

Daily Times, 1 November 2006

Militancy will be crushed with force, vows Musharraf

ISLAMABAD: President General Musharraf has vowed to crush militancy with force and insisted that the Bajaur madrassa targeted in an airstrike on Monday was a training camp for Taliban militants. We will crush militancy with force and no one will be allowed to challenge the writ of the government, Gen Musharraf said in his address at a seminar on Security in South Asia in the Non-Traditional Spheres and Human Security on Tuesday. He added that the targeting of the training camp was a manifestation of the government's resolve to crush militants. Anyone who says that they were innocent people are telling lies..

Dawn, 1 November 2006

Opposition seeks debate on Bajaur attack

ISLAMABAD, Oct 31: Opposition members belonging to the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy ARD and Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal MMA on Tuesday submitted separate adjournment motions to the National Assembly and Senate secretariats seeking debate on Bajaur killings. The motion submitted by the ARD members has signatures of 12 MNAs belonging to the Peoples Party Parliamentarians and the Pakistan Muslim League-N. The MMA's motion has been signed by 23 members. The MMA members have claimed that the attack on a Bajaur seminary was carried out by the US aircraft and those killed in it were children aged between 10 and 15..

The Nation, 1 November 2006

Editorial: The loose ends

THE backlash against the Bajaur bombing reflects the indignation of the local population at the deaths of 82 people in airstrikes at a madrassa, whom they claimed were innocent. But the government insists the dead were all militants. Thousands of angry tribesmen staged demonstrations in Khar, the Agency's main town, ahead of protests planned across the country. The police sealed the town and roadblocks were set up on various routes to stop outsiders from entering the area. The federal government has also banned journalists entry into the Agency. MMA chief Qazi Hussain Ahmad, who attempted to lead a convoy to Khar and also visit the targeted seminary in Cheenakai village to offer his condolences, was denied entry..

Daily Times, 1 November 2006

EDITORIAL: Govt should show evidence of terrorists in Bajaur

The army has struck Bajaur again in pursuit of militants foreigners and home-grown who were training in a targeted madrassa. Eighty plus people are said to be dead. The army says there was no collateral damage, meaning that innocent or peaceful civilians were not killed. But local people swear there were no militants in Chingai, which is 12.5 km from Damadola where 13 were killed last January. The senior MMA minister of the NWFP belonging to the Jamaat-e Islami has resigned, declaring that his party will now protest all over Pakistan. In Karachi, the JI students wing has already come out and protested on the streets..

Dawn, 1 November 2006

Editorial: The Bajaur massacre

IT is impossible to believe the governments claim that those killed in the attack on the madressah near Damadola in Bajaur Agency on Monday morning were all militants. Given the firepower in a missile attack of that nature, no one can rule out civilian casualties, even if it is accepted that the madressah was the sole target. Mondays assault occurred nine months after the devastating American air strike on the same village on Jan 13, but the death toll then was much lower-18. Now it is Pakistan's security forces that have owned up to re-enacting the massacre and on a much bigger scale, the casualty figure being four times the number of those killed in the American air strike..

The Nation, 1 November 2006

Opinion: Bush-Musharraf anti terror strategy (ISRAR UL HAQ)

President Musharraf spurred on by the Kudos he received from President Bush for his courage and leadership and above all for his agreeing to a common anti terror strategy to protect our freedom and people during his long visit to the US in September 2006 seems to have become extra enthusiastic in implementing this common strategy. Both the Presidents have however kept the card of this common strategy close to their chest. It however remains open to speculations if President Musharraf under the spell of these Kudos and some maneuverings behind the scene gave in to President Bush's overture for hot pursuits by the US soldiers into Pakistan to capture Osama and other Al Qaida leaders. If so it would be the very end of Pakistani territorial integrity and sovereignty..

Dawn, 2 November 2006

HRW seeks probe into Bajaur attack

WASHINGTON, Nov 1: Pakistans government must allow an independent investigation into the aerial bombing of a religious school in the Bajaur area, a US based rights group said on Wednesday. The Human Rights Watch noted that the October 30 attack in the town of Khar killed 82 people, including several children, though a military spokesman claimed the dead were all militants and denied any collateral damage. .The demand came hours after Pakistani troops sealed off the troubled frontier zone amid a third day of tensions over the deadly air raid. Hundreds of soldiers threw a tight cordon around Bajaur a day after 15,000 tribesmen protested against the Pakistani and US governments and vowed to take revenge..

Dawn, 2 November 2006

Al Qaeda was target of Bajaur attack: US

WASHINGTON, Nov 1: The White House on Wednesday backed Islamabad's claim that this weeks missile strikes on a seminary in Bajaur intended to kill Al Qaeda militants. This was intended against A Qaeda, Press Secretary Tony Snow told a briefing at the White House. Commenting on civilian casualties, he said that the US had also experienced in Afghanistan that Al Qaeda does everything it can to get the civilians killed in such operations. The White House spokesman praised President Pervez Musharraf's contribution to the war on terror, saying that he has shown courage and determination..

Daily Times, 2 November 2006

EDITORIAL: A milestone in our sectarian war

An Anti Terrorism Court ATC has sentenced to death two members of the banned sectarian outfit, Lashkar e Jhangvi, for killing six Shia employees of the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Organisation Suparco in 2003 in Karachi. The two militants were charged with attacking a Suparco van carrying its employees to a mosque for offering Friday prayers on October 3, 2003. The accused, Shaukat and Shahnawaz, committed the heinous crime which the court said had been proved beyond any doubt. We are not told if the convicts were questioned by the police and whether information collected from them was fed into the system presumably in place to prevent further sectarian violence in Pakistan. This year too there has been no dearth of deaths, although most of the leaders of sectarian organisations have been hauled up and are facing trials..

Paktribune, 2 November 2006

Musharraf statement on Bajaur agency incident insulting: Political, Religious leaders

ISLAMABAD: The political and religious leaders and thousands of protesters on the third consecutive day of protest rallies against killings of students of seminary in US led coalition forces bombardment in Bajaur agency flayed the statement given by President Musharraf that those killed in attack were militants. In NWFP and tribal areas the markets remained closed and the entire country seemed to be wearing mournful look. The security forces besieged the entire area of Bajaur agency and all the entry and exit points were sealed. The funeral prayer in absentia was held in Fowara chowk Peshawar under Jamat ul Dawat JUD. It was led by JUD leader Maulana Inam Ullah. Thousands of mourners attended the prayers..

Daily Times, 2 November 2006

Belgium wants Pakistan to open up N sites

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan should open all its nuclear installations for examination by the International Atomic Energy Agency IAEA if it wants help from countries to meet its nuclear energy needs, Belgian Foreign Affairs Minister Karel De Gucht told reporters on Wednesday evening. We want that the Pakistan civil nuclear programme be governed by IAEA safeguards and the programme should be open to the IAEA for inspection, Mr De Gucht said after talks with Pakistans Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri. On US cooperation with India in civilian nuclear energy technology without opening its installations for IAEA examination, he said, We are not making any comparisons here..

Daily Times, 3 November 2006

Pakistan and UK to cooperate against nuclear proliferation and terrorism

LONDON: Pakistan and the United Kingdom have agreed to promote bilateral cooperation in the fields of nuclear proliferation, terrorism, narcotics trafficking and international crimes, a private television channel reported on Thursday. The agreement was secured during the second round of the Strategic Dialogue process held between the two countries in London, with both sides reiterating that every country had the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, the channel reported..

Dawn, 3 November 2006

Concurrent list being revised: Wasim Sajjad committee to meet next week: Saifullah

ISLAMABAD, Nov 2: Federal Minister for Inter provincial Coordination Salim Saifullah Khan has said that the parliamentary sub-committee headed by Wasim Sajjad will meet next week to draft a formula to redraw the precincts of provincial autonomy. Talking to Dawn, Mr Saifullah said the grand Balochistan tribal jirga convened by President Musharraf was aimed at associating the people of Balochistan in the efforts to develop the province and help it achieve political stability. Answering a question, the minister said he was unaware of the list of invitees to the jirga and added that November 8 was not the final date for the jirga..

Daily Times, 3 November 2006

Bajaur Agency madrassa airstrike: Amnesty reprimands Pakistan over extra judicial killings

PESHAWAR: Amnesty International has expressed concern that those killed in this weeks air strike on a madrassa in Bajaur Agency, might have been executed extra judicially. The British based human rights organisation noted, in a statement issued in London on Wednesday and received here on Thursday via email, that no attempt had apparently been made to arrest those inside the madrassa before the strike, despite claims by the Pakistani government that militants were using the building as a terrorist training ground. Local residents have argued that the 82 victims killed in Mondays aerial target were not militants but clerics and students, many of whom were under 18 years of age. And according to the Amnesty statement, children as young as six years old had been killed in the attack..

The Nation, 3 November 2006

Editorial: Strengthening defence

REFERRING to the impending challenges emerging from the complex security environment in the region, General Musharraf has rightly stressed in his speech at the Gujranwala Corps Headquarters the need for the enhancement of armed forces skills. As he pointed out peace comes from strength. Military might however is only one component of national defence. The other equally important aspect is the public confidence in the armed forces. This is reduced when the army becomes a political actor and starts losing its image as a professional force fully concentrating on the task of defending the national borders. Involvement in politics makes the prestigious organisation controversial. The longer the army stays in power the greater the alienation among the people. The latest example of the phenomenon are the reactions emerging in the tribal agencies and Balochistan..

Daily Times, 3 November 2006

EDITORIAL: Keeping the bomb safe from extremists

..The fear of nuclear technology slipping into the hands of terrorists also relates to Pakistan, in addition to certain developments after the break up of the Soviet Union, when nuclear devices could become dangerously available to non state actors. It also indirectly points to the possibility of nuclear weapons and material falling into the hands

of extremist elements either through a change of government or through sheer pilferage by state functionaries owing allegiance to extremist ideologies. Pakistan says it has set up a fail safe system of safety for its nuclear facilities, but any known estimates of how a state may achieve complete security of nuclear materials militate against such a claim. Apart from Pakistans financial ability to safeguard a completely fail safe nuclear security, there are political risks run only by Pakistan as an Islamic state that cannot be ignored..

Dawn, 4 November 2006

Jirga to be held in Gwadar on 16th

Quetta, Nov 3: Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Mohammad Yousuf has said that the venue and date of a tribal Jirga of Baloch sardars and tribal elders convened by the government has been changed and now it will be held in the coastal town of Gwadar on November 16. Talking to newsmen during a visit to the under construction Quetta Press Club building here on Friday, he said that the jirga was earlier planned to be held in Islamabad on November 8, but the date and venue had been changed. He said that President Pervez Musharraf would be in Gwadar on November 16 and he would address Baloch and Pashtoon tribal sardars and elders..

Daily Times, 4 November 2006

EDITORIAL: Government is not coming clean on Bajaur

At last Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has said that the government is collecting more information regarding the Bajaur operation and it will be made public soon. He said the government would not tolerate elements that created hurdles in the development and progress of the country: Every corner of the country is equally important for us and we are taking steps for peace at all places of the country. He said this when Islamabad was abuzz with the rumour that the Bajaur strike was made to sabotage the deal which the government was about to make following the one made in South Waziristan earlier. It seems to us that the prime minister should not have underestimated the blowback from the Bajaur strike and therefore have had all manner of proof of potential terrorist activity ready to show the media immediately after the strike..

Dawn, 4 November 2006

Editorial: Not the right way

One only wishes the initiative succeeds in producing the desired results. Doubt, however, arises because the move bypasses the leadership that wields considerable influence in the province, such as the Mengals, the Marris and the Bugtis. Besides, the meeting should have been held in Quetta if for no other reason than as a gesture of goodwill to the Baloch people. While others who do not have as much clout in the province will be talking to the government, the BNP will be planning a province wide protest. There is obviously something seriously wrong with a strategy that does not take into account the confrontation that is going on between the nationalist elements and Islamabad which has chosen to talk to a group of compliant Baloch leaders..

