem in the province. "Tribal clashes are taking a heavy toll. Therefore, the Balochistan Assembly has formed a parliamentary committee led by me to address these issues," he said at a press conference at Karachi Press Club. He belongs to the MMA, which is the dominant coalition partner of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League in Balochistan. Maulana Abdul Wasey referred to the clashes between Mengal tribe, Bugti-Kalpar, Rind-Issani and Gichkis. He said that at present, the committee was dealing with the violent clashes between some Mengal tribes. He said that the committee had been successful in removing 'Morcha' (fortification) so far. He claimed that land was the bone of contention between the groups. He said the committee would look into the issue of an attack on Attaullah Mengal's house. The minister opined that the attack on

Dawn, 14 November 2005

Indo-Pakistan ties facing trust deficit: Aziz

DHAKA, Nov 13: India and Pakistan exchanged tough words on Sunday over a slow-moving peace process, casting a chill on attempts to end decades of rivalry and renewing doubts about any rapprochement. The diplomatic tussle between the nuclear neighbours came as a two-day summit of South Asian nations ended here raising fresh questions over whether the group would be able to overcome differences between its two biggest members. "There is clearly a trust deficit between the two countries," Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz told reporters as the meeting of the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Sarc) drew to a close. He said that as far as Pakistan was concerned, the core dispute with India was over Kashmir.

Dawn, 14 November 2005

Pakistan to appeal for \$5bn: Musharraf

ISLAMABAD, Nov 13: President Gen Pervez Musharraf has said Pakistan will appeal to international community and donor agencies for \$ five billion relief assistance at the donors conference for reconstruction and rehabilitation of quake-affected people. "We need five billion dollars for rehabilitation and reconstruction of quake-devastated areas. I will appeal to our friends and donor institutions on this count at donors conference taking place on Nov 19," he said in an interview with CNN on Sunday. The president said that the international community and donor institutions had played a vital role in helping quake survivors in Pakistan. "We are convinced to it. We want that world community and donor agencies join us in our efforts for rehabilitation and rebuilding of quake-devastated areas at this difficult time," he held.

Dawn, 15 November 2005

Kishanganga dam talks fail; issue may be taken to WB

LAHORE, Nov 14: Pakistan is likely to move the court of arbitration after the latest round of talks with India over the Kishanganga dam project ended in failure, Syed Jamaat Ali Shah, Pakistan's Commissioner on the Indus Basin Treaty, said here on Monday. Mr Shah told Dawn upon his return from India on Monday that the mission was a "complete failure," at least at the commission level. The commission, he said, would now recommend that the government initiate the legal process and move the World Bank for arbitration, as it had done in the case of Baglihar dam. Mr Shah said Islamabad could still take it up with Delhi (at the government level) before going to the World Bank. But one thing was certain that the commission had failed to resolve the crisis, he said.

The Nation, 15 November 2005

Pak-China joint naval exercise

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan and China will hold second joint naval exercise next week in the Arabian Sea close to Karachi coast. A fleet of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy has already left towards the Arabian Sea via northern zone to join the Pakistan Navy. Defence Sources told APP here that the Chinese naval fleet comprised two ships, a missile destroyer and helicopters. It will be the first ever combined maritime drill by the Chinese navy in alien sea areas, likely to take place from November 21 to 24. The two navies will focus on items in non-traditional areas, such as joint search-and-rescue operation. A large number of sailors and officers from both sides will take part in the exercise in the efforts to strengthen their decades old military-to-military relations and further enhance their professional skill.

The Nation, 15 November 2005

Fourth crossing opens

ON THE LINE OF CONTROL (AFP): Pakistan and India opened a fourth crossing Monday along the Line of Control splitting earthquake-ravaged Kashmir but allowed only humanitarian supplies across and not civilians. Indian officials say they expect the first Kashmiri to cross the Line of Control soon but the two sides have not yet set a date. Pakistani and Indian officials smiled and shook hands at the crossing opening. "The Tatta Pani-Mendher crossing on the Line of Control opened at 10:30 am" a senior Pakistani military official said in the area. Tatta Pani is in Azad Kashmir and Mendher is in the Held Kashmir. Afterwards porters carried across heavy sacks containing blankets, rations and other relief, for quake-hit families on both sides. No Kashmiri civilians were permitted to cross the heavily militarised border.

The Frontier Post, 15 November 2005

Pandemonium in NA over president's address

F.P. Report ISLAMABAD: Opposition parties in the National Assembly here Monday slammed President General Pervez Musharraf for not fulfilling what they called a constitutional requirement to address the joint session of Parliament in the third parliamentary year of the Lower House. The criticism from the opposition lawmakers came as 342-member House completed its minimum 130 days in the year without an address by the President to joint sitting. Opposition parties alleged General Musharraf violated the article 56, Clause (3) of the Constitution, which says at the commencement of each year, President shall address both Houses assembled together and inform the Parliament of the causes of its summoning.

Daily Times, 16 November 2005

Musharraf says quake aid essential to fight terrorism

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf said on Tuesday that aid to help Pakistan recover from the October earthquake that killed nearly 74,000 people and left millions homeless was vital to fighting terror. Asked on NBC television's 'Today' show whether increased aid from the US would help Pakistan combat terrorism, Musharraf replied, "Yes it will. It will lend more credibility and strength to our decision that we took of backing the US and being with the US. The people would understand that joining the coalition, fighting against terrorism, joining, supporting the US against terrorism, were all correct decisions." Pakistan is hosting a donors' conference in Islamabad on Saturday to try to raise the billions of dollars it needs to help victims and to rebuild areas devastated by the October 8 quake. Musharraf told NBC that \$5.1 billion in aid would be required, including \$3.5 billion for reconstruction.

Daily Times, November 16 2005

UN adopts Pakistan quake resolution (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: The United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution tabled by Pakistan on Monday and co-sponsored by 133 countries on the October 8 earthquake. The resolution, entitled Strengthening Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Prevention in the Aftermath of South Asia Earthquake Disaster - Pakistan, was co-sponsored by countries from all regions and continents, including the Islamic world, the European Union and North America. The passage of the resolution is seen as a demonstration of the solidarity expressed by the international community for the affected people. The resolution welcomes the proposed convening of the International Donors' Conference for Reconstruction being held in Islamabad on November 19, and invites the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the UN and other international and regional financial institutions to mobilise the international community to address the long-term reconstruction needs of the affected areas.

The Nation, 16 November 2005

Karachi blast kills three

KARACHI: Three persons were killed and at least 21 injured some of them critically, when a powerful car bomb exploded outside the six-storey landmark building of Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation located close to Chief Minister's House on Tuesday at 8:40 am. The explosion was so powerful that it destroyed KFC and MCB buildings and seven cars parked there, while causing a severe damage to the PIDC building where the offices of Pakistan Petroleum Limited are also located. Cracks were visible up to 4th floor of PIDC building while windowpanes of the adjacent buildings were also shattered.

Dawn, 16 November 2005

Opposition sees govt's 'failure' in blast (Raja Asghar)

ISLAMABAD, Nov 15: Opposition parties in the Senate accused the government on Tuesday of failing to maintain law and order as both sides condemned a car bomb blast in Karachi that killed three people and injured 15 others as an act of terrorism. "The government has totally failed in its constitutional duty to safeguard the life and property of the people," said Leader of the Opposition Raza Rabbani while initiating a brief discussion in which Minister of State for Interior Shahzad Waseem assured the house that the government would "reach the culprits soon and bring them to justice". Mr Rabbani complained about prevalence of the "law of the jungle" because of what he called the government's "direct patronage of warlords" and other policies.

The Nation, 17 November 2005

Annan arrives in Islamabad today

Islamabad: UN Secretary General Kofi Annan will visit Pakistan today to attend donors' conference and to inspect massive earthquake relief efforts said UN officials Wednesday. Kofi Annan along with his wife will be in Pakistan for three days. He is also scheduled to hold meeting with President Musharraf, PM Aziz and Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri on quake relief efforts before attending the donors' conference on Saturday. He is expected to visit one of the camps set up for the homeless in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistani Kashmir that had been devastated by the quake.

