

~~BHUTTO-SHARIF BETTER?~~

4/16 Pakistanis may not think so 1/12

IT is unlikely that the misnamed Grand Democratic Alliance between Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party and Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League has anything to do with the non-partisan district polls to be held shortly by Pakistan's ruling junta, the first step in a plan that envisages elected civilian government two years hence. Everything depends on how the election process is managed by the Army, but going by the animosity Musharraf harbours against Sharif and Bhutto, it is more than likely that the entire process will be geared towards keeping these people out. In any case, the law courts have taken care of that to some extent: Sharif, barring a successful appeal to the Supreme Court, is in prison for life, that is, 25 years, with all his property confiscated, while Bhutto and her husband have been sentenced to five years for graft, a quiet beginning to a series of accountability cases. A non-bailable warrant will keep the latter out of the country. There can be no effective democratic leadership, in such circumstances, except for the limited purpose of commanding the streets. Altaf Hussein who leads the MQM from London successfully created a Mohajir constituency for his organisation, without, however, being able to make any substantial dent in Pakistan's established power structure.

Similar logic seems to have prevailed over the attempted rapprochement between Bhutto and Sharif. They know they have no political future under Musharraf and the Army: the present regime derives all of its limited legitimacy from the spectacular failure of democratic politics between the years 1988 and 1999. The GDA's aim, therefore, must be to undermine this legitimacy by exploiting whatever popular discontent there may be. This will happen of its own, sooner or later. The regime is said to have received a stern warning from the US that unless significant progress is achieved on cross-border terrorism, the proliferation of jihadi groups and the CTBT, the US may take a second look at the IMF's standby facilities without which Pakistan is, literally, bankrupt. There is also some kind of urban middle-class clamour for elimination of armed militant groups, a clamour to which Musharraf should, in logic, be sensitive, for three reasons: the Army is by and large middle-class, Musharraf's own programme has a liberal bent, it is the middle-class that was most disenchanted with the political chaos and corruption of the Bhutto-Sharif years. The contradiction is that the most powerful middle-class institution, the Army, is under the sway of radical Islam.

All this does not amount to any advantage for the GDA, for the simple reason that public memory is not all that short. The public, in fact, may still be largely in agreement with Musharraf over the need for a new political leadership in Pakistan but, like Musharraf, doesn't know where to find it. Unless the jihadi groups get completely out of hand and start taking over the country, or the Americans shut off the IMF tap, they won't be too eager to go back to Bhutto-Sharif.

THE STATESMAN

7 JUL 2001

Pak Opposition plans anti-military stir

By MUHAMMAD NAJEEB
Dawn

AA-9 1/12
Islamabad, Nov. 30: Pakistan's two main opposition parties plan to start what could be the first consolidated movement against the military regime after the holy month of Ramzan comes to an end in December.

The Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz group) has joined the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) led by the Pakistan People's Party in what is seen as the coming together of former prime ministers and arch rivals Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto.

"The new alliance will give people confidence in politicians," veteran politician Nawabzada

Nasrullah Khan told reporters in Lahore, adding that the GDA would meet in Islamabad in a week's time to plan its strategy.

The Pakistan Observer said the three main parties in the new alliance — the PPP, PML-N and the Awami National Party — will kick off the movement by opposing the local bodies polls due to start on December 31.

"Both Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto firmly believe that their future in Pakistani politics depends on their ability to block the forthcoming elections," the newspaper said.

On the sidelines of the PML-PPP alliance are the other players — Imran Khan, Ajmal Khat-tak, Qazi Hussain Ahmed and Farooq Leghari. Unlike the PPP and PML, these leaders and

their parties are interested in contesting the local bodies' polls, seeing this as a base for larger participation in national politics.

The military government, led by Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has not reacted to the developments yet. Punjab Governor Lt Gen. (Retd) Mohammad Safdar has however termed the PPP-PML alliance as "temporary and fighting for the love of power." Meanwhile, things have not gone according to plan for the dissidents. Their group has become a gathering of anti-Sharif leaders within the PML. The group's failure to name a leader has also added to the confusion.

"We have yet not decided on the leadership issue," Mian Azhar, the man who opposed Sharif when he was prime minister, said.

THE ASIAN AGE

1 DEC 2000

Pak. scotches summit speculation

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 2. The Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Mr. Inamul Haq, today dismissed as "speculation" reports that a summit meeting between the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, and the Pakistan Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, may be possible after Ramadan if the Indian initiative in Kashmir holds, and if Pakistan responds positively.

Mr. Mansoor Ijaz, an American businessman of Pakistani origin, who claims he is involved in mediation efforts between India and Pakistan, has talked of the possibility of a meeting between Mr. Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf.

Mr. Ijaz, a member of an influential U.S. think-tank on foreign relations and considered close to the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, has made five trips to India and Pakistan in the past year to break the deadlock over the issue.

In a recent article in the *International Herald Tribune* Mr. Ijaz had claimed that he had persuaded Gen. Musharraf to prevail upon the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen to declare a unilateral ceasefire and accused the Chief Executive of going back on the ceasefire under pressure from various quarters.

Mr. Ijaz, who was in Delhi earlier this week, told the *Gulf News* in an interview, "If the Pakistan ruler responds positively and joins the peace effort, then Indo-Pakistani bilateral ne-

gotiations could begin immediately under a summit meeting between Mr. Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf in Delhi and run simultaneously with Indo-Kashmiri talks."

About India's refusal to talk to Pakistan till it stopped all support for alleged "cross-border terrorism", Mr. Ijaz told the paper that "in making peace, it is essential to find face-saving mechanisms for all parties to come to the table ready for the tough task of making concessions aimed at a permanent solution."

In the course of his stay in New Delhi, Mr. Ijaz had told journalists that he intended to visit Islamabad over the weekend and seek a meeting with Gen. Musharraf. It could not be immediately ascertained whether Mr. Ijaz has already landed in Pakistan.

Nambiar for Delhi

Meanwhile, the High Commissioner to Pakistan, Mr. Vijay K. Nambiar, who is to visit New Delhi on December 5, is expected to hold extensive consultations with all those who matter on the peace initiative.

Incidentally this would be the his first visit to New Delhi since he took charge in the second week of August. The visit assumes significance in view of the hope generated by the Kashmir initiative and the directive by Pakistan to its troops to "exercise maximum restraint" on the LoC.

"Obviously, the Indian High Commission would like to be briefed on the latest devel-

opments and the stand to be taken on the formulation put forth by Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir tangle," a senior High Commission official said.

Early this week, the Pakistan High Commissioner to India, Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, was here for consultations on the Indian announcement. He has since returned to New Delhi and is expected to convey to the Indian Government Pakistan's thinking on the ceasefire announcement.

The Pakistan High Commissioner in New Delhi must have been taken into confidence about the response that was made public today.

'Ready for talks'

PTI reports:

In Guwahati, the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, today said the Government was ready to hold talks with any militant outfit of the country but there would be no compromise with outside forces.

"Our doors are always open for misguided youths of our country who have been led astray but we will not talk with Pakistan unless the ISI stops aiding and abetting terrorism," Mr. Fernandes said after delivering the second Lachit Barphukan memorial lecture here. After Kargil, there could be no compromise on the country's security and all help to terrorists must stop "before we can have talks with them".

THE HINDU

- 3 DEC 2000

Pakistan's double jeopardy

By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, DEC. 3. The unrestrained military adventurism of Pakistan on two fronts — Kashmir and Afghanistan — has finally come up against some serious political resistance for the first time in a decade. Until recently it seemed there was nothing in the world to inhibit the Army in Pakistan from pursuing expansionist policies across its borders despite the parlous state of the nation's economy and decaying internal structures. But the apparent unlimited autonomy of the "visionaries" in Pakistan army's General Headquarters in Rawalpindi is now being challenged in both Kashmir and Afghanistan.

After playing on the backfoot in Kashmir for more than 10 years, New Delhi has finally seized the initiative with its unilateral Ramadan ceasefire. The ennui with violence in the Kashmir Valley and the growing international pressure on Pakistan to stop fanning the flames have let India fashion with confidence a more purposeful policy.

Islamabad's belated response to the initiative is indeed a consequence of the new sentiment for

peace and dialogue in the Valley. The Generals in Pakistan are also being nudged by leading western nations to give peace a chance in Kashmir. The international pressure against Pakistan on the Afghan front is more visible and open. The United Nations Security Council, under goading from the United States and Russia, is considering a more punitive set of sanctions against the Taliban regime that will put its mentors in Islamabad in the spot.

All indications are that the new sanctions resolution will be approved by the Security Council in the next few days. It is a measure of the "genius" of Taliban and its mentors that they have facilitated a convergence of interests between Washington and Moscow who had played out one of the last acts of Cold War in Afghanistan a little more than a decade ago.

Pakistan's policies have also allowed Iran, a leading Islamic nation, and India, its arch rival, to become key players in the anti-Taliban coalition. Even China, Pakistan's self-proclaimed "all-weather friend", is unlikely to stand in the way of additional sanctions against the Taliban. The move to expand sanctions

against Kabul is a reflection of the growing frustration of the international community at its inability to persuade Pakistan to either rein in the Taliban or end its military intervention in Afghanistan.

The objective of the new sanctions is twofold. One is to mount additional pressure on the Taliban leadership, by freezing its foreign accounts, closing its offices abroad, and prohibiting all international flights (except humanitarian ones), and restrictions on travel by the senior government officials. The other is to focus squarely on Pakistan's military support to the Taliban. The proposed arms embargo is deliberately limited to the Taliban and would allow external military assistance to its opponents in the northern alliance.

Skeptics argue sanctions are rarely effective in the real world, and that it is impossible to prevent Pakistan from violating the new sanctions with impunity. The supporters of the arms embargo against the Taliban suggest that the resolution will be a signal to Pakistan that it is now on notice, and more action, possibly including military, could follow in the future.

There is nothing in the public domain in Pakistan to suggest that the military leadership there is reviewing the fundamentals of its policy in Kashmir and Afghanistan. Its responses to the Indian initiative in Kashmir and the world appeals on Afghanistan appear tactical rather than strategic. Pakistan's military adventurism in both the conflicts has been driven by a sense that victory is round the corner and a little more time and effort would produce spectacular political triumphs in Kashmir and Afghanistan.

But the latest developments in the two conflicts are forcing Pakistan to pause for a moment take a deep breath and reevaluate its options. The big question is whether Gen. Pervez Musharraf has either the power or the will to launch Pakistan on a new course that rejects external adventure and focuses on internal development. If the Pakistani generals can shake off the *jehadis* and choose a different path, India and the world will be ready to make a new beginning with Pakistan. If they cannot change the direction, they will push Pakistan towards greater political isolation. It is a tough call, but it is their call.

THE HINDU

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DEC 2000

Political parties join hands to restore democracy in Pakistan

HT Correspondent
Islamabad, December 4

PAKISTAN'S LEADING political parties Pakistan Peoples Party and Pakistan Muslim League have joined hand with 16 other regional parties to form an alliance against the military regime of General Pervez Musharraf.

The alliance named as Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy vowed to launch struggle for the restoration of democracy.

This was announced by the father of all such political alliances in the past and veteran politician Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan at a Press conference last night. He was flanked by the second string leadership of the PPP and the PML. While PPP chairperson and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is currently in self exile after being convicted by a court in 1999, the chief of PML and another former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is currently under custody since being ousted from the office last October by General Pervez Musharraf.

The alliance demanded that the military should immediately return



Nawabzada Nasrullah (L) welcomes Kusloom Nawaz, wife of former PM Nawaz Sharif, at a meeting in Islamabad on Sunday. Photo: AFP

to barracks and establish an interim national government which should ensure immediate holding of general elections in the country. The alliance bitterly criticised the policies of the military regime and alleged that the military-led government is targeting politicians alone at the garb of accountability.

The alliance also demanded reinvestigation of corruption cases against Benazir and Nawaz Sharif by an independent truth and reconciliation commission.

They also demanded setting up of an autonomous and independent election commission to ensure free, impartial elections

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

5 DEC 2000

Banishment for 10 years

Sharif in exile deal buzz

FROM SHEREE SARDAR

Islamabad, Dec. 9 (Reuters): Pakistan's jailed former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has made a deal with the military government under which he will receive a pardon in exchange for going into exile for at least 10 years, senior sources in his party said on Saturday.

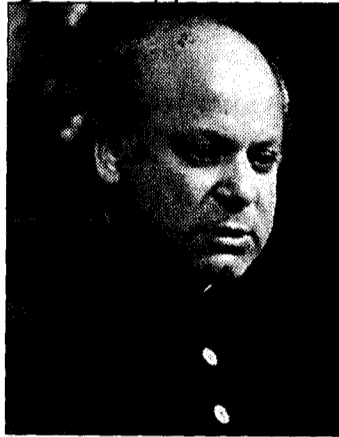
A government spokesman said Sharif, now serving a life sentence in the Attock military fortress, had requested permission to seek medical attention abroad. The spokesman said he did not know if a pardon was under consideration.

Sharif's wife Kulsoom, who has taken over directing the Pakistan Muslim League in his absence, said Saudi officials had carried out extended negotiations on the jailed leader's future but she did not know the outcome.

The party sources said Sharif would leave for Saudi Arabia as early as tomorrow after receiving a presidential pardon for the series of crimes for which he is now serving multiple sentences.

Sharif, his wife, his father-in-law and a brother who is also in prison on related charges would all accompany him into exile after the former Prime Minister promises not to re-enter Pakistan for 10 years, the sources said.

The head of the state's information department, Anwar Mehmood, said the government was considering a request by Sharif, who reportedly suffers heart problems, to seek medical attention abroad. Sharif was removed from power in a bloodless coup in October 1999 after he at-



Nawaz Sharif: Last straw

tempted to fire the head of the armed forces, Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

Musharraf has run the country since then with the title of chief executive, vowing to create a new political system that would exclude the traditional political circles dominated by people like Sharif.

After the coup Sharif was convicted on a number of charges, including corruption. Sharif received a life sentence for "hijacking" because he attempted to prevent Musharraf returning while on a flight from Sri Lanka after ordering his dismissal as army chief. A deal between the army and Sharif would change the political landscape. Sharif's party has just joined an alliance with Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party that has the single goal of ending military rule. Sharif's removal by the army marked the culmination of a decade of political turmoil in Pakistan.

THE TELEGRAPH

10 DEC 2003

Sharif exiled to Saudi Arabia

AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD, Dec. 9. — Mr Nawaz Sharif was released from jail tonight and exiled to Saudi Arabia by the military government that overthrew him a year ago.

"This decision has been taken in the best interest of the country and people of Pakistan," said a statement by state-run news agency, Associated Press of Pakistan.

Saudi Arabia today issued seven visas for Mr Sharif and members of his family.

In Islamabad, Mr Sharif's wife, Mrs Kulsoom Nawaz, was preparing to leave Pakistan with her family.

The whereabouts of Mr Sharif, who was serving a life sentence on charges of hijacking and terrorism, was not immediately known, but he was reportedly being transferred to an air force base near Islamabad.

Mr Sharif and his family members may board a special aircraft for Saudi Arabia tomorrow. A member of the Saudi royal family reportedly brokered Mr Sharif's release and exile.

Earlier, Pakistan's information secretary, Mr Anwar Mahmood, said the deposed Prime Minister, who is apparently suffering high blood pressure

and a heart ailment, had sought permission to leave the country for medical treatment.

One report said Mr Sharif appointed a new president of his Pakistan Muslim League earlier today, amid speculation that he had struck a deal with the army.

Mrs Sharif, who met her husband earlier today, said he needed immediate medical treatment. A tearful Mrs Sharif told reporters her husband's face was pale and he was suffering chest pains.

"His face becomes pale and he grabs his chest while walking even up to the toilet. I'm prepared to take my whole family abroad if given a chance. I'll go by the first flight. Even if he refuses to go abroad, I'll take him with me," she said.

Mr Mahmood, however, said the doctors attending on Mr Sharif had said his condition was stable.

Earlier in the day, sources in Mr Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League said the former Prime Minister had struck a deal with the military government under which he would receive a pardon in exchange for going into exile for at least 10 years.

The News reported that Mr Sharif's elder daughter, Mariam, and younger son, Hassan,

had played a vital role in facilitating the deal.

Sources privy to the behind-the-scene developments said Mr Sharif had agreed to surrender a part of his wealth against liabilities, leave Pakistan and stay away from politics for years to come.

"Hassan had been meeting some top officials of a western power in the recent past, while Mariam had been frequently travelling to West Asia, calling on members of a ruling family over there," the daily said.

"Once out of Pakistan, none of the family members will make any statement against Pakistan's ruling military elite," a source said.

A PML leader said a member of the Saudi royal family would visit Pakistan to try for reconciliation between Mr Sharif and the government.

Mr Sharif was overthrown last year by the military on the charge of corruption. Corruption is a major issue in Pakistan where four successive governments have been ousted on the charge since 1990.

It's not, however, clear how Mr Nawaz Sharif's departure will affect the Pakistani army's campaign to clean up the country's corrupt political system.

THE STATESMAN

10 DEC 2000

Sharif begins exile in Saudi Arabia

Jeddah, December 10

OUSTED PAKISTAN Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has been exiled to Saudi Arabia after a presidential pardon, a Saudi source said. He flew into Jeddah today.

The source said Sharif arrived on a private Saudi plane with several family members. He would stay in Jeddah to visit Islam's holiest sites at nearby Mecca and Medina.