The Nation, 4 November 2006

Editorial: Provincial autonomy

GENERAL Musharraf had rightly diagnosed the increasing dissatisfaction in smaller provinces as a major problem facing the country when he took over in October 1999. The issue of strengthening provincial autonomy which is the major root cause behind the sense of alienation however subsequently slipped out of the governments priority list till unrest ultimately erupted in Balochistan. This led to the formation of two parliamentary subcommittees in September 2004.. In view of the gravity of the situation both committees were required to finalise and present for approval their reports within 90 days. The Sajjad subcommittee failed to produce any recommendations in over two years while whatever might have been proposed by the Mushahid subcommittee has not seen the light of the day. This led to opposition accusations that the move was no more than a political gimmick..

Dawn, 4 November 2006

Bajaur protesters attack checkpoints, block roads

KHAAR (Bajaur Agency), Nov 3: Protesters on Friday attacked several checkpoints and set on fire a security post in Bajaur Agency where a complete strike was observed against Mondays attack on a seminary. Sources and eyewitnesses said that protest rallies were taken out across the agency as angry tribesmen blocked roads bringing life to a standstill. Bazaars and markets remained closed. The Bajaur Agency All Parties Political Alliance had given a call for strike to protest against the attack which had left over 80 people dead and three others injured. Angry mob pelted checkpoints with stones in Loy Sam and Derband, while protesters set a security cabin of Levies in the Nawagai area on fire. About 5,000 protesters, carrying black flags and banners set ablaze an effigy of President George W. Bush and the Stars and Stripes in Inayat Kali and chanted slogans against President Gen Pervez Musharraf..

Dawn, 5 November 2006

Tribesmen hold demo near Afghan border

KHAAR, Nov 4: Tribesmen held a demonstration near the border with Afghanistan, 35 kilometres off here, on Saturday to protest against the bombing of a Bajaur seminary. The demonstration was held at Dankol Dandokai village in the Salarzai area on the call of the Bajaur Political Alliance, comprising all religious and political parties in the agency. Leaders in their speeches held President Gen Pervez Musharraf responsible for the air strike. The general has declared war on the tribesmen. He got killed innocent people of Bajaur. He should resign or be removed, they demanded. Bajaur Agency MNA Maulana Mohammad Sadiq said the government had started a brutal campaign in tribal areas and was killing innocent people to please America and prolong his unconstitutional rule..

Daily Times, 5 November 2006

Uniting Pashtuns: ANP to invite Pashtun leaders for jirga on 20th

PESHAWAR: The Awami National Party (ANP) said on Saturday that it would invite Pashtun leaders from all over the country to a jirga (council) that the party intended to convene on November 20. ANP Central President Asfandiyar Wali Khan told reporters at Bacha Khan Markaz that the move intended to unite Pashtuns on the Pakistani side of the

Durand line, which was crucial to stop bloodshed in Pakistan. He said invites would be sent to all Pashtun leaders whether political, social, secular or religious.. He said the existence of Pashtuns was at stake unless they united and fought its enemy. President Pervez Musharraf and the US have taken advantage of our differences and the ANP is resolved to put them aside, at least for the time being, he said..

Dawn, 5 November 2006

Editorial: Ascertaining the truth

THE dust raised by the missile attack on a seminary in Bajaur on Monday has still to settle. The strong backlash it has touched off is understandable in view of the fact that the government has failed to give credible answers to the numerous questions that are being asked about the military action, its motive and the identity of the victims. Since the people do not feel assured that what was done was unavoidable, they feel outraged. Worse still, the authorities feel touchy about public criticism and are conveying the impression that they want to hush up the matter. Hence their move to keep the media out of Bajaur and not allow the Sindh Assembly to debate the issue..

Daily Times, 5 November 2006

Bajaur madrassa attack: Parliament to be taken into confidence

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Muhammad Ali Durrani has said that parliament will be taken into confidence over the Bajaur incident in which 82 people were killed in an air strike and that the issue will be discussed in the upper house. He expressed these views while talking to reporters after inaugurating the lok virsa festival held at Lok Virsa here on Saturday. He said that the government, the entire nation, parliament and opposition members would be taken into confidence over the Bajaur air raid in the next Assembly session starting from November 10. About Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmood Kasuris remarks regarding terrorism, the federal minister said that his statement was presented out of context. Our government has the clear policy of taking steps in the interest of the country, he added..

Daily Times, 6 November 2006

Pro govt tribal elder killed in Waziristan

WANA: Suspected militants shot dead a pro government tribal elder, while separately three others were gunned down in a Pakistani tribal zone bordering Afghanistan, said officials on Sunday. Malik Wali Zar, a member of a government-sponsored committee working on expulsions of foreign pro Taliban militants, was shot dead on Saturday at Inzar village in South Waziristan, said a security official. Zar was returning home after attending a meeting in Wana when he was snatched from a passenger van by masked gunmen and shot dead, said a security official. Several tribal elders have been murdered this year for supporting Pakistans campaign against Al Qaeda and other militants in the area..

Daily Times, 6 November 2006

Pakistan offers to fence Afghan border

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is willing to fence off its border with Afghanistan, Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri said on Sunday, a day after his Dutch counterpart

called for greater international pressure on Islamabad to stop militants from infiltrating Afghan territory. Kasuri renewed the offer in talks with his Dutch counterpart Bernard Bot, a ministry statement said. Kasuri also said both Pakistani and Afghan security forces should jointly monitor the border to prevent movement by militants, it said. Bot welcomed Pakistans readiness to seal the border ... and said that he would discuss this with other NATO partners, the statement said. Pakistan has repeatedly said it is willing seal the border with Afghanistan. But officials say Kabul has rejected proposals to build a fence or mine the frontier..

Dawn, 6 November 2006

Shura plans peace campaign: New militant commander named for Waziristan

PESHAWAR, Nov 5: A Shura (council) of militant groups in the North and South Waziristan agencies has decided to launch a campaign against lawlessness and appoint a committee to collect donations to finance Mujahideen's activities. Pamphlets distributed purportedly on behalf of the newly appointed militant Commander Mullah Muhammad Nazir in Wana and Miramshah on Sunday said the Mujahideens Shura had outlined steps for restoring peace and curbing crime in the two areas bordering Afghanistan. Sources said that militant groups had unanimously declared Mullah Nazir as their Amir about two months ago. Mullah Nazir has replaced Haji Muhammad Omar, elder brother of commander Nek Muhammad who was killed in a missile attack in 2004..

The Nation, 6 November 2006

Pakistan, Malaysia to ink FTA by years end

ISLAMABAD While resolving to expand bilateral economic and defence relations, Pakistan and Malaysia on Sunday agreed to establish a Joint Investment Company (JIC). During the meeting between Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi, the two sides also agreed to sign the bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) by the end of this year. The two states signed an agreement under which Malaysia will extend loan to Pakistan for the construction of highways. They also signed an MoU on bilateral cooperation in the Islamic finance sector. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and his Malaysian counterpart had a one on one meeting here at the PM House. The two leaders discussed in detail bilateral relations, regional and global issues with focus on terrorism, OIC reforms and the challenges confronting the Muslim Ummah..

Daily Times, 6 November 2006

EDITORIAL: Dangerous nuclear signs

..Among these countries, Egypt is the most advanced in its efforts to move in the direction of nuclear energy. Before it began fearing the Iranian nuclear option it was faced with Libyas intention to get nuclear capacity through Pakistan. Indeed, that is how the world got to know that Pakistans AQ Khan had actually sold old centrifuges to Libya. Therefore Egypt has ordered studies into building atomic power stations following a call by its president, Hosni Mubarak, in September for a national dialogue on the subject. Algerias plans are the next most advanced after Egypts..

Daily Times, 7 November 2006

Bourses under terror threat

LAHORE: Intelligence agencies have been informed of a potential terrorism strike on the countrys stock exchanges by the end of November, intelligence sources told Daily Times on Monday. Sources said that terrorists would try to sabotage Pakistans economy by attacking the stock exchanges and that the intelligence agencies had forwarded the information to the relevant quarters for action... However, sources in the Punjab Police Special Branch told Daily Times that security agencies were alert to possible terrorism, especially in the aftermath of the airstrike on a madrassa in Bajaur Agency suspected of being a training camp for militants..

Dawn, 7 November 2006

Lawyers and journalists manhandled on way to Bajaur

PESHAWAR, Nov 6: A fact finding team of lawyers went to the village of Chingai in Bajaur Agency on Monday after tribesmen thwarted an attempt by the political authorities to stop them from visiting the area. The team recorded statements of scores of tribesmen regarding last weeks aerial attack on a seminary in which 82 people were killed. The members of the team said that personnel of the levy force intercepted the convoy of lawyers, journalists and tribesmen near Sadiqabad checkpoint and asked them to go back. Kareem Mehsud, a member of the team, said that the lawyers and journalists were manhandled..

Daily Times, 7 November 2006

Opinion: Unanswered questions on Bajaur (Rasul Bakhsh Rais)

The missile strike was just a reminder that the coalition forces would use such force in hot pursuit of the Taliban and against groups and individuals in the tribal belt who are suspected of giving sanctuary to the Taliban The killing of 82 Pakistanis in a religious seminary in Bajaur agency is a tragedy considering that the government despite its claim of having taken out militants has not been able to prove it yet. Until now, therefore, it is the governments word against that of local residents, and evidence points to the veracity of the latters version than the governments. For many others who might know the history and people of this region on our political periphery, it is sad to reflect how our state and the present government have gradually pushed the tribesmen into taking up arms..

The Nation, 7 November 2006

US assures Pak of assistance

ISLAMABAD Pakistan and the United States on Monday resolved to continue with their fight against terrorism with Washington assuring its allied nation of all possible assistance in economic and defence sectors. The US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, Richard A. Boucher, called on Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri and discussed Pak US bilateral relations, regional and global issues of mutual interest, said the officials here. The top US diplomat also held talks with Foreign Secretary Riaz Khan, according to an official. During the high level talks, the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to fight against terror, he added. He said that the two sides discussed the latest situation in Afghanistan, Indo Pak peace process, nuclear energy cooperation as well the recently carried out air strike on a religious seminary in Bajaur

Agency..

Paktribune, 7 November 2006

Cross border infiltration allegations leveled by Afghanistan not acceptable: FO Spokesperson

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has brushed aside cross border infiltration allegations leveled by Afghanistan against it saying such baseless accusations are not acceptable. We do not accept cross border infiltration allegations leveled by Afghanistan against us. Pakistan has done a lot to stem cross border infiltration. We put forth the proposals for erection of fence besides laying land mines but Afghan president rejected the proposal of fencing, said foreign office spokesperson Tasneem Aslam in weekly press briefing here Monday. Several challenges are there in Afghanistan with reference to peace, she held. They are presence of war lords, poppy cultivation and Afghan refugees, she added. We want Afghan refugees return to Afghanistan or their camps be relocated to Afghanistan, she maintained..

Daily Times, 8 November 2006

We ll fight militants, but talks can be held: Musharraf

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf said on Tuesday that the government would tackle militancy with force, but would also pursue peace through political means. We will never close the option of dialogue and political settlement and it will continue despite these actions against militants. We will undertake action wherever we find such militant activity, the president said while chairing the day-long 99th Corps Commanders Conference here at General Headquarters (GHQ). Gen Musharraf briefed the conference about the Bajaur madrassa strike and said that it was based on intelligence reports that the seminary was training militants and actively involved in terrorist activities..

