

Dawn, 1 October 2004

IAEA denied access to A.Q. Khan

VIENNA, Sept 30: Pakistan has refused to let the UN nuclear watchdog interview scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei said in an interview with the BBC on Thursday. "We have not been allowed by Pakistan to talk to the man," Mr ElBaradei, who is director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said in the BBC World Service interview. It was the first time the IAEA has admitted that Pakistan is refusing to let it see Dr A.Q.Khan. The IAEA has been asking Pakistan regularly to help it investigate the international black market allegedly run by Abdul Qadeer Khan.

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Aziz wants long-term energy plan by Dec 15

ISLAMABAD Sept 30: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has directed the Planning Commission to prepare a long-term energy plan by Dec 15. The prime minister issued the instructions in the wake of the sudden fall in the hydroelectric generation capacity because of water shortage in dams, necessitating a country-wide load-shedding. Prime Minister Aziz urged the commission to suggest a plan for the development of electricity, gas and alternate energy resources keeping in view the future trends. The long-term energy plan, he said, would help the government to prepare future infrastructural and industrial development plan. While reviewing the goals of planning commission, the premier said that the commission should strengthen individual discipline in social and economic sectors, focusing on accelerating the implementation of projects.

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Pope urges Musharraf to promote dialogue

VATICAN CITY, Sept 30: Pope John Paul II urged President Pervez Musharraf to work for dialogue and tolerance in the sub-continent during an audience at the Vatican on Thursday. "In these times of turmoil and violence, I encourage you and your fellow citizens to continue to foster a spirit of dialogue and tolerance in your region," the pope said in an address to the visiting Pakistani leader and his entourage. "It is only by acknowledging the need for mutual understanding among peoples, through a frank and open exchange of ideas, that the world can obtain true justice and peace," John Paul II added.

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PML-N leaders to discuss cooperation with MMA

ISLAMABAD, Sept 30: A meeting of senior Pakistan Muslim League-N leaders will be held here on Friday to take a decision on a request formally made by the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) for cooperation in its possible movement against Gen Pervez Musharraf in case he does not hang up his uniform by December 31. A source in the PML-N told Dawn on Thursday that the formal request for cooperation was made by MMA chief Qazi Hussain Ahmed during a meeting with former prime minister Mian Nawaz Sharif in Jeddah last week.

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Musharraf standing at right place: US

WASHINGTON, Sept 30: US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said on Thursday it was for the Pakistanis to decide whether Gen Pervez Musharraf could continue to retain the posts of the president and the army chief. Mr Armitage, in an interview to a Pakistani TV channel here, said only the Pakistani nation and their parliament could take such decisions. But his observation that the president was 'driving on the road to democracy' does show that the Bush administration continues to support President Musharraf's concept of controlled democracy. President Musharraf was "standing at the right place," said Mr Armitage when asked to comment on the president's current position. He urged Pakistan to continue to cooperate with the United States in the war against terrorism, no matter whether President George W. Bush or Senator John Kerry wins the US presidential elections due in November.

The News, 1 October 2004

Two tribesmen killed in S Waziristan

WANA: Two tribesmen were killed and a woman was injured in exchange of fire between militants and the military in a remote part of the South Waziristan agency on Thursday. Tribal sources said the two tribesmen, Nobat Khan son of Nur Daraz Burki, and one Driver Khan were killed in Spashteen village near Sam. The former had climbed onto his roof to watch the exchange of fire, when hit by a stray bullet, killing him instantly. Driver Khan, a driver by profession, was grazing his cow in an agricultural field and was killed in the crossfire. His cow was also died. An unidentified young woman from the same area was injured, while fetching water from a stream.

The News, 1 October 2004

Bugti rejects Balochistan committee

QUETTA: Chief of the Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) Nawab Muhammad Akbar Bugti has said they were not hopeful of the committee constituted by the federal government to solve the issues of Balochistan, observing it was a tradition of the successive governments to form committees for an issue which they wanted to put in cold storage. The governments have constituted several committees like the Kashmir committee, NFC committee, water committee that could not yield any result during the past 20 or 25 years, Bugti said at a news conference in his home town Dera Bugti on Thursday. Regarding JWP's constitutional bill, Bugti said he was informed one month back that JWP's constitutional bill was studied and all articles of the bills were categorised in three parts. But I have not been enlightened about the three categories, he added.

The News, 1 October 2004

MMA threatens to quit parliamentary body on Balochistan

ISLAMABAD: The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) blasted at the government for not being included in the parliamentary

committee on Balochistan and "flagrantly violating the understanding at the floor of the House". The MMA may pull out of the body in protest. The government has formed a 29-member parliamentary committee led by Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain to examine the Balochistan situation. The Senate Secretariat issued a notification announcing formation of the committee comprising 29 members but having none from the religio-political alliance. MMA leader and Senator Professor Khurshid Ahmad stated that he would like to record his protest and threatened to "review any participation in a committee that is so bias and is arbitrarily constituted in violation of all parliamentary understandings."

Dawn, 2 October 2004

25 killed in Sialkot mosque blast: Army called out after violence

SIALKOT, Oct 1: Twenty-five people were killed and over 50 others wounded when a suspected suicide attacker detonated an explosive device inside a mosque here on Friday. Violence erupted in the city after the incident, forcing the administration to call out the army. More than 300 people were in the mosque, adjacent to Imambargah Mistri Abdullah on the Raja Road, when an unidentified youth carrying a briefcase entered the hall, official sources said. "As soon as he got close to the faithful who were listening to the Juma sermon, the man opened his briefcase and then a huge explosion occurred," police quoted a witness as saying.

Dawn, 2 October 2004

Wana clash, explosion claim five lives

WANA, Oct 1: Four students were killed and two others injured when a bomb went off on the Wana-Tank Road at about 7.30am on Friday. Later, Mehsuds killed a foreign militant in a brief encounter, locals said. It was unclear whether the students, on way to Government High School Shahu, had hit a landmine or militants had used a remote control to detonate the device, a witness said. He said three students were killed on the spot. Three others were taken to a hospital in Jandola with multiple injuries where one of the victims died, doctors said. The deceased were identified as Shah Hussain, Nizamuddin, Ghulam Khan and Khair Mohammad.

The News, 2 October 2004

100 terrorists killed in Waziristan: Musharraf

ON BOARD PRESIDENT'S PLANE: Pakistani security forces have killed about 100 al-Qaeda terrorists during a recent military operation in tribal areas near Afghanistan, state-run television Friday quoted the president as saying. President Gen Pervez Musharraf also said the operation in the rugged South Waziristan tribal region was "purely against al-Qaeda." "During this operation, about 100 al-Qaeda terrorists were killed," Musharraf was quoted as saying aboard a plane on the way back from visits to the United States, the Netherlands and Italy Thursday night. He gave no further details about the slain terror suspects. He told newsmen that the government is following both military and political channels to flush out al-Qaeda terrorists from the mountainous tribal areas and has not stopped undertaking actions against foreign terror suspects.

Dawn, 3 October 2004

New JCSC chief, VCOAS appointed

ISLAMABAD, Oct 2: President General Pervez Musharraf on Saturday appointed Lieutenant-General Ehsan ul Haq as Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC) and Lieutenant-General Ahsan Saleem Hayat as Vice Chief of Army Staff (VCOAS) after promoting them to the rank of four-star generals. The appointments, which take effect from October 7, were awaited with interest in the political circles in the backdrop of a controversy over President Musharraf's uniform and his continuing as army chief after December 31, 2004. Gen Ehsan was heading the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) before his new appointment and Gen Hayat was Corps Commander Karachi. They succeed respectively in their new posts Gen Muhammad Aziz Khan and Gen Muhammad Yousuf Khan who retire this month.

Dawn, 3 October 2004

Pakistani newsmen to visit Valley

ISLAMABAD, Oct 2: A group of Pakistani journalists will write off a taboo when they arrive in the Indian-held part of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday for a rare peep into a territory that has been out of bounds to them for more than half a century. The week-long trip, an offshoot of a nascent detente between Pakistan and India, will take about 20 journalists from Pakistan and Azad Kashmir to Srinagar and Jammu in what its non-governmental organizers call a 'major initiative' towards a free flow of information across the Line of Control.

Dawn, 3 October 2004

Attackers not from within country, says Maqbool

LAHORE, Oct 2: Punjab Governor Khalid Maqbool has condemned in the strongest terms the suicide bombing inside a mosque in Sialkot, saying the attackers have no relationship with the country. The governor was talking to reporters after inaugurating the Fourth International Calligraphy and Calligraph-Art Exhibition and Competition 2004, organized by the Pakistan Calligraph Artists' Guild (PCG) at the Alhamra Art Centre on Saturday. He said the ghastly bomb attack was altogether against the Islamic teachings.

Dawn, 3 October 2004

Balochistan to get Rs3bn for development: Talks for NFC award soon: Aziz

QUETTA, Oct 2: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Saturday announced a Rs3 billion grant for speeding up development activities and rehabilitation of drought-hit areas in Balochistan. Addressing a meeting of the Balochistan cabinet after his arrival here on a two-day visit, the prime minister said that negotiations would soon be resumed to reach a consensus on the next

National Finance Commission award. He said the federal government would provide 200 bulldozers to the province for the development of the agriculture sector.

Daily Times, 3 October 2004

Centre to intervene in AJK political crisis

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to involve itself in resolving the ongoing political crisis in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), which has been running for eight months and has divided the ruling Muslim Conference into three groups. "The government has decided to help resolve the political crisis in the AJK. It is likely that AJK Prime Minister Sardar Sikandar Hayyat Khan will meet with Rawalpindi Corps Commander Lt General Ashfaq Kiyani in the next few days," sources told Daily Times. These sources said Pakistan's political leadership would also meet with the AJK prime minister to help resolve this crisis. "The decision to intervene in the AJK government's affairs was taken because the political leadership of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference has divided into three groups," sources said.

Daily Times, 3 October 2004

Four terrorists involved in mosque attack

LAHORE: At least four terrorists were involved in the Sialkot Imambargah suicide bombing, two of whom exploded the bombs while the other two maintained watch outside the mosque, sources told Daily Times on Saturday. Investigation officers, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said at least 3kg of explosives were used in the bombing. Eyewitnesses claimed that two unidentified persons were spotted standing at the mosque entrances for nearly half an hour. Both disappeared after the explosion, and a brief case containing 6.5kg of explosives was found at the spot where one of them had stood. The bomb was later defused by security agents.

Dawn, 4 October 2004

'A. Q. Khan's network put out of business'

NEW YORK, Oct 3: US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice said on Sunday President Pervez Musharraf has made certain that former scientist A. Q. Khan's nuclear network was put out of business, and "people are being brought to justice". "I think we all know that A. Q. Khan was a particular kind of figure in Pakistani lore, a national hero, and Musharraf has dealt with what is a very difficult situation about A. Q. Khan, by making certain that he's out of business," Ms Rice told CNN on Sunday. When pressed that Pakistan has refused International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to interview A. Q. Khan and the people in his network, Ms Rice insisted, "They've both been rolled up, and they are being brought to justice."

Dawn, 4 October 2004

ISI chief, corps commanders named

ISLAMABAD, Oct 3: Lieutenant General Pervez Kiani, the Commander 10 Corps, Rawalpindi, has been transferred and made the Director-General of the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). According to an ISPR handout issued on Sunday, seven major generals of the Pakistan Army have been promoted to the rank of lieutenant general and assigned new posts. The promoted officers are: Major-General Syed Athar Ali, posted as Corps Commander Karachi; Major-General Muhammad Afzal Muzaffar, posted as Corps Commander Multan; Major-General Hamid Rabnawaz, posted as Corps Commander Quetta; Major-General Sallahuddin Satti, posted as Corps Commander Rawalpindi; Major-General Imtiaz Hussin, posted as Director-General Weapons and Equipment; Major-General Wasim Ahmed Ashraf, posted as Adjutant General Pakistan Army; and Major-General Muhammad Sabir, posted as Corps Commander Gujranwala. Lt-Gen Shahid Wahid has been posted as Commandant National Defence College. -APP

Dawn, 4 October 2004

US helped avert N-war in South Asia: Powell

WASHINGTON, Oct 3: The Bush administration has played a key role in brining India and Pakistan from the brinks of a nuclear war two years ago to peace talks in New York last week, says US Secretary of State Colin Powell. In a statement released by the State Department on Sunday, Mr Powell also gives credit to Britain, France and China for averting a nuclear war in South Asia. Two nations in the subcontinent were facing each other with huge armies, both nuclear-armed, Mr Powell told a gathering of US scholars at the Southern Center for International Studies, Atlanta, Georgia. Two years ago we worried about a nuclear war between the two of them.

Dawn, 4 October 2004

Army death toll crosses 100 mark: South Waziristan operation

PESHAWAR, Oct 3: The death toll on the army side has crossed the 100 mark since January this year when the military began its operation against foreign and tribal militants in South Waziristan. The figure does not include casualties suffered by paramilitary forces, including the Frontier Corps (FC), scouts and Khasadars, in the ongoing conflict, according to official sources. Although Maj-Gen Shaukat Sultan, the ISPR spokesman, declined to give the exact figure, he acknowledged that the casualties could be close to 100. In background interviews, senior officials and independent sources described the prevailing situation in the remote tribal area as fluid and uncertain, despite the huge deployment of troops in the region, sprawling over 6,619 square kilometres.