The ousted Prime Minister would then move to Riyadh for medical tests. "The choice of Saudi Arabia for the exile is a guarantee he will not participate in politics hostile to Islamabad's military regime. If he did, it would be something the kingdom cannot tolerate on its territory," a diplomatic source said. Saudi authorities avoided any comment on Sharif's arrival.

In Islamabad, the Government of military ruler General Pervez Musharraf said Sharif was pardoned from serving the rest of his lengthy sentences on hijacking and tax evasion. He was jailed earlier this year.

Big fines, seizure of property worth almost \$10 million and Sharif's disqualification from public office for 21 years would remain in force though. The Pakistan Government said: "Over the past few months, Nawaz Sharif and his family had appealed to the Chief Executive and the

President for clemency. They pleaded his failing health and need of special medical care."

Sharif's son Hasan refuted the official stand. "I don't think Musharraf released my family as a goodwill gesture. The regime is illegitimate. He tried to keep my family in jail as long as pos-



Kulsoom Nawaz (centre) with her daughter Maryam, son-in-law Mohammad Safdar and grandchildren before leaving for Saudi Arabia on Sunday. Photo: AP

sible." Hasan ran a campaign for his father's release from his London home.

Saudi Arabia, with 800,000 Pakistanis, has been a close Islamabad ally. It has extended billions of dollars in aid over the years. Shortly

after the coup, Riyadh threw its support behind the new Government.

In November 1999, Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem al-Thani met Sharif in prison. The minister dubbed the visit a part of a humanitarian mission launched by Doha and Riyadh. Emirates President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahayan too urged Musharraf last year to show "clemency" towards Sharif.

Reports from Islamabad said a Saudi prince had been mediating with Pakistani authorities for Sharif's release. According to his family, the former premier suffered a cardiac disorder last week at the high-security Attock Fort near Islamabad. He was released early on Sunday and taken to a military hospital for a check-up. Later, he joined his family aboard a medically equipped plane from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan officials and associates said.

Sources close to the family said Sharif's ailing father accompanied him along with Mian Mohammad Sharif, jailed brother Shahbaz Sharif, wife Kulsoom Nawaz and other close relatives. "We are not going of our own will," Kulsoom Nawaz told reporters as she left home. "This is our country. We will come back when his health permits." On their reported appeal for clemency, Kulsoom said Sharif was "greatly disturbed by the reports of a so-called deal." (AFP)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

11 DEC 2000

Nawaz Sharif's exile will strengthen military

Jean-Claude Chapon
Islamabad, December 10

PAKISTAN'S MILITARY regime will strengthen its position against an opposition already weakened by internal divisions by sending ex-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to join Benazir Bhutto in exile, analysts said.

The three main Opposition parties -- whose activities have been curbed by the military regime since an October 1999 coup -- are now all bereft of their leaders.

Sharif, of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), was pardoned by President Rafiq Tarar and left on Sunday with his family for Saudi Arabia.

The deposed leader was serving a life term imposed in April for hijacking and terrorism and 14 years for corruption handed down in July.

Benazir Bhutto has been forced to lead her Pakistan People's Party (PPP) from abroad after going into voluntary exile before being condemned to five years in jail for corruption in 1998, as Sharif took power.

Altaf Hussein, head of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) -- considered to be the country's third political power -- has lived in exile in London for several years.

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement represents millions of Muslim refugees who fled India during the break up of the sub-

continent to live in Pakistan's southern Sindh province.

"All these exiles can only have a negative effect on the capacity of the parties to oppose a military regime," predicted a diplomat, who said General Pervez Musharraf had also avoided encouraging a revolt of certain "party barons."

Similar fates



- Both Sharif and Bhutto, once bitter foes, were twice elected and twice dismissed.
- Bhutto, charged with corruption, now lives in London; Sharif exiled to Saudi Arabia.
- Both continue to head their parties.

"Even if Mrs Bhutto has succeeded to hold up the party, we can doubt whether Mr Sharif can do this, as the tensions within the League are already very strong," added the Western diplomat, who asked not be named.

Over the last few weeks, the military have already succeeded in weakening the Muslim League by prompting a revolt of certain "party barons" against Kulsom

Nawaz, who took over the party reins after her husband was jailed.

The dissidents oppose the formation of the two-year old Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) -- which recently became the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD) -- who are fighting for an end to the military regime and the restoration of democracy within the country.

The Alliance includes the PPP, MQM and several other small regional political parties.

League opponents regrouping around Ejaz-Ul Haq, son of former dictator Zia-ul Haq and former Minister of Interior Sharif Chaudhry Shujat Hussein, refuse to join the PPP and MQM, and challenge any strategic opposition to the military regime.

An attitude also adopted by the less important but well organised religious parties of this deeply religious country like the leading fundamentalist Jammaat-i-Islami (JI) party which approved the military coup but condemned on Sunday the military "leniency" regarding Sharif's exile.

The secretary general of Jamaat-i-Islami, Syed Munawar Hussain, said the dramatic event was a "major blow" to the credibility of the regime's ongoing accountability drive to punish the corrupt.

Meanwhile, an absence of key leaders in the ARD will weaken its power, where the margin for making inroads is already narrow, said the analysts. (AFP)

Gloom in loyalist camp

NAWAZ SHARIF'S sudden departure into exile Sunday in a suspected deal with the country's military rulers saddened loyalists in his divided party.

Dissidents who recently forced an open split in the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) by demanding election of a new leader, however, rejoiced over the dramatic development.

"This is unprecedented that the whole family has left," said a central PML leader Ejaz Shafi, a close aide to Sharif. "Party workers may have been shocked but now General Pervez Musharraf can at least announce the elections after Sharif is out," he said.

Another PML leader, Mushahidullah, said: "I feel sad. Anyhow I don't have to go to jail for Sharif's release." Musahidullah, who has been to prison twice for demonstrating in public, said exile was also a punishment. "I hope PML workers will understand the circumstances Sharif and his family had gone through."

A female loyalist, Shamim Akhter, hit out at Sharif's wife Kulsom. "I blame Kulsom for all this as she has been saying from the day one that her agenda is just to seek Sharif's release. She has succeeded but hurt feelings of millions of loyalists," she said. (AFP, Karachi)

Key events leading to Sharif's exile

Oct 12, 1999: Nawaz Sharif ousted from power and placed under house arrest after he tried to sack the then army chief General Pervez Musharraf.

Oct 15: Musharraf declares Emergency, suspends the Constitution and proclaims himself the country's Chief Executive.

Nov 18: Case of treason and conspiracy to murder registered against Sharif.

Nov 18, 2001: Sharif and six co-accused including his brother Shabaz are charged with abduction, attempted murder, hijacking and terrorism.

Jan 26: Trial begins at Karachi anti-terrorism court.

Apr 6: Sharif sentenced to two life terms, confiscation of his property ordered. He is found not guilty of attempted murder and kidnapping.

Apr 12: Sharif files appeal in the Sindh High Court against conviction.

May 12: Hearings begin in a corruption case against Sharif at an anti-graft court in the high-security Attock Fort.

June 2: Judge indicts Sharif on charges of concealing assets and tax evasion for hiding the purchase of a Mi-8 helicopter in his income tax returns.

July 22: Sharif is sentenced to 14 years and banned from public office for 21 years for corruption. Judge also fines him \$ 380,000.

Aug 17: Defence lawyer tells the appeal court the Karai conflict triggered a power struggle between Musharraf and Sharif which led to the coup.

Sept 29: Court dismisses Sharif's plea to summon General Musharraf to testify to the events which took place on October 12.

Oct 30: A prosecution plea for Sharif's sentence to be raised to death is rejected.

Nov 20: Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League is in turmoil as a factional dispute erupts over party leadership.

Dec 5: Kulsom Nawaz demands her husband be released from prison for urgent treatment for a suspected heart problem.

Dec 18: Sharif is pardoned. Goes into exile in Saudi Arabia with his family.



Britain to freeze Bhuttos's assets

Vijay Dutt
London, December 10

THE BRITISH Government is all set to freeze the assets of Benazir Bhutto and her husband Asif Zardari here. Home Secretary Jack Straw would also direct the Scotland Yard to help Pakistani authorities to recover money allegedly stolen by Bhutto and her husband.

Ms Bhutto has been away from London since last few months and is living in Dubai. This did surprise many because in the past one year she spent most of her time at her apartment in Queen's Gate, Kensington. She was known to have decided to live in London. Her children were admitted to a school here.

According to the Sunday Telegraph report, A Foreign Office spokesman stated, "Our understanding is she has left (London) because she fears that the net is closing."

Home Office Minister Charles Clarke also confirmed that Home Office officials had a meeting with General Amjad, representative of Pakistani regime, in London last Sept to "explore the possibility of assistance available" to recover

funds that Islamabad alleges have been misappropriated.

Ms Bhutto told the Sunday Telegraph, "I am in the dark about the matter of assets and any investigation." Her spokesman insisted that the only thing she owned in Britain was a small flat. But, he admitted that she has now left Britain.

Pakistan's anti-corruption investigators had conducted a survey of the Bhuttos' assets here in October. According to their report, the two have amassed more than a billion pounds in assets overseas. The two allegedly hold 26 bank accounts and 14 properties including the pound, 2.5 million house, Rockwood, in Surrey, four houses in London, a stud farm in Texas and two houses in France.

The chief prosecutor of the NAB, Farouk Adam, has been quoted in the Sunday paper saying, "We have documents that show irrevocable proof that these properties and bank accounts belong to Benazir Bhutto and her husband."

Ms Bhutto and her spokesman, however, insist that the accusations are part political victimisation.

WE WERE FORCED TO LEAVE: KULSOOM

Sharif exiled to Saudi Arabia

By B. Muralidhar Reddy *FD-1*

from (1)
ISLAMABAD, DEC. 10. In a day of swift and unbelievable developments, the military Government in Pakistan pardoned the former Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, for all his "omissions and commissions" and packed him off on an exile to Saudi Arabia along with 17 of his close family members.

Mr. Sharif reached Jeddah in a Saudi aeroplane that took off from the military airport in Islamabad at 10.54 a.m. (11.26 IST). The Sharif clan is expected to move to the Saudi capital, Riyadh, after medical tests for his heart trouble, as part of the deal brokered by the Saudi Royal family with the Musharraf regime.

Hours before the departure, Ms. Kulsoom Nawaz, Mr. Sharif's wife, insisted that they were not fleeing the country but were sent into exile. "Those who have put my husband behind bars have forced us to leave the country. We have not sought any pardon from the Government."

A Government press statement issued early on Sunday insisted that the clemency has been granted on a specific request of the family and the readiness expressed by Saudi Arabia to allow the family to take shelter in the country. "Over the past few months Mr. Nawaz Sharif and his family had been appealing to the Chief Executive and the President of Pakistan for clemency. They had also filed a petition requesting for the waiver of punishment awarded by the Sindh High Court in the aircraft case and the accountability court in the helicopter case... Recently, Pakistan's closest friend Saudi Arabia offered the Government of Pakistan to accept the Sharif family for medical treatment on humanitarian grounds if exiled to their country," the announcement said.

Mr. Sharif has been awarded life imprisonment along with a fine of Rs. 500,000 and forfeiture of property worth Rs. 500,000,000 in the plane hijack case early this year. An appeal against the award is pending in a higher court. In the "helicopter case" Mr. Sharif was awarded 14 years of imprisonment and Rs. 20,000,000 fine.

The Government announcement said on the advice of the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, the President, Mr. Rafiq Tarar, has pardoned Mr. Sharif's remaining jail sentence while the rest of the punishments awarded by the courts, which includes fines, forfeiture of property and disqualification from public office would remain in place. Among those who have accompanied Mr. Sharif include Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, his brother and former Chief Minister of Punjab who was also in jail on corruption



Ms. Kulsoom Nawaz, wife of the deposed Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, leaving her Islamabad residence with her grand-daughter, Mehru, prior to their departure from Pakistan on Sunday. (Inset) Mr. Nawaz Sharif.— Reuters

charges. His wife, mother and father are part of the 17-member team. Barring the children of one of his brothers, the entire clan was part of exile entourage. Shortly after midnight the President reportedly signed the clemency papers and the former Prime Minister and his son were brought from the Attock Fort jail straight to the Armed Forces Institute of Cardiology in Rawalpindi. Most of the family arrived at the airport by 3 a.m. but they had to wait till 10 a.m. in the morning as the plane from Saudi Arabia reached only around 9.30 a.m.

Early on Sunday, the Sharif family shifted their luggage from Lahore to Islamabad in a truck. It is believed that the Government will take over the Lahore house along with some other properties in London in lieu of the fines imposed by the courts on Mr. Sharif and his family members.

Blackhole for Sharif: Page 14

THE HINDU

17 DEC 2000

Doubts over Musharraf regime's motives

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

✓ **ISLAMABAD, DEC. 10.** The former Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif's departure for Saudi Arabia is expected to have profound implications for the military government as well as the political parties here.

The Musharraf regime, no doubt, can breathe easy but it would have to answer a number of inconvenient questions regarding its much publicised accountability drive. Bringing to book corrupt politicians was one of the military's major planks when it took over in October 1999. Several high-profile politicians including Mr. Sharif were facing charges under the accountability drive.

The Musharraf Government termed the grant of clemency to Mr. Sharif as a decision taken in the "best interests of the country and the people". However, there would be few takers for the explanation.

The Musharraf Government is already at the receiving end from the intelligentsia and the press for its inability to fulfill the expectations it triggered in the wake of Mr. Sharif's ouster in a bloodless coup. And the manner in which it cut a deal with the former Prime Minister is bound to further disillusion the people.

Otherwise, in the short-run at least it has every thing to gain. After the recent bailout package presented by the International Monetary Fund, Mr. Sharif's exile must have been the most pleasing news for the military top brass.

The Pakistan People's Party chief and former Prime Minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, and the Mutte-hida Quami Movement leader, Mr. Altaf Hussain, are both in London on exile.

With the leaders of the three main parties out of the country, the Musharraf Government can afford to chalk out an "exit strategy". The current scenario opens up several options for the military government.

It can consider reviving the suspended National and State Assemblies. It can install a civilian government of its choice without worrying about any serious resistance.

It is now relatively easy for the Government to control the political parties left behind by the leaders in exile. The military can prop up a leader of its

choice from within the political parties and pit him against the established leadership. The possibilities are indeed endless.

At the political level, the journey of Mr. Sharif to Saudi Arabia is indeed a major setback for the political parties. The development could not have come at a more inopportune moment as the parties were trying to make a beginning by floating a new alliance of parties against the military. Only last week, the leaders of Mr. Sharif's PML, Ms. Bhutto's PPP posed as comrades in-arms against the Army rule.

Over a dozen parties came together under the banner of Alliance for Revival of Democracy (ARD). In a hard-hitting resolution against the Musharraf Government, the alliance vowed to take to the streets and pressure the Army to return to the barracks and hold immediate elections under a civilian set-up. All that looks like a dream now.

For Ms. Bhutto and Mr. Hussain, absence from the country has not made any difference to their following. But the same cannot be said of Mr. Sharif. The PML suffered a split on the question of aligning with PPP and the rebel faction is more than happy with the latest turn of events.

Parties unhappy

As expected, political parties and religious organisations have hit out at decision to grant clemency for Mr. Sharif despite the serious charges levelled against him.

In a statement, the PPP said the release of Mr. Sharif as "part of a plea bargain" had exposed the real goal of the so-called accountability. "It is clear that accountability has little to do with corruption and everything to do with achieving political ends by fair means or foul for a certain political agenda", it said.

The Jamaat-e-Islami secretary-general, Syed Munawar Hussain, said allowing Mr. Sharif to go on exile was a major blow to the credibility of the regime's drive to punish the corrupt. "It is unfortunate for the country that both the corrupt rulers of the country, Ms. Bhutto and Mr. Sharif, have succeeded in taking refuge abroad," he said.

Cricketer-turned-politician, Mr. Imran Khan, said Mr. Sharif's exit proved that his political philosophy was only to enrich himself and his clan.

THE HINDU

11 DEC 2000

Sharif arrives in Saudi Arabia with family

ASSOCIATED PRESS & UNI

RIYADH, Dec. 10. — Mr Nawaz Sharif today arrived for exile in Saudi Arabia, more than a year after his government was overthrown by the military.

The former Pakistani Prime Minister and his family arrived in Jeddah on a Royal Saudi plane in the early afternoon amid a tight media blackout and was whisked off to Mecca for a pilgrimage, sources said.

After the pilgrimage, they were to fly to the capital Riyadh, where Mr Sharif was to undergo a medical check-up at a military hospital. Airport officials said the security in the kingdom surrounding the arrival was unprecedented.

The junta issued a statement

SON ELATED

NICOSIA, Dec. 10. — Mr Nawaz Sharif called his son in London saying he had just been freed and was on his way to Saudi Arabia. "It's been a wonderful time. I had no idea," said Mr Hasan Sharif from England "I just want to hug him." — AFP

saying: "On advice of the chief executive (Gen Pervez Musharraf), the President of Pakistan has pardoned Nawaz Sharif's remaining jail sentence while the rest of punishment...Will remain in place."

The former Prime Minister had to forfeit property valued at \$100 million and pay a \$500,000 fine; he also

reportedly handed over at least two of his factories to the government.