Dawn, 8 November 2006

Rockets rain on Wana during governors visit: Aurakzai not targeted: spokesman

WANA, Nov 7: NWFP Governor Ali Mohammad Jan Aurakzai escaped unhurt as rockets rained on a heavily fortified security camp during his address to a jirga in Wana, headquarters of the tribal South Waziristan agency, on Tuesday. A retired army general, Mr Aurakzai, on his first visit to Wana since he took over as governor earlier this year, cancelled other engagements and immediately flew to the provincial capital by helicopter. His quick departure did not cause a let-up in attacks and four more rockets landed in the Wana Scouts camp, leaving at least one paramilitary soldier, Khandan Afridi, injured. A government spokesman told Dawn in Peshawar that in the first attack, two rockets had flown over the tribal gathering, mainly consisting of Ahmadzai Wazir and Mehsud tribesmen, and landed on an adjoining airfield..

Daily Times, 8 November 2006

Opinion: Musharrafs memoirs (Ijaz Hussain)

Musharrafs In the Line of Fire is a controversial book on numerous counts. At the heart of the controversy lies the propriety of writing the book itself while the president is still in office. The latter has justified the timing of the publication on the ground that it will sell when he is at his peak, which will not be the case after his retirement. In other words,

in Musharraf's eyes, publicity has primacy over sensitivities of Pakistan's relations with other countries, the imperative to keep official secrets, the illegality of the exercise itself or the necessity to avoid unnecessary controversies. He has underlined that through the book he has sought Pakistan's projection rather than his own.

Dawn, 8 November 2006

Opinion: Rethinking Balochistan uplift (Kaiser Bengali)

BALUCHISTAN has been taken off the media headlines. Within the province, however, the insurgency continues to simmer. The Baluch peoples' emotional link with Pakistan stands frayed and urgent measures are imperative to address the political and economic factors at the heart of the discontent. Much has been said and written about the necessary political measures. They include, at the least, respect for the Constitution, deference for the principle of provincial autonomy, free and fair elections, enabling the elected provincial government to function without interference from the centre and from state and para-state agencies, ensuring due role of the Senate and the Council of Common Interests, and so on..

Dawn, 9 November 2006

Suicide attack on army base: 40 troops dead; search on for bombers aide

Peshawar, Nov 8: At least 40 soldiers were killed and 20 others wounded when a suicide bomber struck a military base in Dargai, 100kms north of here, on Wednesday morning, officials said. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) put the death toll at 42. Military and security officials told Dawn that the suicide bomber, wrapped in a cloak, came running into the training area of the Punjab Regimental Centre and blew himself up, killing 38 soldiers and leaving 22 others wounded. Two of the wounded died later at the Combined Military Hospital in Mardan, officials said, requesting they not be named..

Daily Times, 9 November 2006

EDITORIAL: Division of Punjab is not wrong

An old debate has been dusted and re-introduced lightly in the press about dividing the Punjab province. The Punjab chief minister, Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, has been compelled to discourage it because of the negative consequences of such a step. But the truth is that a proper and thought-out division will not harm the province. It is also not comprehensible how any move to divide Punjab is likely to strengthen the voices being raised to bifurcate the other three provinces also. Indeed, it is simply not correct that any such move will lead 'to a countrywide polarisation and open a Pandora's box which the country can ill afford. Division is a negative word in itself. It gives the impression of breaking a country or introducing internal dissension in a heretofore peaceful entity..

Paktribune, 9 November 2006

National security agencies had forewarned back lash of Bajaur operation

Islamabad: National Security Agencies in its reports had forewarned the President, National Security Council and government of strong back lash of the Bajaur operation. Intelligence agencies in a report had expressed grave concern following Bajaur operation underlining that security measures must be further tightened in view to avoid untoward incidents. However, despite the warning the interior ministry failed to take any measures

at the recruitment centres as a result the tragic incident occurred on Wednesday in which 35 soldiers were killed..

Daily Times, 9 November 2006

Balochistan governor holds foreign elements responsible for unrest

QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Owais Ahmed Ghani has once again held external elements responsible for creating unrest and instability in Balochistan, regarding which he said the government possessed credible evidence. The governor was talking to reporters on Wednesday after the signing of an agreement for a kidney Centre in the provincial capital between the Fatimid Foundation and Provincial Workers Welfare Board. The Baloch governor said that the government had irrefutable proof regarding the involvement of some external elements in the law and order problems in the restive province of Balochistan. He added, however, that the situation is now rapidly normalising and there are no longer any law and order problems prevalent in the province..

Dawn, 10 November 2006

Hunt for Dargai bomber aide at dead end: Case to be taken to court: Sherpao

Peshawar / Islamabad, Nov 9: Investigators looking for an accomplice of the Dargai suicide bomber appear to have come to a dead end with no sight of the young man who had disappeared into thick sugarcane fields near a village after Wednesday's attack that killed 42 army recruits. Security officials told Dawn that hundreds of personnel from the armed forces, Levy and Frontier Constabulary combed the sugarcane fields over an area of about three square kilometres at the break of light on Thursday. The suspect, said to be of medium build with a short beard and in his mid-twenties, had apparently lost his shoes while being chased by townspeople before disappearing into the fields..

Daily Times, 10 November 2006

US helping Pakistan, Afghanistan defeat Taliban: Jury out on govt deal with tribal elders: US

Kabul: The jury was out on a government deal with tribal elders in Pakistan's North Waziristan that was intended to curb militant activity, a top US official said on Thursday. US Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher said the real test was whether they (tribal authorities) exert that control and whether they stop the activity...I think the jury is still out. However, Boucher said the United States was backing efforts on both sides of the volatile Afghan and Pakistan border to assert government authority and defeat Taliban militants operating there. Boucher was in Afghanistan for talks with President Hamid Karzai and other top officials about efforts to end the Taliban insurgency and to push development of the war-battered country to discourage support for militants..

Dawn, 10 November 2006

Editorial: The Dargai carnage

Those who blame Pakistan for not doing enough in the fight against terror should have seen the bodies of the 42 Pakistani military trainees blown to pieces or mutilated beyond recognition by a suicide bomber in Dargai on Wednesday. This is the price Pakistan is paying and will perhaps continue to pay in a war that has no borders and where the

invisible enemy strikes at a place and time of his choosing. Who are the diabolical elements behind this crime is not difficult to guess. It is obvious that the Dargai bombing was the militants revenge for the Bajaur strike. No objective version of what happened near Damadola on Oct 30 is available. While some tribal militants and their sympathisers insist that those killed in the air strike were all students, the government has now come out, nearly a fortnight after the event, with the identity of 37 of the dead..

The Nation, 10 November 2006

Editorial: Bajaur fallout'

The suicide attack that led to the killing of 42 army recruits in Dargai constitutes an ominous development that needs to be reviewed seriously and urgently by those who matter. The Defence and Interior Ministers, senior cabinet members holding the portfolios most directly concerned, have supported the popular perception that the attack is a reaction to the Bajaur bombing. A self-styled spokesman of the Pakistani Taliban claimed the attack was conducted to avenge it, and that 274 more volunteers were prepared to launch similar attacks. The military's casualties in Waziristan and Balochistan, the largest ever in domestic operations since the dismemberment of Pakistan, had taken place in armed encounters. The Dargai attack was a cold-blooded operation, with clear parallels drawn to Bajaur, where militant recruits were taken by surprise..

Daily Times, 10 November 2006

EDITORIAL: Rise of Pakistani Talibanism

..Unfortunately, however, the action taken against extremism and outlawry in Pakistan has not really worked so far. In fact, it can be shown that the application of force without sufficient politics has actually boomeranged, with the result that most people who sincerely wished the president to succeed in rescuing the country from extremism have stopped backing him and supporting his policies. More dangerously, they have stopped believing him whenever he announces that he is embarking on a new plan of action. Consider. President Musharraf took the army into the Tribal Areas to purge foreigners who are supposed to be sheltering and training on Pakistani soil. But after many months of this policy, during which his supporters stood by him, nothing has been achieved..

The Nation, 11 November 2006

Pakistan is a U.S. ally, Aziz says

New York: - Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz told American students and academics at Princeton University Thursday that Pakistan is misunderstood and has been unfairly represented as a breeding ground for Islamic extremism and terrorism, the scourge it is engaged in combatting. Pakistan, he said, was not responsible for the creation of Al-Qaeda. We are being unjustly blamed for the phenomenon that was not our creation. The prime minister, on a 4-day visit to New York, on his way to Canada, said Pakistan was fighting terrorism primarily for our own sake because we want to develop as a modern, moderate Islamic state. Pakistan, he added, is now ideally positioned to work with cooperation rather than confrontation as a force for peace, stability and prosperity..

Daily Times, 11 November 2006

Opinion: A dangerous turn (Abbas Rashid)

No one should underestimate the seriousness of the problem that we are now faced with on our western border. Though, the use of force may be one element in that equation, it cannot be indiscriminate nor can it be endlessly employed. The reaction to the strike in Bajaur with a death toll of 83 has been swift in coming. In what must constitute the first attack of its kind, a suicide bomber managed to kill 42 young recruits while 20 were badly injured. According to the reports a man simply rushed into the army recruitment and training centre at Dargai and blew himself up causing havoc all around. But why was not there much better security in the immediate aftermath of Bajaur considering that at the many rallies subsequently held to protest the incident the calls for revenge have been loud and strident?

Dawn, 11 November 2006

Editorial: A test case for the govt

PRESIDENT Pervez Musharraf has directed the government to get the Protection of Women Bill adopted by the National Assembly in its current session. The parliamentary affairs minister has also confirmed that the bill will be introduced in the house on Nov 15. The bill is by no means a perfect solution to the problems created by the Hudood Ordinances that must be repealed if justice is to be done to women. But the draft adopted by the parliamentary select committee in Sept at least tries to rectify the most serious shortcomings in the Zina and Qazf Ordinances and improve the situation for women. Unfortunately, the bill has many detractors. The most vocal are the members of the MMA who have been quick to cite Islamic canons to prove their contention that any changes in the law will be in violation of the Sharia..

Dawn, 11 November 2006

Rocket hits assembly block in Quetta

QUETTA, Nov 10: Quetta was rocked on Friday night when a rocket exploded on the roof of the administration block of the Balochistan provincial assembly building. It was a 107 MM rocket that landed and exploded on the roof of the newly built administration block of the provincial assembly, SSP Qazi Abdul Wahid said. The assembly session had been adjourned for the day just one and a half hours before the rocket attack. According to police sources, the long range rocket was fired from Brewery area, about five kilometre west of the provincial capital, and exploded at a place about 50 yards from the main assembly building and the residential suite of Deputy Speaker Aslam Bhootani in the MPA hostel..

Dawn, 11 November 2006

Opposition to boycott Balochistan committee

ISLAMABAD, Nov 10: All the opposition parties are likely to boycott a meeting of the parliamentary sub-committee on Balochistan convened by its chief Senator Wasim Sajjad on Saturday, sources told Dawn on Friday. The sources in the opposition said the decision to boycott the committee had been taken in a meeting of the opposition leaders held in the Parliament House on Friday. It was decided that an announcement in this regard would be made at a press conference on Saturday morning. According to the

sources, the opposition decided to boycott the meeting on the ground that it would be of no use after refusal of the representatives of Balochistan nationalist parties, the main affected people, to participate in the process..

Daily Times, 12 November 2006

EDITORIAL: Britain, new terrorism and Pakistan

It seems that Pakistan now has to take steps to secure itself also against the rising terrorist threat in the United Kingdom. The head of the British secret service MI5, Eliza Manningham-Buller, has surfaced briefly from her traditionally low-profile office to declare that nearly 30 terrorist plots are being investigated in the country, and that her agents are tracking over 1,600 suspects from 200 groups, most with ties to Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaeda terror network..Home-spun British terrorists have grown by 80 percent since January 2006, a spike not seen anywhere in the world, including the Islamic world where governments are taking steps to suppress radical Islam. She said that MI5's database of British-based terror sympathisers many of them British citizens had increased by 80 percent since January, and that some of them were directed by Al Qaeda in Pakistan..