Daily Times, 17 November 2005

Pakistan confident of achieving MDGs: Aziz

Islamabad: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Wednesday reiterated Pakistan's commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), saying emphasis was being laid on alleviating poverty, creating jobs, promoting education and setting up health facilities. Addressing the launching ceremony of the MDGs Report 2005, Aziz said that despite facing the challenge of long-term reconstruction in the earthquake-hit areas the government was determined to change Pakistan's economic and social landscape through the MDGs. He said, "Our people have the ingenuity, resilience and resolve to transform our challenges into opportunities." He said Pakistan had gone a long way towards achieving a vibrant economy, a smooth functioning democracy, improved governance and becoming a major player in regional and global peace and stability initiatives.

Daily Times, 17 November 2005

US wants better industrial ties with Pakistan

LAHORE: US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Christina Rocca met representatives of gems and jewellery industry on Wednesday in Lahore and said that the US wanted to expand industrial relations with Pakistan. The assistant secretary observed various traditional techniques for crafting intricate jewellery and also attended a briefing on development activities intended to enhance the sector's competitiveness. Rocca appreciated the industry's efforts in taking a collaborative approach in addressing growth constraints. She pledged continued US assistance to expand such partnerships as an essential component of its overall \$1.5 billion assistance package to Pakistan.

Dawn, 17 November 2005

PPP leaders demand fresh polls

QUETTA, Nov 16: The Balochistan council of Pakistan People's Party has demanded free, fair and transparent elections in the country and transfer of power to elected representatives. The council met on Wednesday with Nawabzada Mir Lashkari Khan Raisani in the chair. A resolution demanded that all cases against Ms Benazir Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, Bismillah Khan Kakar and other party leaders be withdrawn and they should be allowed to take part in politics. It also demanded restoration of the 1973 Constitution.

Dawn, 18 November 2005

Benazir seeks donors' continuing support

ISLAMABAD, Nov 17: Former prime minister and chairperson of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Benazir Bhutto has thanked heads of state and government of donor countries for providing relief and assistance for rehabilitation of earthquake-affected people in Pakistan. "This sympathy and support means so much to us as we try to rebuild the shattered lives and cities that now pose enormous

challenges to a nation afflicted with great poverty and backwardness," she said in her letter to the heads of state and government. "By your sharing our sorrows and contributing to our relief and rehabilitation efforts, we have been highly encouraged in our time of tribulation," Ms Bhutto said, adding that she looked forward to their "continuing cooperation".

Dawn, 18 November 2005

Pakistan hopes clearance procedure will be expedited

ISLAMABAD, Nov 17: Foreign Office spokesperson Tasnim Aslam said on Thursday that Indian authorities would hopefully expedite the procedure of clearance to the Kashmiris who want to cross the Line of Control (LoC) to see their kins on the other side. According to agreement, both the countries pledged to try their best to wind up the clearance procedure within ten days and this commitment would hopefully be honoured by the parties, she told a private television channel. Answering a question, she said, no unnecessary delay is being made by the Indian authorities, adding that they have had handed over a list of 120 people to Pakistan on Nov 14.

The Nation, 18 November 2005

Pak growth rate 6.6pc: WB

WASHINGTON (APP: The World Bank said Wednesday that this year's performance reflected "a 6.6 per cent growth in Pakistan" while a 7.7 per cent growth rate was recorded in India. "This strong growth can be attributed to increased consumption, investment, exports and industrial production in both countries." The latest World Bank report said, while the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan had catastrophic human consequences, "its overall economic impact is expected to be small". The GDP growth in South Asia is estimated at 6.9 per cent in 2005, up from 6.8 in 2004. For 2006, regional gross domestic product is expected to slow down to 6.4 per cent. Growth in the region's other countries, meanwhile, is expected to decelerate from 5.9 per cent in 2004 to 5.1 percent this year.

The News, 18 November 2005

India fixes dates for quake survivors to cross LoC

NEW DELHI: India said after finalising dates with Pakistan that quake-affected people would be able cross the de facto Kashmir border from Thursday and receive treatment at relief camps on the Indian side. Foreign ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna said people would be allowed to cross at the Uri-Chakhoti point on November 17 and December 1 and at the Uri-Hajipur point on November 24 and December 8. The Tithwal-Nauseri crossing would be open November 19 and 26 and December 3 and 10, the Poonch-Rawalakote crossing on November 21 and December 5 and Mendhar-Tattapani November 28 and December 12, he added.

Daily Times, 19 November 2005

Indo-Pak border forces to sign agreement today

CHANDIGARH: Indian and Pakistani border forces will sign a final agreement on resolving border issues, which includes drug smuggling and accidental crossings by civilians, today (Saturday), said G S Sandhu, Border Security Force deputy inspector general. Sandhu said the countries' agenda and their border forces' opinions were discussed during the first day of a three-day bi-annual meeting on Thursday. The final decisions are being sorted out, he said. Buildings along both sides of the border and the repatriation of civilians and fishermen were also discussed, he added.

Dawn, 19 November 2005

25 Pakistanis released

LAHORE, Nov 18: A group of 25 Pakistani prisoners reached Lahore from India through Wagah border checkpost. The released Pakistanis were received at the checkpost by officials of the Interior Ministry and Punjab Rangers and their relatives. Majority of the prisoners were those who had overstayed their visas or had inadvertently crossed into the Indian side along the Punjab border. Some of them had been incarcerated in Indian jails for the past 14 years. Officials said the prisoners would be debriefed by authorities before being allowed to join their families.

The News, 19 November 2005

Pakistan, Iran three-point agreement over gas pipeline project

TEHRAN: Pakistan and Iran vowed to launch the gas pipeline project soon here in a meeting of the joint working group that discussed various aspects of the project. The two sides also agreed over three points to set guidelines for the energy charter for implementation of the project. Iran will provide the GSPA text till the end of December 2005. The joint working group discussed financial, commercial, technical and legal aspects of the project. Officials also discussed export of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Pakistan. Pakistan, India and Iran will hold a tripartite meeting next year in Iran, while the next meeting of the Iran, Pakistan Joint Working Group will be held in January 2006 in Islamabad.

Daily Times, 19 November 2005

US assures Pakistan of full support for Donors' Conference: People should welcome all the help they can get: Rocca (Iqbal Khattak)

PESHAWAR: The United States on Friday pledged its full support to the Donors' Conference in Islamabad on Saturday, calling the October 8 earthquake "a true catastrophe" that ripped through Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the NWFP. "It will be successful and the international community will step up relief activities for quake victims," Undersecretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca told a select group of journalists at the US Consulate in Peshawar.

The Nation, 18 November 2005

Kashmir resolution could be India's quake 'donation': Musharraf

Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf urged India Saturday to work with his country to resolve their dispute over Kashmir, saying it could be New Delhi's "donation" to the earthquake relief effort. "Let us together solve the Kashmir dispute once for all," Musharraf said at a meeting to raise 5.2 billion dollars for reconstruction and relief after the October 8 quake that killed nearly 74,000 people, most of them in Pakistani Kashmir. "Let this be the Indian donation to Kashmir," he said to applause from the conference, which included a minister-level delegation from India.

The News, 19 November 2005

UK pledges £70m for quake rehabilitation

LONDON: The British government pledged 70 million pound sterling (\$120 million) for the reconstruction of the quake-ravaged areas of NWFP and Azad Kashmir. The junior DFID Minister Gareth Thomas left for Islamabad late on Thursday to represent Britain at the international donors conference, sources said. The new pledge brings the UK's total support to Pakistan, for both relief and reconstruction, to over 100 million pound sterling.

Daily Times, 20 November 2005

Donors' Conference raises \$5.8b in pledges (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: The international community pledged \$5.8 billion to help Pakistan rebuild following the October 8 earthquake at the Donors' Conference here on Saturday, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz announced. "It's a very successful day for Pakistan. The results are better than our expectations," Aziz told a press conference at the conclusion of the conference. He thanked the foreign countries and international donor agencies for helping Pakistan and hoped the total amount pledged would increase further. He gave the break-ups of the grants and soft loans and said countries like Australia and Canada would announce their pledges very soon. He said representatives from 75 countries and international organisations participated in the conference.