Dawn, 4 October 2004

QUETTA: Rocket fired at stadium in Quetta

QUETTA, Oct 3: A man was reported killed after an explosive device went off in a scrap dump near the border town of Taftan while two more explosions occurred in different areas of the provincial capital late Sunday night. Levies officials from Taftan

said that the explosion occurred after a man, identified as Gulzar, tried to hit an object found in the scrap brought over from Iran. In Quetta, a rocket landed in front of the badminton and squash complex inside the Ayub Stadium, the venue of the 29th National Games.

The News, 4 October 2004

Seven major generals promoted

Five corps commanders replaced; Kiani to head ISI

ISLAMABAD: Seven major generals were promoted to three-star generals on Sunday and five of them were appointed corps commanders in Rawalpindi, Karachi, Multan, Quetta and Gujranwala. Lt-Gen Ashfaq Kiani would head the country's premier intelligence agency — the ISI. President Gen Pervez Musharraf appointed five newly-promoted Lieutenant Generals, Syed Ather Ali, Mohammad Afzal Muzaffar, Hamid Rabnawaz, Salahuddin Satti, and Mohammad Sabir, as corps commanders. Maj-Gen Salahuddin Satti, currently with the ISI and former DG Rangers, was appointed to succeed Ashfaq Kiani as Corps Commander Rawalpindi. Lt-Gen Kiani, who was Director-General Military Operations before being shifted to head the Rawalpindi Corps, was shifted to ISI as its DG in place of Lt-Gen Ehsanul Haq, who was promoted to the rank of four-star general and was appointed Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee.

The News, 4 October 2004

Sherpao claims progress in dialogue on Wana issue

PESHAWAR: Federal Interior Minister Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Sunday said that the dialogue process, initiated by the government for finding out peaceful solution to the Wana issue, was in progress and some progress has been made in it. Addressing a press conference at his residence here, Sherpao said the two committees, constituted for holding separate dialogue with Mehsud and Wazir tribes of South Waziristan, have held talks with parliamentarians of the area and local people. As a result of dialogue of these committees, the parliamentarian of Fata and local people have been convinced that the foreigners should leave the area or register themselves with political administration.

The News, 4 October 2004

Tajik held, Turkmen killed by tribal Lashkar in S Waziristan

PESHAWAR: A Tajikistan national was captured and one of his alleged accomplices killed in Sarwakai area by the tribal Lashkar. The foreigners are believed to be involved in the killing of four school children in South Waziristan Agency. "Local tribesmen located them in the nearby mountains and sent an armed force to arrest them," said an official, pleading not to be named. The official said that after an exchange of gunfire between the tribesmen and the group of foreign nationals, numbering four, the 17-year old Khalid from Tajikistan was injured and arrested, another was killed and two of them fled from the area. "Khalid has confessed that he and his colleagues were responsible for the killing of the students," said the official. Four children, including two brothers, were killed when a football-like booby trap bomb exploded in the Bangashwala area of the South Waziristan agency.

Dawn, 5 October 2004

Militants agree to cease fire in S. Waziristan

WANA, Oct 4: Militants in South Waziristan have agreed to a 10-day ceasefire with security forces to give a chance to mediators to resolve the issue of foreign militants in the troubled tribal region, official and tribal sources have confirmed. A source told Dawn that commanders of the tribal militants assured a 19-member mediation committee that they would hold fire for 10 days to give them a chance to help resolve the contentious issue of the presence of foreign militants in the region. The cease fire came into force from Monday night, a highly credible source said on the condition of anonymity. A senior government official confirmed the cease fire offer and said that security forces would not initiate any action unless provoked.

The News, 5 October 2004

Four dead in South Waziristan shoot-out

WANA: Four militants were killed and nine personnel of the armed forces injured in an exchange of fire between miscreants and security forces in the South Waziristan agency on Monday. Sources disclosed that bodies of two militants were recovered by the troops. The injured have been shifted to CMH Bannu. Reports said the security forces targeted the hideouts of militants in Karwan Manza, Laddah and Asman Manza areas of the agency. Meanwhile, a 10-day ceasefire came into effect in the area inhabited by the Mahsud tribe in South Waziristan through the mediation of a committee of tribal elders and Ulema on Monday. According to the agreement, the security forces would not advance from their present positions, while the militants would not attack the Army convoys and bases during this time. Both sides are willing to find a negotiated solution to the ongoing crisis, the sources said.

The News, 5 October 2004

Bomb blast, rocket hit Quetta

QUETTA: A home-made bomb exploded near a mosque and a rocket slammed into the Ayub stadium here, but no one was hurt, police said on Monday. The rocket landed near a tennis court on Sunday night in the stadium, spreading panic among athletes taking part in the National Games but causing no serious injuries, said Police Superintendent Rehmatullah Niazi. The rocket landed with a deafening roar in the stadium's car park, witnesses said. Two women athletes were slightly injured by flying stones after the explosion, while the bomb blast in the city centre shattered the windows of an empty passenger van.

Daily Times, 5 October 2004

ISI briefing: Terrorists working in splinter groups, says Musharraf

ISLAMABAD: Terrorists were carrying out their activities in small splinter groups as their central leaders had either been killed or captured, President Pervez Musharraf told a meeting of the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) held to brief him on national security on Monday. The president was also briefed on the performance of the ISI's special anti-terrorism group. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, outgoing ISI chief Lieutenant General Ehsanul Haq and the agency's new director general, Lt Gen Ashfaq Pervez Kiyani, also attended the briefing. President Musharraf said that Pakistan was fighting the war against terrorism for its own interest and there would be no compromise on it.

The News, 6 October 2004

Army beefs up security along Afghan border

ISLAMABAD: Hundreds of extra troops backed by helicopter gunships have been deployed along the border with Afghanistan to prevent insurgents from sneaking across the frontier to disrupt Afghan presidential elections on Saturday next, the Army said on Tuesday. Pakistan's military has set up 250 new checkpoints along the border and has deployed "Quick Reaction Force" commandoes to the area to take "immediate counter measures" in case of attack, DG ISPR Maj-Gen Shaukat Sultan said. The extra security precautions are in addition to about 70,000 troops already in tribal regions near the border, trying to flush out Taliban and al-Qaeda fugitives, as well as their local supporters.

The News, 6 October 2004

Two soldiers dead in blast near Jandola

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Two soldiers were killed and seven others sustained injuries in an explosion caused by a remote-controlled improvised explosive device (IED) near Jandola on the Tank-Wana road on Tuesday morning. The incident occurred a day after the agreement between the Army and the militants to observe a 10-day ceasefire in the area inhabited by the Mahsud tribe in South Waziristan. However, the blast in Jandola was outside South Waziristan and far beyond the territorial limits of the Mahsud tribe. Abdullah Mahsud, a commander of the tribal militants, in a phone call to The News denied his group's involvement in the blast at Jandola. He reminded that his group couldn't be held responsible for incidents taking place outside South Waziristan. He also said his men were observing the ceasefire that came into effect on Monday.

The News, 7 October 2004

Seven hurt in Quetta bomb blast

QUETTA: Seven people were injured when a powerful bomb went off at the Zerghoon Road in the Quetta Cantonment on Wednesday night. Police officials confirmed that six people were injured, while the Edhi Foundation staff told The News that seven people were wounded in the blast that took place near a general store in Quetta Cantonment around 8.30pm. Police said the people were busy in shopping in the general store when a powerful bomb exploded with a big bang, shaking the nerves of the people in the locality. The thud of the blast shattered the windowpanes of nearby buildings.

Dawn, 7 October 2004

Port facilities to China offered

ISLAMABAD, Oct 6: Pakistan on Wednesday offered China its seaports for trade with Middle East countries. This was announced at a press conference addressed jointly by Minister for Kashmir Affairs Faisal Saleh Hayat and Ismail Tiliwaldi, the visiting governor of the Xinjiang Uyger autonomous region of China, at the ministry of Kashmir Affairs here. Mr Hayat said Pakistan could earn millions by becoming a transit country for China's trade. He said that businessmen of both countries could benefit from the Karachi port, the under-construction port at Gwadar and the Karakoram Highway.

Dawn, 7 October 2004

Nationalists set terms for meetings on Balochistan

ISLAMABAD, Oct 6: Nationalist parties have drafted a 10-point charter of demand, including reconstitution of the parliamentary committee on Balochistan, with proper representation from the opposition as a condition to participate in the committee's proceedings. Sources told Dawn that the charter would be presented by nationalist leaders at the first meeting of the committee scheduled for Thursday at the Parliament House. Opposition members, the sources said, were also considering a walkout and boycott of the meeting if the 10-point agenda was not accepted by the treasury members. The Senate Secretariat on Sept 29, 2004, announced a 29-member parliamentary committee on Balochistan, with Pakistan Muslim League (PML) president and former prime minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain as its chairman.

Dawn, 7 October 2004

Bike bomb injures six in Quetta

QUETTA, Oct 6: Six persons, including an army officer, were injured in a bomb explosion in the cantonment area here on Wednesday night. "It was a cycle bomb," DIG Quetta Pervez Rafi Bhatti told Dawn, adding that the device had been planted in a mountain bike with Russian-made timer. According to sources, some people had parked a bicycle near the wall of a canteen at the main Zarghoon Road. When the bicycle exploded, its pieces spread in a 500 yards area, injuring six persons present near the canteen. All the injured were rushed to the civil hospital.

Daily Times, 8 October 2004

Sipah-e-Muhammad prime suspect in Multan bombing: investigators

LAHORE: Investigators said banned organisation Sipah-e-Muhammad Pakistan (SMP) was the prime suspect in the Multan bombing on Thursday. A major crackdown was launched against SMP activists throughout Punjab and eight were arrested in Multan and its adjoining areas, official sources told Daily Times. "The government formed 20 teams of officers from intelligence and security agencies for a crackdown in various parts of the province," sources said. "Among militant Shia organisations, only

SMP had the capability to carry out such an attack," sources said, "but the SMP has been quite inactive since the arrest of its chief, Ghulam Raza Naqvi. Many of its frontline activists have fled the country."

The News, 8 October 2004

40 killed in Multan car bomb blast

MULTAN: A powerful car bomb ripped through a prayer gathering here before dawn on Thursday, killing 40 people and wounding more than 100. The blast at 4:30am targeted around 2,000 people from a group who had gathered in the city to mark the first anniversary of the assassination of their leader Azam Tariq. "It was a high intensity bomb that carried seven to eight kilograms of explosives," city police chief Sikandar Hayat said. It was set off by remote control or a timer. The target was the Millat-e-Islamia, the new name for the outlawed Sipah-e-Sahaba, Pakistan led by the late Maulana Tariq. The explosion triggered a stampede through Multan. The main Rasheedabad Square was littered with body parts, turbans and bloodstains, witnesses said.

The News, 8 October 2004

Gen Aziz, Gen Yusaf retire

RAWALPINDI: Ceremonies were held on Thursday at the Joint Staff Headquarters and the General Headquarters to bid farewell to the outgoing Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Gen Muhammad Aziz Khan and the Vice Chief of Army Staff Gen Muhammad Yusaf Khan. At the Joint Staff Headquarters, the Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Shahid Karimullah and other senior representatives of the Army and PAF received Gen Muhammad Aziz Khan. A contingent of the three services presented general salute to the departing Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. He also reviewed the parade. A similar ceremony was held at the General Headquarters to bid farewell to outgoing Vice Chief of Army Staff Gen Muhammad Yusaf Khan. On arrival, Lt-Gen Javed Hasan, Corps Commander, received Gen Muhammad Yusaf Khan. The corps commanders and principal staff officers were also present at the occasion.

The News, 8 October 2004

Pak journalists face criticism in Srinagar

SRINAGAR: Angry Pakistani journalists had difficulty in restraining themselves in a meeting with Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front leader Yasin Malik, when abuses, insinuations and questions marks on their credibility were thrown. "You are prisoners in the valley and are only meeting those people that New Delhi wants you to meet. You have come with a brief from Pakistan which is hurting our sentiments. You are being feted by members of the government with the so called 'healing touch' and what we are seeing is Punjabi statecraft at work here", were the views of Malik and other speakers he had called to speak.

The News, 8 October 2004

Two subcommittees on Balochistan formed

ISLAMABAD: The Parliamentary Committee for Balochistan has formed two sub-committees to examine the current situation in the province and creating provincial harmony. The decision was taken at its first meeting on Thursday, which was chaired by President Pakistan Muslim League Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain. One of the sub-committee would be headed by Senator Mushahid Hussain to examine the current situation in Balochistan and to make recommendation, while the other would be headed by Wasim Sajjad to make recommendations to promote inter provincial harmony and protect the rights of the provinces to strengthen the federation.

The News, 8 October 2004

South Waziristan ceasefire collapses

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: The ceasefire between the military and the militants in South Waziristan was broken on Thursday on the fourth day of its enforcement when the two sides became involved in a fierce clash near Kaniguram and Karwan Manza in the Mahsud tribal territory. Tribal sources told The News that the clash erupted at 5:00 pm at Khashu Panga near Kaniguram and was continuing till filing of this report later at night. The military used mortar, artillery and light machineguns to pound the militants' positions while the latter fired missiles and rockets at the troops. Troops based in Asman Manza and Karwan Manza had also started firing at the suspected hideouts of the militants. There was no credible information about the losses suffered by the two sides.