He left the country from an air force base near Islamabad with his wife, parents, his three children and their families, his brother Shahbaz, former chief minister of Punjab, his wife and daughter. Also allowed to leave was Mr Sharif's younger brother Abbas and his sons. Both Abbas and Shahbaz were in jail on corruption charges.

Mrs Sharif said: "Pakistan will never be far from our hearts. We pray our countrymen will be prosperous and whenever Nawaz Sharif's health is better we will come back." There was no indication, however, that the military would ever allow Mr Sharif to return.

THE STATESMAN

11 DEC 2000

Musharraf slammed for allowing Sharif to leave

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's major political and religious parties have slammed the military regime for allowing deposed premier Nawaz Sharif and his family members to live in exile in Saudi Arabia and demanded that the deal under which he had been freed be made public, media reports said on Monday.

The influential Pakistani English daily, 'The Nation', in a strong editorial, termed Mr Sharif's departure deal as a "great betrayal", while the "Dawn" wrote that with a resurgent former premier being removed from the political scenario, "few excuses remain for holding up the return of democracy".

The parties condemned the government for making a "mockery" of the fight against corruption in Pakistan by releasing Mr Sharif who faced a number of corruption cases. The parties also hit out at the former premier for striking an "underhand" deal with the regime of Gen. Pervez Musharraf.



Nawaz Sharif

Former premier Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) termed the presidential pardon for Mr Sharif, who was serving jail sentences for his role in hijacking the presidential plane and corruption charges, as part of a "plea bargain" that had exposed the real goal of so-called accountability.

"It is clear that accountability has little to do with corruption and everything to do achieving political ends by fair or foul means for a certain political agenda," a PPP spokesman said.

Fundamentalist and religious parties like the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Pakistan Awami Tehrik and several others said the deal to release Mr Sharif left the "existence

of the government and the accountability drive null and void".

Referring to Asif Ali Zardari, the jailed husband of Ms Bhutto, the PPP spokesman said that Mr Zardari had been granted bail for medical treatment by several courts but he was still in prison whereas Mr Sharif was freed on health grounds bypassing the judiciary.

On the future of the multi-party Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD), he said it was too early to speak on the participation of the Pakistan Muslim League (N), the party led by Mr Sharif.

PML (Chattha) chief Hamid Nasir Chattha was of the view that the "biggest loser" was the present military regime which had struck a "bad deal".

Awami National Party's Begum Wasim Wali said "this is the same government that first brought cases against Mr Sharif. Then they moved an appeal to hang him. Now they allow him to go into exile. The army says

they have acted in greater national interest. We would like to know what is this interest".

Maintaining that with Mr Sharif's departure, an era of politics of corruption and deception had ended, Imran Khan, former cricket captain and chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf, said the former premier has "now joined the infamous list of despots along with Idi Amin and Benazir Bhutto, who have sought refuge abroad.

Meanwhile, three Gulf states — Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirate — are said to have played a key role in the exile patch-up between Mr Sharif's family and Gen Musharraf's military regime, a newspaper said. (PTI)



Gen. Musharraf

5/10 Awaaz about Nawaz 12/12

Pakistan's chief executive General Parvez Musharraf seems to have stolen a leaf out of Indian prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's 'insaniyat' book. By releasing from prison and exiling his bitter rival the deposed prime minister, Mian Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistani dictator no doubt hopes to score some valuable brownie points abroad and establish that he isn't the stern and ruthless dictator he's often made out to be. In recent times General Musharraf has been under great pressure from the international community — and in particular the United States — to adopt a more sympathetic approach while dealing with Mr Sharif. This message seems to have finally hit home. It should have been apparent to General Musharraf that he cannot do a Bhutto on Mr Sharif. That was 1979. Today we are into a new millennium. However, this is not to suggest that the dictator's actions could not have been motivated by other compulsions. After all, if it was only the question of appeasing the international community, then there was little stopping General Musharraf from indulging the "humanist" in him and ordering Mr Sharif's release earlier. Obviously, there were factors closer to home. Chief amongst them being the general's own desire to hang on to power in the face of some emerging serious political challenges which could potentially undermine the legitimacy of his claim to office.

Lately, General Musharraf's arch political rivals, the jailed Mr Sharif and Pakistan People's Party leader Benazir Bhutto had set aside their "sizable" differences and joined hands under the aegis of a broad democratic coalition called the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy to press for his abdication. However, General Musharraf could be mistaken in believing that Mr Sharif's exile would neutralise this coalition, help him earn political goodwill at home and weaken opposition to his rule. For as soon as he brokered the pardon-for-exile deal with Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistani media severely criticised him. After all, hadn't General Musharraf justified his October coup as a step necessary for ridding the country of corruption and to make the political system more accountable? By striking a deal with the not so shareef Nawaz, the general has backtracked on his teflon agenda and lost the legitimacy to rule. His actions have proven that he is at least as great a political opportunist as any other supposedly corrupt leader in Pakistan. The pardon-for-exile deal gives the general's political opponents the opportunity they have been looking for to press for his abdication and the restoration of democracy. In fact, the Pakistani media has suggested the politically astute and experienced politician Ms Bhutto is in the best position to play this role and should make a bid to occupy the political space created by Mr Sharif's expulsion. Though this is a distinct possibility, Ms Bhutto must remember that General Musharraf is still in a position to make life very difficult for her. All he has to do to stall her bid is to rake up the numerous and highly damaging allegations of corruption pending against her.

THE TIMES OF INDIA
12 DEC 2001

Sharif loses 80% assets

Surrendered property includes 5 factories, 3 houses

Mubashir Zaidi
Islamabad, December 11

FORMER PAKISTAN Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif surrendered 80 per cent of his family's assets, adding up to crores of rupees, to the Pakistan government to buy his safe exit to Saudi Arabia.

According to a Pakistan government spokesman, the Sharifs surrendered Rs 300 million apart from five profitable industries including Brother Steel Mills, Ilyas Enterprises, Hodaybia Paper Mill, Hodaybia Engineering Co and Hamza Spinning Mills.

They also surrendered three plush houses including their Model Town bungalow, plots and properties and agricultural land in Lahore. The government did not, however, confiscate the Raiwind palace of the Sharif family.

The spokesman denied any underhand deal between the government and the Sharif family resulting in his exile. He said the government had merely responded to the repeated mercy petitions filed by the Sharifs.

According to him, the Sharif family had written to the government, including chief executive Pervez Musharraf and President



Exiled former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif being greeted by Saudi Arabian Governor of Makkah region Prince Abdul Majid bin Abdel Aziz, on his arrival in Jeddah on Sunday. Photo: AFP

Rafiq Tarar appealing for pardon. "We were receiving their requests for mercy in the past three to four months particularly after the

court," military spokesman Rashid Qureshi said in an interview.

Benazir rejects offer: Page 18

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

12 DEC 2000

Nation of exiles

THERE ARE two views on what Pervez Musharraf will do as an encore now that he has driven the imprisoned ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, into exile in Saudi Arabia. One view is that the chief executive officer, having emasculated his country's civilian political leadership, will now lead the army back into the barracks. The other is that having neutralised Mr Sharif, the General will settle down to a long incumbency. However, while they may differ on the tactics, both theories agree on the General's overall goal. Namely, that the military ensures there is no credible civilian political leadership in the country for at least a decade.

It was well-known that Gen. Musharraf hoped Mr Sharif's trial and imprisonment would lead the Pakistani Muslim League to fracture. In the end, Mr Sharif blinked first. He bolted, sacrificing family fortune and the PML. His party is likely to follow the fate of Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party which has become all but dysfunctional thanks to a non resident leader. It hardly matters whether Gen. Musharraf remains formally in control or lets a civilian regime return to office. With the leaders of three of Pakistan's largest political parties in exile — the third being Muhajir leader, Altaf Hussain — the country's democratic culture has been downgraded from superficial to farcical. Unsurprisingly, low turnouts and obscure candidates are being predicted for the coming local body elections.

Gen. Musharraf has never hidden his contempt for Pakistan's civilian politicians — a hatred that has grown in office as he has uncovered the extent of the rot in Pakistan's economy and society. He also has personal reasons to wish Mr Sharif ill, believing the then Prime Minister sought to kill him in an airplane accident in October last year. Pressure from countries like the United States and Saudi Arabia has kept the General from executing Mr Sharif. However, he has found that it is tough to be a dictator in today's world. But he and his corps commanders could not afford a political situation in which either Ms Bhutto or Mr Sharif were still major players. With Mr Sharif's forced exile, the General has done well for himself. However, the education of Pakistan into the ways of democracy and modernity has once more been interrupted, perhaps for as much as a decade. Gen. Musharraf may be pleased at the prospect of making Pakistan a military protectorate. But the long-term prospects for his country have only become even more bleak.

Right-wing parties upset, but in one stroke Gen Musharraf has rid himself of all opposition at home

'Sharif exile setback for democracy in Pak'

KAMAL SIDDIQI
ISLAMABAD, DEC 11

FORMER Pakistan premier Nawaz Sharif's disappearance from Pakistan's political firmament is a grave setback to democratic forces in the country, analysts here have said.

With Pakistan People's Party chief Benazir Bhutto already away in London and Sharif removed from the scene, the military regime of General Musharraf has, in one stroke, rid itself of all opposition at home.

Writing in the *Jang* newspaper today, columnist Irshad Ahmad Haqqani warned that weakening of the political forces in the country might encourage the junta to stay in power much beyond the October 2002 deadline set for it by the country's Supreme Court.

His words seem portentous if analysed in the light of the regime's move to exile Sharif within a week of his Pakistan Muslim League joining hands with Bhutto's PPP to campaign for restoration of democracy at home. Bhutto and Sharif, once bitter political foes, buried the hatchet only last week to form a "grand alliance" for democracy.

Reacting to news of Sharif's exile to Saudi Arabia in London, Bhutto expressed "surprise" over his sudden exit from the country. In a statement published in Urdu daily *Ausaf* yesterday, she said that she never expected "such a baffling move" from the PML and would demand an explanation from the party on it.

"It is strange that we were no taken into confidence about such a clandestine deal," she said. Yesterday, Sharif's wife Kulsoom

Foes tread similar path, hope to keep ambitions alive abroad



■ Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif may have been very unlikely foes but the political path they scripted for themselves seem uncannily similar.

The suave foreign-educated Bhutto and the son of the soil Sharif both ended up running a similar race, although they would both hate to admit it. Twice elected and twice dismissed, the once-bitter-foes who duelled for power throughout the 1990s, now also share the experience of trying to keep their political ambitions alive from the foreign soil.

Bhutto, who has lived in London in self-exile since

April last year after being charged with corruption under Sharif's government, remains at the helm of the PPP and launches frequent broadsides against Musharraf's regime. Sharif is now faced with a similar situation. He is now faced with the unenviable situation of running the PML from Saudi soil, although the Saudis are unlikely to allow him the political liberties Bhutto enjoys in Britain.

Analysts assume that he will be kept in a tight leash in Saudi Arabia with almost no freedom to indulge in political activities.

—ENS



had denied that Sharif was voluntarily going into exile and alleged that the family was being forced into exile much against its wishes. "We will return," she vowed shortly before leaving. Sharif's exile is also expected to demoralise his "ardent partners" and his own party. His hand-picked successor, Javed Hashemi, has already denied any deal with the Army regime on the issue. Sharif will return once his health permits him to do so, he said, hours after Sharif left.

Right-wing parties at home, however, hauled the military regime over the coals

for letting Sharif leave. "Now that they are pardoning big plunderers and sending them abroad, there campaign to bring back looters who fled the country has become a farce," Jamaat-i-Islami secretary general Syed Munnawar Hasan, alleged.

"The National Accountability Bureau should now be established," he demanded. "It is unfortunate that both corrupt leaders, Banazir and Sharif, have succeeded in taking refuge abroad," he said. Incidentally, the regime had grabbed power on a strident anti-corruption plank.

Religious groups clamour to make exile deal public

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, DEC 11

PAKISTAN'S major religious parties have slammed the country's military regime for allowing deposed premier Nawaz Sharif and his family members to settle in exile in Saudi Arabia and demanded that the deal under which he has been freed be made, public, media reports said today.

Influential Pakistani English daily *The Nation*, in a strong editorial, termed Sharif's departure deal as "a great betrayal", while *Dawn* wrote that with a resurgent former premier being removed from the political scenario, "few excuses remain for holding up the return of democracy".

The political parties condemned the government for making a "mockery" of fight against corruption in Pakistan by releasing Sharif, who faced several charges of corruption. They also hit out at the former premier for striking an "underhand" deal with the regime of Gen Pervez Musharraf.

Former premier Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party termed the Presidential pardon to Sharif, who was serving jail sentences for plane hijacking and corruption charges, as part of "plea bargain" that had exposed the real goal of the so-called accountability.

"It is clear that accountability has little to do with corruption and everything with achieving political ends by fair or foul means for a certain political agenda," a

PPP spokesman said.

Fundamentalist and religious parties Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan Awami Tehrik, and several others resented the incident saying "it had left the existence of the government and its accountability drive, null and void". Regretting the release of Sharif on health grounds, bypassing the judiciary, a PPP spokesman referred to Asif Ali Zardari, husband of Benazir Bhutto who still remains in prison despite having been granted bail for medical treatment by several courts.

On the future of multi-party Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD), he said it was too early to speak on the participation of Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (N). Hamid Nasir Chattha, chief of the other faction of PML—PML(C), was of view that the "biggest loser" in this episode is the military regime since it has struck a "bad deal".

Awami National Party's Begum Wasim Wali said "this is the same government that had brought cases against Sharif and had appealed to hang him. Now they allow him to go into exile. The Army says they have acted in great national interest. We would like to know what this interest is".

Imran Khan, former cricket captain and chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, claimed that the former premier has "joined the infamous list of despots along with Idi Amin and Benazir Bhutto, who have sought refuge abroad."

INDIAN EXPRESS

12 DEC 2000

A DECISIVE DENOUEMENT?

MR. NAWAZ SHARIF, the deposed Prime Minister of Pakistan, has gone into exile in Saudi Arabia in circumstances that have not yet been fully explained. However, his dramatic exit from the 'political' scene in Pakistan appears to bear the hallmark of an affirmative denouement in the tortuous drama that began with his overthrow in a bloodless military coup in October 1999. The virtual reality in Pakistan at this stage is an acknowledgment by its premier civilian leaders, by design or default, that their country's Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, is not only the *de facto* ruler but also a *de jure* arbiter of its political life. Mr. Sharif has now either accepted a perceived Hobson's choice or actually cut a deal with the military regime to go into an apparent non-political exile. Pakistan's other well-known former Prime Minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, remains in voluntary exile in the U.K. by adopting a patently calculated policy of not wishing to challenge Gen. Musharraf on their home terrain. Independently of her, the 'Mohajir' leader, Mr. Altaf Hussain, who has for long made a virtue of a self-ordained exile, keeps an arguably safe distance from Pakistan's Chief Executive. While the uncoordinated actions of these civilian leaders may not legitimise a military coup, they certainly have left Gen. Musharraf with the political space he needed to 'govern' Pakistan. His credentials to speak for Pakistan on the international scene may have also received a boost as a result. This is a factor that India cannot ignore.

Mr. Sharif's wife has of course asserted that her incarcerated husband and some of his relatives, including her, have been unilaterally banished by Gen. Musharraf. The obvious suggestion is that he is trying to prevent the possibility of Mr. Sharif bringing a nemesis upon the military regime in Islamabad. Now, given the political style of Saudi Arabia and its fraternal and patron-like ties with Pakistan within

the latter's ambit as an Islamic state, Mr. Sharif's own version from his new home in exile may be hard to come by. Dominant in the public discourse at the moment is the version by the Musharraf administration that Mr. Sharif has indeed been pardoned by the country's President before being sent into exile and that these actions have been taken on two counts. Cited are the putative mercy pleas by and on behalf of Mr. Sharif and, separately, Saudi Arabia's political willingness on humanitarian considerations to host him as an exile requiring medical treatment. An alternative account by Mr. Sharif's wife is that neither a petition for presidential clemency nor a move for plea bargain had been made by the former Prime Minister, who was duly re-elected to that position in 1997. So, some external advocates of a restoration of democracy in Pakistan can doubtless view the stratagem of clemency as a political death warrant to snuff out the reasonably young Mr. Sharif's dreams of re-emerging as a leader of his people.

Inside Pakistan itself, the investigations, judicial trials and the punishments concerning Mr. Sharif since his fall from power have not so far galvanised a spirited opposition to Gen. Musharraf. In a sense, however, the latest order exiling Mr. Sharif can be seen to have been timed to set the cat among the pigeons even as a fledgling alliance for the revival of democracy is still struggling to take off. Both Mr. Sharif and Ms. Bhutto are widely believed to have either blessed or acquiesced in the emergence of the alliance. Yet Mr. Sharif's exile as a sequel to Gen. Musharraf's coup leaves the latter almost exclusively in charge of Pakistan, whatever might be the military ruler's economic and other challenges on the domestic front. Any persistent refusal by New Delhi to engage Gen. Musharraf's Pakistan in bilateral parleys in this changing context will be no less vacuous as before.