Daily Times, 20 November 2005

FIA teams hunt human traffickers in quake-hit areas

PESHAWAR: Two teams of anti human trafficking unit of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in Peshawar have reached Balakot, Battagram and Battal searching for human traffickers suspected to have infiltrated the earthquake-hit areas. According to a press release on Saturday, this was ordered by the ministry of interior as a sequel to the reports published in newspapers about groups of human traffickers in quake-hit areas carrying out their sinister activities. The FIA teams will also carry out a survey in Mansehra and Abbotabad districts where hundreds of quake victims are under treatment in hospitals and residing in camps. app

The News, 20 November 2005

Pakistan, India agree to improve joint patrolling on border

LAHORE: Pakistan and India have agreed to improve joint patrolling at border areas. This was stated by DG Rangers Sindh Maj-Gen Javed Zia and DG Rangers Punjab Maj-Gen Hussain Mehdi, while addressing a joint press conference at Wahga Border, soon after their return from India on Saturday after attending four-day Pak-India biannual meeting held at Chandigarh. BSF Inspector General Surendar Paul Singh represented his country. They said it was conveyed to the Indian authorities that violation of working boundary by Indian Border Security Forces (BSF) may end ceasefire between the two countries. Maj. Gen Hussain Mehdi said during the meeting they pointed out that the BSF violated the land limits by constructing defence construction in the working boundary area. He said explained "Working boundary covers 280 km area from Chenab River to Abial Dogar. "The BSF IG assured the visiting team that no violation would be committed by Indian forces in future," he maintained.

The News, 20 November 2005

UAE assures continued support (Hanif Khalid)

ISLAMABAD: United Arab Emirates has pledged to continue its support with Pakistan in relief and rehabilitation of earthquake devastated areas. "The government and people of UAE will respond now and in future to the needs, both directly and through international relief efforts, with money, with logistics support and with anything else that we have at our disposal," UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan said in a message to President General Pervez Musharraf. "UAE is committed to utilise all its energies and continue to meet the needs of the quake victims," President Khalifa said in his message. The message was carried by UAE Minister for Labour and Social Welfare Dr. Ali Abdullah Al Kaabi. Al Kaabi described the post-quake scenario a challenging one. "The affected areas need a long-term reconstruction process.

The News, 20 November 2005

UN mulls over \$1bn emergency fund (Naveed Ahmad)

ISLAMABAD: While the Pakistan government lauded the generous pledges by the international community, the United Nations and other leading humanitarian agencies highlighted their funding shortfall for quake relief work and emphasised the need for a permanent emergency pool to be called the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). The United Nations is currently debating setting up a fund to avoid a situation where afflicted people are dying for want of succour while donor governments are fumbling with their pockets in an attempt to dole out some money. So far the US, Italy, France, Canada and Belgium have pledged nothing to support the fund. Only seven governments-UK, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Ireland, Switzerland and Luxembourg - have pledged \$187 million to the fund. After the Pakistan earthquake, the United Nations, International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) report severe shortfall of funds.

The News, 21 November 2005

PM calls for self-govt in both parts of Kashmir (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir)

ISLAMABAD: Appreciating India's response to Pakistan's proposal for opening five crossing points on the Line of Control (LoC), Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Sunday suggested that the points should remain open every day of the week instead of only one day. "We wish that the crossing points should also be used for trade of goods manufactured in Kashmir," he said while talking to a group of journalists after meeting head of an Indian delegation E Ahmed, Minister of State for External Affairs here on Sunday. The prime minister said Pakistan is engaged with India in resolving the disputes, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir, through composite dialogue. "We are gradually moving towards the solution of issues.

The News, 21 November 2005

Nepra determines tariffs of eight power companies

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) has determined the differential power tariff of around Rs 4 per unit on an average for profit-making power distribution companies and Rs 5 to Rs 5.30 per unit for the companies facing loss, a government official told The News. "The power regulatory body has determined the differential power tariffs as per the cost-based formula which has been communicated to government informally not formally," the official said. Nepra has determined the power tariff of Rs 4 per unit (which is below the existing power tariff that stands at around Rs 4.25 per unit) of profit-making power distribution companies, including Islamabad Electric Supply Company, Lahore Electric Supply Company, Gujranwala Electric Power Company and Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO).

The Nation, 21 November 2005

Bomb blast, rocket attack in Balochistan

QUETTA - Two separate incidents of bomb blast and rocket attack rocked two towns of interior Balochistan on Sunday. Some unidentified miscreants fired a rocket on the residence of vice President Pakistan Muslim League-Q Prince Abdul Qadir in Naushki town, some 148 kms west of Quetta. The rocket landed close to his house, and shattered windowpanes. However, there were no reports of loss of lives or property. In another incident a bomb planted near the wall of telephone exchange in Kharan town went off with a bang, causing minor damages to the building.

Dawn, 21 November 2005

LoC should be demilitarized: Strategic assets not damaged: Aziz (Iftikhar A. Khan)

ISLAMABAD, Nov 20: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Sunday called for demilitarization of the Line of

Control (LoC) and reiterated that settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was essential for durable peace in the region. Talking to journalists after a meeting with Indian Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahmed, the prime minister appreciated New Delhi's response to help Pakistan in the wake of the devastating earthquake, but said that the five points opened along the LoC recently should remain open seven days a week instead of once a week. He noted that the composite dialogue with India was moving in the right direction and hoped it would deliver good results. Answering a question, Mr Aziz said that Pakistan was an active member of the global coalition against terrorism and did not support killings through any form of terrorism.

Daily Times, 21 November 2005

'Osama evaded Pakistani troops'

LONDON: Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden evaded capture by just 30 minutes as Pakistani troops zeroed in on him in a remote village close to the Afghan border earlier this year, reported the Press Trust of India, quoting the British tabloid 'News of the World' on Sunday. The tabloid claimed that data from a cellular phone used by one of Bin Laden's close aides helped Pakistani troops pinpoint his hideout. But by the time they raided the area Bin Laden had slipped away, it added. According to PTI, details of the operation were revealed to American interviewer Daphne Barak by President Pervez Musharraf. "It was in the spring. We acted on intelligence reports and were close. Such fleeting opportunities come and either you succeed in a moment or you fail and miss the opportunity for a long time," the British paper quoted Musharraf as saying in Islamabad.

The News, 22 November 2005

Pakistan fine by UN resolutions on (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday said it still abided by the UN resolutions on Kashmir but needs an out-of-the-box solution. "There should be flexibility by all sides to arrive at a solution acceptable to all the stakeholders," Foreign Office spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said during a weekly briefing here. The Foreign Office declined to comment Sunday's remarks of Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz that there should be demilitarisation and self-governance in both parts of Kashmir. The prime minister had made these remarks after his meeting with Indian State Minister for External Affairs E Ahmed and had said he had brought up these points in his meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Dhaka. About 15 questions related to his major policy decision on Kashmir were asked at the weekly press conference but the Foreign Office spokesperson shrugged off all of them. When journalists kept insisting and demanding an answer, the spokesperson was constrained to reply, "These are ideas and naturally the leadership talks of demilitarisation and self-governance.

The Nation, 22 November 2005

PM forms body to review relief operation (DILSHAD AZEEM)

ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz Monday constituted a 19-member Parliamentary Committee having representation from both treasury and opposition with mandate to review relief and rehabilitation works being carried out in earthquake-hit areas of the country. However, the opposition parties conveyed to the prime minister that they will take a decision whether or not to participate in the parliamentary committee meetings after having consultations with each other. "Maulana Fazlur Rehman told Federal Minister Muhammad Ali Durrani that the opposition members including Makhdoom Amin Fahim and Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan would take a joint decision after having a meeting," sources told The Nation when contacted.

The News, 22 November 2005

Earthquake compensation increased to Rs 80bn

RAWALPINDI: The government Monday increased the compensation amount for earthquake-hit areas of the NWFP and Azad Jammu and Kashmir from Rs 20 billion to Rs 80 billion. The decision to this effect was taken on the recommendations of NWFP Chief Minister Muhammad Akram Durrani and AJK Prime Minister Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan in a meeting of Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) and Federal Relief Commission. The meeting, which was chaired by President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, discussed the revival of income opportunities, creation of industry and also improving the life of people in the earthquake-hit areas, which ultimately would lead to the conversion of this challenge into opportunity. During the meeting it was decided that an amount of Rs 125,000 would be distributed to each affected house in NWFP and AJK. This amount would be in addition to already announced Rs 25,000 which is being distributed to each affected house in earthquake-hit areas.