Daily Times, 12 November 2006

Opinion: Failing top-down counter-terrorism (Dr Hasan-Askari Rizvi)

The government should recognise that it cannot effectively manage its counter-terrorism policy without opening up the political system to mainstream liberal and centralist political forces subscribing to the view that Pakistan's national interests are served by containing extremism and militancy. The November 8 suicide bomb attack on army troops at a training camp in Dargai is yet more evidence of the growing threat of religious extremism and militancy to Pakistan's internal security and harmony. A day earlier, rockets were fired while NWFP Governor, a retired Lt.-General, was addressing a tribal jirga in Wana. These two incidents took place within nine days of the attack by the military in the Bajaur area, and which prompted some militant Islamic groups in the region threaten revenge..

Dawn, 12 November 2006

Provincial autonomy proposals received: Panels report before poll: minister

SLAMABAD, Nov 11: The parliamentary sub-committee on Balochistan held its long overdue meeting on Saturday, but the opposition and the Baloch nationalist parties boycotted the proceedings. The sub-committee, headed by Senator Wasim Sajjad, decided to continue deliberations to finalise its recommendations for transfer of powers to provinces. The sub-committee resolved that efforts would continue for bringing the opposition back to the negotiating table to develop a consensus formula on the precincts of provincial autonomy. Inter-provincial Coordination Minister Salim Saifullah Khan said after the meeting that the government was left with a short period of time and our effort would be to finalise and hand over our recommendations for legislation before the next years elections..

Dawn, 12 November 2006

Joint intelligence centre being built in Kabul

KABUL, Nov 11: Military commanders from Afghanistan, Pakistan and NATO reviewed plans on Saturday to build a jointly staffed centre to share intelligence in their battle against extremist militants, an official said. The commanders were in Kabul for the 19th meeting between the three forces that are together fighting unrest that spans the Afghan and Pakistan border and involves groups such as the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Part of their discussions focussed on a planned joint military intelligence sharing centre expected to be based in the Afghan capital, an official with the Nato-led International Security Assistance Force said. The centre will be staffed by Afghan, Pakistani and ISAF officials and will work to understand what information can quickly be shared in a mutually beneficial fashion, he said..

Dawn, 13 November 2006

US not allowed to fire missiles into Pakistan: Aziz

WASHINGTON, Nov 12: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said in an interview broadcast on Sunday that his country does not allow the United States to use unmanned aircraft to fire missiles into Pakistan to kill terrorists. The prime minister said Pakistan is 'very capable of tackling such activities ourselves. US President George W. Bush has said he would absolutely order military operations inside Pakistan if Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden or other top terrorists were found to be hiding there. Mr Aziz said in an interview conducted on Friday with CNN's Late Edition that Pakistan is committed to fighting terrorism, but it has to be fought together. And if we go into each others countries and take unilateral action, that does not help the cause of fighting terrorism..

Dawn, 13 November 2006

Editorial: Fighting terrorism

..For Pakistan the turning point came with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan when this country became Americas frontline ally and served as a conduit for the CIAs overt and covert aid to the mujahideen. As President Pervez Musharraf has said several times, this was a joint enterprise in which the US and Saudi Arabia were equal partners. But once the Soviets were driven out, Pakistan was left to fend for itself. While Afghanistan plunged into civil war, Pakistan became home to religious militants who often defied the government and used the madressahs as training and recruiting grounds for their cause. No wonder the foreign media invariably links every act of terrorism to madressahs in Pakistan, even if the terrorists are born and bred abroad. The chief of Britains MI5 now says that most of the 1,600 suspects in Britain had links in Pakistan..

The Nation, 13 November 2006

Opinion: The Bajaur carnage (Dr Syed Farooq Hasnat)

..The attack at Khar came as a surprise and as a tragic incident, for the people of Pakistan. The residents of Bajaur were shocked as they were gearing up for a North Waziristan type peace agreement. The signing ceremony was to take place after few hours. It should be pointed out that the American officials have been critical of the previous peace deal between the government of Pakistan and the residents of the tribal areas, in North Waziristan. Apparently, the Bush administration demands the Pakistan government to use

high handed methods against its own people..No matter, why and how it happened, there is no excuse for killing more than 80 Pakistanis. The manner in which this attack was conducted and the approach through which the government spokesmen justified it, raises lots of questions and doubts..There is enough evidence by the foreign and Pakistani journalists that there were children at the premises and that the air attack was more than from the Pakistani air force..

Dawn, 13 November 2006

Two airports on red alert

RAWALPINDI, Nov 12: Two airports in Balochistan have been placed on red alert and the remaining 34 airports in the country on a state of high vigilance following intelligence reports about threats of terrorist attacks, Dawn has learnt. The airports in Quetta and Gwadar have been placed on red alert indicating a high risk of terror attacks, a security source said. The alert was raised to red after last weeks terrorist attack on an army training camp in Dargai which left 42 soldiers dead, sending a wave of panic throughout the country. A senior official of the Airport Security Force (ASF) said the high vigilance level was between the levels of red and high alert..

Daily Times, 14 November 2006

Pakistan a key ally: Bush

Islamabad: US President George W Bush called President General Pervez Musharraf on Monday and reiterated his commitment to establishing a long-term and broad-based strategic relationship with Pakistan. The US president said Pakistan was a key ally and their ties would strengthen in the days ahead. He also offered condolences on behalf of the American people for the killing of 42 army recruits, saying the United States stood alongside Pakistan. He appreciated Pakistans commitment in the war on terrorism and Gen Musharrafs vital and crucial support despite the grave dangers..

Dawn, 14 November 2006

Balochistan an urgent issue, says Senate team

Quetta, Nov 13: Members of the senates standing committee on housing and works have said that both treasury and opposition benches in the senate have always raised their voice for the rights of Balochistan and called for peacefully resolving political issues. They expressed the views during their visit to the Balochistan Assembly secretariat on Monday. The visiting team comprised Mohammad Ali Brohi (chairman), Farooq Naik, Abdul Khaliq Pirzada, Saleh Muhammad Shah, Muhammad Hussain and Shujaul Mulk. Mr Brohi and Mr Pirzada said the senate had discussed the Balochistan issue several times and there was a consensus among the members that the issue was of urgent nature and that it should be resolved through talks..

Dawn, 14 November 2006

Editorial: The wrong approach

THE oppositions decision to boycott the meeting of the parliamentary subcommittee on Balochistan dealing with the issue of provincial autonomy points to a confrontationist approach. It will only make matters more difficult to resolve if solutions to problems cannot be found through a dialogue. The oppositions contention that the government is

playing politics and was never serious about the parliamentary committees it has set up is quite valid. The Wasim Sajjad subcommittee that was set up in 2004 to look into the autonomy issue met on Saturday after more than a year. The other subcommittee on Balochistan headed by Mushahid Husain managed to produce a report but it was never laid before the house and its recommendations have not been implemented..

Paktribune, 14 November 2006

MMA offers Fateha in NA for Bajaur agency victims despite speakers disapproval

Islamabad: MMA held Fateha Khwani on its own in national assembly for the victims of airstrike in Bajaur agency after the NA speaker Chaudhry Amir Hussain did not allow them to offer Fateha. This led to create a tense situation in the house and the speaker had to adjourn the house for fifteen minutes. This triggered protest among the MMA and PML-N legislators and all of them assembled in front of speakers dais. The PPP-P did not participate in the protest. The MMA legislators carried banners inscribed with the slogans on condemnation of attack on seminary in Bajaur agency. Liaqat Baloch of MMA led the slogans chanting law makers..

Daily Times, 14 November 2006

Opinion: Jinnahs legacy (Mohsin Hamid)

..In Pakistan, Jinnah is venerated because his struggles on behalf of the Muslims of India resulted in the establishment of the country. But Jinnahs true claim to greatness as an Asian leader is more universal: he sought to protect the rights of minorities through constitutional law. Jinnah was a secular, Westernised, British-trained barrister; himself a Muslim, he married a Parsi, spoke mainly in English and wore European clothes..Six decades later, Pakistan has drifted far from Jinnahs vision of a secular democracy. President Pervez Musharraf, who invokes Jinnahs values in speeches, has little patience for democracy. The religious opposition parties reject as un-Pakistani the concept of secularism..

Dawn, 15 November 2006

Pakistan got \$1.1bn for fighting terrorism

Islamabad, Nov 14: Pakistan received about \$1.1 billion last year from the United States for the logistical support it provided for the counter-terrorism operations, including its own military operation mainly in Waziristan and other tribal areas along the Durand line. According to a recent report of the Asian Development Bank, Pakistan received about \$1.1 billion from the United States for logistical support. And according to a report of the Congressional Research Services (CRS), updated on October 26, the United States disbursed about \$3.7 billion to Pakistan for counter-terrorism operations during January 2002 to August 2005. Another \$900 million would be provided to Pakistan during the current year and \$739 million next year..

Daily Times, 15 November 2006

Opinion: Questionmarks over Bajaur(Chaudhry Fawad Hussain)

Bajaur, a Pakistani tribal area situated on the border with the Afghan province of Kunar, has been the target of heavy bombardment, presumably by US forces, twice this year. This has raised many internal questions. The political parties of Pakistan, particularly the

Jamaat-e-Islami, have condemned the Bajaur attacks. Bajaur has always been deeply influenced by Jamaat-e-Islami. Haroon Rasheed, member of the National Assembly from Bajaur, is part of the Jamaats old guard. After the American-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, Maulana Sufi Muhammad, a former Jamaat activist, rallied ten thousand men and marched to Afghanistan, expressing open support for the Taliban. Hundreds of these Pakistanis were killed fighting in Afghanistan. Almost 5,000 were imprisoned and kept inside containers near the Pak-Afghan border..

Paktribune, 15 November 2006

US ready to help Pakistan in investigation into Dargai incident: Bush

Islamabad: President George W Bush has talked to President General Pervez Musharraf by telephone on Monday evening and exchanged views on multidimensional relations between Pakistan and US, war on terror and other key regional and international issues. Foreign office sources told Online that President Bush strongly condemned suicide attack in Dargai in which 42 Pakistani soldiers were martyred. He reiterated his resolve that US and Pakistan would continue to work together to eliminate menace of terrorism. The terrorists would eventually be forced to kneel down. US is ready to extend help in the investigations of Dargai incident, Bush assured..Both Pakistan and US have also agreed on making the intelligence sharing process more effective and vibrant. President Bush expressed sympathy with the bereaved families of martyrs of Dargai incident..

The Nation, 15 November 2006

NATO willing to talk to all Afghans

NATO-led forces battling resurgent Taliban-led militants in southern Afghanistan at times feel like a blinded boxer who needs to be guided where to throw his punches, a senior alliance official said Tuesday, a private TV channel reported. Maj-Gen Ton Van Loon, the commander of NATO-led troops in the south, said that his forces needed the help of tribal elders to make sure they correctly targeted militants. But he added that NATO was also willing to talk to all Afghans to bring an end to fighting. Dozens of civilians have been killed during the alliances summer offensive in the south, including air strikes, that NATO says also left hundreds of suspected militants dead..