THE HINDU

12 DEC 2000

SHARIF'S EXILE

Deal between pygmies

NAWAZ Sharif once embodied the bright hope for democracy in Pakistan. Not any more, given the deal he appears to have struck with Pakistan's military authorities to obtain his and family members' release. The Saudis have played the role of some kind of mediator, and the official pardon granted to the Sharifs mentions that they have been exiled specifically "to Saudi Arabia", which gives credence to the rumour that they will not be allowed to leave that country in the near future as part of the deal. If Sharif has been prevented from speaking out on Pakistani politics and rushing round the world mobilising opinion against the military regime, this would indeed be a victory for Musharraf. Making use of a landslide election victory in 1996 Sharif had once succeeded in amending the constitution to make it impossible for a President to fire the Prime Minister and was on the verge of doing the unthinkable in Pakistani politics, assert civilian supremacy by firing the chief of the armed forces. The tragedy is that by that time Sharif had frittered away the massive mandate for change he had acquired; his reputation was so besmirched by corruption and adoption of autocratic methods that he got little sympathy from the populace when Musharraf's *coup* toppled him.

Musharraf, however, may be rejoicing too soon if he thinks that by ejecting Sharif he has had the best of the bargain. The founding myth of military rule in Pakistan is that the military is not corrupt, only civilians are, which is why the National Accountability Bureau set up by Musharraf has left military personnel out of its purview. With Sharif's exile the *raison d'etre* of military rule, accountability of the corrupt, takes a hard knock. Although some of the Sharif family property has been confiscated, Nawaz Sharif has cannily negotiated the retention of most of the running industrial units, as well as an estate at Raiwind; truckloads of family property were observed being moved to Raiwind from confiscated estates. Most Pakistanis will draw the obvious conclusion: the Musharraf regime, like other military regimes before it, is ready to deal with the corrupt; its anti-corruption agenda is just a figleaf to grab power. The person best placed to capitalise on the situation may be Benazir Bhutto, who can now impress foreign interlocutors by claiming to be the sole leader of the democratic opposition to military rule.

THE STATESMAN

13 DEC 2000

THE OTHER KINGDOM

After prison comes exile for the former prime minister of Pakistan, Mr Nawaz Sharif. In exchange for freedom in exile, Mr Sharif has been forced to forfeit the major chunk of his accumulated wealth, both money and property. He has also given an undertaking that he will not come back to Pakistan. Unless the wheel of Pakistani politics takes unexpected turns, Mr Sharif's political career in Pakistan is over. This is nothing new in Pakistan. Military coups, imprisonment of rivals, exile and, in one notorious case, execution are familiar signposts in the vulnerable career of democracy there. Mr Sharif should count himself fortunate that he has at least got back his freedom. This good fortune is obviously related to the pressure the international community, especially the United States, has mounted on General Pervez Musharraf, to be lenient and sympathetic towards the man he deposed. The polity of Pakistan, since the untimely death of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, has been subject to a perpetual tension between military and civilian rule. The record would suggest the balance in this unhealthy tussle is in favour of the military. Whoever has fallen foul of the army in Pakistan has paid for it by the loss of power. Mr Sharif's exile strengthens Mr Musharraf's hand and practically ensures that there is no effective opposition to military rule in Pakistan.

Politics is not possible *via* remote control. Thus a non-resident leader is by definition a non-starter. The plight of the Pakistan People's Party, whose leader, Ms Benazir Bhutto, now lives in the United Kingdom, is proof of this generalization. Similarly, the leader of the other big political formation, Mr Altaf Hussain, the Muhajir leader, is discovering the difficulties of leading an agitation from exile. Ms Bhutto, Mr Sharif and Mr Hussain are all civilian leaders who are currently in exile. This, by itself, shows the strength of Mr Musharraf's position. He is without any credible opposition. There is nothing better a military ruler could ask for. Mr Musharraf may feel smug about this state of things since he has very little respect for Pakistan's civilian politicians. It is his belief that under civilian rule, Pakistani society and economy has become more and more corrupt; civilian politicians, in Mr Musharraf's view, have only lined their pockets in the name of serving their country. There is a good measure of truth in all this. But Mr Musharraf has to address more fundamental questions concerning the future of Pakistan under military rule. It is clear that in today's world, issues relating to freedom and democracy are crucial to progress and modernity. Democracy in Pakistan has been long delayed, it remains to be seen how much longer it can be denied. As long as the army rules Pakistan, there will be a question mark hovering over Pakistan's membership to a modern community of nations. Army rule has, in fact, exiled Pakistan in all but name.

THE TELEGRAPH

13 DEC 2000

Sharif pardon gets puppet Cabinet nod

Islamabad, Dec. 13 (Reuters): Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf's Cabinet today endorsed his weekend decision to pardon ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif and exile him to Saudi Arabia, a government statement said.

The statement, said Musharraf briefed the cabinet on the background of the "arrangement and considerations" under which Sharif was allowed to leave the country along with 19 family members on Sunday.

It said that while "endorsing the government's decision, the federal cabinet felt the step "would reduce (political) polarisation and bring harmony on the political scene".

Pakistan's daily *Dawn* newspaper reported today that Musharraf had not consulted his civilian cabinet before granting clemency that pardoned Sharif of his prison terms, but had taken the military elite into confidence.

Musharraf, who toppled Sharif in a bloodless army coup in October last year, was quoted by the statement as telling today's cabinet meeting that the pardon decision was taken "in the larger national interest while giving due consideration to the request by Pakistan's closest and brotherly country" Saudi Arabia.

Most of the cabinet members suggested that a pardon request received from Sharif should be made public, it said, indicating that it might be released for publi-

cation.

The government released Sharif from a fort overlooking the Indus River near Islamabad before dawn on Sunday and put him on a Saudi royal family plane for an indefinite exile and silence in Saudi Arabia.

But it said other court punishments given to Sharif of fines and forfeiture of property costing



Musharraf, Sharif

more than \$9 million — believed to be a small part of Sharif family's wealth — and a 21-year ban on holding political office would remain.

Opposition politicians and many newspapers have sharply criticised Musharraf's decision, saying it would damage his 14-month-old government's anti-corruption drive as well as a new political alliance formed to oppose military rule.

But the government statement said that at the cabinet meeting, Musharraf "dispelled the impression that Nawaz Sharif's departure had af-

ected the accountability process. On the contrary, the accountability process will continue with full steam."

The prison sentences that were waived and other punishments, which will stay, were awarded to Sharif in two trials on the charges of attempted plane hijacking and wrongdoing in the purchase of a helicopter.

But there was no official word yet about the fate of Sharif's challenge against his conviction in higher courts or of several corruption charges that the government said in the past it would bring against Sharif and other members of his family.

The hijacking charge, for which Sharif was sentenced to a life term, emanated from a brief denial of landing permission at Karachi airport to a civilian plane bringing Musharraf from a visit to Sri Lanka on the day of October 12 1999 coup.

Three days after Sharif was sent in exile to Saudi Arabia, media reports here said Pakistan's fragile economic situation was an important aspect of his release. "The most important aspect of the release of Sharif was country's fragile economic situation."

Frontier Post said. "When the Arab countries were approached to help Pakistan boost its foreign exchange reserves, they reiterated that they want Musharraf's government to adopt a soft attitude to Sharif," the paper said.

THE TELEGRAPH

14 DEC 2000

Political obituary

On the face of it, Pakistan's military ruler Pervez Musharraf has played a masterstroke; in one go, he has ensured that there is no civilian political leadership left in his country. Ironically, Mr Nawaz Sharif chose to bargain for a political exile for 21 years on the World Human Rights Day. Mr Sharif may have special affection for his friends in Saudi Arabia, but the latter are unlikely to let him flap his wings politically now or in the future. Mr Nawaz Sharif has actually written his own political obituary. His political "friend" Ms Benazir Bhutto finds herself ensconced in London, fretting and fuming about the nefarious "secret deal," wondering whatever happened to the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy which she was trying to work out with Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan and Mrs Kulsoom Nawaz. With her husband Asif Zardari still languishing in Gen. Musharraf's jail, Ms Bhutto's political future is at best nebulous. Mrs Nawaz had managed to create a modicum of sympathy for her jailed husband, but in the end, she has preferred to forget all about the restoration of democracy and other such things she claimed were central to her struggle. Mr Sharif evidently thinks that a life in exile is better than a life behind bars, but through this line of reasoning, he has given further proof, if any was needed, of his distinct dislike for even trying to make a political comeback. No wonder, therefore, that the dominant reaction to the latest turn in his fate has been tepid even in his own party, leave aside the rest of Pakistan. The Pakistan CEO has thus emerged as the only player of any consequence in Pakistan, which means that all his protestations about his commitment to restore democratic functioning mean nothing at all. In the event, New Delhi will have to factor in this added dimension to its attitude towards Islamabad and take note that there are no political counterweights to the military ruler now more firmly than ever in control in that country. Mr Sharif has wrecked not only any chance for the restoration of democracy; but by entering into a deal with Gen. Musharraf, he has also ensured that the Army will not go back to the barracks in a hurry. Political opportunism of the worst kind has thus snuffed out the possibility of any democratic transition in Pakistan, and India will do well to recognise the situation on the ground. There has been some movement of kind in Kashmir, and the developments on that front need to be viewed in the context of the latest political twist in Pakistan. It was not as if Mr Sharif or Ms Bhutto were very relevant at the moment, but now, even the theoretical possibility of them becoming major players if and when electoral politics returns to Pakistan is well and truly over. It is the same old story of an effete, compromised and corrupt political class simply legitimising, by its deeds, consolidation of military rule in that country. In the event, it is hardly surprising that neither Mr Sharif and even Mrs Benazir Bhutto have many sympathisers left in their own country, and they are primarily themselves responsible for this to have happened.

THE ASIAN AGE

14 DEC 2000

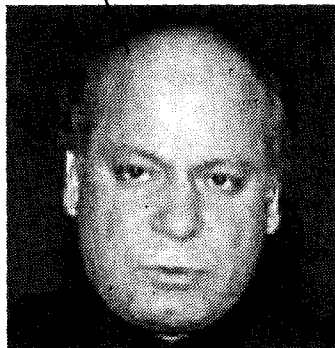
Saudi role under fire

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, Dec. 13. — Saudi Arabia is facing flak in Pakistan for its role in Mr Nawaz Sharif's release and exile. The Pakistan government has claimed that it had received a request from Saudi Arabia to release Mr Sharif and let him come to the kingdom.

The chairman of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Mr Afrasyab Khattak, describes this as an act of interference.

Mr Khattak told the BBC (Urdu) last night: "We're dumbfounded by the news of Mr Sharif's release and exile. There is no law in Pakistan under which any citizen can be



Mr Nawaz Sharif

exiled. Now the military's game is up."

The military government too has been facing criticism. The chief reporter of the *News* investigative team, Mr Kamaran Khan, told the BBC:

"Army's reputation has been badly damaged by releasing the man whose government it toppled on charges of corruption."

Sindhis are angry for a different reason. The BBC reported that Mr Sharif's release had widened the rift between Sindhis and Punjabis. Sindhis say Mr Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged because he was a Sindhi, but Mr Sharif was let off as he is a Punjabi.

'Sharif released for aid': Media reports said the fragile economy and 'Arab nations' insistence on adopting a soft attitude towards Mr Sharif as a pre-condition for help had forced the government to release Mr Sharif. PTI adds from Islamabad.

THE STATESMAN

1 2 0 1 1

WHEELING DEALING

Karachi: A superficial analysis would create the perception of a perfect deal: Nawaz Sharif gets to play with his dirty billions in the safety of royal patronage and the generals rid themselves of a political awkwardness. Realistically speaking, however, while Nawaz may appear to be a loser in terms of his political credibility and the government a winner for having "exposed and shamed" the pseudo democrat from Lahore, the situation remains otherwise.

At worst, Nawaz has come out a weakling who could no longer take the pressure and ditching his loyalists took the first available flight out of the country.

But even in the kindest analysis, the government has suffered the heaviest blow to its moral standing. From an outfit wanting to hold accountability of the corrupt at any cost, it has been reduced to look like a typical military regime anywhere, willing to cut any deal, to hang on to power somehow. This appears to be the perception today, reality be damned.

To be fair to the government, the overriding factor may have been its inability to say no to such powerful financial benefactors as Saudi Arabia and the UAE. But then, the same could have been achieved in a more dignified manner. A little advance work could, and should, have been done in the media to prepare grounds for such an impending fact of kindness as it is being portrayed rather belatedly and totally unconvincingly by the government. Whisking away the entire Sharif clan on a few hours notice, in the dead of night, only added a surreptitious tinge to the entire episode. According to highly placed insiders, even the corps commanders conference was informed of this decision at the very end of the meeting. The so-called cabinet, or the national security council for that matter, were not even considered worthy of consultation on such an important issue.

Can the people, therefore, be faulted for saying that the government has itself underlined the belief that as long as one had immense wealth and formidable friends, he or she would always escape accountability. Hijack or no hijack! Maybe limited damage control can be done by the government by demonstrating a similar "compassion" towards lesser politicians even if to insinuate that while Nawaz may have been the most high-profile example, he in reality was just the first of many more to benefit from this softened government attitude. By letting Nawaz go, however, the government has let go of whatever little tenacious hold it had on any legal and moral grounds for its coming to power and continuing to be in power. We all know where the government stands today; the question is where does it go from here?

The importance of the revival of the suspended Parliament has always been expounded in these columns but now it

Nawaz Sharif's departure for foreign shores tells the tale of Pakistani junta's desire to hang on to power, at any cost

BY MOHAMMAD MALICK



IN EXILE: Pakistan's deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif (left) is greeted at Jeddah airport, western Saudi Arabia, by the governor of Mecca Prince Abdel-Majid bin Abdul Aziz on Sunday (AP)

no longer remains just a desirable option; it is the only option left to the government. The government has taken a very bold gamble by allowing Nawaz to go into exile. Whether it proves a costly mistake or one that could yield immense political dividends will depend on its moves within the next few weeks. According to insider gossip, the government is also attempting a similar *coup de grace* vis-à-vis Asif Zardari. Maybe, its political strategists believe that by allowing Zardari to leave as well, the objective of humiliating Benazir Bhutto *à la* Nawaz could be achieved.

Even if Zardari were to leave as a consequence of any deal, the nature and implications would be way different from those of Nawaz; equating the two would be simply foolish. Both Zardari and Benazir have repeatedly hinted at the possible exclusion of Zardari from PPP politics in future any way. The government now needs to make a long-term appreciation of political realities and stop relying on short-term palliatives.

Where does the national politics stand today any way? Provincial acrimony has reached alarming levels. Business

activity is about as active as a stagnant village pond. Foreign investment is zilch. The local bodies elections, the government's only real political foray to date, look set to prove the disaster they were predicted to be by various political observers. Let alone the voter turnout that is yet to be seen, even the contestant turnout has been dismal.

Whisking away the entire Sharif clan on a few hours notice, in the dead of night, only added a surreptitious tinge to the entire episode. Even the corps commanders conference was informed of this decision at the very end of the meeting

On a national average it has come to about two contestants per seat but the reality is even worse. In an overwhelming majority of the cases, candidates have been elected uncontested. And the situation keeps getting worse as one moves away from the central Punjab districts, showing a clear road map of provincial discontent vis-à-vis policies emanating from the federal capital.

The Opposition alliance of ARD, undoubtedly reeling from Nawaz's betrayal at the moment is nevertheless set to bounce back into action after Eid. A list of 1,500 volunteers, who shall be courting arrest in the first wave, has already been finalised. Sure, it may appear a trickle at this time but then haven't all anti-government movements been that in the first phase of their activation? Contrary to common belief, the PML, too, would be participating effectively in ARD activ-

ities even if for no other reason than the compulsion to overcome the shame of Nawaz's capitulation and to retain its political relevance. That Javed Hashmi, a hand picked successor to Nawaz, would be replaced in the coming weeks is a foregone conclusion.

The next few days would witness the return of the Nawaz-rebels to the party fold and unless they can deliver a revived assembly to their party colleagues they, too, would have no option but to adopt high-profile anti-government stances to retain their own relevance within PML politics. There is little doubt that the complexion of the Muslim League will figure heavily in any government decision regarding the revival of the National Assembly.

Maybe it's time the government rethinks one of the earlier proposals made by its own trusted think tank. According to that proposal, Gen. Musharraf should go on to become president and a revived Parliament passes the sixteenth amendment incorporating the national security council as an inalienable organ of the ruling establishment. This would enshrine a constitutional role for the armed forces. The proposal also called for the president's modified power under Article 58 2(b). Instead of him having to dissolve the entire assembly to send a corrupt or inefficient government packing, he should be able to just sack the government alone. According to this proposal, the revived assembly should elect a PML prime minister who would then form a broad based national government incorporating all important political parties and manage the affairs till the holding of general elections a year down the road. So far so good except for a little hitch. What do you do about the Senate?

The government, according to its legal eagles, is faced with a dilemma on the revival front. Parliament gets revived only with the revival of both houses and for that to happen the provincial assemblies must immediately elect the senators. Who gets to choose the senators is the real question. Busy with everything else, the government's so-called political experts never bothered to fine tune their own list of desirable candidates and now, as with every other political manoeuvre to date, this, too, promises to become another headache for the government.

The government would be well advised to open a serious dialogue with the main political parties on this count. The senate seats can be easily brokered between the real political forces on the basis of their past share and, if handled prudently by both sides, such an interaction could well speed up the revival of the real democratic process in the country. But what remains of paramount importance is for the government to stop beating about the political bush and to start taking the real political forces into confidence.