Dawn, 22 November 2005

India's response awaited: FO: Kashmir demilitarization, self-governance (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Nov 21: Pakistan on Monday declared that India had taken note of its proposal on demilitarization and self-governance in Kashmir, indicating that there could be a forward movement on both proposals if New Delhi responded positively. Answering questions on Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz's talk about self-governance and demilitarization, Foreign Office spokesperson Tasnim Aslam told her weekly press briefing: "These are very important ideas and if India responds positively to our proposals then modalities for these two ideas can be worked out." She, however, made it clear that it could not be done unilaterally. "Naturally when a leadership talks about demilitarization and self-governance they are concrete proposals, but these proposals can be discussed and progress can be achieved on them if the other side also accepts them."

Dawn, 22 November 2005

Five soldiers wounded in Waziristan

MIRAMSHAH, Nov 21: Three bombs exploded in Mirali Bazaar of the North Waziristan Agency on Monday, wounding five soldiers of the Frontier Corps, officials said. The three powerful blasts, going off one after the other, rocked the town about 30km east of Miramshah, the headquarters of the volatile agency. An official said that the first remote-controlled bomb went off at 8.45am near the FC checkpoint along the Khaisaro Road in Mirali. The second device exploded at the Mirali Chowk without causing any casualty. The third bomb planted near a petrol pump went off at about 11am which wounded five soldiers of the FC. The wounded soldiers belong to the Khyber Rifles.

Dawn, 22 November 2005

Kasuri leaves for Malta

ISLAMABAD, Nov 21: Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri left here for Malta to attend the meeting of the Commonwealth heads of government (CHOGM) from Nov 25-27. He will attend the preparatory meeting of the foreign ministers of the Commonwealth from Nov 23 to 24. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz will represent Pakistan at CHOGM after a gap of six years after its re-admission to the Commonwealth in 2004. Malta, which is both a member of the Commonwealth and the European Union, will be hosting this meeting.—APP

The News, 22 November 2005

Howard arrives on three-day visit

ISLAMABAD: Australian Prime Minister John Howard arrived on a three-day official visit to Pakistan here on Monday night. He was received at the airport by Minister in Waiting Ijazul Haq and other senior officials. A boy attired in national dress presented him a bouquet as the Australian prime minister alighted from the Royal Australian Air Force C-130. He is accompanied by Madame Janette Howard and a 21-member entourage. The visit is aimed at further strengthening bilateral relations between Pakistan and Australia in diverse fields, said a Foreign Office spokesperson. His itinerary includes a call on President Pervez Musharraf and full delegation-level talks with his Pakistani counterpart and a visit to earthquake-affected area of Dhanni. John Howard is the second head of the government of Australia to visit Pakistan.

The News, 22 November 2005

Kishanganga may be taken to ICJ or neutral expert

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Commission of Indus Water (PCIW) has recommended to the federal government to move the International Court of Justice (ICJ) or Neutral Expert (NE) for the resolution of the Kishanganga hydropower project. "Keeping in view the recommendations of PCIW, Islamabad is most likely to formally intimate New Delhi very soon about its intention of moving ICJ or NE," a senior government official told The News. A neutral expert, appointed by the World Bank is already listening to Pakistan and India on the Baglihar hydropower project. "Now the government of Pakistan has started process to take the 300 MW controversial Kishanganga hydropower project to NE or ICJ soon. "India is constructing the 330MW Kishanganga hydropower project on the Ganga River in held Kashmir.

The News, 23 November 2005

UN seeks additional funds for quake victims

GENEVA: The United Nations is seeking donations to help rescue people trapped in earthquake-ravaged areas of Pakistan as the winter sets in and snow threatens to cut off mountain passes, the top UN humanitarian official said on Tuesday. While the billions of dollars (euros) pledged toward reconstruction in the earthquake's aftermath was impressive, Jan Egeland said much more was needed to help ongoing rescue efforts in Kashmir, where many people were still trapped in remote areas. "Some of those who have made commitments for 100s of millions of dollars for rebuilding should also make it possible for the people to survive until you rebuild," said Egeland, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The United Nations has asked for \$550 million for emergency relief, but received only one-third of that — or \$175 million — in cash and pledges, Egeland said. "We need the full thing," he said.

The News, 23 November 2005

India asked to respond to Pak ideas on Kashmir

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday asked India to respond with an open mind to the ideas of demilitarisation and self-governance to help find a solution to the Kashmir dispute and for durable peace in the region. The Foreign Office spokesperson said it would be regrettable if India chooses to be evasive in responding to these ideas. "(These) must be considered with an open mind in the interest of finding a solution of the Kashmir dispute and durable peace in the region," the spokesperson said in response to a question about the statement by the spokesman of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. The spokesperson said: "The ideas of demilitarisation and self-governance remain relevant towards the resolution of the Kashmir dispute as these have also been supported by

Chairman APHC Mirwaiz Omar Farooq and other leaders in held Kashmir."

The News, 23 November 2005

Pakistan for reforming human rights machinery

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has urged the need for 'comprehensive' and 'balanced' reforming of the human rights machinery, stressing curtailment of 'politicisation', 'selectivity, and 'double standards'. During his meeting with President of the United Nations General Assembly Jan Eliason, former Foreign Office spokesman and now Pakistan representative in Geneva, Masood Ahmed Khan urged the reform process should avoid making faulty decisions. "The best approach will be the promotion and protection of rights through persuasion, not coercion; dialogue not sanctions; education, not demoralizing and involvement not grand-standing", he said on behalf of the 57 member Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Eliason has travelled especially to Geneva to consult UN missions based in Switzerland.

The News, 23 November 2005

Pakistan denies Dawood's presence in Islamabad (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has vehemently denied reports that Dawood Ibrahim and his family are in Islamabad under the covert protection of the ISI. A senior official, who did not wish to be quoted, told The News, "This report has been written in the Outlook without giving the name of the correspondent which is highly unusual. The fact that the source of the story is not clearly indicated also indicates that there is no credibility". The official was commenting on the latest report from Outlook which asked whether Dawood Ibrahim and his family were in Islamabad? In a report from an unnamed source, the Outlook said it is to be believed that Dawood now lives in a high security zone under the ISI's covert protection. The report said that RAW's "The Get Bhai Plan" was masterminded by Indian intelligence in collaboration with Dawood's main business rival and former right-hand man, Rajender Saashiv Nikhalje alias Chhota Rajan.

The Nation, 23 November 2005

UK issues visas to Sharifs

LAHORE— British Embassy in Jeddah on Tuesday issued visas to former Prime Minister Mian Mohammad Nawaz Sharif and all the members of his family. After receiving passports from the British Embassy, the Sharif family applied for American visa. Nawaz Sharif is expected to leave Saudi Arabia for UK by the end of this month. Nawaz Sharif's visa application has been treated with full protocol by both the British and American Embassies as they have been moved by Saudi government.

The News, 24 November 2005

US must press for 'civilian rule' in Pakistan: ICG (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: Though there has been a lot of criticism at home of the manner in which the recent local elections were held, the International Crisis Group (ICG) has said after months of research and conducting interviews in every corner of the country both with government and opposition politicians that there is a strong demand for a neutral election commissioner. "Following Pakistan's recently rigged local elections, the US and others must make clear they will withdraw support for the regime unless it takes genuine steps to restore civilian rule," the ICG said in a report titled 'Pakistan's Local Polls: Shoring Up Military Rule'. The latest report from the ICG demonstrates how President Pervez Musharraf's efforts to maintain military control over politics make Pakistan more prone to violence. The deeply flawed local elections were marred by serious violence, which may well become worse in future

polls as extremists are bolstered

Dawn, 24 November 2005

PM to discuss quake disaster at C'wealth summit

ISLAMABAD, Nov 23: Pakistan will highlight the difficulties it faces after last month's massive earthquake when it attends the Commonwealth summit in Malta this weekend after an absence of six years. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz will lead the delegation to the Nov 25-27 gathering. "We will highlight the post-quake situation but it will not be for seeking funds," foreign ministry spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz will participate in the opening ceremony which will be attended by Britain's Queen Elizabeth in her capacity as head of the Commonwealth. The summit will discuss key issues such as governance and capacity building, combating terrorism and promoting tolerance, trade, poverty eradication and digital divide.