The News, 8 October 2004

President, PM for action plan to curb suicide attacks

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz underlined the need for evolving a comprehensive action plan to pre-empt the suicide attacks in the country. Prime minister met General Pervez Musharraf on Thursday at Army House Rawalpindi on Thursday. They exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, national issues and political situation of the country. Official sources informed Online both the leaders condemned the terrorist attack in Multan in strongest terms and reiterated their resolve to pursue comprehensive strategy to counter such incidents in future. The terrorists wanted to destabilise the country through such incidents, they warned. However, they would not be allowed to succeed in their malicious designs as the whole nation was opposed to terrorism and sectarianism, they announced.

Dawn, 9 October 2004

Bill on president in uniform moved in NA

ISLAMABAD, Oct 8: The government introduced a draft bill in the National Assembly on Friday aimed at allowing President Gen Pervez Musharraf to retain his army post till his tenure in presidency. The draft bill was referred to the house committee on law and justice which is expected to meet on Saturday to approve it. The bill 'President to Hold Another Office Act, 2004' seeking to take effect from Dec 31, 2004, will be tabled at the NA session on Monday or Tuesday for its first, second and third

readings before its passage by a simple majority. The opposition which had created noisy scenes on being disallowed a debate on its adjournment motions on bomb blasts in Sialkot and Multan, showed a poor reaction when the draft bill was introduced by Law and Justice Minister Wasi Zafar. There was no visible protest except for few meek voices of 'shame shame'.

Dawn, 9 October 2004

More troops deployed along Afghan border

ISLAMABAD, Oct 8: Pakistan on Friday deployed more troops along its western border to stop cross-border movement of militants. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that additional troops were deployed in pursuance of Pakistan's goal of maintaining cordial relations with Afghanistan and ensuring peace during forthcoming elections. Polling in the Afghan presidential election is scheduled to be held today (Saturday). "These additional troops have plugged-in possible gaps and will exercise vigilance to prevent cross-border activities of miscreants who may aim at disrupting the elections," said the ISPR

Dawn, 9 October 2004

Ulema asked to help curb suicide bombings

KARACHI, Oct 8: Sindh Home Minister Rauf Siddiqui has said that religious leaders can play crucial role towards bringing an end to the scourge of suicide attacks. He was addressing a workshop on "Suicide bombing and their impact on society" at the University of Karachi on Friday. The workshop was held under the auspices of Karachi University's criminology department. Rauf Siddiqui was of the view that the basic cause of suicide bombing was poverty or creed. He said that everyone should play his role towards curbing such crimes and that the religious leaders should particularly play their role in this respect. The minister said that poverty and sometimes religious- political beliefs compelled people to commit suicide attacks. "Person having religious or political beliefs often resort to suicide attacks, owing to which the whole society and country get destabilized," he said.

The News, 9 October 2004

Multan closed, thousands rally against bombing

MULTAN: Multan remained closed on Friday and about 3,000 supporters of the outlawed, Millat-i-Islamia, Pakistan (MIP), held a protest rally, demanding immediate arrest of attackers, who killed 40 people in a car bombing the other day, police and witnesses said. All shopping centres, markets, hotels and petrol pumps remained shut. Police had already expelled Maulana Alam Tariq, brother of late Maulana Azam Tariq, in the night. However, MIP chief Maulana Muhammad Ludhianvi stayed in the city. The MIP rally went ahead despite a government ban on political and religious gatherings. The protesters blocked a main road and burnt tyres near the scene of the Thursday's attack, casting thick black smoke. They shouted slogans against a rival sect. The crowd initially refused to disperse, when asked by police, but when the Army troops arrived, people fled and scattered into smaller groups.

The News, 9 October 2004

Eight more inducted into body on Balochistan

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Mian Soomro has inducted eight more members in the 29-member special Parliamentary Committee on Balochistan. Two subcommittees have been formed on the issue. One of the committees is led by Leader of the House in the Senate Barrister Wasim Sajjad while the other by secretary general of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayeed.

Dawn, 10 October 2004

Mufti Jameel, associate shot dead

KARACHI, Oct 9: A prominent religious scholar, Mufti Jameel Ahmed Khan, and his associate were shot dead near the Guru Mandir intersection here on Saturday. The murder of the religious scholar came at a time when most of the city's police were deployed for the security of Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, who was in the city. The Hi-ace van in which Mufti Jameel was riding, was intercepted near Guru Mandir intersection and was showered with bullets by unknown gunmen. Mufti Jameel and his associate Maulana Nazeer Taunsvi, sitting in the van, received multiple bullets and died before they could be provided with medical aid.

Dawn, 10 October 2004

2 Chinese engineers kidnapped

WANA, Oct 9: Two Chinese engineers and their five security guards were kidnapped on Saturday while travelling through the South Waziristan Agency. Sources said the Chinese, working on the Gomal Zam dam project in South Waziristan, were heading towards the site early morning from Dera Ismail Khan when the incident occurred. The dam is being built near the tribal Tank town, some 283km southwest of Islamabad and on the border of South Waziristan. The two were part of a batch of over 100 Chinese workers brought by the Sino Hydro Company which is building the multi-purpose dam.

Dawn, 10 October 2004

Aliens in Fata told to give up arms

PESHAWAR, Oct 9: Interior Minister Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao has asked the illegal foreign elements in Fata to lay down arms and get registered with the authorities, saying "the government won't let its soil to be used by the terrorists against any other country". We must continue the dialogue process, because it was the only durable and maintainable solution to end terrorism, Mr Sherpao said while addressing the oath-taking ceremony of the Media Marketing Association here on Saturday evening. It was wrong that the US was pushing Pakistan to do away with the foreign militants in Pakistan, he said, adding "let terrorism be eliminated and an atmosphere of brotherhood and harmony among all religious sects be created to make

Pakistan conducive for the investment.

The News, 10 October 2004

Saudi minister due today to receive Mushak planes

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Assistant Minister of Defence for Military Affairs Prince Khalid bin Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, arriving in Pakistan on Sunday, will receive Mushak during his four-day official visit. Saudi Arabia placed the order for 20 Mushak planes some time back. The first batch of small aircraft, manufactured by Pakistan, will be handed over to the Saudi minister at a ceremony at Pakistan Aeronautical Complex Kamra on Tuesday. Prince Khalid bin Sultan will be leading a high-powered delegation of senior defence officials. Defence Minister Rao Sikandar Iqbal and senior officials of the Defence Ministry will receive the Saudi minister at the Chaklala air base.

Daily Times, 10 October 2004

Over 60 'most active' militants arrested

LAHORE: Law enforcement agencies arrested around 60 of the "most active members of religious organisations" on Saturday following the bombings in Sialkot and Multan that claimed 72 lives and left 150 injured, sources told Daily Times. The Punjab Home Department along with the police and intelligence agencies have prepared a list of 220 people who are to be detained for 90 days. The list includes Shahbaz Raza, brother of Dr Qaiser Raza, who allegedly masterminded a sessions court bombing in Lahore in 1997 that killed 24. Most of the people on the list belong to Jhang and South Punjab. The 4th schedule of a list prepared after the Sialkot and Multan bombings includes 679 people believed to be actively involved in sectarianism in the province, sources said.

Dawn, 11 October 2004

Musharraf says stand on UNSC principled

ISLAMABAD, Oct 10: President Gen Pervez Musharraf said on Sunday that Pakistan had a principled stand on the expansion of the UN Security Council and did not support to the idea of increase in its permanent members as it was against the democratic basis of sovereign equality of nations. "We feel that increasing the number of permanent members of the UN Security Council is against the democratic considerations of the sovereign equality of nations," he told newsmen after holding talks with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. He said the government and the people of Pakistan held Germany and Chancellor Schroeder in the highest esteem and stated that the German chancellor understood that Pakistan had a principled position on the issue of enlargement of the UN Security Council.

Dawn, 11 October 2004

Terrorists trying to shatter sectarian harmony: Rashid - No Shia-Sunni rift in country

ISLAMABAD, Oct 10: There is a complete sectarian harmony in the country and the fresh wave of violence is the work of terrorists who are on the run and are trying to shatter peace, says federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shaikh Rashid Ahmed. The minister said this during a press conference at the PTV Headquarters on Sunday. He said: "There is no Shia-Sunni conflict in the country. Sialkot and Multan would have been reduced to a cinder by now if there was any involvement of sectarian elements in the recent incidents." Pakistan, he said, was playing a crucial role as a frontline state in the war on terrorism, adding that some elements did not want to see the country's image improving in the comity of nations and wanted to destabilise the country.

Dawn, 11 October 2004

Captors threaten to kill Chinese: Govt warned against attack

PESHAWAR, Oct 10: The kidnappers of the two Chinese engineers and their two Pakistani escorts have threatened to blow themselves up along with the hostages if attacked, sources told Dawn on Sunday. "The kidnappers have explosives strapped to their bodies and have grenades in their hands. They say they would blow themselves up along with their four hostages if security forces or the tribe itself made any attempt to snatch the captives," a highly-placed official source told Dawn. The kidnappers, said the source, had been offered a safe passage if they let the two Chinese engineers go. "They have turned down the offer. They are not interested in it. They say that their safe passage leads only to heaven," the official said.

Dawn, 11 October 2004

4 killed in Lahore mosque blast

LAHORE, Oct 10: Four people, including a 13-year-old boy, were killed and 10 injured when a suicide bomber detonated explosives at the entrance of Jamia Masjid Kashmirian in Mochi Gate here on Sunday. "The death toll might have been higher had the suicide bomber managed to enter the mosque," residents of the Mohala Shian said. According to eyewitnesses, Agha Jaffer and Dilbar Khan stood guard at the mosque's entrance at Chowk Nawab to scan people coming for the Magrib prayers when they stopped a young man for body search. On his refusal, Jaffer tried to overpower him while Khan pointed a gun at him. At that time, the man detonated the explosives he had wrapped around his body. The three of them and a boy who was entering the mosque were killed on the spot. The boy was identified as Salman Ali, a class VII student.

Dawn, 11 October 2004

Al Qaeda seeking new recruits in Pakistan: report

WASHINGTON, Oct 9: Al Qaeda, which once only recruited Arabs, is now also seeking recruits from other ethnic groups and many new Al Qaeda operatives are from Pakistan, says a report published in some US newspapers on Saturday. The report quotes Karachi police chief Tariq Jameel as saying that the change in Al Qaeda's strategy has made it difficult for security agencies to monitor the profiles of these new recruits and new groups. According to this report, based on interviews with security officials and some Al Qaeda suspects in Pakistan, new Al Qaeda cells are small. Most of them have less than 10 members and are independent of each other to ensure that if one group is busted, others can still work. Attaur Rehman and nine of his accomplices, who are charged with carrying out a deadly attack on the Corps Commander Karachi in June, are also

listed in this report as Al Qaeda operatives. The report says that their group, Jundullah, is a good example of how Al Qaeda has changed its strategy since 9/11.

The News, 12 October 2004

Fate of kidnapped Chinese engineers uncertain

TANK: The deadline given by the militants who were threatening to kill the two kidnapped Chinese engineers ended at 4 pm on Monday, raising fears about the turn of events in case no agreement is reached to end the stalemate. Abdullah Mahsud, commander of the tribal militants who sent the kidnappers on their mission, told a group of six reporters, including this scribe at his hideout in South Waziristan that his patience was running out. "I am waiting for a "yes" or "no" from the government. If a safe passage isn't given to my men, who are holding the two Chinese engineers and their police guard and driver, then I would order them to start killing the captives," he warned. The five kidnappers, along with their four captives, are trapped in Chagmalay village, located about half an hour drive from Jandola, since Saturday morning. The kidnappers were forced to find a sanctuary in the village after the vehicle in which the Chinese engineers Wang Ping and Wang Ende were driving to work broke down on the Tormandi road. The kidnappers had commandeered the vehicle and wanted to take it to their hideouts in the area inhabited by the Mahsud tribe in South Waziristan.

The News, 12 October 2004

No U-turn on Kashmir: FO

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office on Monday dispelled the impression of any U-turn on Kashmir, but said areas needed to be explored to find a resolution of the lingering dispute that reflected the wishes of the Kashmiri people and was acceptable to both Islamabad and New Delhi. "There is no U-turn, no change in our policy on Kashmir, what we need is a sense of destiny and strong commitment to resolve the issue," Khan said of a reported allegation by Kashmiri leader Syed Ali Geelani. FO spokesman Masood Khan told a weekly press briefing the two sides had to look for areas to find a resolution acceptable to all the Kashmiri people, Pakistan and India. He recalled Pakistan had long been demanding for associating Kashmiri people with the composite dialogue process "sooner than later" as it was their future that had to be decided.

The News, 12 October 2004

'Talks continuing for release of kidnapped Chinese engineers'

KARACHI: Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Sherpao on Monday said negotiation for the safe release of the two Chinese engineers kidnapped on Saturday from the South Waziristan tribal region were in progress and hoped they would be released. "Negotiation for the safe release of the kidnapped Chinese engineers are in process and we are hopeful," Sherpao told newsmen after 118 pick-ups handing-over ceremony to the police of three provinces at the site office of the Indus Motors, Karachi. "But as you know, we are dealing with the terrorists," he cautioned. The government is negotiating with the kidnappers, he said, adding that the Jalalkhel tribe had assured that the kidnapped Chinese engineers were safe. "These matters do take time," he said.