By arrangement with Dawn

Nawaz Sharif let off because of secret deal, claims Benazir

By Siddharth Varadarajan
The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: Pakistan Peoples' Party leader Benazir Bhutto has claimed that the pardon and exile of former premier Nawaz Sharif was the result of a "secret deal" between him and Gen. Pervez Musharraf and has hinted at the possibility of the deposed PM having bribed his way out.



Benazir Bhutto

In an interview with *The Times of India* conducted via e-mail, Ms Bhutto said the "secret deal" was struck "either as part of a political gameplan or as a corrupt act". The

PPP has asked for the details of the negotiations and the agreement to be released.

Refusing to accept that the decks were now clear for a long spell of military rule, since both she and Mr Sharif were in exile, she said the PPP had "a strong base which had grown stronger since its dismissal in 1996." Ms Bhutto added, "Our people compare the PPP's boom economy with the bankruptcy of the successors. They want to see the PPP back in power."

Describing Mr Sharif's departure as a momentary setback to the opposition's grand alliance for democracy, she said people were realising that dictatorships did not provide a solution. "There is a growing skepticism over whether another sham regime can do any better than all the sham regimes since (former president Farooq) Leghari took power after throwing out the PPP."

Asked if her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, might accept an "amnesty-and-exile" package, Ms Bhutto said, "The

senator and the party would reject a similar package because of the vast differences between Mr Sharif and senator Zardari. Mr Sharif owed Rs 600 crore to the banks, unlike Mr Zardari who does not owe a rupee. Mr Sharif had built up Chaudhrian trading (\$100 million capital) and Star Trading (\$50 million capital) and had the sword of the Hudaibya/Ilford money laundering and forgery case hanging over his head."

At the same time, she said that her husband could consider "a temporary withdrawal from politics" provided the regime opened talks with him. "If that is linked to a democratic gameplan, Mr Zardari could consider surrendering some of his fundamental rights for a higher cause."

On the Kashmir issue, Ms Bhutto described India's announcement of the Ramzan ceasefire as a bold step in that it was unilateral. "Prime Minister Vajpayee has taken some remarkable initiatives with regard to Kashmir. Islamabad always is reacting. I'd like to see it play a more pro-active role, given the signals the Indian PM is sending." Ms Bhutto said she was also "impressed with home minister L.K. Advani's visit to Ajmer Sharif". Asked whether she approved of a dialogue between the Indian government and Kashmiri leaders without Pakistan, she said, "Conditionally, yes. The Kashmiri groups could begin the dialogue but, ultimately, Pakistan is a party too, and a final agreement needs its participation."

She said Altaf Hussain—the MQM leader who has stirred a hornet's nest with his controversial statements criticising the idea of Pakistan—could play a role in the struggle for democracy, but "the MQM leader has to decide whether he wants independence or devolution".

THE TIMES OF INDIA

16 DEC 2000

H.D. 16
R/12

Accountability exiled

PAN (1)

IT EXPLODED like a bombshell on an unsuspecting nation. The Cabinet of Pakistan's ruling military regime, the partymen and colleagues of the deposed Prime Minister, Mian Nawaz Sharif, not to speak of the public, woke up totally bewildered last Sunday.

The only point that is certain about the Nawaz Sharif exile drama is that the principal players and the institutions they represent are losers all. Not that values like credibility are held at a premium in Pakistani society, but this time it was dealt a deathblow.

The Army had not let up even once, since it put Mr. Sharif behind bars more than a year ago, in calling him a conspirator and a cheat. It imprisoned him for life with excessive fines on multiple charges of hijacking, corruption and misuse of power. But in a swift overnight move, Mr. Sharif and 18 of his family boarded a waiting Saudi Arabian plane from the military airport near Islamabad and flew into exile to the gulf kingdom. In lieu of their submitting some of their properties and assets, the Army negated a 14-month-old campaign.

The first casualty of the secret operation: the Army regime's credibility. The masses had accepted Gen. Pervez Musharraf when

The only point that is certain about the Nawaz Sharif drama in Pakistan is that the principal players and the institutions they represent are all losers, writes

B. MURALIDHAR REDDY.

he staged his coup and given him a long rope ever since for he talked of 'honesty' and 'accountability' in a system steeped in corruption.

And the General had continued to get the benefit of the doubt as an honest, upright and straightforward person despite all the gloom over the track record of his Government at the end of one year. But this one incident cast a dark shadow over this trust.

It also cast a shadow over the entire accountability process as well as the status of the Judiciary. The questions being raised are: can anyone first loot the nation and then get away with it after submitting a part of the booty? And, what is the meaning of

being nabbed by the NAB (National Accountability Bureau), the Chief Executive's most popular move?

There is no concept of exile in Pakistan's Constitution. So, not just the ruling of the courts but also the clemency granted by the President, Mr. Rafiq Tarar, is in doubt. The public reaction has been so strong that the military is now seriously considering counter measures. These include an address to the nation by the Chief Executive explaining the reasons for letting Mr. Sharif go and making public his mercy petitions.

The plight of the Pakistan Muslim League, the party Mr. Sharif presided over with an iron hand till the minute he boarded the Saudi aircraft, is a shade worse. Only a week before the 'great escape', the Sharif loyalists had staked their 'honour and pride' to become part of the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD). The issue led to a split in the PML as the rebels, who were hell-bent on breaking away from Mr. Sharif at the behest of the Army, struck on the plea that joining hands with the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was against the party Constitution.

Mr. Sharif's loyalists in the PML are shocked and just do not know how to react to the changed realities. As if that was not enough, Mr. Sharif nominated a relatively junior party leader to preside over its destiny. Indications are the Army is waiting for the rebels to gain ground in the party, and with a man like Mr. Makhdoom Javed Hashmi in charge for now it will be no surprise if the PML ends up performing a role as the king's party.

Perhaps, the nascent ARD is the biggest loser in the whole game. The birth of the ARD, consisting of all the major mainstream parties in Pakistan, was heralded as the beginning of the end of military rule. Now, it's dead for all practical purposes.

The stoicism, or rather the indifference, of the masses, that matches the onslaught on credibility and morality in high office, confounds this lack of any political direction. They did not react when Gen. Musharraf displaced Mr. Sharif in a coup. They did not react when Mr. Sharif's wife, Mrs. Kulsoom Sharif, tried over nearly 14 months to whip up public sentiment for his release. And the shock value of 'the deal' expended, they are not reacting now.

Looking at it from another angle, the exile of Mr. Sharif makes it an open and unchallenged field for the military. After all, three top politicians of the country operate from foreign lands. The Pakistan People's Party chairperson, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, and the Mojahir Quami Movement's Mr. Altaf Hussain have now been joined by Mr. Sharif and his clan who are guests of the Saudi royalty in Jeddah where they are to lead a strictly apolitical existence.

The only silver lining is a probable link-up between the clemency for Mr. Sharif and the forever-in-the-pipeline foreign aid. Besides, the military regime now has all the time and manoeuverability to plan its exit strategy. It can work on several options including revival of suspended Assemblies and installation of a leader of its choice.

THE HINDU

17 DEC 2000

11-10 A Silver Lining 18/12

Pakistan has been swirling with rumours of one kind or another ever since the Musharraf regime granted a full pardon to Nawaz Sharif and allowed the deposed prime minister to leave the country for Saudi Arabia last week. To the usual allegations of a secret deal — voiced most recently in the columns of this newspaper by Mr Sharif's *bete noire*, Benazir Bhutto — must be added another compelling bit of hearsay. The word is that Gen Pervez Musharraf is contemplating a radical overhaul of Pakistan's constitutional system by substituting a US-style presidential form of government for its — much disrupted — prime ministerial form. Since the general is no fool to dream up such changes in the abstract, it is presumed that, were such a shift to be effected, President Rafiq Tarar would politely be asked to resign first. And Gen Musharraf would then anoint himself president. What makes these rumours especially interesting is the fact that the military regime seems seriously to have underestimated the extent of resentment its decision to pardon Mr Sharif has generated. The Jamaat-e-Islami has called for Gen Musharraf's resignation while other opposition factions have demanded that the 'secret deal' struck with the exiled prime minister be made public. Though there is little India can do except wait and watch, it is necessary for the government to analyse how the changing political scene in Islamabad will affect the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, and, specifically, Pakistan's willingness to play ball with India on the question of a ceasefire.

The Ramzan ceasefire unilaterally declared by the Indian government is now into its third week with no untoward incidents having occurred so far. Except for the Baramulla region, the number of militant attacks has come down and there has also been a noticeable improvement in the situation along the Line of Control. All indications are that given some sort of positive response from Pakistan, New Delhi will be prepared to extend the ceasefire. Given the political consensus in India on the need for a dialogue, the ball really is in Gen Musharraf's court. The Vajpayee government has in the past used back-channel facilitators — such as the Pakistani-American businessman Mansoor Ijaz — to send assurances of its willingness to address Islamabad's concerns. Though these efforts have borne fruit up to a point, all attempts at reviving the ceasefire and dialogue process have been stymied by hardliners in the Pakistani military establishment, this despite an important section of the Kashmiri militant movement itching for the start of a political process — Sunday's Hurriyat meeting is a clear pointer in this direction. As events unfold in Pakistan, India will be less concerned about the fact of military rule in that country than by the question of whether Gen Musharraf can develop a coherent and singular locus of power around him. If there are too many centres of power — the chief executive's office, GHQ, ISI, the fundamentalists — Pakistan will not be able to respond to Kashmir's cry for peace. In a curious sort of way, therefore, India could benefit if the current set of rumours about Gen Musharraf assuming the presidency turn out to be true. It may just empower him enough to stand up for his country's national interest and push for a peaceful, political resolution of the Kashmir issue. Should he do that, India's response can only be positive, as is evident from Mr Vajpayee's statement that he would be open for talks once the violence level comes down.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

11 DEC 2000

The Great Escape: ...and then the

With Nawaz Sharif's great escape to Saudi Arabia, all three of Pakistan's top opposition leaders are out of the country. That leaves The military ruler may legitimise his position in due course, but democracy seems to have been abandoned. *The Sunday Times* takes a look at the future of democracy in Pakistan

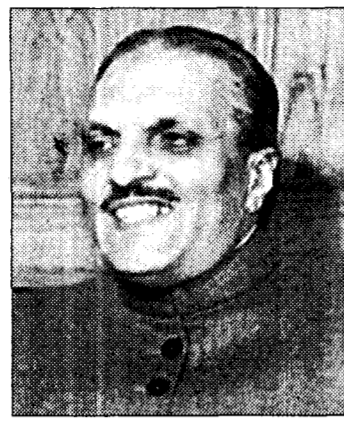
By G. Parthasarathy

GENERAL Zia-ul-Haq sent Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to the gallows. General Pervez Musharraf sent Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to exile in Saudi Arabia. The difference in the treatment that two elected prime ministers of Pakistan received from the military dictators who overthrew them raises queries about whether things in Pakistan have changed for the better.

Bhutto was not particularly admired by the Americans. Henry Kissinger actually threatened to make a 'horrible example' of him. Further, while Nawaz Sharif assiduously courted the Saudi royal family and even arranged for the Saudi defence minister to pay an unprecedented visit to the Kahuta nuclear weapons complex, Bhutto was more comfortable in the company of Arab radicals like Muammar Gaddafi of Libya.

With Pakistan's economy in tatters and the post-Cold War world not particularly well disposed towards military dictators, General Musharraf had little choice but to release Sharif in the face of pressure from U.S. President Bill Clinton and the rulers of Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar. As any observer of the dynamics of power in Pakistan should know, it is relatively easy for a Punjabi general (Zia) to execute a Sindh Prime Minister (Bhutto) than for a Mohajir general (Musharraf) to mete out the same treatment to a Punjabi Prime Minister (Sharif).

However, on the issue of the restoration of democracy, Musharraf can be expected to tread the same path as his worthy predecessors, Zia and Ayub Khan. He will hold 'elections' to local bodies in towns and villages and claim that he has introduced 'grassroots democracy'. In the meantime, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) will either split the demoralised Pakistan Muslim League or ar-



RULE OF THE GENERALS: (Above) Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (left) who was sent to the gallows by Zia-ul-Haq; Nawaz Sharif (left) who was sent into exile recently by Pervez Musharraf (extreme right)

range for its leadership to pass into the hands of people who don't particularly love Sharif. Meanwhile, Sharif may lie low for a few months in Saudi Arabia. But sooner, rather than later, he will endeavour to leave the land of Mecca for the Mecca of all Pakistani politicians — London. And, if the army continues to mismanage the economy, Sharif will attempt to turn the growing public discontent to his advantage.

Benazir Bhutto retains a measure of popular support, particularly in rural Sindh. But, she and her

here will receive full encouragement and support from the military.

If all goes according to plan, the army will arrange for national elections in 2002, with Musharraf perhaps becoming the President. The ISI will try to get its favourites elected as it has done ever so often in the past. Pakistan will then return to a system that may be democratic in form but is really a quasi-democracy, controlled and manipulated by the military-intelligence establishment. The army has neither the inclination nor the will to rein in armed fundamentalist outfits like the Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Jaish-e-Mohammed or the Sipah-e-Sahaba. It would, therefore, only be reasonable to expect growing manifestations of sectarian and ethnic violence in the coming years. The rapacious military establishment will never allow democratic institutions and traditions to be nurtured. It will then blame politicians for the sorry state of affairs. India will, therefore, have to be prepared to live with a rather dysfunctional and troublesome neighbour, obsessed with the quest for 'parity' with India.

While Pakistan is a country blessed with immense agricultural and mineral potential, its rulers, both civilian and military, have been incapable of harnessing the talents of the people for economic growth and prosperity. There are now voices in Pakistan urging that national priorities must be changed and confrontation with India over Kashmir and other issues ended. One only hopes that such voices are heard and respected by Pakistan's military rulers. But, given the military establishment's obsession with 'bleeding' India and its anachronistic views about 'Jihad' worldwide, one cannot be too optimistic on this score.

(The author is a former Indian high commissioner to Pakistan)

Don't equate us with Sharif, we didn't cut a deal, say Benazir, Altaf

By Rashmee Z. Ahmed

LONDON: A week after Nawaz Sharif's flight into exile in Saudi Arabia, his long-time political opponent Benazir Bhutto is taking the moral high ground and pointing out the new opportunity available to her Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to dominate the Pakistani province of Punjab. "I too could have a cut a deal and run, but I chose otherwise and live a life of great tension and hardship, when abandonment of politics could allow me a peaceful and privileged life," Bhutto told *The Sunday Times of India* in an exclusive interview.

Bhutto, who is in self-imposed exile and divides her time between London and Dubai where her children are at school, said, "Nawaz Sharif's departure could allow the PPP to dominate the political vacuum in Punjab, where it hasn't formed a government since 1977." She said this was one of her first thoughts when she heard news of Sharif's exile. "But initially," she added, "I felt a sense of shock and outrage at the discriminatory treatment meted out to political leaders from the majority and minority provinces."

BENAZIR BHUTTO

Referring to the recent decision of Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML), the PPP and some other parties to band together in a loose coalition called the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy, Bhutto said, "The Nawaz backdoor deal with the military, to go into the darkness of the night, has splintered the unity of political forces." She said the regime's decision to allow Sharif to walk free "could either be part of a larger game plan or just another corrupt act."

Bhutto denied moves to secure the release of her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, who is in prison on corruption charges. She rejected the parallels drawn by Pakistan's interior minister Moinuddin Haider between Sharif and her husband and a PPP statement issued on November 30 assuring "pragmatism about Senator Zardari to assist the restoration of democracy". Instead, Bhutto said, "We are prepared for arbitration. If Senator Zardari broke the law, he is liable, but if the regime broke the law then it is liable."

Bhutto said she challenged the

very rationale for keeping Zardari in jail or even offering him a free pardon. "The interior minister is misinformed on the subject. Sharif, who became a businessman after coming to power unlike Senator Zardari, owes Rs 600 crore to the banks and there are cases of money-laundering against his companies. These gave him the motive to cut a deal."

As calls for her return to Pakistan grow louder within the PPP, Bhutto said she had little faith in a "khaki democracy" and Gen Musharraf's promise to restore democracy by 2002 in the absence of the country's three main political leaders. "The military is unable to comprehend the importance of democratic function," she said. "They work by command and democracy is more complicated. Instability and bankruptcy is the



Benazir Bhutto

Bhutto, who was declared a "proclaimed offender" by the military regime as part of its anti-corruption drive within months of coming to power in August 1999, said she would not accept criticism of her decision to leave Pakistan and her case could not be compared with that of Sharif. "That's the view of my opponents," she said. "My children sacrificed a family life so that I could resist state oppression on their behalf. My husband has spent seven of the last ten years in prison. But, I didn't do any deals and my supporters respect me for that."

LONDON: Altaf Hussain leads Pakistan's third largest political party, the *Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM)*, from exile in London. He has lived here since 1992 and is wanted in Pakistan on several criminal charges, all of which he denies. Excerpts from an interview:

What were your feelings when you learnt of Nawaz Sharif's exile? After all, you are in the same boat.

I thought bad beginnings make bad endings; as you sow, so shall you reap. But it's unfair to equate my situation with that of Nawaz Sharif. I didn't make a deal with the army and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), I didn't make a deal with the Sharif government. I did not leave the country for fear of arrest. I left after persistent assassination attempts and when my party workers requested I guide them from abroad.