The News, 24 November 2005

Blair convenes meeting on more aid to Pakistan today (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir)

ISLAMABAD: Queen Elizabeth of the United Kingdom has invited Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz to an exclusive lunch on Saturday next in Malta during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit. British Prime Minister Tony Blair will also join them at the lunch, which would be followed by a meeting of the heads of government attending the Commonwealth meeting for the first time. It is expected that the situation prevailing in Pakistan in the aftermath of devastating earthquake will come up for discussion beside other matters. The lunch will be organised separately from the formal reception generally hosted by the Queen as head of the Commonwealth for the participants of the meeting. The Queen, who took keen interest in reconstruction of tsunami-hit areas, is believed to be taking a similar interest in the case of Pakistan following the trembler.

The Nation, 24 November 2005

Islamabad to spend \$300m for F-16s, PC-3 (SHAIQ HUSSAIN)

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan will spend \$300 million out of \$698 million being extended by United States early next year for the purchase of F-16 fighter planes and maritime patrol aircraft Orion PC-3, said officials here on Wednesday. The US Congress approved a \$698 million for Pakistan as part of foreign appropriations bill for 2006 few days back, which includes \$300 million for military financing and \$300 million in economic support fund. The fresh US allocation is a part of a \$3 billion, five-year assistance package announced by President George W. Bush for Pakistan in June 2003 after a meeting with President Pervez Musharraf at the Camp David presidential resort. Out of \$698 million, the hefty amount of \$300 million would be spent on the purchase of F-16s and PC-3 surveillance planes despite the government's decision to defer the buying of fighter jets because of October 8 earthquake, said the officials here.

Dawn, 24 November 2005

Support claimed in US for Pakistan's case on N-power plants (Ihtasham ul Haque)

ISLAMABAD, Nov 23: Official circles here are pressing Pakistan's case that the United States should treat India and Pakistan on a par in helping them meet their growing energy needs. And it is being claimed here that several US think-tanks and nuclear-related bodies are stressing the need for addressing Pakistan's grievances in this respect. Informed sources told Dawn here on Wednesday that there was a growing realization in the Bush administration as well that Pakistan needed to be offered the much sought after nuclear cooperation to help it generate 8,800 MW of electricity by 2030 by

accepting its "safeguards and non-proliferation assurances". This view has been bolstered by the fact that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has already been extending such cooperation to Pakistan after satisfying itself that the country meets its safeguard requirement.

The Nation, 24 November 2005

Punjab, Sindh have no representation in Nepra (DILSHAD AZEEM)

ISLAMABAD - Punjab and Sindh, two majority provinces constituting almost 80 per cent of country's total population, are presently deprived of representation in power regulatory body, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA). "There is no appointment even as acting members of these two major provinces in the five-member NERPA body as Punjab is without its representation for the last 15 months," sources told The Nation here Wednesday. Whereas Sindh Member in NEPRA Fazlullah Qureshi also relinquished the post on completion of 65 years of age a few days back since he had assumed the position in 2000 and was presently on extension. "A summary regarding appointment of Punjab Member is pending before the Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz seeking his approval or rejection for the last over six months," the sources in Cabinet Division maintained.

The News, 24 November 2005

Pakistan, Malaysia discuss defence cooperation

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Malaysia have reiterated their mutual desire to further strengthen and enhance bilateral cooperation between the two countries particularly in the field of defence. This was discussed during a meeting between the visiting Malaysian Chief of Army Staff, General Dato Sri Abdul Aziz Bin Hj Zainal and senior Federal Minister and Minister for Defence, Rao Sikandar Iqbal, and Minister of State for Defence, Zahid Hamid, here on Wednesday. The meeting exchanged views on matters of bilateral interest and stressed the need for greater collaboration between the two countries in different fields. The ministers apprised the visiting dignitary about the tremendous potential of the defence industry of Pakistan.

Dawn, 25 November 2005

Pakistan-China exercise begins

KARACHI, Nov 24: The marine phase of a Sino-Pakistan naval exercise commenced in the Arabia Sea on Thursday, according to an Inter Services Public Relations (Navy) statement issued here. The statement said that surface ships along with helicopters were pitched and tested in the wartime scenario including the rehearsal of a collective response to large-scale disasters like a tsunami. The joint exercise also included search and rescue from helicopters, advanced manoeuvres and cross deck transfers, etc. The exercise offered an excellent opportunity to the two country's navies to refine interoperability and tactical proficiency, the ISPR statement said. The officers and men from both sides got a chance to dwell upon their standard operating procedures and figure out areas where improvement could be made. For the Pakistan Navy it was a perfect setting to closely monitor the characteristics and operational capabilities of Chinese technology, it said.

Daily Times, 25 November 2005

Quake reconstruction won't affect other projects: Musharraf

RAWALPINDI: President Pervez Musharraf said on Thursday that the reconstruction and rehabilitation process in the earthquake-hit areas and other development projects in the country should move in tandem. Chairing the second meeting to review progress on the national programme for the improvement of watercourses, the president said that policy for relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation

in the quake-hit areas was in place and there was a need to continue other development projects in the country. The president said that the brick-lining of watercourses was a very important project that would help save water and contribute to introducing new techniques like drip and sprinkler irrigation. He said that all tiers of government should do their duty to enact useful legislation and implement it. He said he would visit various areas to see the progress on projects in irrigation, health and education.

Daily Times, 25 November 2005

Pakistan and Indonesia agree to increase anti-terrorism cooperation

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf and his Indonesian counterpart Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on Thursday agreed to increase cooperation in counter-terrorism, saying Pakistan and Indonesia were victims of the menace and that both countries needed to address it. Musharraf said, "Both of us are victims of terrorism and therefore we need to fight it together through increased intelligence cooperation." Pakistan and Indonesia also agreed on encouraging their private sectors to strengthen economic relations. Both countries signed a framework agreement on comprehensive economic cooperation. Musharraf and Yudhoyono also oversaw the signing of a letter of intent to increase bilateral cooperation in fighting terrorism, which they called important in the context of increasing bilateral cooperation. Yudhoyono also praised Musharraf's efforts in the fight against terrorism, saying the Pakistani president's vision of enlightened moderation was important vis-à-vis improving the condition of Muslims and addressing extremism in the long-term perspective.

Daily Times, 25 November 2005

No let-up in infiltrations from Pakistan: India

NEW DELHI: India said on Thursday there had been no let-up in the number of militants sneaking into Jammu and Kashmir from Azad Jammu and Kashmir despite pledges by Islamabad to seek to halt the flow. The infiltration level this year "is almost the same as last year," said Junior Foreign Minister E Ahmed, but gave no details. He said in a written parliamentary statement that the government had told Pakistan it had taken no effective action to permanently dismantle "the infrastructure of support for terrorism," reported the Press Trust of India. Ahmed said Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had told US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that a stop to infiltration and terrorist attacks targeting India was essential for New Delhi's peace process with Pakistan to succeed.

Daily Times, 25 November 2005

UK grants asylum to Dr Shazia

WASHINGTON: Dr Shazia Khalid and her husband have been granted political asylum by the British government. The couple's application for immigration to Canada is being processed by the Canadian authorities and it is expected to be approved in a couple of months. Dr Khalid and her husband are due to arrive in New York at the invitation of a women's rights organisation called Equality Now, which will honour the rape victim from Pakistan at a ceremony on December 14. She is also planning to travel to Florida where Somi Ali of the Asian American Network Against Abuse of Women is planning to host a ceremony honouring her. A visit to Washington and the West Coast, to be arranged by Equality Now, is also expected. khalid hasan

Daily Times, 25 November 2005

Pakistan probes alleged threat against Hong Kong, China hotels

KARACHI: Pakistan is investigating a threat to carry out attacks on hotels in Hong Kong and the rest of China ahead of a World Trade Organisation conference, officials said on Thursday. Hong Kong and

Pakistani security officials said there was no evidence to support the anonymous warning, which was carried in a letter faxed to the Chinese consulate general in Karachi three weeks ago. "It mentioned possible attacks in Hong Kong" but not in Pakistan," Pakistani Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said. "There is no evidence to suggest the threat is genuine. It may be a prank. "A senior security official in Pakistan told AFP the fax also threatened hotels in the rest of China. The threat carried the name of a person who identified himself as Ali Rizvi, the official said.