Dawn, 15 November 2006

Editorial: Hasba bill: time to act

THE passage of the revised version of the Hasba bill by the NWFP Assembly on Monday raises a question or two which are of profound significance for the entire country. Even though confined to the NWFP and subject to gubernatorial assent, the bill seeks to set up a department and a police force whose duty it will be to enforce Islamic morality. By appointing ombudsmen at various levels of government to enforce virtue and prohibit vice, it establishes what looks like a parallel judicial system in a province (and a country) where three sets of laws the British-crafted criminal procedure code, the Islamic Hudood ordinances, and the various martial law regulations which have been given constitutional cover already exist. The question is: what sort of message is an elected government giving to its constituents and the country at large'

Daily Times, 16 November 2006

Pakistan must not harbour Taliban (Khalid Hassan)

WASHINGTON: Pakistan must be persuaded not to harbour the Taliban so that the explosive situation that now exists on its shared border with Afghanistan can be brought under control and stability can come to the region, according to a panel of experts. The experts - Marvin Weinbaum, Steve Coll, James Dobbins, Bruce Riedel and Col Richard Giguere - were on a panel organised at the two-day annual conference of the Middle East Institute at the National Press Club on Monday to discuss Afghanistan, Pakistan and regional stability. Weinbaum, who moderated the discussion, said Afghanistan put the entire blame for regional instability on Pakistan, which, for its own part, is witnessing some disconcerting developments domestically, both for Gen Pervez Musharraf and the military. There is an insurgency in Balochistan, while in the tribal areas there is a state within a state..

Dawn, 16 November 2006

US-Pakistan defence ties being boosted

WASHINGTON, Nov 15: The US and Pakistan have been quietly rebuilding their military-to-military relationship disrupted in 1990 when Washington slapped restrictions on Islamabad for its efforts to develop nuclear weapons, says a congressional report. The report by the Congressional Research Service notes that in June 2004, President Bush designated Pakistan as a major non-Nato ally of the United States. The report says the close US-Pakistan security ties of the cold war era which came to a near halt after the 1990 aid cut-off have been in the process of restoration as a result of Pakistans role in US-led anti-terrorism campaign. The Pentagon reported Foreign Military sales agreements with Pakistan worth \$344 million between 2003 and 2004, growing to \$492 million in 2005..

The Nation, 16 November 2006

Musharraf commutes Tahirs death sentence

ISLAMABAD - President General Pervez Musharraf has commuted the death sentence awarded to Mirza Tahir Hussain, a British Muslim from Leeds who was on death row since 1988 for killing a taxi driver Jamshid Khan. The death sentence of Mirza Tahir Hussain has been converted into life imprisonment by Musharraf on the advice of the Prime Minister and Interior Ministry - a welcome gift for British Prime Minister Toni Blair who is arriving in Pakistan on November 18. Musharraf commuted the sentence under Article 45 of the Constitution of Pakistan that states: The President shall have power to grant pardon, reprieve and respite and to remit, suspend or commute any sentence passed by a court, tribunal or authority..

Dawn, 16 November 2006

Editorial: And now Talibanisation

THERES nothing even remotely moderate or enlightening about Talibanisation a euphemism for the enforcement of radical interpretation of religion that is continuing in parts of the Frontier province. Groups of so-called local Taliban are going around stopping women from stepping out of the house, and shutting down girls schools, civil society organisations and NGOs offices even in the settled areas, not far from Peshawar.

The zealots have also distributed pamphlets warning the errant men of horrible consequences if they did not stop their women from going to work or their girls to schools and colleges. This is happening right under the nose of the MMA government which on Monday passed the controversial Hasba bill aimed at enforcing Islamic tenets through a moral police guided by the ombudsman..

The News, 16 November 2006

Ballistic missile Hataf V Ghouri successfully test-fired

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has successfully test-fired ballistic Hataf V Ghouri missile on Thursday morning. Medium range Hataf V missile can hit targets up to 1300 km. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has congratulated the scientists and the nation on successful missile test. The strategic command force conducted the test fire at the end of exercises. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, Vice Chief of Army Staff General Ahsan Salim Hayat, DG Strategic Forces Lieutenant General Khalid Munir, Chairman Nescom Dr.Samar Mubarakmand, Chairman Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission Anwar Ali, Chairman KRL Karim Ahmad and other military officials, scientists and engineers witnessed the launch..

Daily Times, 17 November 2006

Offsetting Indo-US N-deal to Islamabads advantage

Beijing: Chinese President Hu Jintao was expected to unveil an extensive nuclear cooperation plan with Pakistan during his visit to Islamabad next week, analysts and diplomats said on Thursday. On the first trip to Pakistan by a Chinese president in a decade, Hu, they said, was likely to announce Beijings intention of helping Islamabad construct six nuclear plants over the coming decades. The political intent is quite certain. The specifics are less certain, but this will be a political gesture above all, said one diplomatic observer in Beijing, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the official secrecy around discussions. However, Chinese officials have not given any word of any nuclear deal being concluded during the visit, while Pakistans Foreign Office spokeswoman, Tasnim Aslam, said that no new deal was imminent..

Daily Times, 17 November 2006

Opinion: Can Afghanistan be far behind? (Tanvir Ahmad Khan)

The failure to create a more positive dynamic in the Afghan conflict will make it difficult to keep Afghanistan out of the policy shifts that the United States would be forced to make in the months ahead. The mid-term election that reversed the configuration of political forces in the US Congress aroused an extraordinary interest in Pakistan..The post-election scenario vindicates the hope that President Bush takes the calls for a progressive disengagement from Iraq seriously. The appointment of the bipartisan Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group foreshadowed the grudging acceptance of the collapse of the once strident policy of staying the course. The alacrity with which George Bush dumped Rumsfeld demonstrated the urgency to control damage. It was meant to steady a hobbled presidency in its quest for the least hazardous retreat from the arrogant and insensitive positions taken by it for years..

Dawn, 17 November 2006

Pakistan tests N-capable missile

Islamabad, Nov 16: Pakistan on Thursday conducted a successful launch of the intermediate range ballistic missile Hatf V (Ghauri) and was witnessed by the Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. The launch was carried out by the troops of the Army Strategic Forces Command (ASFC) at the culmination phase of a training exercise held to test the operational readiness of a Strategic Missile Group (SMG) equipped with Ghauri missiles. President Pervez Musharraf had handed over the highly accurate Ghauri missiles to the ASFC some years back. The Ghauri missile has a range of 1300km. Today's launch exercise was also witnessed by Vice Chief of Army Staff General Ahsan Saleem Hayat and a large number of senior military officers, scientists and engineers of the strategic organisations..

Dawn, 17 November 2006

Opinion: Promise and performance (Tahir Mirza)

WHILE Gen Pervez Musharraf talks of the need to persist with the strategy followed by his administration to fight the war on terror and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz asks the world to find ways to eliminate poverty, some basics that perhaps impinge much more on the common citizens psyche demand attention. Most of these matters relate to the persistent lack of accountability on the part of the government and its contempt for those who ask for an explanation of the policies being followed in the national interest. Lets take the small things first. Mr Shaukat Aziz on a visit to Karachi last month had asked the administration to curb street crime in the city within a fortnight. Scepticism at the deadline imposed on our poorly equipped, inefficient and incompetent police force was expressed even then..

The News, 17 November 2006

Bomber killed, two cops injured in suicide attack near Peshawar

Peshawar: A suicide attacker set off a bomb near a police mobile in Pushta Khara Chowk near Peshawar Friday, killing himself and wounding two policemen. Police found an identity card from the scene of the blast, which identified the attacker as Nadeem, a resident of Pushta Khara. Nadeem's father Sarzameen Khan said that his son was not at home last night and he received the news of blast on Friday morning..

Dawn, 18 November 2006

20 injured in Lahore bomb blast

LAHORE, Nov 17: At least 20 people were injured, four of them seriously, when a locally made 1kg explosive device planted in a dustbin at a bus stand on Ferozpur Road went off on Friday, a day before the arrival of President Pervez Musharraf in the city. Earlier, police officers sparked a controversy by telling mediapersons at the site of the blast that a couple of people had been killed. But Punjab chief minister, talking to newsmen at the Services Hospital, denied the statement. The blast, which took place near the Rescue 1122 headquarters at around 11:55am, created panic among commuters and passers-by and caused a traffic jam which lasted more than two hours..

Dawn, 18 November 2006

50 terror camps destroyed

GWADAR, Nov 17: President Gen Pervez Musharraf has said that at least 60 terrorist camps have been raided and destroyed in Balochistan. Speaking to Balochistan nazims and notables on Friday, he said terrorists trained at the camps had taken part in anti-state activities like bomb blasts and blowing up of electricity pylons, gas pipelines and railway tracks. He also spoke about the various development projects being pursued by the government in the province. He said that the Gwadar port would soon be operational and the government was in the process of selecting a suitable port operator. He said that an oil refinery would be established in Gwadar where container terminals would also be set up. He promised that seats would be reserved for students from Balochistan in all educational institutions across the country..

Paktribune, 18 November 2006

Death row Briton Mirza Tahir Hussain freed from jail

ISLAMABAD: Family members of a taxi-driver killed 18 years ago by a British national have expressed outrage at President Pervez Musharraf's decision to commute his death sentence and said they would challenge the decision in the Supreme Court. President Musharraf commuted Mirza Tahir Hussain's death sentence on Wednesday following a well-orchestrated campaign by his family, friends and politicians in Britain. The move came after a series of negotiations by Pakistani officials to persuade the victims family to reach a settlement failed. It is an unfair and unlawful decision, Abdul Ghani, father of the taxi-driver, Jamshed Khan, said. Not only all the courts in the country had upheld the death sentence but even the president had turned down the mercy petition of the accused earlier this year..

The Nation, 18 November 2006

Editorial: Balochistan

ON Thursday, General Musharraf inaugurated the Mirani Dam which was conceived in 1956, but no move was made to construct it till 2002. He also referred to other development projects that have been taken in hand in the province. Ironically the day General Musharraf landed in Turbat he was greeted with a province-wide strike called by the combined opposition comprising Baloch nationalist parties, PKMAP, ANP and PPP. Markets and shops remained closed in all major towns and protest marches were held in several cities. Over 100 political activists were arrested in Quetta. BNP President Hasil Bizenjo was nabbed in Turbat along with scores of party men and is being reportedly kept incognito. That any attempt to resolve the issues in Balochistan through the well-known stick-and-carrot methods is bound to fail is best illustrated by the ever growing resentment in the province expressing itself in protests by political parties, lawyers, students and the business community..

Daily Times, 18 November 2006

Opinion: Another opening in Bajaur (Shaukat Qadir)

The tribesmen cannot understand why, when they were being kicked by the Russian boot, they were told to kick the Russians back; and why, when it is the American boot that kicks them, they must lick the boot that kicks them. The Pashtun sense of proportion is

always surprising. It appears that the government is at least partially correct in contending that the Bajaur tribes are still keen on negotiating a peace deal with it. Their reasoning demonstrates their astonishing political wisdom. This is how it goes. To begin with, they are in no doubt that the strike on the madrassa in Bajaur was conducted by US forces and the Pakistani military accepted responsibility merely because of political expediency. In this, Mulla Faqir Muhammed is not the only person to assert that our military can never commit such a dastardly act against its own people..

Dawn, 19 November 2006

Editorial: Tackling terrorism

FRIDAYs bombings in Peshawar and Lahore come as a rude reminder that the demon of terrorism is alive and kicking. The roadside blast in Lahore using a timed device left 20 bystanders injured; in the Peshawar suicide bombing, the 20-year-old bomber blew himself up and injured two policemen. Of late, terrorist attacks have been on the rise in Quetta and the rest of Balochistan. Karachi, too, has had more than its fair share of bombings over the years. Last month, even in the high-security environment of Islamabad, a rocket attack on the presidency was foiled just in time. Overall, little has been achieved by the countrys vast intelligence and security apparatus in checking the wave of terrorism. The security agencies primary concern seems only to facilitate the VIPs movement and safety, leaving the lesser mortals going about their daily business with a sense of fear and insecurity. The total apathy of the authorities towards public safety is appalling..