How demoralising is it for grassroots workers and middle-rung politicians to find their leaders fleeing the country one by one?

I didn't flee Pakistan of my own accord. That's why my party's vote bank is intact. It won two general elections and remained popular even while I've been in exile. But, leaders of other political parties have a feudal background and don't care about the workers. This has been demonstrated by Nawaz Sharif, who cut a deal for himself and his family, leaving his workers in the lurch. I came to London without a single member of my family. The world is witness to the torture and extra-judicial killing of not only thousands of MQM workers, but along with them my elder brother Nasser and my nephew Arif in December 1995. Even then, I did not surrender or apply for pardon or their release.

The military regime is talking of restoring democracy. How credible will this be in the absence of the three main political figures?

For the past 53 years, the ruling oligarchy has been using the same tactics. Sharif's exile is not part of a game plan, it is a big gamble by the army. Pakistan needs a grassroots party; its future lies in the rule of the middle class, not the rule of the army, feudal lords and hand-picked politicians. If the army and the ISI don't change their ways, I see a bleak future for Pakistan.

How would you answer some of the more critical views being expressed — that you, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif have betrayed the people by leaving the country and the political arena?

The people are the best judge of who betrayed Pakistan. I have repeatedly been offered a release and good jobs by the government — when Gen Zia-ul-Haq first arrested me in August 1979; after the arrest in October 1986 and again in August 1987 when I was held, along with hundreds of party workers. Local elections were held while I was in prison, the MQM won a landslide in Karachi and Hyderabad. The government was in shock and offered to release me on bail, but I refused and asked to be tried in a court of law. The government offered to withdraw all charges against me, but I refused unless they released my fellow workers. This ultimately happened.

The MQM took part in four consecutive general elections and emerged as the third largest political party and the second largest in Sindh. But I personally never took part in elections, never held a government office or took a bank loan. I have never owned a house, nor

was an inch of land taken by me or any member of my family from the government. But you see what Sharif and Benazir did twice when they held the office of Prime Minister — looting the country, taking kickbacks in government deals, building palaces and hotels. When I came to London, no cases were registered against me, but Benazir fled because she feared arrest. Sharif was convicted and has dozens of pending corruption cases, but he made a deal with the government and went into exile with 15 family members. He took away 22 big containers, carrying 101 suitcases full of gold and diamonds. He left his colleagues in jails and is now free with his family and enormous illicit wealth to live abroad in comfort.

So isn't it time for you to return and perhaps create a new understanding with a military regime led by a Mohajir general?

A military regime led by a Mohajir general doesn't mean he can act against the will of the Punjabi establishment. I want to go back. I want to be with my people, but it all depends on the people's wishes.

ALTAF HUSSAIN

No qualms about supping with Musharraf

Sharif or no Sharif, the hard-nosed reality is that India has no qualms about talking with Musharraf if Pakistan changes its tune on Kashmir. Seema Guha reports

It is an internal matter and has nothing to do with us." That's the official line in South Block. Whether Nawaz Sharif is in Pakistan or Saudi Arabia is of little relevance to New Delhi. For, India realises that any deal with Pakistan can only work with the backing of its army. In fact, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee made it clear days after the general seized power last year that India had dealt with military regimes in Pakistan in the past and could do so again if necessary.

There is a hitch, though. India swears by the Simla agreement and the Lahore Declaration, and has made it clear that both will have to figure in any dialogue with Pakistan. Gen Musharraf and the military establishment in Pakistan are totally opposed to the Vajpayee-Sharif ini-

tiative in Lahore. "Civilised countries honour their commitments even if there is a change of guard," says an Indian official. "India is committed to the Simla agreement which was signed by the then prime minister, Indira Gandhi. Prime Minister Vajpayee, despite differences with the Congress opposition, will not renege that agreement," he pointed out.

Can India expect Musharraf to do the same? Officials say it does not matter whether it is a civilian or a military government ruling in Islamabad. India is ready to talk with Pakistan once it changes its view on bleeding the Indian state by encouraging terrorists in Kashmir, and there is evidence of this on the ground.

New Delhi is resigned to dealing with the Pak-

istani military establishment. Senior officials admit as much in private. Irrespective of whether democracy is restored in Pakistan, the army will continue to call the shots, they point out. One reason why the Lahore agreement unravelled so soon was primarily because the army did not support the initiative.

From India's point of view, the state of Pakistan's economy is much more important than questions of democracy and politics. "If the economy picks up next year, the general will have no problem. But if there is no sign of any improvement, Pervez Musharraf's grip on power could become weak," says an Indian diplomat. If that happens, India will have to reassess whether it would be worthwhile talking to the current regime.

By Ayaz Amir

WITH politicians discredited and the Pakistani people expecting riders on horseback to clear up the political stables and work miracles into the bargain, the generals had an open field when they stumbled on to power on October 12, 1999. With or without the gun, they were masters of all they surveyed.

The good mood did not last. Miracles were slow in coming. The hard facts of life — rising prices, no jobs, higher utility bills — remained as intractable as before. The Pakistani public, learning nothing from the past, was dismayed. The euphoria which had greeted the advent of the generals, evaporated leaving in its place a fresh onrush of cynicism, a feeling that defines Pakistani political temperament.

But the new mood did not condemn Nawaz Sharif. Amongst his supporters, Sharif began to be looked upon not as the author of his misfortunes (which would have been more accurate) but as a political martyr. All efforts to oust him as party leader and consign him to political oblivion came to nothing. Instead a new leader emerged: Sharif's wife, Kulsoom Nawaz, who breathed new life into the half-dead carcass of the Muslim League by hurling fire and brimstone at the generals. To many, she seemed more canny and together than her imprisoned husband.

Kulsoom began secret contacts with other opposition parties, in-

Is Benazir the only credible opposition leader?



COMING TO NAUGHT: Kulsoom Sharif (left) emerged as leader while her husband was in jail but is now in exile with him; playboy cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan has little popular support

cluding Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party — contacts culminating into what was billed as the mother of all alliances, the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy. The event was choreographed by the aging political maestro, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, who has been making and unmaking alliances for as long as one can remember. Bringing all the country's worthwhile political parties on one platform was quite a development.

The generals looked more isolated than ever. For the first time since the October coup, the politicians seemed to be on their feet.

This was the setting against which a stunned nation learnt that after all this sound and fury the Sharifs had cut a deal with the government and were on their way to a red-carpet exile in the holy land. More stunned than anyone else were diehard Sharif supporters in the Muslim League. On the morrow of this fa-

mous turnaround most of them could have been felled by a feather. As a parting gift, Nawaz Sharif appointed a junior acolyte, one Javed Hashmi, as acting party president. Even for party elders, hardened to the ways of politics, this was too much to take. In the hour of his strategic escape, Sharif could have left the party to its own devices. But even then he wanted to keep things to himself, a trait which, above all, had led to his downfall in the first place. So where do matters stand now? Sharif's supporters are dismayed and have no heart for anything. The Muslim League, already being dominated by his detractors, is eager to do what it knows so well: dance to the military's tune.

Nawabzada's alliance looks dazed, a bit like a troupe of clowns which has forgotten its tricks. Benazir Bhutto is the only one licking her chops because Sharif's heroic escape leaves her as the only credible political figure in the country — quite a change of fortune for someone whose credibility was all but destroyed by lurid tales of corruption. The generals have nothing to worry about except their own ineptitude.

Musharraf freed Sharif to trace his hidden millions, says report

LONDON: Pakistan's military regime has hired international detectives to trace an estimated 700 million pounds allegedly amassed by exiled premier Nawaz Sharif during his 21 years in politics, *The Sunday Telegraph* reported on Sunday.



Nawaz Sharif

The report said Mr Sharif had handed over his properties in Lahore and his Pakistani bank accounts worth four million pounds to the country's military regime under a deal which allowed him to go to Saudi Arabia in exile.

Quoting a senior government official, the paper said that the sudden decision to free Mr Sharif and exile him to Saudi Arabia with his family followed advice from investigators that the only way to track down his fortune was to let him start spending it.

"While he was in prison, we managed to locate only six million dollars in accounts which have been confiscated," the official said. "Now he's free, with his luxury-loving way of life, he won't be able to refrain from spending money and a paper trail will emerge that can then be traced."

The national accountability bureau claimed that Mr Sharif owned seven apartments in London and held bank accounts in

London, Liechtenstein, Austria and Switzerland. His total wealth was estimated at 700 million pounds.

"This is phenomenal wealth for a man who owned only a steel mill when he started his political career in 1979," said Hussain Haqqani, an adviser to military ruler gen. Pervez Musharraf.

Mr Haqqani has also worked as a political consultant for both Mr Sharif and Benazir Bhutto, the exiled head of the Pakistan People's Party. In addition to hiring a U.S.-based detective agency, the Pakistani regime filed writs in a London court last week and approached the home office with a view to freezing Mr Sharif's assets in UK. (PTI)

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Democracy Exiled

Pakistan Marches to Army's Tune

By C UDAY BHASKAR

THE dramatic departure on December 10 of deposed Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif from a high-security Pakistani prison to safe exile in Saudi Arabia was totally unexpected and the Musharraf regime is now under spirited attack from all sections of Pakistani society. However, the Sharif exit is likely to have a significantly detrimental impact on the eroding credibility of the institutional calculus of Pakistan in the long term.

While this sudden move may ostensibly strengthen the hand of the military regime by creating a near political vacuum in the country, this initiative will also deepen the structural contradiction inherent in the correlation between the Pakistani military and its linkage with the state, polity and civil society.

Axiomatically, this development will have its own relevance for India and the bilateral relationship which is now poised at a delicate stage in the embryonic Ramzan ceasefire now in force in Kashmir.

A brief recapitulation of events in Pakistan will place this development and its deeper implications in context. General Musharraf who seized power in a bloodless coup from Mr Sharif in October 1999 in the aftermath of the Kargil war was projected as the saviour of a nation and its weary people who had been repeatedly let down by their political representatives. Mr Sharif of the Pakistani Muslim League (PML) and his predecessor Ms Benazir Bhutto of the Pakistani People's Party (PPP) who were elected prime minister on two occasions each in the last 12 years were differently beholden to the Pakistani military for their political viability. They represented the brief return to democracy in a country better known for its distinctive characteristic of the military repeatedly seizing political power.

Beginning with Field Marshal Ayub Khan, the Pakistani military has been the most powerful element of the troika that included the president and the prime minister. This leverage was legitimised by the draconian 8th amendment to the Constitution that allowed the president to sack the elected PM — often at the behest of the military. However, in his second term in 1997 Mr Sharif who enjoyed the requisite parliamentary majority clipped the wings of the military and the president by introducing the 13th amendment and set the stage for his own political demise. Mr Sharif recklessly

squandered his considerable political capital during both tenures and lost popular support in much the same way that Ms Bhutto forfeited her mandate through the machinations of her husband. Thus the cynicism in Pakistan about the quality, mettle and rectitude of its political representatives is not invalid.

What is germane is that since its birth in 1947 on the basis of the two-nation theory, the Pakistani military abetted by external forces has gradually subsumed the interests of the state, as the nascent republic navigated through the turbulent decades of the Cold War. Seeking an elusive parity with its larger neighbour India, the identity of the Pakistani state and its core interests were increasingly defined by the military which also exploited religion and sectarianism. This ill-advised step has eaten into the entrails of state and civil society.

The determined militarisation of

IN BRIEF

- Sharif's exile will be detrimental to Pakistan in the long-run
- The military's interests have been promoted at the cost of the polity
- A political vacuum cannot be filled by the military

national objectives and collective endeavour reached its tragic denouement in the 1971 war that led to the creation of Bangladesh. The excesses of the Pakistani army and the genocide unleashed in the erstwhile East Pakistan that led to this war are reflective of the impress of the jack-boot on the Pakistani psyche. Both history and narrative have been selectively shaped to suit the interests of the military even as the core interests of the state were mortgaged and the polity alienated.

The Zulfikar Ali Bhutto years in the aftermath of the 1971 trauma saw a brief return to democracy but his charisma did not prevent him from going to the gallows in 1979 under his own protegee, General Zia. The military was back in the driver's seat and the subsequent Soviet presence in Afghanistan only served to consolidate the hold of the military over Pakistan which became a front-line state for the US-led West.

Domestic politics and democratic aspirations in Pakistan were once

again buried and the army supported by the US nurtured the mujahideen fervour. The Zia years saw the rampant encouragement of the religious divide and the cynical quip was that three As shaped the fortunes of Pakistan — the Army, America and Allah. After Gen Zia's death in a mysterious plane crash in August 1988, a fragile democracy emerged under the PPP with Benazir Bhutto at the helm but the military virus had already permeated state and polity and a robust democratic practice could not take root as the major political parties entered into unhealthy liaisons with the military to ensure their survival.

Ironically, Nawaz Sharif, a Punjabi industrialist-turned-politician was a protegee of the Zia regime and owed his success in overthrowing Ms Bhutto at the hustings to the army. Yet the passage of the 13th amendment, the nuclear tests of May 1998 and the manner in which he sacked an army chief even while signing the February 1999 Lahore accord seemed to suggest that a civilian PM was finally calling the shots. But this was swiftly belied in the ill-fated Kargil episode and the military with General Musharraf was back in business.

In arriving at this exile deal that puts Mr Sharif in the equivalent of a political black-hole, General Musharraf has perhaps scored a brilliant victory — but it will remain at best tactical. With Ms Bhutto of the PPP also in exile in the UK where she joins the mohajir leader Altaf Hussain of the MQM, the credible Pakistani political parties have no major leaders in situ. The attempt at forming an umbrella alliance of political parties may have presented a democratic challenge to the Musharraf regime but the recent fissures in the PML and the Sharif decision to seek exile have put paid to this prospect.

However, political science and the evolution of states suggests that this political vacuum cannot be filled by the military and this is borne out by the empirical track record. History reveals that Pakistan is not the first state wherein the military has subsumed the state and stifled the birth of a normative civilian polity. Germany, Japan and Italy before World War II and Indonesia and Myanmar more recently have paid a heavy price of violent internal turbulence to cleanse their internal structures. It is unlikely that Pakistan will be the exception to the rule.

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19 DEC 2000

Your human rights record, Mr Musharraf

RESPECT FOR civil and political rights deteriorated significantly in the year following the bloodless military coup, on October 12, 1999, that deposed prime minister Sharif in Pakistan. Gen Pervez Musharraf's administration began to address some longstanding justice issues, but it also greatly augmented executive powers and curtailed the independence of the judiciary. It moved to neutralise political parties through the application of broadly defined laws governing terrorism, sedition, and public order, and through the establishment of a powerful extra-constitutional "accountability" bureau. Opposition party members were subjected to prolonged detention without charge; some were tortured in custody. **Sectarian violence and attacks on religious minorities continued and, despite renewed attention to the issue, the government failed to provide meaningful recourse for women victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.**

Early this year, the military government moved to strip the judiciary of much of its power. On January 26, Musharraf issued an order requiring all Supreme and High Court judges to take an oath binding them to uphold his proclamation of a National Emergency and to adhere to the Provisional Constitution Order (PCO). Many, including the chief justice of the Supreme Court, refused to take the oath. A total of 15 judges were removed. The PCO, which remains in effect, had been announced by Musharraf just days after the October

coup. It suspended the constitution and legislative bodies and prohibited the Supreme and High Courts from making any decision against the Chief Executive.

On May 12, a reconstituted Supreme Court issued a verdict rejecting petitions challenging the coup's legality. The court set a deadline of three years for the holding of national and provincial elections, but reserved authority to review the continuation of the Proclamation of Emergency, leaving the door open to future extensions of military rule.



Top officials of the deposed government were detained on the day of the coup; two of them, former information minister **Mushahid Hussain** and former petroleum minister **Chaudhry Nisar Ali**

Khan continue to be held without charge. Sharif was convicted of hijacking and terrorism under the Anti-Terrorism Act, and sentenced to life imprisonment following a trial marred by procedural abuses.

In December 1999 the military government amended the Anti-Terrorism Act to add hijacking and conspiracy to the list of offenses falling within the Anti-Terrorism Court's jurisdiction. These offenses were then applied retroactively to Sharif. Another amendment allowed the government to replace the judge originally assigned to hear the case, a Sharif appointee.

In January, the new judge stepped down, publicly complaining of the presence of intelligence agents in his courtroom. In March, only days before the final arguments were to be presented in the trial, Sharif's lawyer, Iqbal Raad, and two of his colleagues were assassinated in their office. Other members of the defence team charged that the government had failed to provide them protection despite repeated warnings that they were being threatened. The new government's principal vehicle for detaining former officials and party leaders, however, was the National Accountability Ordinance, a law ostensibly created to bring corrupt officials to account. The ordinance confers sweeping powers of arrest, investigation, and prosecution in a single institution, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), and permits detainees to be held for up to ninety days without being brought before a court. The law was later amended to facilitate conviction by shifting the burden of proof during trial from the prosecution to the defence. There were persistent reports of ill treatment in NAB custody.

Despite numerous crackdowns on political activism, human rights organisations, for the most part, were permitted to function freely. Groups such as the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan openly condemned the military government's treatment of detained political figures, and its curtailing of judicial independence.