The News, 25 November 2005

UNHCR chief urges urgent work to avert winter tragedy

BALAKOT: The head of the UN refugee agency, stunned by the damage in earthquake-ravaged northern Pakistan, warned that urgent work is needed to avert further tragedy as troops race against time to get aid to the most vulnerable before the frigid Himalayan winter sets in. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres met officials in Azad Kashmir, toured a tent camp for quake survivors and visited what is left of Balakot. Heading into Balakot aboard a UN helicopter, Guterres peered over the shoulders of the Russian crewmen at hillsides covered by the jumbled rubble of what were once homes, shops and schools. "It is absolutely awful. I have no words to express my feelings," he said. "I don't remember ever having seen a disaster of these proportions."

The News, 25 November 2005

PM arrives in Malta to attend CHOGM

VALLETTA: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz arrived here on Thursday to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) beginning on Friday. He was received here at the airport by Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri and Pakistan's High Commissioner to UK Maleeha Lodhi. Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao is accompanying the prime minister. Earlier, before his departure at the Islamabad airport, Shaukat described the invitation to Pakistan to attend the Commonwealth meeting as a welcome sign and said that he would discuss measures to enhance trade with the member states. The prime minister termed Pakistan's participation after a six-year gap significant and attributed it to the country's growing stature and standing in the comity of nations. The event, he said would provide an opportunity to interact with other heads of states and governments and to convey Pakistan's point of view on different global issues.

Dawn, 25 November 2005

Nato not to establish bases in Pakistan: official

ISLAMABAD, Nov 24: The Commander of Nato disaster relief team in Pakistan, Air Commodore Andrew Walton, has said the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has no plans to establish permanent bases in Pakistan. Speaking at a press conference here on Thursday, he said it was a democratic right of political parties to criticize presence of foreign troops in a sovereign country but the Nato team had come here on the invitation of Pakistan. He rejected the impression that US occupation forces were operating in Pakistan in the garb of the Nato team. He said the impression being created by certain quarters that the Nato forces were here to contain China had no basis at all, and ruled out the possibility of Nato setting up an observatory in Pakistan.

Dawn, 25 November 2005

Ministry not happy over Wapda's attitude

ISLAMABAD, Nov 24: The Ministry of Water and Power is concerned over non-compliance of its directives by Wapda and has expressed inability to defend the government in parliament owing to

unilateral decisions of the utility on major policy issues. "The minister and secretary of water and power are held answerable before various parliamentary committees and public accounts committee but the ministry, in fact, is never consulted by Wapda on major issues," a senior official told Dawn. The ministry is being bypassed in all major issues by Wapda and has even been deprived of its "post-office role". This has repeatedly been brought to the notice of the prime minister through a number of summaries and letters, the official said.

The News, 26 November 2005

UK assures Pakistan of long-term assistance

VALLETTA, Malta: British Prime Minister Tony Blair on Friday assured Pakistan that the United Kingdom would extend full help and assistance to Pakistan in its long-term process of reconstruction in the earthquake-devastated areas. He gave the assurance during a 30-minute meeting with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz here. The two leaders decided to strengthen bilateral cooperation in fighting terrorism and promoting trade economic relations between the two countries. Talking to the media after the meeting, the British prime minister said the UK and other members of the EU would continue their help to Pakistan in its relief and reconstruction work. Blair said he once again expressed his solidarity and sympathies with Pakistan. "We will continue to help Pakistan, and our help and assistance will continue in future," he added.

The News, 26 November 2005

Musharraf backs PML plan for MPs visit to held Kashmir (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf has welcomed the decision of the Pakistan Muslim League to take a bipartisan parliamentary group to Uri in held Kashmir from Chakothi to hand over relief goods and extend support to the survivors of the October 8 earthquake. "I met the president and during our conversation he fully supported and welcomed a purely humanitarian visit by Pakistani parliamentarians to Uri, which has seen massive devastation. We want to reach out to the Kashmiris in their time of need and let them know that they are not alone in these difficult times. The president was very open and supportive of this move," Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed told The News. In fact, Musharraf said, if there were any irritants as far as permission was concerned, then Pakistan in turn would also welcome Indian parliamentarians to come across the Line of Control into Azad Kashmir.

The News, 26 November 2005

Freedom of speech in Pakistan hailed (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: The US and European Union are monitoring Pakistan with regard to entry and freedom of speech to Sidney Jones, the South East Asia Project Director of International Crisis Group, banned by Jakarta. However, diplomatic sources told The News on Friday the Musharraf government has "shown a lot of respect towards freedom of speech." "And it is within this environment that the ICG has been able to play an important role and point out controversial issues which at times have been an eye-opener for the decision makers." The sources attest that Pakistan has "behaved more democratically than Indonesia though there is a military general at the helm of affairs." With regard to checks, the sources said that Washington and the European Union will be monitoring the situation in Pakistan.

The Nation, 26 November 2005

Pak, India to set up 2 banks

NEW DELHI (APP)—India and Pakistan would be opening two branches each of their respective banks with an objective to enhancing trade and bilateral relations between the two countries, the Lok Sabha

was informed today. In response to a written question, Minister of State for Finance S S Palanimanickam said Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had issued a notification granting permission for opening of two branches of banks from India in Pakistan and two branches of banks from Pakistan in India on reciprocal basis. The specific banks to be permitted to set up the branches would be mutually agreed upon by the RBI and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) keeping in view to their regulatory policies and procedures.

The Nation, 26 November 2005

Jolie meets Musharraf President for consistent world support

ISLAMABAD - President General Pervez Musharraf meeting the visiting UN Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie emphasized consistency in the world community's support to the earthquake-affected people till realisation of donors' conference pledges. The goodwill ambassador called on Musharraf Friday to express the world body's continued support for Pakistan in its efforts to rebuild lives and infrastructure damaged in last month's deadly earthquake. Jolie, who visited the quake zone on Thursday, said the immense magnitude of the disaster called for consistent and long-term support for relief and rehabilitation of survivors.

Daily Times, 27 November 2005

Durrani seeks funds for refugee-hit NWFP, Balochistan

PESHAWAR: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) should include the rehabilitation of the NWFP and Balochistan in the agenda of the proposed International Donors' Conference in New York and London, said Akram Khan Durrani, the NWFP chief minister, on Saturday. According to a press statement, Durrani met Antonio Guterres, the UNHCR commissioner, at the Frontier's House and discussed issues related to the proposed International Donors' Conference in New York and London. Durrani said the proposed conference would seek the international community's financial help for the repatriation of Afghan refugees presently living in the NWFP. He praised the UNHCR's role in providing help during and after the Afghan war and in sending relief goods to the quake victims. He paid tribute to the UNHCR head for continued assistance and relief efforts for the quake victims.

Dawn, 27 November 2005

Aziz seeks more access to market: C?wealth discusses trade, poverty (Shamim-ur-Rahman)

VALLETTA (Malta), Nov 26: As Commonwealth leaders continued their discussion on key issues of trade, poverty, terrorism and governance, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz stressed the need for providing a level playing field to the developing countries. He made this call at a news conference before the leaders went into weekend retreat on Saturday. The Commonwealth summit would end on Sunday. 'We want more access to the world market. We demand and expect a level playing field. The developed world has to come up with a timeframe for dealing with the issue of agricultural subsidy,' said Mr Aziz who is the first Pakistan government leader to attend the CHOGM in six years. Mr Aziz noted that one-third of Europe's farmers were subsidized which had made it difficult for the developing countries to compete. He stressed the need for structural reforms so that when the economies were opened up they were able to absorb the pressure.

Daily Times, 27 November 2005

India calls for scrutiny of AQ Khan network (Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: India has demanded a scrutiny of the ?Pakistan-based AQ Khan network? for greater

transparency in non-proliferation. In his statement at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Saturday, India's permanent representative Dr Sheel Kant Sharma called for 'greater clarity' regarding clandestine proliferation activities. He singled out the AQ Khan nuclear proliferation network, saying that Pakistan needed to shed greater light on its activities. "Greater clarity and transparency in this area will serve the objectives of non-proliferation, to which we are all committed," the Indian representative said. "This would also enhance the IAEA's credibility." India also expressed "happiness and relief" that Iran's controversial nuclear programme was not put to a vote for referral to the UN Security Council at the IAEA meeting.