The News, 12 October 2004

Mortars, rockets fired at FC camp in Dera Bugti

QUETTA: Unknown men fired over a dozen mortars and rockets in an attempt to target the Frontier Corps (FC) camp of Uch Gas Field in Dera Bugti district, some 343 kilometres off the provincial capital, on Monday evening, officials said. However, no casualties were reported. Gas field officials said that more than five rockets landed near the Officers Mess at 5.35pm, when unknown armed men rained rockets and mortars on the field. The rockets landed with big bangs, shaking the nerves of the residents of the area, they added. The officials said no loss of life was reported, while contradicting the reports that anybody was hurt in the attack. They added that unknown men fired the rockets and mortars several kilometres away from the gas field.

The News, 12 October 2004

Pakistan offers joint venture to S Arabia Islamabad, Riyadh to hold military exercises

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have agreed to hold joint military exercises between the armed forces of the two countries. The decision was taken during talks between visiting Saudi Assistant Minister for Defence Prince Khalid bin Sultan bin Abdul Aziz and Defence Minister Rao Sikandar Iqbal here on Monday. The defence ministry in a statement said the Saudi delegation was informed that Al-Khalid tanks, manufactured by Pakistan, would be handed over to Saudi Arabia for trials next summer. Pakistan also offered to undertake a joint venture for production of arms and ammunition, armoured fighting vehicles, Anza missiles and Al-Khalid tanks. The statement said the two sides underscored the need to enhance military cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Dawn, 12 October 2004

Round-table rejects 17th Amendment

LAHORE, Oct 11: Leaders of the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy and 17 relatively small parties and half a dozen professional organizations, who attended a round-table conference here on Monday, rejected the 17th amendment and resolved to restore the 1973 Constitution as it stood before Gen Pervez Musharraf took over power five years ago. The participants also pledged to restore democracy in what they called its purest form, but did not spell out the strategy they would adopt to achieve the goal. The RTC, held under the chairmanship of Makhdoom Amin Fahim at the Lahore Press Club, refused to recognize Gen Musharraf as president and army chief and said that the system given by him was not democratic. The Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal was not invited to the conference despite contacts between the two alliances at the highest level, which continued till Monday morning.

Dawn, 12 October 2004

Uproar in NA as bill on uniform is tabled

ISLAMABAD, Oct 11: A bill allowing President Pervez Musharraf to continue holding the post of army chief beyond Dec 31, 2004, was tabled in the dying moments of the National Assembly's session on Monday in what was seen as a calculated move. It will be a private members' day on Tuesday unless the house business is suspended by a majority vote. The bill, therefore, will be presented for a debate on Wednesday. The move sparked angry protests by the combined opposition whose members, shouting slogans, surrounded the speaker's rostrum and tore the bill's copies. Leaders of the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) and the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal later addressed a joint press conference in which they announced they would launch an anti-Musharraf movement after Ramadan.

Daily Times, 12 October 2004

Mochi Gate Mosque bombing: Guard and boy buried amid mourning

LAHORE: Security guard Jaffer Hussain Baltistani and 13-year-old Salman Haider, who died in the Mochi Gate suicide bomb explosion, were buried on Monday noon in Firdosia graveyard on Ferozepur Road. The body of another security guard, Dilbar Khan, has been sent to his native town Kohat for burial on the request of his relatives. The body of the suicide bomber was lying in the city morgue unidentified till late on Monday night. Imamia Students Organisation activists blocked traffic near Shahalam Market for around two hours before the funerals were held in the Mochi Gate Bagh. They chanted slogans against the government, police and city administration. The protesters also damaged police vans, private cars, vehicles and shops. The bodies were brought to Mochi Gate at around 11am where a large number of people mourned and berated the bombing. Syed Ali Musavi, the khateeb of Jamia Masjid Kashmirian, addressed the crowd.

Daily Times, 12 October 2004

Northern Areas reforms package: Legislative council seats raised to 32

GILGIT: The Northern Areas Legislative Council (NALC) has been increased from 29 members to 32, according to a Northern Areas reforms package approved by President Gen Pervez Musharraf. The reform package, announced by Senator Nisar Memon on behalf of the president, said that the three additional NALC members would be elected by the originally elected 24 council members. The package also amended the Local Government Ordinance and increased seats for women in districts and union councils by 33 percent. Memon said the administrative powers of the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Northern Affairs had been transferred to the NA administration and the districts in the northern areas had been increased to six with the addition of a new district called Astore. Memon said an appellate court would be established in the northern areas and PIA would improve its aircraft service to the region by replacing the old Fokker (F-27) fleet. He also said that the president had directed the National Highway Authority to speed up work on widening the Gilgit-Skardu road. He said the president had approved an additional development fund of five hundred millions rupees to Northern Areas during the current fiscal year to develop the area.

The News, 13 October 2004

Talks on Pak-US investment treaty soon

ISLAMABAD: Commerce Minister Humayun Akhtar Khan on Tuesday said Pakistan and United States have decided to undertake serious negotiations on Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT). Speaking at a press conference the minister said the two sides also agreed to continue to work towards strengthening bilateral trade ties. Referring to his recent visit to United States, he said, "We held candid discussions and significant progress was made on the issue of market access." He said, "We have put forward five proposals for enhancing economic and trade cooperation between the two countries. However, these could not be disclosed at the moment."

The News, 13 October 2004

No breakthrough in Chinese hostage crisis

TANK: No breakthrough was achieved on Tuesday to secure the release of two Chinese engineers kidnapped by militants on October 9. Abdullah Mahsud, the commander of the militants, wasn't available for a meeting with tribal elders who had flocked to Barwand, a village close to his hideouts, in the hope of prevailing upon him to free Chinese hostages, Wang Ping and Wang Ende. After a long wait, members of the 21-member reconciliation committee, comprising Mahsud tribal elders and Ulama, were asked to stay overnight at Barwand and try to meet militant leader the next day. Meanwhile, the Jalalkhel Mahsud elders made use of a time-honoured tribal tradition to seek freedom for the Chinese engineers Tuesday. Four of their elders took a lamb, a copy of the holy Qur'aan and a woman as "Nanawatay," which means seeking one's mercy or protection, to the kidnappers and asked them to release the Chinese hostages. The kidnappers consulted Mahsud, who directed them to release the local policeman, Asmatullah, who was also kidnapped while escorting the Chinese engineers to work on the Gomal Zam dam project in the area. However, he refused to free the Chinese engineers.

The News, 13 October 2004

Pakistan tests N-capable missile

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan on Tuesday carried out another successful test of the indigenously produced intermediate-range ballistic missile Hatf V (Ghauri) as part of a series of tests planned for the Ghauri Missile System. "Alhamd-o-Lillah, the test completely validated all the design parameters," said an ISPR press release issued here. "The successful flight test bears testimony to the fact that the Ghauri weapon system is based on the highest standards of scientific and technological advancements," it added. The missile incorporates highly refined guidance and control systems and superior technology capable of achieving the greatest accuracy. The Ghauri missile has a range of nearly 1,500 km and can carry nuclear and other warheads. It had been handed over to the Army Strategic Forces Command in 2003.

The News, 13 October 2004

NA to debate MMA's High Treason Bill

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Tuesday admitted High Treason Bill of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) for debate. The treasury benches strongly opposed the tabling of the bill in view of the presence of existing high treason law that was made part of the Constitution in 1973 by the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto government. The bill signed by 35 MNAs of the MMA was tabled in the House by Qazi Hussain Ahmed. Earlier, in the morning session, Speaker National Assembly Ch Amir Hussain allowed to formally table the bill for formal debate. The speaker told the MMA that the debate would resume on the bill from the next private members day.

Dawn, 13 October 2004

Militant snubs mediators: No progress in efforts to free Chinese

WANA, Oct 12: Efforts to secure the release of two Chinese engineers and their Pakistani escorts were deadlocked on Tuesday as militant leader Abdullah Mehsud vowed not to negotiate unless the hostages and kidnappers were allowed to meet him. "I swear by Almighty Allah that I will neither talk to anyone nor will I meet anyone till the security forces allow my men and the hostages to come to me," the self-styled commander told a group of tribal journalists at a secret location in the volatile South Waziristan region. His refusal to meet a 21-member mediation committee that included his cousin, a retired army major, poured cold water on government's efforts to negotiate a way out of the present impasse.

Dawn, 13 October 2004

'Ties with Riyadh to be boosted'

ISLAMABAD, Oct 12: President Gen Pervez Musharraf said on Tuesday that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoyed close brotherly relationship and expressed the hope that these would be enhanced through increased defence cooperation. Talking to Saudi Assistant Minister for Defence, Prince Khaled bin Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, here at the Aiwan-i-Sadr, the president said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had fraternal relations based on common bonds of religion, culture and history.

Dawn, 13 October 2004

Govt not involved with Khan network: report

WASHINGTON, Oct 12: A prestigious American nuclear watchdog has concluded that the government of Pakistan was not involved with the network of nuclear proliferators who supplied nuclear technology to Iran, Libya and North Korea. In a recent report - "Uncovering the Nuclear Black Market" - the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security observes: "The Pakistani government was not directing this network. It was essentially a criminal operation." But the report also says the fact that a group of individuals were able to run such a network for so long without being noticed by the international community was "more disturbing and dangerous" than if it had been a secret government-controlled effort.

Dawn, 13 October 2004

Pakistan assured of US arms supply

ISLAMABAD, Oct 12: A visiting US defence delegation on Tuesday informed Pakistani officials that arms and equipment requested by the country for its three armed forces were in the pipeline, an official statement said. The delegation led by Deputy Director of the Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) Millies told senior officials of the Defence Ministry and Defence Production some of the equipment had already been given while the remaining would be delivered "at the appropriate time". The US officials also promised to "favourably consider" Pakistan's request of training requirements of its armed forces, according to a statement by the Defence Ministry issued after the meeting in the garrison town of Rawalpindi.

The Nation, 13 October 2004

Tribal elders meet Mehsud for Chinese engineers' release

JANDOLA - A 24-member team of Mehsud tribe elders Tuesday again started talks with militant leader Abdullah Mehsud at an unknown place near Brawanda area here in South Waziristan Agency to convince him on releasing the Chinese engineers.

"The talks are in progress for the early release of the Chinese engineers," said the sources. The talks between the tribal team, headed by Member of National Assembly Maulana Merajuddin and Brig. (Retd) Qayoom Sher Mehsud, and the militant leader Abdullah Mehsud got under way in the afternoon at a secret place after the latter refused to appear before a traditional Lashkar of Mehsud tribesmen that reached Brawanda from Tank.

Dawn, 14 October 2004

Pandemonium in NA as debate on uniform bill begins

ISLAMABAD, Oct 13: A loud opposition protest on Wednesday greeted a government bill designed to allow President Pervez Musharraf to remain army chief as well, beyond a constitutional deadline of December 31, before the National Assembly began a debate on the controversial law. Opposition members launched a bitter attack on "the President to Hold Another Office Bill" compared to an unimpressive defence put up by the treasury benches during a three-hour general debate, or the first reading, which remained inconclusive when the house was adjourned until 10am on Thursday. It was not immediately clear how long the bill will take to be passed by the 342-seat lower house as the opposition said it had a list of about 60 members to speak on what it regards as a violation of the constitution and a public pledge by President Musharraf to give up his office of the Chief of the Army Staff by December 31.

Dawn, 14 October 2004

'Safe release of Chinese is govt's priority': Cabinet discusses hostage crisis

ISLAMABAD, Oct 13: The federal cabinet was informed on Wednesday that ever-changing demands of the kidnappers of two Chinese engineers were blocking the government's efforts to secure their release. At a meeting, presided over by Prime

Minister Shaukat Aziz, the cabinet expressed concern that tribal militant Abdullah Mehsud was stalling negotiations with his ever-changing demands. But it expressed the hope that the hostages would be safely released. Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed told reporters later that a grand jirga called after the failure of a previous 21-member committee had also ended without making any progress.

Dawn, 14 October 2004

Tribal elders give up mediation bid

WANA, Oct 13: A group of Mehsud tribesmen trying to secure the release of two Chinese engineers kidnapped by militants expressed its inability on Wednesday to get the hostages freed through negotiations and told the authorities that that were now free to use whatever means they deemed fit to achieve the objective. The Mehsud elders who had gathered at the political agent's compound in Tank to discuss the situation made the announcement after refusal by militant commander Abdullah Mehsud to meet them and release the hostages.

Dawn, 14 October 2004

'Simple solution is demilitarization': Musharraf on Kashmir

NEW DELHI, Oct 13: President Pervez Musharraf sees a 'simple' solution to the Kashmir dispute: India should pull troops out of the Himalayan territory and agree to a compromise over its status. Gen Musharraf said both sides needed to step back from these 'maximalist' positions after which, he added, they could find a solution in just a day if they really wanted to. "It is simple - identify the region, demilitarize it and change its status," he told India's Asian Age newspaper in an interview published on Wednesday. Last year, Gen Musharraf told Reuters he could set aside Pakistan's demand for a plebiscite and meet India half-way.

Dawn, 14 October 2004

'Khan network supplied N-parts made in Europe, Southeast Asia'

WASHINGTON, Oct 13: A large number of sensitive nuclear components sold to Iran and Libya for building uranium enrichment plants were made at workshops in Europe and Southeast Asia, says a Washington-based nuclear monitoring agency. In a recent report on the nuclear black market, the Institute for Science and International Security confirms Pakistan's claim that the network might have been headed by a Pakistani, Dr A.Q. Khan, but it was a gang of international proliferators and smugglers that had bases and workshops at many places across the globe. The ISIS report says that the centrifuges the network sold to Iran and Libya are formally called Pakistan 1 and Pakistan 2 but are better known by their acronyms, P1 and P2.