Paktribune, 19 November 2006

Iran has right to get assistance to develop peaceful nuclear program: Pak

BRUSSELS: Pakistans Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Mohammad Shahbaz said a negotiated solution would be the best way to resolve the nuclear stand-off between Iran and the West. Talks between the EU and the Iranians are continuing and hopefully they would be able arrive at a solution which would be satisfactory to both sides, Shahbaz told IRNA in an interview in Brussels. The best way forward is to keep talking, and use of force is not something that we would recommend...We would prefer a negotiated solution and I think what is happening is the best way forward..

Dawn, 19 November 2006

US wants no nuclear accord with Pakistan

WASHINGTON, Nov 18: Pakistan cannot get a similar nuclear deal as India because that's a unique agreement with a unique country, says US Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns. In a video-conference with reporters, Mr Burns assured India that Washington would remove its concerns about some of the restrictions prescribed in the bill the US Senate approved on Thursday. A similar agreement with Pakistan is not going to be possible. This is a unique agreement with a unique country, Mr Burns said. As we have said we would not be seeking similar relief to American law for any other country. He declined to comment on reports that China has agreed to provide similar assistance to Pakistan as the US is offering to India. Reports in the US media, however, have suggested that President Bush will take this up with his Chinese counterpart when they

meet..

Daily Times, 19 November 2006

Blair arrives for talks on Afghanistan, terrorism

ISLAMABAD: British Prime Minister Tony Blair arrived here on Saturday for talks with President Gen Pervez Musharraf on stemming the flow of militants travelling between Pakistan and the UK and tackling the Taliban in Afghanistan. Blair landed here before a meeting with Musharraf scheduled for Sunday, when the leaders were expected to agree on new plans to counter extremism - including a funding package to promote moderate teaching in religious schools and a new push on intelligence sharing. The leaders hoped to discuss problems policing the porous Pakistan-Afghan border and the role of British troops in Helmand..

Dawn, 20 November 2006

Accord to set up anti-terror group with UK: Taliban an Afghan issue: Musharraf

Lahore / Islamabad, Nov 19: Pakistan and the United Kingdom on Sunday agreed to strengthen cooperation to fight terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal immigration and trans-national organised crime through a joint working group. In meetings British Prime Minister Tony Blair held with President Gen Pervez Musharraf in Lahore and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in Islamabad, the two countries also expressed the resolve to boost ties in areas of economy, education, health and human recourse development. The working group to be set up by Pakistans interior ministry and Britains home office is expected to have its first meeting in January and it will strengthen the regular dialogue between the two countries. Emphasising the importance of economic stability in Afghanistan, Gen Musharraf and Mr Blair said that security was crucial for the war-torn countrys (economic) progress..

The Nation, 20 November 2006

Editorial: Presidential pardon

THE commutation to life imprisonment granted last week by the President to Mirza Tahir Hussain, a dual Pakistani-British national, whose death sentence for murder had been upheld all the way to the Supreme Court, has raised a pertinent question: whether the head of state can pardon a criminal, who has been found guilty of murder and been awarded the death penalty by a competent court, and whose victim's heirs are demanding execution. The Presidents legal advisers should have taken the 1992 Shariat Appellate Bench ruling into account, which had declared the power of pardon unIslamic. Understandably, the victims relatives have been outraged by the pardon, while Mr Hussain has flown to Britain to join his family beyond their reach to invoke the SAB verdict. The Hussain familys defence that the other party had refused to accept Qisas is pointless. They are not obliged to accept it..

Daily Times, 20 November 2006

Opinion: Peace trade-off' (Moeed Yusuf)

..The theory of economic interdependence which suggests that interdependence would lead to peace in no way implies that peace is an automatic outcome of enhanced trade relations between two or more states. Instead, it postulates three pre-requisites. First, the

trade volume has to cross an unspecified critical point without which the positive spin-offs from it are unlikely. Second, simply trading goods or services is not enough. What is required is economic interaction, which leads to an inherent integration of the two economies, thus increasing dependability on each other (the structure of interaction should ensure component production, joint production, etc). Third, both countries should view trade ties from the liberal perspective i.e. the macro benefit of trade rather than narrowly focusing on the relative gains between them. The absence of even one of these conditions would lead to the economic interdependence à peace link to fail..

Dawn, 20 November 2006

Opinion: Womens rights & their protection (Anwer Mooraj)

PRESIDENT Musharraf has finally swung his club and hit a birdie, and large sections of the nation are rejoicing. But even though he is hogging the limelight one cant help getting the feeling that in the Great Game that he has been playing with the relatively new members in the clubhouse, he and his supporters are anxious to circumvent some of the puddles around the seventeenth hole, as if afraid they might inundate the course. How different things would have been if he had wielded his club with the same determination and resolve seven years ago when he took over the stewardship of the country. He could have nipped the evil in the bud with a stroke of his pen. The landscape was then bright and green and a little uncertain, and there was nobody on the links to challenge him. He could have easily scored a birdie or two and have gotten away with it. People expect dramatic transformations after a coup d'etat or a radical change of government and are usually willing to accept anything..

Dawn, 21 November 2006

Arms for peace and deterrence: Musharraf inaugurates defence expo

KARACHI, Nov 20: President Pervez Musharraf has said that Pakistans defence strategy is based on defensive deterrence, both in conventional and unconventional spheres. We want to use our arms for peace only, for defensive deterrence, President Musharraf said at the inauguration of fourth International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) 2006 here on Monday. He said Pakistans defence strategy emanated from its belief that peace could only be achieved through strength and not weakness. The president said the greatest threat to any progress were the dangers from extremism and terrorism, not only for Pakistan but also for the entire world..

Daily Times, 21 November 2006

EDITORIAL: Afghanistan revisited with Blair and Musharraf

President Pervez Musharraf has underlined the need for economic and military measures to defeat the Taliban and bring peace to Afghanistan. He told the visiting British prime minister, Tony Blair, that he wants massive amounts of foreign development aid in billions of dollars under some kind of a Marshall Plan for the south-eastern part of Afghanistan to blunt the power and influence of the Taliban there. He also explained to the British premier that the war against the Taliban could not be won only by military means, and that a lot of development money must be deployed via a political dialogue, something on the lines of what he had done in North Waziristan. Mr Blair, however, seems to adhere to the view prevalent in the West about the third worlds neglect of the

masses in the field of education, leading to poverty and recruitment of illiterate young men into the ranks of the extremists..

Daily Times, 21 November 2006

Pakhtuns pledge unity despite differences

PESHAWAR: Participants of the Pakhtun Peace Jirga (PPJ) held on Monday said that they would stand united to demand national, political and economic rights for the Pakhtun community regardless of their political differences. The PPJ calls for unity among all Pakhtuns to stop the ongoing bloodshed. This call has been prompted by the fact that the international security system and regional government have failed to bring peace in the Pakhtun populated areas, reads the unanimous resolution passed at the end of the event at Bacha Khan Markaz. The ANP sponsored PPJ was attended by approximately 500 leading Pakhtun figures from across the country, including political and religious party leaders, religious scholars, social workers, senior journalists and tribal elders from FATA and Balochistan..

The Nation, 21 November 2006

Editorial: Another grand jirga

THE MMA-sponsored All Parties Tribal Areas Protection Conference at Peshawar on Sunday called for the conclusion of peace agreements with all tribal areas on the lines of the one reached in North Waziristan. Representatives from different tribes, and political and religious parties, including the PML (N) and Tehrik-e-Insaf, attended the conference, but significantly JUI (F) leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman and NWFP Chief Minister Akram Durrani stayed away. Criticising the government for military action in the tribal areas, the conference demanded the constitution of a grand jirga consisting of various tribes and political parties to work for the restoration of peace and the return of the army to the barracks..

Daily Times, 22 November 2006

47 suspected Taliban arrested in Quetta

QUETTA: Police arrested 47 suspected Taliban militants in raids in various places in Quetta and its suburbs on Tuesday, officials said. They are all newcomers who crossed the border illegally over the past one week, said SSP Qazi Waheed. We believe they are Taliban fighters, he said, adding that the detainees were being interrogated to determine their motive and possible links here. Police last month rounded up more than 50 suspected Taliban, six of them from a hospital in Quetta where they had been receiving treatment..

Daily Times, 22 November 2006

WASHINGTON DIARY: JI, PPP divide (Dr Manzur Ejaz)

If the argument for unity is to be pushed, one could ask why the MMA did not back off from their anti-women stance and support the PPP to save the precious grand alliance against Musharraf. The wind of change is blowing across the world. The US mid-term election has precipitated the beginning of the decline of Republicans conservative counter-revolution; in Nicaragua the election has seen Daniel Ortega winning back the presidency, which means the country has slipped out of the US orbit and in Pakistan the

Mullah-Military-Feudal alliance seems to have passed its zenith (despite Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain and his bunch, the current cracks in this unholy alliance are not going to be patched up). For me, another little indicator of change is that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairperson, Benazir Bhutto, has placed Ghulam Abbas, a progressive populist leader over the descendants of retrogressive politics that have been running the show for a while..

The Nation, 22 November 2006

Editorial: Pak-Iran cooperation

IRANIAN Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki made a very strong point when he said that economic relations between Pakistan and Iran need greater substance and depth and should not remain confined to traditional trade and regional cooperation. His call on Islamabad to take concrete steps to implement bilateral agreements while pointing to inaction by us in developing ties with Tehran demands positive moves from the concerned ministries in Islamabad. Officials and entrepreneurs of the two countries should explore the scope of covering the widest possible economic and commercial sphere and exploit the proximity factor to the advantage of both. Although Mr Mottaki, who was talking to visiting Pakistani journalists in Tehran on Monday, did not link the proposed gas pipeline project with his idea, the deal would, if executed, certainly contribute to strengthening bilateral relations because it would meet a most vital concerns of Islamabad..

Dawn, 22 November 2006

Opinion: Cost of an extremist image (Najmuddin A. Shaikh)

JUST as British Prime Minister Tony Blair was praising President Musharraf for his cooperation in the battle against terrorism and expressing optimism about the future of Pakistan-UK relations and that of Pakistan itself, the BBC was carrying stories about the new crackdown on illegal immigration to the UK. It was perhaps incidental that the visual coverage of the story showed raids carried out on what appeared to be two South Asian restaurants and the arrest of two men who, despite the deliberate blurring of faces, were clearly South Asian almost certainly Pakistani. This action is, of course, part of the campaign to curb illegal immigration to the UK where it is estimated that one in 19 workers is now a foreigner. It is not directed at immigrants from any one corner of the world..

Dawn, 23 November 2006

Ties with China to be deepened: Aziz

KARACHI, Nov 22: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has said that Chinese President Hu Jintao's four-day visit to Pakistan, beginning Thursday, has great strategic significance as the two countries are expected to take a quantum leap forward in bilateral cooperation by entering into several agreements. Talking to reporters during his visit to Ideas 2006 at Expo Centre on Wednesday, he referred to all-weather tested historic relationship with China and said these ties would be deepened with President Hu visit. Pakistan is expected to sign agreements for construction of nuclear power plants, regarding Gwadar Port, construction of frigates and JF-17 Thunder fighter plane..

The Nation, 23 November 2006

Opinion: To resign or not to resign (Aziz-ud-Din Ahmad)

The MMA has fallen victim of its own rhetoric. It has gone back on its words to resign from the assemblies twice before, first when it announced two years back it would quit if Musharraf did not undo the uniform and then in September this year when it announced it would say good bye to the assemblies to protest Akbar Bugtis killing. It finds it is difficult to wriggle out of the commitment it made on November 16 at a press conference where both Qazi and Fazlur Rehman were present. For three months the MMA had condemned the proposed amendments in the Hudood Ordinance as negation of the Islamic identity of Pakistan aimed at turning the country into a free sex society. While the religious alliance could ignore Gen Musharrafs political sins it decided it was no more possible to continue to sit in an assembly that had passed a thoroughly un-Islamic Protection of Womens Rights Bill..