Dawn, 27 November 2005

Work on project to be expedited: India: Trilateral gas pipeline

NEW DELHI, Nov 26: Indian minister for petroleum Mani Shanker Aiar vowed on Saturday that work on the much-delayed India-Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline would be expedited. Mr Aiar expressed this resolve while talking to reporters during a Round-Table Conference of Asian oil ministers here. He said the project was getting immense importance with the passage of time. Therefore, he hoped the Indian cabinet would give permission to take forward tripartite negotiations regarding the execution of the project. About Russian gas company's interests in the project, the Indian minister said he would welcome the company, adding that conditions would be worked out by all the three partners of the project. Russia is keen to participate in the \$7 billion pipeline project and sharing the risks involved.

Daily Times, 27 November 2005

Musharraf to begin Arab visit on December 3

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf will visit Kuwait, Yemen and Saudi Arabia from December 3. Musharraf will participate in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting in Mecca on December 8. An OIC committee will present a report regarding the body's reorganisation in the summit. Musharraf will meet with the leadership of several Muslim countries and discuss challenges faced by Muslims along with the situation in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kashmir. The Pakistani president will hold special meetings with Saudi King Abdullah. online

Daily Times, 27 November 2005

Indian Consulate in Karachi to start working in Jan

KARACHI: The political counsellor of the Indian high commission in Islamabad, Gitesh Sharma, on Saturday said the office of Indian Consulate in Karachi would start functioning from January. Talks on the Karachi-Mumbai ferry service would be held next month, he said while talking to newsmen after meeting with the former nazim of Karachi, Niamatullah Khan, at his residence. Mr Sharma said the Indian government had finalised the arrangements for the restoration of the Khokhrapar-Munabao rail link. Mr Sharma called for enhanced trade and economic activities between the two countries. Niamatullah Khan said the media could play an important role in normalising the ties between both the states. He termed the Kashmir issue a major impediment in normalising the ties between Pakistan and India and said this core issue needed to be resolved permanently in accordance with the UN resolutions.

Daily Times, 28 November 2005

Pakistan can help NATO in Afghanistan, says alliance secretary general

BRUSSELS: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer has called the alliance's relationship with Pakistan "very important" in terms of the NATO mission in

Afghanistan under the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Scheffer said on Sunday that he had been in contact with the Pakistani prime minister, foreign minister and other government officials "since before the horrible earthquake in Pakistan, and we are discussing an Alliance Communication Agreement as Pakistan, in its geographical position, can support the ISAF mission". The NATO secretary general said that the organisation is committed to its mission in Afghanistan. However, the assistance of the entire international community is required to help the country's revival. "Therefore, my message in the London Conference on Afghanistan in January 2006 would be to tell the EU, G-8 and other nations to do it (aid Afghanistan's development) together," he said.

Daily Times, 28 November 2005

C'wealth summit warns Musharraf over uniform

VALLETTA: Leaders of the 53-nation Commonwealth on Sunday warned Pakistan's President General Pervez Musharraf that retaining his role as leader of the army "is incompatible with the basic principles of democracy". And they said that until he gives up his military role, Pakistan remained in danger of sliding into repression, despite its recent progress. In a statement at the end of a three-day summit here, they welcomed Pakistan's progress in restoring democracy since its reinstatement to the Commonwealth in 2004, and gave it two years to resolve the issue of Musharraf's dual role. Pakistan was suspended from the club of mainly former British colonies in 1999 when Gen Musharraf grabbed power in a military coup, and he has reneged on a pledge to give up his military role in 2005. Commonwealth leaders "reiterated that until the two offices are separated, the process of democratisation in Pakistan will not be irreversible," the statement said.

Daily Times, 28 November 2005

Driver's killing in Afghanistan: Indian official points finger at Pakistan

OTTAPPALAM: India's national security advisor accused Pakistan on Sunday of conspiring with the Taliban to abduct and kill a Border Road Organisation (BRO) driver in Afghanistan. MK Narayanan said that Pakistan's aim was to create a rift in the cordial relations between India and Afghanistan, PTI reported. "It is a conspiracy and an ill-motivated act," Narayanan said. The driver, Ramankutty Maniappan, was abducted from the Afghan province of Nimroz on November 19 and killed on November 22. He said that the incident will not dampen Indo-Afghan relations, and India will continue its construction work in Afghanistan. Narayanan rejected the claim that India had not done anything to secure Maniappan's release. India had contacted the Afghan government as soon as it heard of the kidnapping, he said. However, a link could not be established with the Taliban, which did not offer a chance for negotiations.

The News, 28 November 2005

PM convenes meeting on mega dams (Khalid Mustafa)

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has convened an important meeting on Monday (today) on the construction of mega dams –including Kalabagh, Basha, Akhori and Katzara, a government official at the Prime Minister's Secretariat told The News. Minister for Water and Power Liaqat Ali Jatoi, Secretary Ashfaq Mehmood, Wapda Chairman Tariq Hameed and Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Dr Ikram Sheikh and other top officials will attend the meeting. The Wapda chairman will give a presentation on the most feasible dam from among the proposed ones keeping in view the reports of the Technical Committee on Water Resources headed by A G N Abbasi and the Parliamentary Committee on Water Issues led by Senator Nisar Ahmad Memon. "The meeting will discuss all the technical issues pertaining to mega water reservoirs keeping in view the recent

devastating earthquake, as many of the proposed big dams fall on the fault lines," the official said and added that the fault lines were dead lines. He said that later on President Pervez Musharraf would also convene a meeting on dams this week.

The Nation, 28 November 2005

Pakistan seeks extension in \$1b Saudi oil facility (SHAIQ HUSSAIN)

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan has sought extension in the Special Oil Facility (SOF) worth a billion dollars from Saudi Arabia, which is likely to be granted during the forthcoming visit of President Musharraf to the Kingdom and other Gulf states, commencing from December 3. Pakistani leadership has been engaged in hectic consultations with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf states for relaxation in oil payments since October 8 earthquake that caused unprecedented devastation in the country. Officials here said that one important aspect of these discussions was the continuation of SOF from Saudi Arabia, adding that the response to Islamabad's request in this regard had been positive and formal pact was likely to be sealed during President Musharraf's visit to the Arab state.

Daily Times, 29 November 2005

NATO doing relief only: Musharraf

LAHORE: President General Pervez Musharraf said on Monday that the presence of NATO Forces in the earthquake-hit areas was "nothing strange" and it was a misperception that they came to Pakistan on a special mission. Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Universities Chapter of the National Volunteer Movement at Aiwan-e-Iqbal, the president said that Pakistan's forces were strong enough that the country could not be occupied. He said the nation was facing the worst-ever crisis in its history but Pakistanis should not lose their nerve because "unnerved people can not work properly". We should advance after properly perceiving things and the situation, otherwise making noise over this tragedy is useless," the president added. He said the government had three post-earthquake challenges : estimate of damages, planning and implementation.

Dawn, 29 November 2005

All proposals backed by Kashmiris: FO: HR violations by Israel, India deplored (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Nov 28: Pakistan on Monday declared that all proposals and ideas floated by it for the final settlement of the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, including demilitarization and self-governance, have the backing of Kashmiri leadership on both sides of the Line of Control. Answering questions at a weekly news briefing here, a Foreign Office spokesperson categorically stated: "Let me assure you that any proposal, any idea that emanates from the government of Pakistan, it is in consultation with and endorsement of the Kashmiri leadership on both sides of the Line of Control." Reiterating Pakistan's position, Tasnim Aslam, the spokesperson, said: "Any settlement has to be acceptable to all the three parties and, above all, must represent the wishes and aspirations of Kashmiri people."

Daily Times, 29 November 2005

Pakistan wants long-term LoC opening

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan said on Monday that it wanted the opening of points along the Line of Control (LoC) as a long-term arrangement. At a weekly press briefing, Foreign Office Spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said that Pakistan wanted the opening of the five LoC points for the long term for the benefit of the Kashmiri people. "Pakistan also wants trade across the line (LoC) to boost economic activity in the region," she said. Aslam rejected allegations that Pakistan was supporting terrorism across the LoC,

saying that Pakistan condemned all sorts of terrorism. The spokeswoman pointed out that the Indian Army chief had acknowledged last month that infiltration was no longer a problem and that violence had decreased in Jammu and Kashmir. However, she expressed Pakistan's concern over human rights violations by Indian forces in Jammu Kashmir.