• *Human Rights Watch report*

THE TIMES OF INDIA

19 DEC 2000

'Rs 50,000 cr paid for Sharif's freedom'

Mubashir Zaidi and PTI
Islamabad, December 19

THE UNEXPLAINED and sudden release by Pakistan's military ruler General Musharraf of Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister he deposed, is now being linked to the payment of a form of "blood money."

Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League party's acting chief claimed yesterday that a group of Arab countries led by Saudi Arabia paid Rs 5 trillion (an unbelievable Rs 50,000 crore) for his and his family's safe passage of into exile in Saudi Arabia. The money was paid as aid to Pakistan to shore up its floundering economy. Even by the standards of the deep pockets oil-rich Arab countries enjoy, the figure claimed was clearly outrageous.

In an apparent reaction today to the PML allegation, a spokesman of the administration said Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf will explain on national TV and radio the circumstances under which Sharif was sent into exile in Saudi Arabia on December 10.

Acting PML president Javed Hashmi told reporters in Peshawar yesterday: "Five trillion (Pakistani) rupees have been paid by Saudi



Arabia and other Islamic countries as economic assistance to secure the release of Nawaz Sharif."

Hashmi sought to emphasise that Musharraf's decision to dislodge Sharif was "neither accepted within the country nor by the outside world". Hashmi wanted the military regime to make public the details of the money-for-Sharif's-freedom deal.

Hashmi, who described Sharif as "the hero of Muslim world for successfully conducting

Pakistan's nuclear tests", claimed the military government was "under tremendous pressure from Muslim countries and their leaders" to release him.

He countered rumours about an imminent split in the PML saying, "eight or 10 leaders are expressing differences and it is negligible."

Asked about the possibility of Sharif returning to Pakistan, Hashmi: "The party's central committee will decide on this soon."

The PML acting chief's claim yesterday gives a new angle to the ongoing ruckus within Pakistan over the release and subsequent exile of Sharif. The Musharraf regime is already facing opposition from the hardline Jamaat-e-Islami over this issue.

In an unrelated development, the military administration ordered all its envoys abroad to seek prior permission from it before attending social functions and seminars. This comes after the expulsion of Pakistan's Deputy High Commissioner at Dhaka, Irfan ur Rehman Raja, who was asked to leave Bangladesh. Raja had at a seminar in Dhaka on November 27 reportedly accused the Bangladesh's ruling Awami League of atrocities during 1971 war which led to the creation of Bangladesh.

Pakistan: Is the party over?

Karachi: Pakistan, as well as the world at large, is still digesting the dramatic news of the release of deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his close relatives, through the exercise of presidential pardon on December 10. The military government has linked the decision to the exercise of clemency in response to the repeated appeals by Mr Nawaz Sharif and his family because of his deteriorating health. The ends of justice are claimed to have been served, since only his prison sentence has been waived, while other punishments awarded by the courts, pertaining to cash fines and confiscation of property, are being implemented.

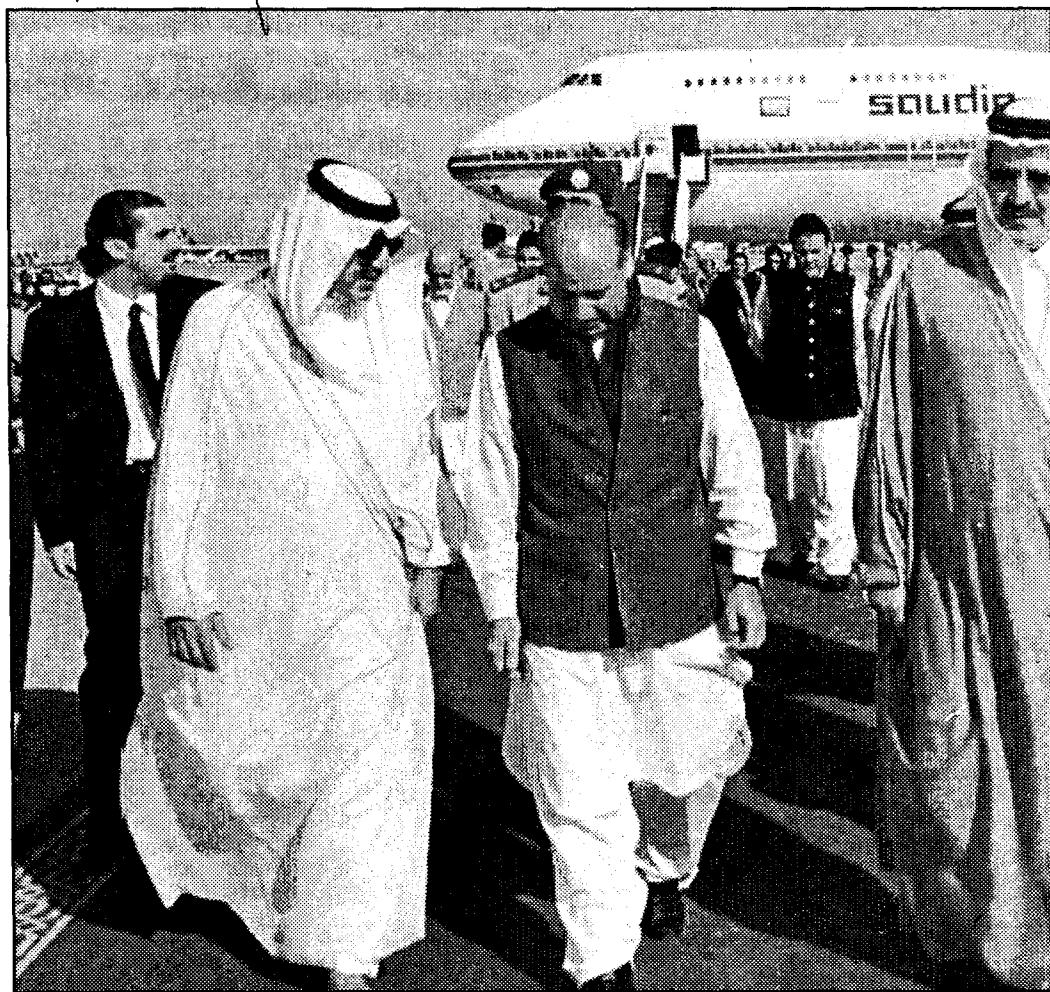
There appears to have been an understanding that Mian Nawaz Sharif will not indulge in statements or political activity, at least for some time to come, though no specific details of any compact have been announced. This development, which came as a complete surprise, is likely to profoundly affect domestic politics in general and the politics of the Muslim League in particular. The purpose here is not to carry out any analysis of the domestic repercussions as that would be highly speculative at this stage. There is no dearth of comments and interpretations of the event by expert observers of the political scene at home. As such, this preliminary analysis focuses on the international response to the event.

Though the US Ambassador in Pakistan has disowned any official role by his government, the reports of the involvement of President Clinton, in pressing for Mr Nawaz Sharif's release informally through the Saudis, appear credible. Considering that the former prime minister had responded to the advice of Mr Clinton in signing the Washington statement of July 4, 1999, and agreeing to effect withdrawals across the Line of Control in the Kargil sector, the US President could not be expected to remain indifferent to his fate. The role played by the Saudi royal family, with which Mian Nawaz Sharif had developed close personal ties, does not come as a surprise either. The matter appears to have been discussed between the Chief Executive and Prince Abdullah at the OIC summit at Doha, Qatar, in November last.

The clout of the US, and of the Saudis, is mainly financial, and here one can understand the concern of the military government to ensure vital economic support to its programme of fiscal and economic regeneration. Interestingly, the BBC has linked the decision on Mian Nawaz Sharif to Pakistan's economic predicament. The government will obviously not admit this officially, but given the seriousness of the country's financial situation, and the threat of default that has been looming as a result of the post-nuclear sanctions, it is entitled to take whatever measures it considers necessary to put the economy on an even keel.

It is pertinent to recall the

BY DR MAQBOOL AHMAD BHATTY



FREE TO CUT A DEAL: Nawaz Sharif being received at the Jeddah airport last week

recently released report of the State Bank of Pakistan, pertaining to July-September quarter, which indicates that inflation has risen and that price hikes are inevitable in utilities and petroleum. Efforts to achieve greater self-reliance have not succeeded as tax revenues have fallen

Though the US Ambassador in Pakistan has disowned any official role by his government, the reports of the involvement of President Clinton, in pressing for Mr Nawaz Sharif's release informally through the Saudis, appear credible. Considering that the former prime minister had responded to the advice of Mr Clinton in signing the Washington statement of July 4, 1999, and agreeing to effect withdrawals across the Line of Control in the Kargil sector, the US President could not be expected to remain indifferent to his fate

short of targets by significant amounts. The compulsion to rely on external resources therefore remains, and with it the imperative necessity of heeding IMF advice.

Our communities abroad, notably in the US, have been taken aback as the release of Nawaz Sharif is seen as seriously undermining the exercise of accountability, which is one of the key planks of the military regime. The answer to this could be that the financial provisions of the sentences awarded by the courts are being implemented. In fact, a legal controversy has already arisen as to whether the government is entitled to confiscate properties in the manner announced in the official media. That, however, is a separate issue over which courts may have to deliberate. But reverting to the international assessment of this decision, one could say that it is being widely regarded as a judicious act, and one that presents the military government as a humane rather than a vengeful one.

The attitude of other governments, which have commented on the event, such as that of China, has been that this is an internal matter of Pakistan on which they do not wish to express any opinion. But behind the scenes, friendly governments welcome measures that promote national conciliation, and express concern when harsh measures are taken, even through the judicial process. One has only to recall that many governments had urged clemency rather than the execution of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1979.

No country follows the domestic politics of Pakistan with greater interest than India. Despite preoccupation with domestic controversies, the *Hindu*, one of the most respected dailies of that country, found space in its issue of December 12 to express its opinion on

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Nawaz's release and exile. In its editorial entitled *A decisive denouement?* the newspaper takes note that with Mr Nawaz Sharif proceeding on apparent non-political exile, the factual situation is that the leaders of the three major political parties are out of the country. The head of the Pakistan People's Party, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is in voluntary exile in the UK. Independently of her, the Mohajir leader, Mr Altaf Hussain, also remains in self-ordained exile. Though these uncoordinated actions of the three civilian leaders "may not legitimise a military coup, they have certainly left Gen. Musharraf with the political space he needed to govern Pakistan. His credentials to speak for Pakistan on the international scene may have also received a boost as a result." This is a factor, the paper feels, that India cannot ignore.

The newspaper does not miss the divergent versions of the decision given by the government, and by Mr Sharif's wife, who has asserted that her incarcerated husband and some of his relatives, including her, have been banished by Gen. Musharraf. This suggests that he is trying to prevent Mr Sharif bringing a nemesis upon the military regime in Islamabad. The government cites two reasons for the pardon: putative mercy pleas by and on behalf of Mr Sharif, and separately Saudi Arabia's political willingness on humanitarian considerations to host him as an exile requiring medical treatment. The wife's contradicting account is that there was neither a petition for presidential clemency, nor did the former prime minister make a move for plea bargain.

Advocates of restoration of democracy can doubtless view the stratagem of clemency as the means of snuffing out the young Mr Sharif's dreams of re-emerging as a leader of his people. The paper notes that a fledgling alliance was shaping up between Mr Sharif and Ms Bhutto for the revival of democracy. But Mr Sharif's exile leaves Gen. Musharraf exclusively in charge of Pakistan. "Any persistent refusal by New Delhi to engage Gen. Musharraf's Pakistan in bilateral parleys in this changing context will be no less vacuous as before," the *Hindu* editorial concludes.

If an Indian view sees the prospects for the government of Gen. Musharraf in a favourable light after the decision to pardon Mian Nawaz Sharif, the tendency among some domestic commentators to indulge in forecasts of gloom and doom needs to be tempered with moderation. We are at a critical pass in our history, and the need of the hour is that decisions on our policies and plans are taken with due deliberation, and in the best interests of the country. Moves towards the restoration of democracy offer the best hope for the long-term well-being and stability of Pakistan.

By arrangement with Dawn

Pakistan starts rocky return to democracy

KARACHI: Pakistan will take its first steps towards restoring democracy with village elections next week, but candidates are already wondering what sort of democracy the military is trying to create.

Military ruler General Pervez Musharraf has described his plan to devolve power to the village level as nothing short of "revolutionary". But candidates and observers are unconvinced, pointing to rules forbidding election campaigns.

"We have been told by administration that any candidate holding public meetings, putting up banners and posters will be disqualified," said Sakina, one of women candidates for whom a third of seats in village councils have been reserved.

The Pakistan election commission recently announced code of ethics barring candidates from holding public meetings, leading processions, waving flags, displaying banners.

"This is sham democracy ... Voters are trying to follow candidates who cannot even put up a banner," said a voter.

The rules, which allow low-key speeches, are part of a strategy to ensure that Pakistan's political parties have nothing to do with the

elections.

But Qaim Ali Shah, former chief minister of Sindh in Benazir Bhutto's first government, said her Pakistan Peoples Party's was quietly supporting candidates "as awam dost (people's friends)." The first phase of the village council elections starts in 18 districts around the country on December 31.

More will be held in the new year, followed by district and

provincial elections leading up to promised general elections before October 12, 2002. "I am confident that it is a revolutionary step and a revolutionary move," Mr Musharraf said last week.

"Through this system, we intend to make the people of Pakistan masters of their own destiny. We want people to take their destiny into their own hands."

The general has crisscrossed the

country in recent weeks, imploring people to vote for upright candidates and resist pressure from the parties.

"I request you to fulfil your responsibilities and cast your vote honestly for a correct person. Don't lose this opportunity. This is your national duty. Don't come under anybody's pressure," he said last week.

Mr Musharraf's "devolution plan" aims to create a three-tier system of assemblies to integrate rural and urban government and give local communities more say over their own affairs, particularly in financial, police and judicial spheres.

Women and minorities have each been assured a third of the seats in the village and district assemblies, perhaps the boldest move in a strongly patriarchal, Islamic society. "It is like a dream come true," said female candidate Tehmina Pathan, 40, from a patriarchal tribal family. "In a feudal and tribal dominated society, it was not an easy decision for my husband (to allow me to contest)."

Another female candidate, Shamim Pathan, said, "In a rural society, women who were not even allowed to work without permission from the male family members will now have a say in political issues." (AFP)

Benazir willing to return home

DUBAI: Former Pakistan prime minister Benazir Bhutto is willing to return to her country to provide leadership to the opposition against the military rule in the wake of a vacuum created after the sudden exile of Pakistan Muslim League leader Nawaz Sharif, a newspaper report said.



"She will do that only at the invitation of the party's central executive committee (CEC) which is now studying the pros and cons of her possible safe return," the Pakistan Peoples

Party (PPP) vice chairman Makhdoom Amin Fahim told *Gulf News* here.

Mr Fahim was in Dubai along with some top PPP leaders from Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan to meet Benazir who is here on the occasion of Eid.

At an *Iftar* dinner offered by Ms Bhutto for the party leaders at her residence on Saturday evening, they discussed the current political situation in Pakistan and how best to take advantage of the situation after Mr Sharif's exit.

The leaders denied that the PPP was seeking a deal with the military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf for Benazir's return or for the release of her husband Asif Ali Zardari, the daily said. (PTI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

25 DEC 2000

Benazir willing to return to Pakistan, says report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI, Dec. 24. — Mrs Benazir Bhutto is willing to return to her country to provide leadership to the Opposition against the military rule in the wake of a vacuum created after the sudden exile of the Pakistan Muslim League leader, Mr Nawaz Sharif, a newspaper report said.

"She will do that only at the invitation of the party's central executive committee which is now studying the pros and cons of her possible safe return," the Pakistan People's Party vice chairman, Mr Makhdoom Amin Fahim, told *The Gulf News* here.

Mr Fahim was in Dubai with some top PPP leaders from Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan to meet Mrs Bhutto who is here on the occasion of Id.

At an Iftar dinner offered by Mrs Bhutto for the party leaders at her residence last evening, they discussed the current political situation in Pakistan and how best to take advantage of the situation after Mr Sharif's exit.

The leaders denied that PPP



Mrs Benazir Bhutto

was seeking a deal with Gen Pervez Musharraf for Mrs Bhutto's return or for the release of her husband, Mr Asif Ali Zardari, the daily said.

"It is all propoganda as there is no such efforts in the process. Neither did I ask for a meeting with him (Gen Musharraf) nor did I meet him secretly," Mr Fahim said. The report said, quoting a PPP source, the party was divided on the issue of Mrs

Bhutto's return to Pakistan.

"Some of them want her to come back immediately and face trial as they believed that the time was ripe for her return after Mr Sharif's exile, while another group insisted that she should stay abroad unless they discussed the issue in detail," the report said.

Polls: Pakistan will take its first steps towards restoring democracy with village elections next week, but candidates are already wondering what sort of democracy the military is trying to create, adds AFP from Karachi.

Gen Pervez Musharraf has described his plan to devolve power to the village level as nothing short of "revolutionary". But candidates and observers are unconvinced, pointing to rules forbidding election campaigns. "We have been told by the administration that any candidate holding public meetings, putting up banners and posters will be disqualified," said Ms Sakina, one of the women candidates for whom a third of seats in village councils have been reserved.

THE STATESMAN

25 DEC 2000

RISING VIOLENCE / JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI THREATENS STIR

Pakistan Govt. invites religious groups for talks

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 28. Concerned over the growing threat from the religious parties and organisations, the military government has invited various leaders of the Islamic groups for talks.