Dawn, 14 October 2004

Work on Karak oilfield stopped

KOHAT, Oct 13: Work on the Gurguri oilfield in Banda Daud Shah tehsil of Karak district and the laying of a pipeline in Aman Kot was stopped on Tuesday following a warning by a grand jirga of 50 villages held under the auspices of the Khattak Grand Ittehad and Action Committee to attack and destroy the site if their demands were not met. All the 250 staff members of the Descon Engineering and MOLE, a foreign drilling company, were pulled out of the area under the protection of frontier constabulary and police, reports reaching here on Tuesday night said. A large number of FC personnel and police took control of the entire area to protect the site from the attackers. The project manager of Descon, Iqrar Pervez, told journalists that he had sent the whole staff on leave till further orders. The staff included the Kohat chief manager of MOLE company, Cgyula Vegh, 50 officers and 200 workers.

Dawn, 14 October 2004

Five killed in attack on music show

MARDAN, Oct 13: At least five people were killed and 35 others were injured, eight of them seriously, when a bomb was lobbed on a music programme at a marriage party at the Jalala refugee camp on Tuesday night. A music programme was under way at the marriage function of an Afghan refugee, Zahir Khan, when some men hurled a bomb on the crowd which had gathered to enjoy the show.

The News, 14 October 2004

Militants refuse to free Chinese engineers

PESHAWAR: The situation in the Mahsud territory of South Waziristan Agency was tense on Wednesday, as the militants led by Abdullah Mahsud refused to release the two Chinese engineers to end the impasse. A Jirga of four tribal elders and close relatives of Mahsud comprising Col (ret'd) Yaqoob, Engineer Murad, Malik Alamzeb and Malik Rehman Gul are meeting him for the release of the Chinese engineers. The 21-member Jirga of Mahsud tribesmen, which met Mahsud at an undisclosed location on Tuesday, has already returned empty-handed. The members said Mahsud has refused to free the engineers and stuck to his demand to give safe passage to the kidnapers and the hostages to reach him. He has demanded that the hostages and his fighters involved in the kidnapping of the Chinese be allowed to reach him first and only then the release of the two engineers would be negotiated.

The News, 15 October 2004

NA empowers Musharraf to keep two offices

ISLAMABAD: Amid rowdy scenes and strong opposition protest, the National Assembly on Thursday empowered the president to keep the two offices beyond December 31 this year. The assembly approved the bill to enable the president to hold another office by a voice vote. The opposition members gathered around the rostrum of the speaker, chanting slogans of "No Musharraf no", "Go Musharraf go" during the passage of the bill. As the discussion was going on on the bill and PML-N's

Tehmina Daultana was speaking, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Sher Afghan Khan Niazi abruptly on a point of order moved the closure motion on the debate. During the opposition protest, the treasury benches approved the bill clause by clause. Minister for Law, Justice and Human Rights Chaudhry Muhammad Wasi Zafar moved the bill. The debate on the bill was supposed to continue on Thursday.

The News, 15 October 2004

Chinese engineer, five captors killed in operation

JANDOLA: After six tension-filled days, the hostage crisis, taking place in a desolate tribal hinterland near here in South Waziristan ended in bloodshed on Thursday with the death of one of the two Chinese hostages and the five kidnapers as a result of an operation by Pakistan Army commandoes. Wang Ping, a young, recently-married Chinese engineer working on the Gomal Zam Dam project, sited in parts of South Waziristan tribal agency and Tank district, was killed in the operation, while his older, 49-year-old colleague, Wang Ende, was lucky to survive. Ping was the chief surveyor in the private Chinese company that had brought more than 80 persons from China to work on the project. Corps Commander Peshawar, Lt-Gen Safdar Hussain, told The News that the kidnapers shot dead the Chinese hostage, prompting the Army sharpshooters to kill the five kidnapers and rescue the second Chinese engineer.

The News, 15 October 2004

Pakistan favours Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service without passports, visas

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri on Thursday said Pakistan favoured a bus service between Muzaffarabad and held Srinagar without passports and visas. "This is not something that I am saying, I have met a large number of Indian intellectuals and they say it seems quite alright. They also say it is also consistent with India's own position," he said, while talking to reporters after addressing an international seminar here. The proposal of Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service is part of the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) being discussed by the two countries. Kasuri said he met the Kashmiri leaders in India and also in Pakistan and there was not a single leader who had said they would like to travel with passports and visas.

The News, 15 October 2004

ARD, MMA to chalk out strategy today

ISLAMABAD: The separate parliamentary party meetings of both the opposition groups, the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy and the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal will be held today (Friday) to chalk out strategy with regard to no-confidence motion against the Speaker National Assembly. According to sources in the opposition, after holding their separate parliamentary party meetings the senior leaders of both the opposition groups, the ARD and the MMA, would also meet to formulate a joint strategy before the session and to continue their protest on the passage of the uniform bill.

The News, 15 October 2004

No compromise on uniform: Qazi

LAHORE: The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) alliance will not compromise on the president's uniform. Central leader of the MMA Qazi Hussain Ahmad said, "We expect that Musharraf will honour his agreement with the MMA and doff uniform in the wider national interest." In an interview with PPI on Thursday, Qazi warned that a forceful countrywide drive would be launched against the president if he failed to fulfil his commitment and did not give up the Army post by Dec 31. Preparations for the countrywide movement had already been started, he said. The MMA leader was of the opinion that the ARD and the MMA should cooperate with each other to launch an anti-Musharraf movement. "Our target is the same then why can't we go together to get rid of the uniformed president," he questioned.

The News, 16 October 2004

Qazi hints at resignations

ISLAMABAD: The opposition on Friday continued to block the gate of the Parliament House and staged a sit-in on the Constitution Avenue. After registering protest inside the National Assembly, the opposition members gathered at the gates of the Parliament House for an hour. The opposition members were divided in two groups, as some of them blocked the gates and the rest staged a sit-in on the main road, blocking the traffic. They chanted slogans: "No Musharraf no", "Go Musharraf go", and "Uniformed president not accepted". This protest of blocking the gates of the Parliament House started on Thursday after the passage of the two offices bill. Talking to reporters, Qazi Hussain Ahmed said Musharraf got power by force five years ago, and he was destined to be ousted by force. "We would force him out because he is an unconstitutional and un-elected ruler." He called upon all the parliamentarians to abide by the norms of democracy and help get "rid of an Army dictator". Qazi said all the opposition parties were united on this particular issue and this was a good omen for democracy that "rule of a dictator" would not last long.

The News, 16 October 2004

IED injures three soldiers in Shakai

TANK: Three Army soldiers were injured when a remote-controlled improvised explosives device (IED) hit their vehicle in Shakai area of South Waziristan tribal agency. Tribal sources said the incident took place on Thursday evening but it took some time for information from the remote Shakai area to reach Wana and Tank. The vehicle suffered minor damage because the blast was triggered a bit late. By that time, the vehicle had passed the place where the IED was planted and it didn't take the full impact of the blast. Still the three soldiers received injuries and had to be shifted first to a hospital in Wana and later to the Combined Military Hospital in Bannu.

The News, 16 October 2004

Tahirul Qadri resigns

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Awami Tehrik Maulana Tahirul Qadri Friday announced his resignation from the National Assembly seat protesting against the passage of the bill which empowered President Gen Musharraf to hold two offices.

Rising on a point of order when the assembly met Friday morning, Tahirul Qadri said the passage of the bill was a dark chapter in the history of Pakistan. As Qadri was delivering his speech, a large number of members of the opposition parties gathered around him and stopped him making the announcement. He went out of the hall.

The News, 16 October 2004

**Ulema urged to help govt promote religious harmony
President, PM for joint strategy to spread message of love**

RAWALPINDI: President Gen Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Friday asked the Ulema to join hands with the government for the promotion of religious harmony and make pro-active efforts for preventing extremist elements from committing terror against innocent people. In a meeting with religious scholars hailing from various schools of thought, both the leaders called for devising a joint strategy for spreading the message of unity and brotherhood throughout the country and stopping the fringe elements from perpetuating terror crimes against innocent people. The two leaders strongly condemned the recent terrorist acts in the country, saying it was inconceivable that a Muslim should kill fellow Muslims, when they are offering prayers in mosques. They said we have to forge unity in our ranks, shun discord, develop trust and understanding and stop issuing Fatwas against each other and prevent extremists from imposing their views on others as the Islam stands for tolerance, peace and well-being of all.

Dawn, 16 October 2004

Efforts stepped up to capture Mehsud

ISLAMABAD, Oct 15: Security forces on Friday stepped up their hunt for Abdullah Mehsud, an Al Qaeda-linked former Guantanamo Bay prisoner who had masterminded the kidnapping of two Chinese engineers, government officials said. In a commando operation, one of the Chinese and five kidnapers were killed on Thursday. Abdullah Mehsud, who spent 25 months in the US-run Camp X-ray until his release in March, had ordered the kidnapping to pressurize the government into halting counter-terrorism operations in the tribal region bordering Afghanistan.

Daily Times, 16 October 2004

Clerics told to issue edict against mosque attacks

ISLAMABAD: Islamic clerics on Friday told President General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz that they would consider issuing a decree that suicide attacks on mosques and imambargahs were un-Islamic. Talking to the Daily Times after a meeting with the president and prime minister at the former's camp office in Rawalpindi, Coordination Secretary of the Ithad-e-Tanzimat-e-Madars-e-Dinya Qari Hanif Jalandhry said the clerics were urged by the president and premier to issue a decree that suicide attacks on mosques and imambargahs were un-Islamic. "The mullas made it clear to the president and the prime minister that they would only consider it," he said, because they would have to consult scholars authorised to issue such decrees. He said the consultations would be held soon.

The News, 17 October 2004

Violence not to hinder progress: PM

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has expressed the confidence that Pakistan would continue to march on the path of progress despite incidents of violence in different parts of the country. "The government is determined to overcome the activities of miscreants, who are out to destroy the atmosphere of development," Shaukat Aziz said, while talking to The News at an Iftar dinner here on Saturday. Shaukat Aziz said he had a detailed telephonic conversation with his Chinese counterpart on Thursday evening to express condolences over the killing of Chinese engineer in the tribal areas. The Chinese premier while sharing his grief over the gory incident assured him that the friendship between China and Pakistan would remain unaffected since it was very deep-rooted. "Pakistan takes pride in its close ties with China," he added.

The News, 17 October 2004

Body of slain hostage flown to China

ISLAMABAD: The body of a Chinese engineer killed in an Army operation to rescue him from his kidnappers was flown to China on Saturday aboard a Pakistan military plane, officials said. Wang Peng died of bullet wounds in the operation on Thursday in which another abducted Chinese engineer, Wang Ende, was rescued unhurt. Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao saw off the body of the slain engineer. Wang arrived in Beijing late on Friday. He was greeted by vice foreign minister Wu Dawi, before returning to his hometown in eastern Shandong province, the Beijing Times said. Wang, 49, was accompanied by Meng Dequn, the pregnant wife of his slain colleague, Wang Peng.

The News, 17 October 2004

Two blasts target military convoy in Wana

TANK: Two remote-controlled improvised explosives devices (IEDs) targeting a Wana-bound military convoy exploded near Dabara village in Tank district on Saturday morning without causing any human or material damage. The blasts occurred at a distance of 3-km from each other on the main Tank-Jandola-Wana road. It was the first time that such terrorist activity on this busy road was reported from the settled area of Tank district. In the past, militants have fired missiles at the offices of the political agent and other government buildings in Tank city.

The News, 17 October 2004

Government to buy 30 bulletproof cars for VVIPs

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to purchase a fleet of 30 high-priced bulletproof Mercedes Benz for VVIPs costing more than Rs 3 billion. Officials in the Prime Minister's Secretariat confirmed to The News on condition of anonymity that Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has allowed the purchase and sanctioned the amount. The purchase was considered imminent apparently because of security concerns. Following the prime minister's instruction, the Finance Ministry has also given its financial endorsement, which would be over and above the budgeted allocation for 2004-05.

Dawn, 17 October 2004

Oman deports over 1,200 Pakistanis

KARACHI, Oct 16: More than 1,200 Pakistanis deported from Oman for illegal entry arrived here Saturday, many complaining of bad treatment at jails in the Gulf nation, immigration officials and rights activists said. The group was the latest in a stream of Pakistanis to be expelled from Gulf countries for entering or being there illegally. "We have received 1,201 Pakistanis, who were sent back by Oman for entering the country illegally," Iqbal Mehmood, deputy director of the Pakistani Federal Investigation Agency's immigration cell, said.

The News, 18 October 2004

New partnership with Pakistan forged: Powell

WASHINGTON: The United States has forged a new partnership with Pakistan, US Secretary of State Colin Powell said, adding without the cooperation of Pakistan waging war on terrorism would have not been possible. In his remarks to the US Global Leadership Campaign, Powell said: "And I called President Musharraf two days after 9/11 and he agreed that it was time for him to make a strategic choice and he made that choice." "And, three years later now we are working in close partnership with President Musharraf, as we help him to move his country forward at a pace that the Pakistani people can absorb." He said American leadership was also yielding unprecedented cooperation in South Asia. "We have transformed our relationship with India and we have forged a new partnership with Pakistan."