The News, 29 November 2005

Pakistan concerned over HR abuses by Israel (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday expressed serious concern over human rights abuses of the defenceless Palestinians by Israel. "We deplore these violations of human rights by Israel. We have serious concerns about such violations. We hope that Israel will improve the human right situation," The Foreign Office spokesperson told a weekly press briefing. The spokesperson was asked about a photograph published on Monday in which a Palestinian woman, Mahfoza Oude, 60, was crying and hugging one of her olive trees in the West Bank village of Salem. Palestinian villages lost dozens of their olive trees after they were chopped down by Israeli settlers. The photograph has moved Pakistanis beyond words and dozens of phone calls were received by The News, asking how the government could even contemplate holding dialogue with a regime that carried out such ruthless actions depriving the oppressed Palestinians of their livelihood.

Dawn, 29 November 2005

Clerics hand over 35 militants in Waziristan

MIRANSHAH, Nov 28: Tribal clerics handed over 35 suspected militants to the political authorities in North Waziristan after signing a peace agreement here on Monday. The agreement was signed by a group of tribal ulema, including Maulana Abdur Rehman, former MNA Maulana Deendar and Senator Mateen Shah. The suspects are wanted in connection with militant activities in and around the area. Under the pact, the tribal group has vowed not to harbour foreign militants and promised to take action against those involved in anti-state activities. The government has signed similar peace deals with militants in the neighbouring S. Waziristan. It is not immediately clear whether the government would set the surrendered militants free in the wake of the agreement.

The Nation, 29 November 2005

SAARC and its multiple identities

PROF MOAZZAM TAHIR MINHAS

The rusted egos of the two ? Pakistan and India in particular the designs of the latter have not allowed SAARC to take off in the manner they should have. Of course Pakistan's post 9/11 foreign policy helped Afghanistan to become a member. If not, then India has certainly gained an ally on a silver platter. If past is any guide, a correct political behaviour from Afghanistan at SAARC forum is not expected, in view of its expedient and distrustful relationship with Pakistan; having pro-Indian Northern Alliance in Karzai's administration. Then the past Taliban phenomenon and the possibility of its being chosen again in times of political need, justifiably haunts the Karzai government in viewing Pakistan as a potential enemy.

Dawn, 29 November 2005

Pakistan-Saudi naval exercise begins

KARACHI, Nov 28: North Arabian Sea will become venue of a joint Pakistan-Saudi naval exercise, Naseem Al Bahr-VIII, for which a task group of Seven Royal Saudi Naval Forces Ships arrived on Monday morning at the Karachi Port. The exercise to be conducted from Nov 28 will continue till Dec

15 in various phases. Commander Task Force Rear Admiral Sammi bin Mansoor Al Rafi is leading the royal contingent. The aim of this exercise is to enhance level of interoperability between the two navies. A large number of royal force and Pakistan Navy units, including most modern destroyers, frigates, missile corvettes, tankers, mine hunters, aviation personnel, special services group will participate in multi-dimensional activities.

Daily Times, 30 November 2005

Mirwaiz asks NATO to supervise Kashmir demilitarisation

SRINAGAR: Top Kashmiri leader has said that India and Pakistan should demilitarise the disputed Himalayan region under the supervision of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). After troop pull-out, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) could ask militants to stop fighting and strengthen the peace process, said Mirwaiz Umar Farooq in an article published in Tuesday's edition of Greater Kashmir, a local English daily. India already has rejected a similar demand for demilitarisation put forward by Pakistan during a meeting of the prime ministers of the two countries earlier this month in Dhaka on the sidelines of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit. Farooq wrote that NATO could help bitter rivals India and Pakistan. "We appeal to NATO, which is already present in one part of Kashmir, that it should oversee the demilitarisation on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC)," Farooq wrote.

The News, 30 November 2005

Back channel diplomacy with India to continue: PM (Ziaullah Niazi)

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has said that supporting the demand for "self-governance" is not a U-turn on the Kashmir policy and we also want demilitarisation in Kashmir. The prime minister was talking to reporters after the groundbreaking ceremony of Orient Power Company's power plant at head Balloki, near Kasur, on Tuesday. Punjab Governor Lt-Gen Khalid Maqbool, Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, federal Minister for Water and Power Liaqat Jatoi, Oman Ambassador to Pakistan Saeed-ul-Masoodi and Orient Power Company's Chief Executive Nadeem Babar were also present on the occasion. Replying to a question whether supporting the demand for self-governance instead of sticking to the United Nations resolutions was not a U-turn on the Kashmir policy, the prime minister said different options were under consideration.

Daily Times, 30 November 2005

NATO asks Pakistan about stay

ISLAMABAD: NATO asked Pakistan on Tuesday how long the government wanted its 1,000 medics, engineers and helicopter support crews helping with earthquake relief efforts to stay in the country. The North Atlantic Treaty Alliance contingent has a mandate to stay until February 4. Maurits Jochems, NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Operations Division, said the troops could stay a bit beyond the initial 90-day mandate if the Pakistan government needs them. "I don't say another 90 days, but for perhaps a few weeks here and there," Jochems told reporters. Islamist politicians have spread fears that NATO was seeking to establish a long-term presence, and its forces were only interested in hunting Al Qaeda. reuters

Daily Times, 30 November 2005

Meeting on construction of new dams delayed

ISLAMABAD: A high-level meeting on the construction of new dams in the country has been delayed until after President Pervez Musharraf's visit to the Arab countries. "The meeting scheduled for

Wednesday (today) has been postponed," said ANG Abbasi, the Technical Committee on Water Resources (TCWR) chairman. The meeting with the provincial governments on the construction of the proposed water reservoirs, including Kalabagh Dam, will be held after Musharraf's visit to Kuwait, Yemen and Saudi Arabia, a government official said. Meanwhile, the president held a meeting with Sindh Chief Minister Arbab Ghulam Rahim on Tuesday in a bid to build consensus among the provinces on constructing new dams, an official said. The Sindh chief minister remained tight-lipped on the details of the meeting and refused to meet reporters.

The News, 30 November 2005

Saudi planes to carry relief goods collected by Pakistanis (Tariq Butt)

ISLAMABAD: A dozen Saudi Arabian planes will transport relief goods to Pakistan, collected by the Pakistani community, residing in Saudi Arabia, for earthquake victims. For the purpose, Saudi Arabia has established an additional 'air bridge' on instructions of Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, Minister of Defence and Aviation, a Saudi Embassy statement said. Instructions have been conveyed to the relevant authorities to make available to the Pakistan Government the facility of 10-12 planes to transport these relief goods in the shortest possible time. It is expected that these planes will arrive Islamabad during the current week. The Saudi leadership has taken the step as an expression of solidarity and brotherhood with the leadership, the government and the people of Pakistan, the statement said.

The News, 30 November 2005

Pakistan urges resolution of Iranian N-issue through talks (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has urged resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue under the framework of IAEA through negotiations. Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri said this while talking to Dr Kim Howells, British minister of state for foreign affairs and Commonwealth office, who called on him at the former's office here on Tuesday. British High Commissioner to Pakistan Mark Lyall Grant was also present on the occasion. Kasuri also urged the need for solution of Kashmir issue to ensure durable peace in the region. The discussions focused on the whole gamut of Pakistan-UK bilateral relations, regional and international issues of mutual interest including progress in the composite dialogue process between Pakistan and India, Iranian nuclear issue and Afghanistan.

Dawn, 30 November 2005

Gorbachev confers award on Benazir

ISLAMABAD, Nov 29: Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto on Tuesday received the World Tolerance Award for "her vision, personal strength, commitment to her ideals and passion for creating a better and peaceful world in the 21st century." Former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev gave her the award in the German city of Leipzig, says a message received here. The World Award Committee is headed by Nobel laureate Gorbachev and composed of the distinguished International World Award Jury. The citation said: "You became the first woman to lead a Muslim country in modern times when you were elected prime minister of Pakistan in 1988.