Daily Times, 23 November 2006

Pakistan to maintain strategic balance

..The CJCS pointed out that Pakistans collaboration with other friendly countries such as China, France, other European countries, the United States and Ukraine had helped Islamabad develop state-of-the-art defence products, in line with its credible minimum deterrence concept..Gen Ehsan went on to say that Pakistan priority was to achieve self-reliance in the field of national defence. Secondly, reliance on a single source of supply had to be avoided, he said, noting that Pakistan's armed forces today had equipment from several countries. The CJCS noted that the principal objective of the exhibition was to promote Pakistans defence industry at the international level, adding that there had been a continuous increase in the export of Pakistani defence products since IDEAS made its debut back in 2000..

Dawn, 23 November 2006

Opinion: Fiscal autonomy for provinces (Sultan Ahmed)

THE federal governments move to share with the provinces the authority to levy and collect taxes is indeed welcome. The extent to which such sharing will be done will be recommended by the parliamentary committee on provincial autonomy headed by Wasim Sajjad, former chairman of the Senate and the extent to which they are accepted by the centre and the provinces. He has before the committee a proposal to transfer 35 out of 47 items in the Concurrent List following the demand of the provinces to abolish the unduly long list. But that is only a proposal, he says. Of course, the centre will weigh very carefully any recommendation that comes from the committee which also includes opposition members, though it has been sitting tight over the 47 subjects so far, while formally sympathising with the provincial demands and some radical suggestions of the opposition in this regard..

Daily Times, 24 November 2006

Pakistan, China to sign 18 agreements

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China are to sign a total of 18 agreements and memorandums of understanding, including a free trade agreement (FTA), today following talks between President General Pervez Musharraf and his Chinese counterpart

Hu Jintao, who arrived here on Thursday on a four-day state visit. The agreements will cover economic relations, trade, cooperation in education, science and technology, and cultural exchanges. The two sides will also discuss cooperation in civil nuclear technology to help Pakistan meet its growing energy needs. Hu, the first Chinese president to visit Pakistan in 10 years, will also meet with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz..

Dawn, 24 November 2006

Heavy fighting in Kohlu areas

QUETTA, Nov 23: Reports of heavy fighting between security forces and militants were received from Karmo Wadh and Tartani areas of the troubled Kohlu district on Thursday. Sources said that security forces, reacting after an attack, launched an operation against hideouts of militants in a vast area and chased the assailants in the mountains. They also used helicopter gunships in the chase. According to reports reaching here, fighting erupted in the area when militants attacked a vehicle of security personnel in the Tartani area and fired rockets on a post in Karmo Wadh area of Kahan tehsil. The sources said that militants hiding in mountains fired a number of rockets on the vehicle, but it was not hit. Troops present in the area rushed to the place and returned fire..

Daily Times, 24 November 2006

Opinion: Adding fuel to fire (Bilal Habib)

There is a growing awareness about the need for renewable energy. A carefully planned and incentive-oriented implementation of an ethanol programme could ensure that Pakistans long-term resources for automotive energy are clean, renewable, scalable, and sustainable Economic development in the third world has historically taken precedence over environmental concerns. The two, however, are not unrelated. Studies suggest that the costs associated with pollution in Pakistan may be as high as 5 percent of GDP. Our cities are particularly susceptible to the health hazards of environmental degradation. Urban air pollution in Pakistan is estimated to be 20 times higher than the World Health Organisations minimum standards. The largest contributors to air pollution are vehicular emissions of greenhouse gases, sulfur oxides, and particulate matter. The fact that recent years have seen a dramatic expansion in the number of vehicles only exacerbates the problem..

The Nation, 24 November 2006

Editorial: Driven against the wall

THE registration of a treason case against the late Nawab Akbar Bugtis son Nawabzada Jamil Bugti for criticising the government and the army must have outraged the Baloch, already up in arms against the military operation that shows no sign of abating. It took the provincial government quite long to decide to initiate legal proceedings against Mr Bugti for making treasonous observations at a press conference last month. The registration of the case came on the heels of the freezing of the accounts of Nawab Bugtis granddaughters Zamour Dombki and Zawazboh for their alleged links with the shadowy Balochistan Liberation Army. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has condemned this latest move in a series of outrageous actions against the Bugti family and rightly asserted that the Interior Ministry should have resorted to the judicial process if it believed that the two women were actually involved in anti-state activities..

Daily Times, 24 November 2006

Senate passes WPB unchanged

ISLAMABAD: The Senate passed the Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill 2006 on Thursday after a two-day debate. The bill will now be sent to the president for his approval to make it a law. The opposition MMA and PML-N made a last ditch effort to defer the bill by moving a motion to send it to the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII). However, they could get the support of only 20 members, when they needed double that number to send the bill to the CII. The two parties also suggested amendments to various clauses of the bill, but these were also rejected and the bill was passed as adopted by the National Assembly..

The Nation, 25 November 2006

Govt under fire in Senate on Bajaur attack

ISLAMABAD - The Senate on Friday began heated debate on Bajaur and Dargai incidents with combined opposition's assertion that the countrys establishment was in fact the architect of Taliban and extremists, now active in Afghanistan and the restive tribal region. They also said Dargai suicide blast could be the retaliation of the air strike at Bajaur madrassa, which left 82 students dead last month. ANP parliamentary leader Asfandyar Wali Khan initiated the debate on an adjournment motion moved by Opposition Leader Mian Raza Rabbani on the Bajaur and Dargai incidents. He claimed that Pakistani establishment and not the people created Taliban by arming Afghan refugees to wage Jihad in Afghanistan in 1980-81 against Russian forces..

Daily Times, 25 November 2006

China wants leading role for Pakistan: Hu

ISLAMABAD: Chinese President Hu Jintao said his country wanted Pakistan to have a leading role in ASEAN, SCO, SAARC, Asia-Europe meeting and Asian Cooperation, in his address to the Pakistani nation from the Jinnah Convention Centre on Friday. Hu is the first foreign leader to receive the privilege of addressing Pakistanis live on state television after US president Bill Clinton in March 2000. He said China would continue working with Pakistan to promote peace in the region. Hu acknowledged Pakistans role in promoting peace and harmony the world over and particularly President Gen Pervez Musharraf's idea of enlightened moderation. The Chinese president said the two countries enjoyed a time-tested friendship, and ties would be strengthened through our strategic cooperation in defence, security, economy agriculture, education, IT, infrastructure and energy..

Dawn, 25 November 2006

Iran denies Dr Khans help in N-plan

TEHRAN, Nov 24: Irans top nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani has rubbished the idea often heard in Pakistan that his country had tried to bribe Islamabad to get access to sophisticated nuclear technology for producing bombs. He also denied that Dr A.Q. Khan had in anyway helped Iran in its nuclear programme. Asked to comment on Ms Benazir Bhutto's claim quoting Gen Mirza Aslam Beg, who was army chief when she was prime minister, that Iran had offered as much as 12 billion dollars to Pakistan to acquire nuclear technology, Mr Larijani said he had met Gen Beg several times, but according to his

knowledge no such offer was ever made by Tehran to Islamabad. He had regular contacts with Pakistan, but it was for the first time that he was hearing about the alleged financial incentive to the Benazir government..

Dawn, 25 November 2006

Editorial: Curbing drug trade

WHEN it comes to ingenuity, Pakistani drug smugglers seem to lead the way. This is evident from the customs drug enforcement cells seizure in Karachi on Thursday of heroin that was stuffed into dry fruit. There are, it seems, no limits to how far smugglers will go in their greedy pursuits. The parcel was being couriered to Australia and when it was checked by officials, heroin was found inside walnuts. While the bust is welcome, it is also a reminder of how much more needs to be done to deal with the scourge of drug trafficking. It is not just about worrying about drugs leaving the country. There are equal concerns about opium finding its way into Pakistan since poppy cultivation is back to an all-time high in Afghanistan..

The Nation, 25 November 2006

Editorial: Canada, too

CANADIAN Foreign Ministers accusation in his Parliament, and the ensuing debate therein, of Pakistan not doing enough to curb the Taliban, becomes the latest diatribe against us in our role in the war in Afghanistan. The NATO forces fighting in Afghanistan includes a large Canadian contingent, the largest to have left its shores since World War II, and there have been a number of casualties. The Minister claimed, while addressing the Parliaments committee on defence, that 30,000 Pushtuns cross the border every day. A Liberal MP of Indian origin accused the government of mollycoddling the Pakistani government. Canada becomes yet another government decrying Pakistans role after the US, UK and Afghan governments..

Dawn, 26 November 2006

Turmoil no cause for concern: Musharraf: Anti-state elements allowed to escape scot-free

LAHORE, Nov 25: President Gen Pervez Musharraf on Saturday said that temporary upheavals in the countrys security environment should not arouse public concern as the turmoil had been caused by the governments own steps taken to rein in anti-state elements. Addressing officers of the Lahore Garrison at the corps auditorium here, he said dealing with issues like internal security, provincial autonomy, construction of water reservoirs, NFC award and womens rights would certainly cause some disturbance in the domestic milieu but nothing could shake our determination and will to take the bull by the horns in the larger national interest..

Dawn, 26 November 2006

Opinion: America must rethink Afghanistan (M.P. Bhandara)

THE US invasion of Afghanistan was based on the premise of Mulla Omars refusal to hand over or expel Osama bin Laden and his cohorts. Five years down the road, despite the occupation of Afghanistan by the US and a NATO army, Bin Laden and Omar in all probability remain in Afghanistan. The writ of President Karzai hardly extends beyond

Kabul. Narco warlords have been appointed governors of the provinces; a learned governor was shot dead a few weeks ago. Afghanistan last year produced over 6,000 tons of opium, the highest production ever. It is believed that about a third of the multiple millions of dollars being invested by the West for reconstruction are salted away by corruption. The country is in a state of turmoil: terror stalks the land night and day..

Daily Times, 27 November 2006

Americans bombed the Bajaur madrassa

LAHORE: The bombing of a Pakistani madrassa last month, in which 82 students were killed, was carried out by the United States, writes Christina Lamb in The Sunday Times. The madrassa in the tribal agency of Bajaur was bombed during a visit to Pakistan by the Prince of Wales amid allegations that it was being used to train suicide bombers. We thought it would be less damaging if we said we did it rather than the US, said a key aide to President Pervez Musharraf. But there was a lot of collateral damage and we requested the Americans not to do it again. The Americans are believed to have attacked after a tip-off that Ayman al-Zawahiri, the deputy leader of Al Qaeda, was present..

The Nation, 27 November 2006

Editorial: Pak-China friendship

THE joint declaration issued at the conclusion of President Hu Jintao's visit to Pakistan brings out the strength the bilateral relations have, in their multifarious dimensions, acquired over the years. For the common objectives of economic, political and social cooperation, the document sets out promises to deepen and expand them, making both China and Pakistan such prized friends of each other that prompted President Hu to say at the citizens reception at Shalimar Gardens, Lahore, on Saturday that China could leave gold but not Pakistan-China friendship. There is absolutely no doubt that Pakistanis entertain similar feelings, which have found expression in the joint declaration as its (Pakistan's) relations with China serve as the bedrock of its foreign policy and that pursuing friendship with China is the consensus of the government of Pakistan and people..

Dawn, 27 November 2006

Editorial: The jirga method of peace-making

IN pursuance of the agreement between President Musharraf and President Karzai in Washington in Sept, Pakistan and Afghanistan have at long last begun to address the issue of terrorism in their border areas on a bilateral plane and to involve the local leadership in the dialogue. The format of this consultation termed a jirga, but not in its traditional form is yet to be finalised. Both countries have been discussing the issue and it is not clear how the two sides will link up which is essential if the on-going dispute between Kabul and Islamabad on cross-border attacks is to be amicably settled.