The News, 18 October 2004

Iftikhar lauds tribesmen's cooperation

PESHAWAR: NWFP Governor Iftikhar Hussain Shah has appreciated the cooperation extended by the Mehsud tribe particularly the Jalalkhel subtribe to the government in the operation against kidnapers of two Chinese engineers. He has thanked the elders as well as the entire tribe for their cooperation and support to the government. The Jalalkhel tribe, he added, has sided the forces of rightness besides practically proving their love for Pakistan. This, he said while addressing a grand Jirga of Mehsud elders at Tank on Sunday during a brief visit to the town. The governor also met the delegations of Jalalkhel elders and members of 21-member peace committee. Secretary Fata Security Brig (retd) Mahmood Shah and the Political Agent Asmatullah Gandapur were also present on the occasion.

The News, 18 October 2004

Long-term ties with Pakistan in US interest: Hillary

WASHINGTON: Senator Hillary Clinton on Saturday said United States and Pakistan faced several challenges-the most significant of them came from the menace of terrorism. Addressing a large number of Pakistani-Americans and other guests at a reception held in Los Angeles, she commended the role being played by Pakistan in the war against terrorism. She said it was in the US interest to maintain long-term relationship with Pakistan. Senator Hillary Clinton recalled her meetings with President Musharraf, particularly during her last visit to Pakistan, and said that "he had made difficult but right choices". She said Pakistan should be extended all the support it needed for social uplift of its population, human resource development and particularly revamping of its educational system.

The News, 18 October 2004

Defunct TNSM activist holds villagers hostage

PESHAWAR: An activist of the banned Tehrik Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) has reportedly held dozens of residents of a village hostage in Doag Dara of Dir Upper district amid reports of casualties and burning of houses. Police and local sources said that Haji Muhammad Khan and his men attacked Mina Doag, a village of about 35 houses, on Saturday night and burnt down houses of his rival, Mehmud, after an exchange of heavy firing that continued for more than 24 hours till Sunday night. No independent details of the casualties or damage to property were immediately available due to the inaccessibility of the mountainous area in Tehsil Shringal. However, police sources confirmed that two persons including a man and a girl were killed. Locals, however, claimed that dozens of people are feared dead and injured while the number of burnt out houses was more than two dozens. Some unconfirmed reports put the number of dead and injured to more than 30.

Dawn, 18 October 2004

PML legislators told to follow party line

ISLAMABAD, Oct 17: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Monday held meetings with a number of legislators and advised them to follow the party line in the no-trust vote against the National Assembly speaker on Friday. The ruling party is faced with difficulties following its failure to satisfy a number of groups in the ruling coalition despite the induction of a huge cabinet. Party stalwarts have expressed fears that an angry lot of treasury members might make things difficult for the government on the day the no-trust motion against the speaker is taken up.

The News, 19 October 2004

Courts get more anti-terror powers

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Monday empowered judges of Anti-Terrorist Courts to impound passports of suspected religious terrorists for indefinite period to deal with the threat of terrorism across the country. The bill to amend the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 was passed by the treasury benches with voice vote. Under the new powers, suspected terrorists would not be allowed to get adjournment of their cases except twice. The House cleared the bill in the absence of the opposition parties that boycotted the proceedings to protest against dual office for General Pervez Musharraf. The bill empowered the judges to award life imprisonment to religious terrorists instead of earlier sentence of 14 years in jail.

The News, 19 October 2004

Jihadis barred from collecting donations during Ramazan

KARACHI: The federal government has directed the provincial governments to take special measures for curbing the

collection of Zakat, Fitrana and other kind of donations by any proscribed or Jihadi outfit during the Holy month of Ramazan, it is learnt. Sources in the Interior Ministry told The News that all the law-enforcement and intelligence agencies had been directed to keep an eye on the activities of those workers of proscribed and Jihadi organisations who were on government's watch list to ensure that they would not involve in any kind of donation collection activity. The sources said special instruction were issued to the provinces not to allow Millat-e-Islamia Pakistan (erstwhile Sipah-e-Sahaba), Islami Tehirk Pakistan (erstwhile Tehrik-e-Jaffria), Khuddamul Islam (erstwhile Jaish-e-Muhammad), Jama'atul Furqaan and others banned outfits to collect donations during Ramazan and on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

The News, 19 October 2004

Pak-Afghan trade has picked up: Humayun

ISLAMABAD: Commerce Minister Humayun Akhtar Khan has said that bilateral trade between Islamabad and Kabul has increased after improvement in security situation. Delivering a key-note address to "Evian Group" in Montreux (Switzerland), the other day, the commerce minister said that due to improvement of law and order situation in Afghanistan, bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan has picked up substantially and now it was reaching a level of one billion dollars. "Similarly if the situation improves in South Asia and when SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Area) is successfully concluded, the present low level of trade could grow many folds," he added.

The News, 19 October 2004

Opposition starts work on grand alliance

ISLAMABAD: The opposition in the National Assembly on Monday announced to form a grand alliance to kick off a massive campaign for restoration of democracy and Constitution while formulating its national charter. "We have started consultations to form a grand alliance against the government and its national charter is under process on the basis of which we would go to the masses to kick off a campaign against General Pervez Musharraf," said Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal chief Qazi Hussain Ahmed while talking to newsmen at the Parliament House after the opposition registered its protest boycotting the proceedings of the National Assembly. Acting parliamentary leader of the PML-Nawaz Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan and Deputy Secretary-General of the PPP Shah Mehmood Qureshi were also present on the occasion and seconded the views of Qazi Hussain Ahmed.

The News, 19 October 2004

China feels threat to its engineers

ISLAMABAD: There is a danger to Chinese engineers in Pakistan and Beijing wants guarantee of their security, a senior visiting Chinese official said here on Monday. "We understand, this is a fact, that there is a danger for Chinese engineers in Pakistan," Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei told a gathering of tribal elders in Islamabad. "We want categorical assurance for their safety and also protection of their property." A Jirga (council) of 55 tribal elders from seven agencies held a meeting with senior Chinese officials and expressed deep shock and sorrow over the death of the Chinese engineer Wang Peng during a rescue operation in South Waziristan last week.

The Nation, 19 October 2004

Tribal Jirga assures safety to Chinese workers

ISLAMABAD - The tribal elders on Monday strongly condemned killing of a Chinese engineer and assured the government of extending all-out support to it in its fight against terrorism and provide security to the foreigners working in Pakistan. A grand Tribal Jirga comprising senior leaders from the tribal areas reaffirmed their full support to the government to fight terrorism and assured that all measures would be taken to ensure security and safety of the Chinese working in Pakistan. The delegation with representatives from the seven tribal agencies met with the visiting Chinese delegation in Islamabad.

Daily Times, 19 October 2004

'Pakistan got \$22.58m aid to improve education'

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Monday was told that the Pakistani government had received \$22.58 million in grants since November 2002 from different countries and donor agencies to improve the education system. Records placed before the house by Hina Rabbani Khar, state economic affairs and statistics minister, in response to a question by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's Abid Sher Ali, showed that the amount came from two countries and four institutions and was used for nine projects in Pakistan. The World Food Programme gave \$12.06 million, the European Union gave \$5.21 million, Norway donated \$3.02 million, the United Kingdom contributed \$1.86 million, the United Nations Population Fund gave \$200,000 and the Islamic Development Bank gave \$230,000.

The News, 20 October 2004

Musharraf, Rocca discuss Indo-Pak dialogue process

ISLAMABAD: US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca conveyed Washington's appreciation on Tuesday for Pakistan's role in the fight against terrorism and this month's presidential election in Afghanistan, Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said. In talks with President Pervez Musharraf, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and other officials, Rocca also encouraged Pakistan to continue peace negotiations with India, Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said. Rocca thanked Islamabad for capturing hundreds of terror suspects after the Sept 11, 2001, attacks in the United States, he said. "Rocca, during this meeting with President Musharraf, conveyed her government's appreciation for Pakistan's role in the fight against terrorism," Rashid said Rocca also praised Pakistan for tightening security near the Afghan border before the Oct 9 presidential election in Afghanistan, so that insurgents could not sneak across the frontier to disrupt the vote.

The News, 20 October 2004

Levies revolt, occupy police stations in Naseerabad

JACOBABAD: The Levies policemen occupied four police stations of Naseerabad district in Balochistan by expelling

policemen of the provincial police the other day. The Levies police, Naseerabad, had been merged with the provincial police and all "B" areas of the district were removed following the announcement by former prime minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali to maintain law and order after the murder of the ex-DIG Sibi by unknown dacoits. Levies officials on Monday asked the provincial policemen to leave the police stations and occupied Saddar Dera Murad Jamali, Chatter, Tumboo and Amjhoo Shoree on the plea that the Balochistan government did not fulfil the promises made with them as yet. They demanded restoration of their old status.

The News, 20 October 2004

RAW involved in terror activities in Pakistan: study

ISLAMABAD: India in its bid to become dominant power in the region has used the covert help of its intelligence network — RAW. It is also involved in carrying out terrorist activities in Pakistan, a study reveals. The latest publication of the Institute of Strategic Studies (ISS) — RAW-Covert Instrument of Indian Ambitions — gives a detailed analysis of how India in its pursuit of foreign policy has used the covert help of its intelligence network against Pakistan. Though eyebrows are raised when a report of the "enemy's" intelligence network is published from Pakistan, what gives the publication credibility is that the majority of the research is based on Indian or Western sources with charts based on the Indian Defence Yearbook and Asoka Raina's work of "Inside RAW: The Story of India's Secret Service."

The News, 20 October 2004

Pakistan seeks \$ 1bn Chinese investment

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has discussed new investment projects worth one billion dollar with China, including second phase of the Gwadar deep seaport and other infrastructure projects. In a meeting between Salman Shah, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance, and Chinese delegation led by Chen Jian, Assistant Minister of Commerce, here Tuesday, two sides also agreed to expand the list of items permissible for preferential trade between the two countries, and discuss free trade. The government of Pakistan has sought Chinese technical and financial assistance for Gwadar Phase-II, Karachi Mass Transit, technical assistance in developing Genetically Modified Cotton, Neelum-Jhelum Valley Hydro Power, Private Sector Development with China, urban development, motorways on BOTs and opening up of banking sector in the two countries.

The News, 20 October 2004

Multan blast suspect held

MULTAN: Police have taken one Amjad Hussain Shah into custody from Bhakkar and recovered a computer, mobile phone sims, explosives, formulas of making destructive bombs and a motorcycle from his house. He was arrested when he was fleeing to tribal area via Dera Ismail Khan, sources said. He allegedly worked as the chief commander of the South Punjab Sipaha-I-Muhammad and according to police, Amjad was the prime suspect in the Multan bomb blast case. "On a tip-off, security agencies rounded him up from Bhakkar before he could enter the NWFP and also took a lawyer Rana Fida Hussain into custody who had allegedly provided a house to Amjad in Islampura (Toba Tek Singh)," the sources said.

The News, 20 October 2004

3 soldiers, 4 militants killed in S Waziristan

TANK: At least three soldiers were killed and five others sustained injuries on Tuesday evening when severe fighting broke out in South Waziristan's Spinkai Raghzai town hitherto controlled by militants. There were also reports of the deaths of four militants and two civilians in the fighting. The casualty figures on both sides could go up as the fighting that flared up around Iftar time continued for quite some time. Heavy weapons were also used during the clash and there were even reports of hand-to-hand fighting.

The News, 20 October 2004

Army lost 171 troops in Wana operation: Safdar

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Army and the Frontier Corps have lost 171 troops during the military operations in South Waziristan while 246 militants including more than 100 foreign terrorists were also killed. At his maiden press conference, Corps Commander Peshawar Lt Gen Safdar Hussain said 579 militants were arrested in 35 military operations launched to-date. He said the militants were increasingly resorting to the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) due to their inability to confront the military. "Twenty one troops out of 171 killed in action fell victim to the IEDs and another 80 were injured. We have taken measures to protect our troops, but I fear civilians would suffer as a result of the explosions caused by IEDs," he explained.

Daily Times, 20 October 2004

Abdullah Mehsud slated to face justice soon

PESHAWAR: Justice would soon be served to Abdullah Mehsud, the mastermind behind the kidnapping of the Chinese engineers, Peshawar Corps Commander Lt Gen Safdar Hussain said on Tuesday. "I am confident that he (Abdullah) will not escape. I want to see him punished as soon as possible," he told a news briefing at the 11 Corps Headquarters in Peshawar. Lt Gen Hussain said Abdullah was his primary target, but did not give a timeframe for his capture. "I have several options to ensure that justice is served to Abdullah — military action is one of them."

The News, 21 October 2004

Mahsud's hide-out bombed

Troops enter Spinkai Raghzai; 4 civilians among 5 killed in fresh fighting

PESHAWAR: Troops entered Spinkai Raghzai in South Waziristan on Wednesday as five more deaths were reported. By noon, troops entered Spinkai Raghzai town and began occupying hills and other vantage points. People were seen leaving the conflict area for safer places by early morning. The closure of roads and absence of passenger vehicles compounded their problems. Many families walked on foot to escape the fighting. Phone connections in Spinkai Raghzai were disrupted by the authorities, as the military advanced into the area.

The News, 21 October 2004

Dates set for eight Indo-Pak meetings

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India on Wednesday announced a new schedule for confidence-building measures (CBMs) in which eight meetings between them would start from November 29 and continue till mid December. The foreign ministries of the two countries simultaneously unfolded schedule of meetings in Islamabad and New Delhi. The agreement, in principle, to hold these meetings was reached during Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri's meeting with his Indian counterpart Natwar Singh in New Delhi last month. Meanwhile, Pakistan is still waiting for a response from New Delhi to the dates it has suggested for foreign secretaries' meeting most probably at the end of this year. "Kashmir, peace and security will be taken up by the two foreign secretaries when they meet. We have proposed dates to the Indians and we hope that they will respond", said Foreign Office spokesman Masood Khan during the weekly briefing.

The News, 21 October 2004

LEAs stop action against banned TNSM activist

PESHAWAR: No action has been taken against an activist of the banned TNSM, Haji Muhammad Khan, who was held responsible for burning houses of his rivals in village Doag Dara of Dir Upper, as the CID commandos and police force sent to the area, were withdrawn after a truce. Police said that Khan had given his word to a Jirga of elders to respect the ceasefire for three months and had gone into hiding. They said that 14 houses owned by Khan's rival Mehmud and his relatives had been burnt down so far. The police also claimed to have arrested one Muhammad Arif, a close aide of Haji Muhammad Khan.

The News, 23 October 2004

No-trust against speaker fizzles out

Neither side voted on motion; opposition members tear ballot papers;

ISLAMABAD: The no-confidence motion against Speaker National Assembly Chaudhry Amir Hussain fizzled out amid chanting of slogans and tearing of ballot papers by the opposition members here on Friday. No one cast vote either in favour or against the motion. The treasury benches abstained from the voting process while the opposition boycotted it. Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan moved the motion, which was supported by 111 opposition members who rose from their seats when the deputy speaker asked for counting to grant the leave for moving the motion. The motion read, "that under paragraph (C) of clause (7) of Article 53 of the Constitution read with Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, 1992, the honourable Speaker, Chaudhry Amir Hussain, may be removed from his office." At that time around 26 members of treasury benches were sitting in the House and they abstained from the whole process.

The News, 23 October 2004

4 killed as hunt for Mahsud continues

TANK: A paramilitary soldier and three civilians were killed and eight others, including four troops, were injured as violence gripped parts of the troubled South Waziristan on Friday. In Widhan village on the Makin-Razmak road deep in the Mahsud territory, sources said a militiaman from the paramilitary Frontier Corps was killed and two of his colleagues were wounded when a remote-controlled improvised explosive device (IED) targeted their vehicle. Witnesses claimed the paramilitary soldiers started indiscriminate firing after the incident. A burst of fire killed a woman and her six-year old son in a cab and injured her six-year old daughter. The woman was the daughter-in-law of Qazi Khan of Makin town.

The News, 25 October 2004

Tribesman killed in S Waziristan blast

TANK: Three personnel of the paramilitary Frontier Corps were injured in an explosion caused by a remote-controlled improvised explosive device (IED) in Makeen in South Waziristan on Sunday while the brother of a pro-government tribal elder was killed in a land-mine blast in the same area. Elsewhere in the restive tribal agency, troops recovered some more weapons while searching tribal homes in the former militants' stronghold of Spinkai Raghzai and a Jirga of elders of the three Mahsud sub-tribes in Barwand reiterated their support to the ongoing military operations to hunt down foreign militants.

The News, 25 October 2004

Suicide attacks against Islam, says Ejaz

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Ejazul Haq said that Islam was the religion of peace, tranquillity and safety and all suicide attacks and terrorism acts were against the norms of Islam. Talking to The News at an Iftar-dinner hosted by PML leader Rizwan Sadiq in his honour here Sunday he said that Muslims of the world sustained major damages after the 9/11 attacks so the religious leaders were bound to awaken the people against the menace of terrorism. Ejazul Haq said that in the present circumstances blasphemy law and the Hadood Ordinance needed amendment and the religious leaders should come forward to guide the government in this regard.

The News, 25 October 2004

Three Education Ministry wings abolished; Minister approves reorganisation plan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education Lt-Gen (retd) Javed Ashraf Qazi has gave approval to the reorganisation of the Education Ministry to promote quality education in the country. In a meeting here on Sunday, he said that through this reorganisation, the targets and goals, which the ministry had committed to the international donors and to the people of Pakistan, would be achieved. According to the new structure, Education for All (EFA) Wing, Advanced Education Wing, Science and Technical Education Wing has been abolished. The new wings will included the Projects Wings, having EFA project, Non-formal Basic Education Projects, Science Education project, Technical Education Project, Deeni Madaris Project, Education Sector Reforms project, Adult Literacy Project, Functional Literacy Project, Early Childhood Project, Girls Primary Education Project, Cadet Colleges Project and the Federal Directorate of Education Projects.

The News, 26 October 2004

Musharraf for debate on Kashmir options

ISLAMABAD: Solution to the Kashmir problem can be found by debating different options such as identifying, demilitarising and changing the status of seven regions composing both parts of the disputed territory, said President General Pervez Musharraf here on Monday. He was addressing an Iftar-dinner hosted by Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, several federal ministers, chief ministers of Sindh and Balochistan, renowned figures of the twin cities and senior journalists of both print and electronic media were also present. President Musharraf said: "We want plebiscite in Kashmir, while they (Indians) want the LoC to be made permanent border." He said if both sides continued to stick to their stands, the dispute would persist for 100 years without any solution in sight. Explaining his option for progress towards the Kashmir solution, the president said two regions of the territory in dispute were the AJK and Northern Areas and five regions were under Indian occupation. One of these five regions is linked to AJK because of its Muslim population and common casts of residents. Another region inhabits Balti-speaking Shia Muslims and is closed to the Northern Areas. Jammu is the third region that has Hindu majority. The fourth region comprised Kashmir valley that is Srinagar and its surrounding areas. This region is inhabited by the Muslims. The fifth region under Indian occupation has Budhist majority.

The News, 26 October 2004

More troops deployed in Spinkai Raghzai as clashes continue

TANK: The military reinforced its troops in the former militants' stronghold of Spinkai Raghzai in South Waziristan on Monday as it consolidated its control in the area. The reinforcements fuelled speculation that the military was planning to push further into the Mahsud tribal territory after taking full control of Spinkai Raghzai and Kotki areas. The fresh troops are expected to occupy vantage points by the road leading into Srarogha and other places deep in the Mahsud-inhabited areas. However, the search of tribal homes by the troops in Spinkai Raghzai area could not take place on Monday. The search of homes belonging to the Behlolzai Mahsud sub-tribe would now be carried out on Tuesday. The troops would be looking for hidden weapons and militants during the search. Earlier on Saturday and Sunday, the soldiers had seized weapons of every description from some tribal homes, businesses and a closed tannery and shoe making in Spinkai Raghzai.

The News, 26 October 2004

India sending wrong signals: FO

Says barring Kashmiris from travelling to Pakistan creates misunderstanding

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday said that India was sending wrong signals and creating misunderstandings by not allowing the citizens of held Jammu and Kashmir to travel to Pakistan. In a recent move, New Delhi has sent fresh directives to held Srinagar that henceforth all passports would be valid for travel to all countries "except Pakistan". This new Indian policy comes on the eve of expectations that the bus route between Muzaffarabad and Srinagar would once more be operative. "This is not very helpful and India should never have resorted to such a move. It is certainly not in sync with the present environment and will lead to creating misunderstandings. Islamabad wants more interaction between the people of India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir on both sides. This will also affect the spirit of the present process," said Foreign Office spokesman Masood Khan during a weekly briefing.

Daily Times, 27 October 2004

'Pakistan has 17th most restricted press'

LAHORE: Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF or reporters without borders) has announced its annual worldwide press freedom index ranking Pakistan 150th in a total of 167 countries. North Korea is at the bottom of the list for having the most restricted press. "Freedom of press is threatened most in East Asia (with North Korea at the bottom of the entire list at 167th place and China 162nd) and the Middle East (Saudi Arabia 159th, Iran 158th and Iraq 148th)," the RSF report said.

Daily Times, 27 October 2004

17 die in attack on Mehsud jirga

PESHAWAR: At least 17 tribesmen were killed and many were injured when a pro-government Mehsud jirga in South Waziristan Agency was shelled and attacked with a 107mm rocket on Tuesday afternoon, a tribal elder and officials said. Army spokesman Maj Gen Shaukat Sultan blamed militants for the incident that happened in Sheikh Ziarat near Jandola, 65 kilometres east of Wana. "Militants fired a 107mm rocket at the jirga," he told Daily Times. "The rocket was fired from the Ziarat area at around 5:00pm and security forces immediately responded by targeting the area," the military spokesman said, adding, "According to our information, nine tribesmen died and seven were wounded."

Dawn, 27 October 2004

Protocol with China to be signed during PM visit: Thar Coal Power Project

KARACHI, Oct 26: The protocol for setting up Thar Coal Power Project between Pakistan and China would be signed by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz during his coming visit to China as all initial studies have almost completed to the satisfaction of the stakeholders. This was stated by Sindh Minister for Mines and Mineral Development Irfanullah Khan Marwat on Tuesday. Responding to the questions he told Dawn some more foreign firms, including two other Chinese firms had shown interest to install coal-fired power plants in Sonda and Jhirak coal reserves.

Dawn, 27 October 2004

Options criticized by leaders in AJK

MUZAFFARABAD, Oct 26: Reacting to President Gen Pervez Musharraf's statement on options to resolve the Kashmir issue, Kashmiri leaders were almost unanimous that no lasting solution could be achieved without the consent and involvement of the basic party to the dispute. AJK Prime Minister Sardar Sikandar Hayat appeared worried and told this correspondent: "The options have been floated by President Musharraf without taking the Kashmiris into confidence."

The News, 27 October 2004

Uniform bill to be tabled in Senate today

ISLAMABAD: The bill giving powers to Gen Pervez Musharraf to stay army chief beyond 2004 will be presented in the Senate Wednesday. Law minister Wasi Zafar will table the bill for the approval of the Senate. Opposition parties in the upper House are expected to protest at the time of the tabling of the bill. The Senate session will remain in process for five days. A government official said the Senate session was called to get the most important bill of uniform passed in addition to other bills such as defamation, and anti-terrorism act. The defamation bill is also being tabled in the senate for its approval and enactment after its clearance from the National Assembly.

The News, 27 October 2004

AJK PM for Kashmir plebiscite

ISLAMABAD: AJK Prime Minister Sardar Sikandar Hayat said on Tuesday he was disappointed with Musharraf's proposals. "We believe in a plebiscite, the one which was promised to us by both Pakistan and India," he told AFP. "Now after five decades they are talking about disintegration of Kashmir into six, seven parts. This negates Kashmir's integrity." Sikandar said he welcomed the concept of demilitarising the region, but said there must be some form of "international guarantee" to stop India conducting military options in Kashmir.

The News, 27 October 2004

NA approves death for Karo-Kari

SP level officer to investigate blasphemy, rape charges

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly here on Tuesday passed the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2004 providing severe punishments for those involved in Karo-Kari. The killing of a woman on the pretext of honour has been declared murder punishable with death penalty. However, the government did not agree to the demand of certain quarters that it should retain the right to lodge an FIR against the killer of a woman as usually family members pardon the killers. The government rejected this demand on the grounds that Islam does give such right to Wali and it would not assume the role of Wali. Now the courts have been given the powers to pardon the killers of a girl in case the family elder of the victim strikes any deal with the killers.

The News, 27 October 2004

Pak MPs visits China today

BEIJING: A 20-member parliamentary delegation, led by Speaker National Assembly Chaudhry Amir Hussain, will reach here on Wednesday on a 10-day visit. The delegation will hold formal talks with Wu Bangguo, Chairman China's National People's Congress (NPC) on the same day. The NPC's sources told APP that the delegation would also meet other senior Chinese leaders to discuss matters of mutual interest. They hoped that the visit would help strengthen bilateral cooperation at the level of two parliaments. Sino-Pak friendship parliamentary groups have already been set up in the National Assembly and the NPC to promote their working relations. During the stay, the delegation will also travel to Urumqi, Shanghai and Nanjing

The News, 27 October 2004

Pakistan, Malaysia move toward free trade pact

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia and Pakistan agreed on Tuesday to take the first step towards a free-trade pact and look at cutting import duties on some of each other's exports. Foreign ministers from the two Muslim nations said after a meeting in the Malaysian capital that officials from both sides would start work soon on a preferential trade agreement. "We have agreed to invite a delegation to Pakistan to come and look at a preferential trade arrangement, leading to a free trade agreement," Foreign Minister Khursheed Mehmood Kasuri told a joint news conference.

The News, 28 October 2004

NSC not created to perpetuate rule: Musharraf

Says if we have to learn democracy from Afghanistan

SINGAPORE: Pakistan supports Afghan President Hamid Karzai but democratic polls in its neighbour will not influence Pakistan's political processes, President Pervez Musharraf said in remarks published here on Wednesday. In an interview with Singapore's Straits Times, Musharraf declared "we are with President Karzai" and dismissed suggestions that the Pakistan military maintained links with the former Taliban regime in Kabul for strategic reasons.