Traditionally the local elders are the members of a jirga because of their social standing in the community, their views carry weight. Since terrorism has come to acquire national and international dimensions it cannot be resolved at a purely local level. Therefore, the need has been felt to induct representatives of the nationally and provincially elected government bodies as well, as Afghanistan is considering..

Dawn, 27 November 2006

Opinion: Pakistan & rise of Democrats (Tanvir Ahmad Khan)

THE 52-year old alliance with Pakistan has probably seen more fluctuations than any other relationship that the United States entered into in pursuit of its global security agenda. Periodic mutations of this alliance have been intensively discussed in both the countries under the rubric of an unstable partnership, a union of unequals, and in Pakistan as an example of Washington's inherent opportunism. Notwithstanding recurrent disenchantment with each other, the Pakistani ruling elite has never given up efforts to revive the partnership and Washington has responded positively whenever Pakistan provided a useful platform to carry out its political and military intervention in the region. Each time the US returns, the Pakistani hosts claim that a framework for eternal cooperation has finally been established. The present military-dominated regime in Pakistan has, since 9/11, run a more Washington-centric policy than ever before..

Dawn, 28 November 2006

Senators reject govt's Bajaur strike claim

ISLAMABAD, Nov 27: The opposition voiced an almost total disbelief in the governments claim that its own forces had carried out a deadly missile strike on a Bajaur madressah last month, on the second day of a Senate debate on Monday. Most opposition Senators blamed the 83 deaths in the October 30 incident on the US forces in Afghanistan, with some calling it an extra-judicial massacre, as opposition groups seemed to be closing their ranks after recent differences over the passage of the women's rights bill in parliament. The opposition-sought debate over the Bajaur strike and an apparently retaliatory suicide bombing that killed 42 army recruits on November 8 at Dargai in the NWFP had begun on Friday before the house was adjourned for a two-day weekend..

Daily Times, 28 November 2006

Waziristan accord not a get out of jail free card for Bin Laden

ISLAMABAD: Brian Cloughley, a British expert on Pakistan and Afghanistan affairs, said on Monday that the peace treaty in South Waziristan Agency did not provide a get out of jail free card to anyone including Osama bin Laden. Speaking at the fourth Altaf Gohar Memorial Lecture, he said the agreement had received criticism within Pakistan and abroad, but it was premature to say whether the initiative would work or not. The lecture titled, Some Major Developments Affecting Afghanistan and Pakistan, was presided over by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. Cloughley said the agreement permitted foreign residents to remain in those tribal areas. These people, probably some hundreds, were absorbed in various tribes at the end of the US anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan and are equal members of the tribes..

The Nation, 28 November 2006

Opinion: Sufism, Islam and terrorism (DR FAROOQ HASSAN)

The just concluded International Sufi Convention in Lahore has to be analytically considered a significant theoretical development with a simply formulated objective. That being to try to meet the immense psychological crescendo of dynamics that Islam is being credited with by those who feel threatened with by such a process. The Conference itself

cannot be termed as an event that would be of immediate and tremendous reverberations. It could, however, have far-reaching planning behind it. One thing is quite manifest. It was decidedly a government show. The bureaucratic set-up hosting the convention, which was visible along with its publicly disseminated media related activities, established this point beyond any doubt. To begin with, it was nominally hosted by a provincial administrative department (which normally has no connection with organizing national or international meetings)..

Dawn, 28 November 2006

Editorial: Temporary upheavals'

PRESIDENT Pervez Musharraf's reference to temporary upheavals during an address to army officers in Lahore on Saturday deserves a closer examination. Every Pakistani would like to share the president's enthusiasm when he says that the stir one finds in the nation today is a passing phenomenon. But the issues he referred to are of the kind whose ramifications will be felt for a long time. These included internal security, provincial autonomy, the controversy over the dams, the NFC award and the women's rights bill. Internal security is a subject unto itself: it includes the consequences of Pakistan's alliance with the US in the war on terror and the situation in Balochistan. The autonomy question is not confined to Balochistan alone, for in Sindh and the NWFP too some political parties want an amendment to the Constitution to increase the quantum of provincial autonomy..

The Nation, 28 November 2006

Pak, S Arabia start joint mly exercises

RAWALPINDI - Joint military three-week exercises between Royal Saudi Land Forces (RSLF) and Pakistan Army commenced in Bahawalpur on Monday. According to ISPR, exercise AL-SAMSAAM-2 (Sharp Sword) is a sequel to the series of exercises which are routinely carried out from time to time. APP adds: Pakistan Navy is conducting its biannual maritime exercise SEASPARK 2006, to be conducted on full scale in the North Arabian Sea. Opening briefing of the exercise was held at Pakistan Navy Tactical School at PN Dockyard Monday. Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Afzal Tahir and other senior naval officers attended the briefing..

The Times of India, 29 November 2006

Pakistan launches nuclear-capable missile

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday conducted a test of its nuclear-capable medium range ballistic missile, the military said. Pakistani troops have conducted a successful launch of the medium range Hatf 4 or Shaheen-1 missile, it said in a statement. Shaheen-1 missile, which has a range of 700 kilometres, has been previously test-fired by Pakistan, a military spokesman said. The missile system was handed over to the army strategic force command (ASFC) a few years ago, the statement said..

Daily Times, 29 November 2006

Orakzai consulting Pushtoons on jirga

PESHAWAR: NWFP Governor Ali Muhammad Jan Orakzai is consulting Pushtoon nationalist party leaders to discuss the proposed jirga tasked with arresting growing

militancy in Pakistans tribal areas and helping Afghanistan fight the Taliban-linked insurgency. We discussed the jirga and the governor's mind is quite clear, veteran nationalist leader Afzal Khan Lala told Daily Times on Tuesday after meeting Orakzai at Governors House on Monday. Orakzai is coordinating arrangements for the jirga that Islamabad and Kabul agreed upon during a meeting between President Pervez Musharraf and his Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai in Washington on September 27..

The Nation, 29 November 2006

NATO staff smuggling goods into Pak

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani authorities have found alleged involvement of NATO forces personnel in smuggling of petrol, diesel, food items and many other goods to Pakistan before these reach the destination at Bagram Airbase in Afghanistan. There are two possibilities in this rampant smuggling of goods; that either these goods are smuggled back to Pakistan or sneaked here before reaching Bagram Airbase, sources privy to this development said. We have provided proof of involvement of NATO forces (in this smuggling) to the CENTCOM high-ups in the shape of snaps and other relevant information, official sources disclosed to TheNation here on Tuesday. According to the sources, Pakistani authorities have laid down special procedures to control smuggling of goods, especially petrol, diesel and mainly food items, which used to find their way back into Pakistan..

Daily Times, 29 November 2006

EDITORIAL: Region at risk from Afghanistan

The former US deputy secretary of state, Richard Armitage, says that Afghanistan might jeopardise stability in neighbouring Pakistan and have a knock-on effect on India, and that persistent violence in that country might wreck Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's efforts to defeat forces of religious extremism at home. He thinks the stakes in Afghanistan are larger than in Iraq in the near term and that India might already perceive itself to be surrounded by failed or failing states such as Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Mr Armitage also implied that future American decisions in the field might be delayed because of a heightened level of deliberation and oversight and that it was by implication possible that NATO might be affected by slow reaction and growing lack of interest and commitment in the West. Should the fighting in Afghanistan continue at the current pace, he suggested, it might overturn Pakistans efforts to yank itself out of the quagmire of religious fanaticism..

Dawn, 29 November 2006

Opinion: Plight of the minorities (Hafizur Rahman)

EVERY country, every nation, has its minorities racial, ethnic or religious. In a truly Islamic state, which Pakistan is not, (nor is it likely to be with so much hypocrisy around) the majority is supposed to be the protector of non-Muslims. But one is heartened by the spirit shown by the Christians to safeguard their rights in the context of the Shariat. Now another element has crept into the minorities question. Smug in our false satisfaction that we are being good, and even generous, towards the Christians (and particularly towards the Ahmedis) we have started calling the kettle black. You have to read the statements issued by our political leaders in the recent past condemning Indian Hindus for

committing violence against Christians, to understand what double-faced means..

Daily Times, 30 November 2006

EDITORIAL: Receding prospect of the Iranian gas pipeline

No one is surprised that India and Pakistan have rejected the gas import price worked out by a consultant appointed by Iran as part of the US\$7 billion tri-nation pipeline project. The consultant, a Western company, was asked to peg the price at the future price of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) which is normally one-third of the price of normal un-compressed gas. Pakistan and India apparently had agreed that if the price was in the range of 2.25 dollars per BTU at the Pak-Iran border, it should be accepted; but the consultant pegged it at 7.2 dollars, which then had to be rejected..

The Nation, 30 November 2006

Editorial: Akhtar Mengals arrest

BNP leader Akhtar Mengal has been put under house arrest and according to him hundreds of party activists have also been detained. The police has confirmed 145 arrests. The crackdown comes on the eve of a protest march organised by the party from Gwadar to Quetta. The protest was aimed at expressing resentment against what the BNP calls extrajudicial arrests and abductions of political activists, killing of Nawab Akbar Bugti, military operation and the establishment of mega-projects. While some may differ with certain views of the party, there is no justification for stopping the party chief from leading a peaceful protest march. The law and order situation in Balochistan has continued to deteriorate despite military operations against the supposed ferrari camps avowedly run by certain Sardars..

Dawn, 30 November 2006

Opinion: Economic cooperation with China (Sultan Ahmed)

CHINA, it appears, is the answer to Pakistans many problems. Not that the leadership in Pakistan wants to emulate China in the social, cultural or political spheres, but they want to benefit from the free market policies of the Chinese government which is eager to help Pakistan in every possible way to make it a total strategic partnership. That a neighbour can help provide a solution of so many problems is indeed an extraordinary development. But then the abiding and long-standing friendship between the two countries has been an extraordinary relationship is acknowledged by all. So, over 18 agreements and 13 memorandums of understanding for cooperation between the two countries have been signed, beginning with the historic free trade agreement, following the visit of President Hu Jintao to Pakistan..

The Nation, 30 November 2006

Opinion: Shock and awe policy in tribal areas (Aziz-ud-Din Ahmad)

Talking to Sunday Times reporter Christina Lamb Governor Aurakzai has made a sensible statement. Britain, he said, will never win in Afghanistan by military means. Bring 50,000 more troops and fight for 10 to 15 years more and you wont resolve it. According to him instead of fighting, the answer was to talk to the Taliban. The advice is however ironic as those extending it have pursued a shock and awe policy dictated by the US in Pakistans tribal areas. What is more despite statements of the sort, the policy

continues to be followed. Unlike Pakistani army the US troops and Nato led forces are conducting operations thousands of miles away from their countries, against people with whom they share no ethnic, historical or cultural links. What is more they can pack up whenever they decide without causing any serious problems for themselves..

Daily Times, 30 November 2006

Aziz, Shujaat discuss possibility of amending Womens Protection Bill

Islamabad: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and Pakistan Muslim League President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain on Wednesday discussed the possibility of amending the Protection of Women Bill in accordance with the views of religious scholars. Hussain told Aziz that parliament must amend the bill if it conflicted with Islamic injunctions. They decided at their meeting at Prime Ministers House that the PML president would continue consulting religious scholars and Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) leaders on the bill. The MMA has threatened to quit parliament in protest at the bill, which it says is un-Islamic. Sources told Daily Times that Mr Hussain proposed that any amendments to the Womens Protection Bill could be introduced through a bill that the PML president has already submitted to the National Assembly to abolish cruel customs against women..