Musharraf denied perpetuating his hold on power by creating a National Security Council, which he described as an "institutional check" on the power of the president as well as the Army chief. "Previously, there was no check on me. I could get up and decide among my people: 'The prime minister is stupid and sick. OK. Dismiss him.' That was within my power previously," he said. "I personally believe that the National Security Council will introduce sustainable democracy with checks on everyone, including the Army chief," Musharraf added.

The News, 28 October 2004

Three 'miscreants' killed near Wana checkpoint

TANK: Tension rose in the relatively peaceful Wana valley in South Waziristan on Wednesday when security forces shot dead three men in self-defence. Government officials said troops manning a joint Army-Frontier Corps checkpoint on the Azam Warsak-Wana road fired in self-defence after one of the men, Usman Khan, refused to allow search of the passenger vehicle in which he and others were travelling and aimed his gun at the soldiers.

Daily Times, 28 October 2004

Two-offices bill tabled in Senate

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Wednesday refused to circulate the two-offices bill to elicit public opinion, and it refused to send the bill to the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) to determine whether it contained anything repugnant to Islam. After the

government tabled 'The President to Hold Another Office Bill, 2004' in the upper house of parliament, the opposition moved three motions to demand that the bill be circulated for public opinion and sent to the CII and house standing committee for review. The motions regarding the CII and public opinion were rejected by a majority vote. The motion to send the bill to a standing committee could not be voted on for shortage of time

Dawn, 29 October 2004

NSC will politicize armed forces: Qazi - Fazl, Durrani not to attend meeting

MARDAN, Oct 28: Amir Jamaat-i-Islami Qazi Hussein Ahmed has ruled out the possibility of the participation of both NWFP Chief Minister Akram Durrani and leader of the opposition in the National Assembly Maulana Fazlur Rehman in a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC), however a final decision would be taken by the MMA supreme council meeting which would be held soon. Talking to newsmen here at the Madrassa Tafheemul Quran during his visit to a four-bed hospital set up by the Tafheem Welfare Foundation (TWF), Qazi said that the MMA had already opposed the NSC and would not participate in its meeting. He said that the NSC was a controversial institution because it would politicize the armed forces. He said that such an institution was also established in Turkey, which was now a great hurdle to its governing the Europe Community to it.

Dawn, 29 October 2004

More parties to join ARD

LAHORE, Oct 28: Alliance for Restoration of Democracy chairman Makhdoom Amin Fahim says the incumbent system will go along with Gen Pervez Musharraf. Talking to reporters here on Thursday before a hurriedly-called meeting of the alliance for discussing the Kashmir formula given by Gen Musharraf, he said even in the past all systems given by dictators had gone along with them. He claimed that more parties would join the 17-party alliance soon, as contacts were being made for this purpose. About the ARD's stance on the new Kashmir formula, he said they believed that only the plebiscite ingrained in the UN resolutions could settle the issue. "Seemingly the ARD constituents have disapproved the formula. However, any formal decision on it will be taken after consulting colleagues (in the alliance)." The Makhdoom said frequent military take-overs and resultant military-civil connivance had hindered progress and prosperity of the masses.

Dawn, 29 October 2004

No end to crisis without democracy: PML

KARACHI, Oct 28: The Pakistan Muslim League-N will continue its struggle until true democracy is restored in the country and the 1973 Constitution is revived in its original form. This was stated by the Provincial Secretary General of PML-N Sindh chapter, Mamnoon Hussain, while talking to journalists at an iftar party hosted on Thursday at a local hall on Sharea Faisal. Referring to the prevailing situation in the country, he said that despite unbridled powers, army rulers had pushed the country into a crisis which could not be overcome without revival of true democratic order in the country. The PML leader said there was unrest among people, and the common man was suffering due to the inept policies of military rulers. Despite the tall claims of Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz about reviving the economy, he said the junta had failed to provide relief rule.

Daily Times, 29 October 2004

Bilateral flexibility on Kashmir imperative: FM (Hasan Mansoor)

KARACHI: Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri on Thursday said no unilateral flexibility could resolve the 57-year-old Kashmir dispute and Pakistan and India would have to show flexibility to secure peace in South Asia. "Both of us will have to move from the years-long static positions and involve the Kashmiris in the peace process to resolve this issue," said Mr Kasuri, who was talking to reporters at the State Guest House after returning from Malaysia. He spoke extensively on President Pervez Musharraf's much-publicised proposal of a national debate on a possible solution to the Kashmir issue.

Daily Times, 29 October 2004

Qaeda-linked doctors' bail plea rejected

KARACHI: An anti terrorism court has rejected bail for the Waheed brothers, two doctors allegedly linked to Al Qaeda and charged with helping a local terrorist group, court officials said on Thursday. Heart specialist Akmal Waheed and his brother Arshad Waheed, an orthopaedic surgeon, were arrested in Karachi in July for allegedly providing medical treatment to Al Qaeda-linked militants including foreigners, according to police. The judge said the two were also accused of training and funding terrorists belonging to the militant Jundullah group, which was blamed for an attack on the Karachi corps commander in June.

Daily Times, 29 October 2004

530 Pakistanis deported from Oman arrive

KARACHI: Five hundred and thirty Pakistani nationals who had been deported from Oman arrived in Karachi from Musqat on Thursday. They were arrested two weeks ago after having illegally entered Gulf countries in search of employment. They had paid agents thousands of rupees to arrange for their travel and documents. The Oman authorities put the deportees on a boat in Musqat, which arrived in Karachi three days later. All were allowed to return to their family homes after clearance from Pakistani immigration authorities.

Dawn, 30 October 2004

Treasury gives UK precedence to justify uniform bill (Arshad Sharif)

ISLAMABAD, Oct 29: The government gave references from British parliamentary history to justify the uniform of President Gen Pervez Musharraf in the Senate on Friday. The treasury and opposition members extensively used historical references

in support and against the bill authorising the president to hold two offices beyond December 31. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Sher Afgan Niazi said the British parliament has already set a precedence when it authorized Lord General Oliver Cromwell to remain a member of parliament and retain his army post. Rebutting the opposition criticism of the government for bulldozing an unprecedented two offices bill through the National Assembly, Dr Niazi said history was full of examples of ex-militarymen including Gen Pinochet of Chile, Gen MacArthur of the United States and Gen Kenan Everan of Turkey who played an important role in reconstruction of their nations.

Dawn, 30 October 2004

PPP rejects Musharraf's proposals on Kashmir

KARACHI, Oct 29: Rejecting Gen Musharraf's proposals for Kashmir, Asif Ali Zardari, the interned husband of Ms Benazir Bhutto said that it was a plan to invite foreign troops under the garb of demilitarization of the territory. He expressed these views while talking to newsmen informally in the central prison where he had been brought in connection with a case against him. Mr Zardari said: "Kashmir is of great strategic importance not only to Pakistan, but also for the entire region and Gen Musharraf's offer to demilitarize and invite foreign troops in Kashmir in the grab of United Nations Peace Keeping Force was a well thought out American plan to entrench themselves physically in the area". He was of the view that plebiscite was the only solution of Kashmir issue which had been accepted by the United Nations. Asif Zardari emphasized that Musharraf's plan reflected his own thinking or perhaps the opinion of a few hundred army officers and not the decision of the parliament. He declared that his party would never accept any such proposal.

Dawn, 30 October 2004

Legal cover to jirga system opposed

HYDERABAD, Oct 29: Awami Tehrik leaders have criticized a proposal to give a legal cover to the jirga system and said that this is tantamount to pushing the province of Sindh into the barbaric era of the Mirs. In a joint statement issued here on Thursday, Abdul Qadir Ranto, Abrar Qazi and Alam Shah alleged that it appeared as if the authorities were thinking of handing over Karachi to terrorists and the remaining of Sindh to tribal chiefs. They claimed that if a legal cover was given to the jirga system, chieftains would get the right to kill people and said that it was tantamount to killing an entire nation. Because of the jirga system, they said, the judiciary was being bypassed and the 5,000-year-old tribal system was being imposed on the people to thwart development and crush fundamental human rights. The leaders called upon the 40 million people of the province to rise against the 'black' law.

Jang, 30 October 2004

Hu wants to further develop ties with Pakistan

BEIJING: Chinese President Hu Jintao says China is willing to further develop the "all-round cooperative partnership" with Pakistan, China Radio International reported. During a meeting with visiting National Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Amir Hussain in Beijing on Friday, Hu described China and Pakistan as good neighbours, and observed that Sino-Pak friendship has endured the changing international situations. The president stressed that the promotion of Sino-Pak relations conforms to fundamental interests of the two countries and peoples. Amir said Pakistan and China have enjoyed an "all-weather" friendship. He offered condolence over a Chinese victim killed in the recent hostage incident in Pakistan. He reiterated that the Pakistan government would do more to fight terrorism to prevent recurrence of similar incidents.

Dawn, 31 October 2004

Federation in danger: opposition

ISLAMABAD, Oct 30: The Senate on Saturday witnessed some hard-hitting speeches from nationalist leaders who claimed that unity of the federation had been damaged by President Gen Musharraf, which was evident from the resolutions passed by the provincial assemblies on the issue of uniform. Taking part in the debate on the bill enabling the president to hold two offices simultaneously, senators from Balochistan and the NWFP alleged that Punjab was trying to establish its hegemony over other provinces with the support of armed forces. Senator Raza Mohammad Raza of the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP) claimed: "There is a plan to set up a government of one province over the whole country through military." He said the people of Karachi and Lahore were 'supporting' military dictatorship as development plans were being launched only in these two cities. "Actually efforts are under way to give supremacy to an institution over all other institutions of the country," he said.

Daily Times, 31 October 2004

Treasury senators want release of political prisoners (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: Treasury senators have called for the release of political prisoners for a "national reconciliation" and demanded that the National Accountability Bureau be redefined and placed under parliament's control. The Senate is expected to pass the two-offices bill tomorrow (Monday). Senator Mushahid Hussain of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) demanded the release of political prisoners and confidence-building measures with the opposition. "The time has come for all political prisoners, including Asif Zardari, Javed Hashmi and Yousuf Raza Gillani, to be released. The time has come for national reconciliation," he said, prompting an outburst of applause on both sides of the house. After his speech, Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) leader Raza Rabbani went to Mr Hussain and congratulated him. Treasury members also endorsed his speech. The PML leader said the role of NAB should be redefined and it should be made answerable to parliament.

Dawn, 31 October 2004

Altaf warns against conspiracies

KARACHI, Oct 30: The Muttahida Qaumi Movement chief, Altaf Hussain, has paid tributes to those who had laid their lives on

Oct 31, 1986 when MQM's caravan was attacked and plunged into bloodshed. He stated the conspiracy of exploiters and the drug mafia failed to succeed because of the resoluteness in the MQM cadre and supporters in 1986, adding that any such conspiracy would be foiled. Meanwhile, Altaf Hussain will be the keynote speaker in the international conference to be held in New Delhi under the auspices of the Hindustan Times. Mr Hussain's address would follow a speech by the Indian Foreign Minister, Natwar Singh. Former US foreign secretary Henry Kissinger will address after Altaf Hussain.

Dawn, 31 October 2004

Benazir criticizes role of intelligence agencies: Ensuring quorum in Parliament

ISLAMABAD, Oct 30: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairperson Benazir Bhutto has questioned the legality of parliament in the wake of media reports that intelligence services were called in to ensure quorum. In a statement on Saturday, she said it was an abuse of office to use the administrative machinery for personal gain under the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) laws. "By using the ISI to ensure attendance of parliamentarians, the present cabinet was abusing its office to ensure its continuation despite the inability to muster a quorum - leave alone a majority - on the floor of the House," she said. The former prime minister said in a democracy, the will of the people prevailed through their elected representatives and that the leader of the majority was legally entitled to govern. If the leader of the majority party lost the confidence of his members, he had to resign.

Daily Times, 31 October 2004

'Bin Laden hiding along Pak-Afghan border'

KABUL/KUWAIT CITY: US forces in Afghanistan said on Saturday that they believed Osama Bin Laden was in hiding along the frontier between Afghanistan and Pakistan. After three years hunting the elusive Al Qaeda leader in Afghanistan, US forces are still "not exactly sure" where he is, but have "firm confidence" that they will finally catch him, said spokesman for the US-led coalition Major Scott Nelson during a press conference at Kabul. "He is operating probably in the Afghanistan or Pakistan border area," he said. US commanders had expressed confidence early this year of finally capturing Bin Laden, but have since played down his importance. The Afghan-Pakistan border is 2,500 kilometres in length, mostly unmarked and snakes through rugged mountains and remote plains, making it difficult to patrol. Hundreds of Al Qaeda and Taliban fugitives have found sanctuary and set up training camps in remote Pakistani tribal areas hugging the border, where hardline tribes support their Islamic extremism and hatred of the US.

Daily Times, 31 October 2004

Musharraf could be a bridge to democracy, says Jugnu Mohsin (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: If General Pervez Musharraf succeeds in his declared intention of rolling back political Islam and normalising relations with India, he could prove to be a "bridge to democracy," according to Jugnu Mohsin, managing editor of The Friday Times. She said Gen Musharraf was "learning on the job" and had taken some "bold decisions" which she hoped would be irreversible. "I feel positive about them," she added. Ms Mohsin, on a brief visit here, was speaking on Friday evening to the Washington Policy Analysis Group that had arranged an Iftar reception to welcome her. She said she did not wish to "quibble about electoral democracy" because democracy was much more than just holding elections. She said there was "some movement on the ground" in the desired direction.