The meeting to be held on January 13 in Islamabad is to seek their co-operation in 'maintaining law and order'.

The Interior Minister, Lt. Gen. (retd) Moinuddin Haider, who made the announcement in Karachi has been quoted as saying that "no one will be allowed to break law and the Government will take all measures to maintain peace in the country".

The initiative for talks comes even as the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) is to launch an agitation next week in protest against the exile deal of the former Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif.

The JI has been very strident in its criticism of the military regime. Its chief, in a statement recently, had demanded that the generals within the Army replace Gen. Musharraf as "he has become a national security risk".

The argument of the JI chief, Quazi Ahmed, is that Gen. Pervez Musharraf cannot be trusted after the manner in which his Government entered into a deal with the former Prime Minister.

Another religious outfit, Tanzeemul Akhwan, had threatened to march into Islamabad with three lakh volunteers in support of its demand for enforcement of Shariah (Islamic rule) in the country.

It took a great deal of persuasion on the part of the military Government to defer the march. It now stands postponed to March after Religious Affairs Minister, Mr. Mahmood Ghazi, assured the Tanzeemul Ikhwan's chief, Akram Awan, that steps were being taken to implement Sharia.

The jihadi group, comprising of senior retired Ar-

my officers, has been demanding for long enforcement of Shariat. Maulana Awan's contention is Pakistan was created in the name of Islam and yet Islamic Shariah was not enforced.

The Government's argument is that there is a blanket ban on holding rallies and demonstrations. However in the past, it had permitted religious organisations to hold meetings despite ban on rallies and demonstrations. Two months ago the JI held a massive congregation near Islamabad and around the same time the militant group, Lashkar-e-Taiba, was allowed to hold a meeting in Karachi.

The Government was criticised for following different standards for various organisations. The explanation from the government was the organisers had sought permission for in-door meetings and later violated the commitment.

Shi'ite cleric gunned down

PTI reports:

Gunmen took a Shiite Muslim cleric from his home in Karachi, shot and killed him, police said today.

Muslim Hussein, the cleric of a nearby Shiite Muslim mosque, was at home in Orangi district yesterday when the two men stormed in, took him outside and shot him, they said. His wife was wounded when she ran outside to help her husband, police said.

A second man, also a Shiite Muslim, was killed earlier yesterday in Karachi. It is not clear whether the two killings were related, police said.

No one has taken responsibility for the killings, but police believe it was carried out by followers of the militant Sunni Muslim group, Sipah-e-Sahaba or Guardians of the Friends of the Prophet.

The group has been blamed for scores of killings of Shiite Muslims, whom they revile as non-Muslims.

THE HINDU

29 DEC 2000

Musharraf remains trouble-ridden

REUTERS

ISLAMABAD, Oct. 6. General Pervez Musharraf approaches the first anniversary of his seizure of power in Pakistan, dogged by a poor image abroad and ingrained scepticism at home.

Mr Musharraf's trip to the UN General Assembly last month, when his talk with US President Mr Bill Clinton lasted for five minutes, seemed to represent his domestic and foreign predicament on the eve of the anniversary.

As Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee began an official visit to Washington, Gen Musharraf was grounded at Kennedy airport while security officers searched his plane following a bomb hoax.

Economists believe that the present Pakistani military government has done enough to win a resumption of vital

International Monetary Fund assistance, cut off 18 months ago. But the list of problems facing the 57-year-old career officer is long and formidable.

"This is their last chance", a Western economist said of the military leaders. "We've just entered the next century and they really have a chance to do something — but not much time".

Gen Musharraf seized power on October 12 last year marking the culmination of a bizarre tug-of-war between him and the then Prime Minister Mr Nawaz Sharif. The latter fired him while he was out of the country and subsequently attempted to block the return of his plane.

Although other countries immediately condemned the bloodless coup and still demand

FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF PAK MILITARY TAKEOVER

nomie decline of the 1990s, root out endemic corruption and dismantle political structures that had seen four elected but ineffective governments in a row thrown out during the decade.

The results have been decidedly mixed. "I think people expected a military government to be more authoritarian and decisive", said Mr Shireen Mazari, head of the government-funded Institute of Strategic Studies. "It was trying to be popular, but a military government could have taken ruthless action", he said.

Gen Musharraf promises to follow a court order and restore civilian rule in 2002. But there is constant speculation on whether the court will give him an extension or whether he will turn himself into a civilian



General Pervez Musharraf

a speedy return to civilian rule, Gen Musharraf enjoyed wide popular support at home and diplomats express little sympathy for the discredited Mr Sharif.

Gen Musharraf promised immediately to reverse the eco-

ruler to stay on.

His government's most noted accomplishments are on the economic front, especially the moves to meet terms set by the IMF for a resumption of aid vital to shoring up of Pakistan's meagre foreign reserves and dealing with a foreign debt of about \$32 billion.

Faced with a chronic budget deficit, Gen Musharraf has refused to retreat despite protests by merchants who will be drawn into the tax net for the first time. In a country of nearly 140 million people, only about 1.2 million pay any income-tax.

Political change is supposed to start this December with the first of six months of local government elections from which parties are banned. The goal is the eventual creation of a new political leadership. Many suspect that the crackdown on corruption has the same intent.

THE STATESMAN

7 OCT 2000

Pak seals Sharif party main office

Islamabad, Nov. 20: An armed mob, allegedly backed by the police, occupied the headquarters of ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League here on Monday amid signs of a major split within the party.

More than 100 people, some armed with sticks and claiming to be party workers opposed to a planned alliance between the PML and an Opposition coalition, invaded the office and shouted anti-Sharif slogans, witnesses said.

"PML house in Islamabad has

AP-9 21 11
been taken over by plainclothes intelligence people and they're not allowing anyone to enter," key PML leader Raja Zafar Haq said.

Syed Zafar Ali Shah, another senior PML leader and former Senator, said numbers of uniformed police were at the office, but did not intervene as the mob rampaged through the premises.

"They are plainclothes policemen (acting as anti-Sharif party members). We condemn this brutal action and the physical takeover of the office by the police," he said.

"No one is being allowed to enter the office. We don't want to create a law and order situation so we have decided to change the venue of the meeting." Some of the mob were shouting "long live the Islamabad police," "friends of the PPP are traitors of the nation" and "down with Nawaz Sharif." "We won't let any Nawaz Sharif supporters in," said one.

The office doors had been locked and a main road blocked to prevent the central working committee meeting taking place, witnesses said. (AFP)

Pak (1)
'Junta better than previous governments'

By arrangement with Dawn

Lahore, Nov. 20: Pakistanis settled in Britain regard the Musharraf rule better than the previous 'democratic' governments, and they support the policies being pursued by the General although their benefits will take some time to reach the common man, a British Lord said here on Sunday.

Lord Nazir, the first Pakistani who is a member of the House of Lords, said the policies pursued by the previous governments had shattered the confidence of overseas Pakistanis. He said they were still prepared to do everything possible for them for their motherland provided the government took necessary steps to restore their confidence.

He said some Pakistanis living in the UK who had deposited money in foreign exchange to get plots in some government-sponsored housing schemes were being issued notices that they should get back their money in local currency. Criticising the decision, he said the depositors must be compensated.

"The Supreme Court has given the present government a three-year mandate and still the British government continues to mount pressure for the restoration of democracy and a clear road map. What is the justification for it to do so and ignore many other countries where there is no democracy?" a reporter asked.

THE ASIAN AGE

NOV 21 1999

PAK ARMY RULE

57-6
24/10

A Dismal Failure

By AG NOORANI

TONY, I want to tell you what I'm doing." That was Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, Gen Pervez Musharraf, alerting Gen Anthony Zinni of the US Marine Corps just as he staged a coup on 12 October 1999 ousting an elected, albeit discredited, government. Zinni received the call at an airfield in Egypt. The US Defence Secretary, William Cohen, happened to be sitting next to him. As head of the US Central Command, Zinni had visited Pakistan and India in June 1999 at the height of the Kargil crisis. The alert notwithstanding, the US took a dim view of the coup. Not one country of significance thought differently.

Having made himself chief executive of his country, Pervez Musharraf had a whole year in which to impress international opinion and, more importantly, fulfil the expectations of the people of his country. He has failed them completely. He has neither cleaned the Augean stables nor drawn up credible plans for a return to democracy. About the only achievements of note, amidst the statistics he merrily cites with a song in his voice, is the documentation of the economy and some reforms in the tax systems. There is good reason to fear worse to come, especially in regard to press freedom.

NO CREDIBILITY

In as many as four important areas, the general beat an ignominious treat. He tried to end smuggling and clamped down on the Barah markets. The traders rose in revolt and made common cause with the Jamaat-e-Islami. The regime caved in. The gun culture is a menace to society. All that the regime could do was to ban the public exhibition of weapons and wink whenever the ban was flouted. It ordered registration of the madrasas (religious schools). Only four thousand out of the 40 to 50 thousand were registered. Even a modest procedural reform of the hideous blasphemy law was abandoned. The CE had the Provisional Constitution Order amended to reaffirm the Islamic provisions of the Constitution.

His credibility and prestige have suffered to the point where his sincerity is openly impugned, not least by the religious bigots whom he sought to appease. At the Tahaffuze Madaris Deenia Convention at Lahore, on 7 August, Maulana Samiul Haq quoted the CE as saying that he was not contemplating any action against the seminaries. Characterising the government as hypocritical, the Maulana stated that while it assured the outside world that it would take action against the seminaries, to them it behaved in an apologetic manner. The survey, one might mention, would have covered not only the seminaries, but also business houses, NGOs and even households. On 15 October it was announced that the controversial columns in the questionnaires can be left blank by the madrasa officials.

A five-member Army junta has ruled Pakistan in the last year with the chief of Army Staff at the apex as the CE. Of the other four, two took the initiative to stage the coup while the COAS was in mid air — Lt

Gen Aziz, chief of General Staff at the GHQ and Lt Gen Mahmood Ahmed, Corps Commander, Rawalpindi who was made DG of the ISI. The other two are Lt Gen Ghulam Ahmed, chief of Staff to the CE, and Major-Gen Ahsan, chief of Military Intelligence. Aziz was by far the most powerful and assertive of the lot.

The reshuffle on 31 August achieved objects more than one by a single stroke. Aziz was made Corps Commander,



Lahore which places him in line for succession to the top post, since only one who has commanded an Army Corps can fill the post of COAS. Pervez Musharraf has thus managed to send out of the GHQ an overbearing understudy. The former Corps Commander, Lahore, Lt Gen Khalid Maqbool, was made chairman of the National Accountability Bureau ousting from the post Lt Gen Syed Mohammed Amjad, the "Mr Clean" of the Army who was proving to be an utter nuisance. He has been appointed Commander 2-strike corps.

Amir Mir wrote in the Karachi monthly *Newsline* (October 2000) that Amjad had "reportedly obtained enough documentary evidence to launch a full-scale probe into six major defence deals involving at least 20 retired senior military officials."

DISENCHANTMENT

The CE was disturbed by such ardour. His acolytes claimed that there was "no explicit" instruction to the NAB chief to go slow. "Amjad's close circles, nevertheless, insist that his removal as NAB chief is directly connected with his ongoing investigations against three former chiefs of army staff, two naval chiefs and an air force chief in the purchases of tanks, submarines, naval mine hunters, Mirage fighters and army jeeps." The issue was squarely joined — does the process of accountability cover the army as well? Involved were alleged kickbacks to the tune of \$1 billion in deals pertaining to Agosta submarines, Mirage VFs and Mirage 3 BEs, Ukrainian tanks, British shops, minesweepers, rifles and spares for F-7 planes. "The NAB has been barred by Chief Executive General Musharraf from investigating corruption cases that relate to serving military officials."

One wonders whether such reportage will be suppressed in the days ahead. *Newsline's* intrepid editor, Ms Rehana Hakeem, who, to use South Asian lingo, hails from Belgaum, wrote in a signed editorial: "Given its dismal performance, shouldn't the Musharraf regime be taking a closer look at its own inadequacies, rather

than accusing the press of indulging in 'lifafa journalism' and using the time-worn tactic of raiding newspaper offices on the pretext of checking electricity meters or income tax files. A muzzled press cannot serve as a cover-up for a confused and directionless set-up." This was a reference to the recent raid on the premises of *Dawn* and to the CE's sneering reference to "lifafa (envelope) journalism" in all places, New York. His voluble minister for Information Javed Jabbar was made uncomfortable enough to be obliged to resign. The General got a poor reception in New York and gets a bad press at home, too, deservedly.

The economy is in bad shape. There has been a huge flight of capital out of Pakistan because of the selective and arbitrary manner in which the accountability drive has been conducted, prices have soared, unemployment has risen and sheer despair has gripped the public mind. The General's arrogant response to those who point out that "disenchantment has set in among the public" is that "such remarks are made by ignorant people". He not only performs badly but refuses to respond to criticism let alone promise improvement.

UBIQUITOUS ARMY

There is not even a facade of civilian rule. Nearly 200 Lt Cols man the army monitoring teams which oversee district administrations. Thousands of army officers run public sector undertakings and new agencies, around 90 serving and retired military officers belonging to all the three services hold key posts in government departments in fields as diverse as politics, sports, diplomacy, intelligence, accountability, education, police, railways, WAPDA and PIA.

The Governor of Punjab and the NWFP, the chiefs of the National Database and Registration Authority, the National Reconstruction Bureau, the NAB, the Water and Power Development Authority, and even heads of sports bodies, and organisations like the National Institute of Modern Languages are army officers. The Army's presence, so all pervasive, is certain to leave lasting imprints on the national life.

Pervez Musharraf said, on 10 October, "we will return to our place exactly after three years in accordance with the deadline given by the Supreme Court in May." Elections in the districts, between December and July, will be followed by polls at the provincial and national levels, be added.

Political parties are barred from contesting the district elections. Their participation in the ones promised thereafter is uncertain. Sharif's Muslim League is a house divided. The discredited Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party is demoralised. Even if he is governed by altruistic considerations, which is suspect, Pervez Musharraf has given little evidence of the skill and resourcefulness that are required for clearing the mess created in recent decades by politicians and army coupists, like himself, who imagined that they could perform better than the politicians. In the final analysis, the state of a polity depends on the quality of its political process. No army can improve that.

The author is a lawyer and commentator on current affairs.

HD-11
15/10

Musharraf was unhappy with Jabbar's performance

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, OCT. 14. The resignation of Pakistan's Information Minister, Mr. Javed Jabbar, has come amidst indications that the military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, was not happy with his 'performance'.

Though Mr. Jabbar has cited "personal reasons" for his resignation, there have been speculations in the press in the last few weeks that Gen. Musharraf was unhappy with him for all the "bad press" against the regime.

Mr. Jabbar, who was running a non-governmental organisation before joining the Musharraf Government, is an affable person with a liberal image. With his exit, the military government would be minus a known civilian face.

It is believed that Gen. Musharraf does not intend to make an appointment in the place of Mr. Jabbar and in all probability handle the all-important portfolio himself. If he decides to keep the

Ministry to himself, it would be an indication of the significance he attaches to the subject and the pinch he is feeling on account of negative publicity in the media.

War of words

In the last few weeks, the print media in Pakistan has been engaged in war of words with the military government over its role. Gen. Musharraf has been rather harsh in his observations that the media is irresponsible and has been indulging in campaign that undermined the interests of Pakistan.

Gen. Musharraf first ventilated his ire against the media during his visit to New York to take part in the U.N. millennium Assembly session, in the second week of September. He said the Pakistani press deserved to be stifled ten times over for its reckless and irresponsible nature of reporting. He accused journalists of practising 'lifafa' (packet) journalism.

Though Gen. Musharraf hastened to add that he has no in-

tention to have a crackdown on the press, his observations led to a furore in the press. It led to fears of an imminent crackdown. The raid by an army team on the headquarters of the *Dawn* group of papers only helped to further widen the gap between the military government and the media.

At the news conference in Lahore early this week to coincide with the first anniversary of the coup, Gen. Musharraf repeated his views on the "irresponsible" nature of the press and urged them to learn to look at the positive side of life.

His running theme was that the press, along with vested interests, was spreading despondency in the country by painting a gloomy scenario about the state of affairs.

The departure of Mr. Jabbar at this juncture is bound to heighten the suspicion among the journalists community on the true intentions of the military regime, vis-a-vis freedom of press and expression.

THE HINDU

15 OCT 2000

General disenchantment

ON OCTOBER 12 last year, when the Army chief, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, staged a coup to oust the elected Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, there was widespread relief all over Pakistan. The Army, the most powerful institution in the country, began its innings with a fund of goodwill.

One year later, there is a perceptible change in the public mood. Disappointment with the military Government is growing for what is seen as its failure to live up to the hopes it had raised. However, this disenchantment does not pose any threat to the regime as no alternative is in sight.

No one expected the military to have a smooth run given the daunting tasks it faced and the overall global scenario. For, this is Pakistan's first military Government in the post-Cold War era and it no longer has the benefit of being the U.S.' frontline ally in South Asia.

The world that overlooked the nature of regimes during the Cold War is no longer willing to tolerate military dictatorships. This difference was tellingly evident in Pakistan. The clamour for a return to democracy and the linkage of all types of aid to ending military rule undoubtedly had its own impact on the regime.

The Musharraf regime's biggest failure has been in breaking free from the past. Of course, it could not have been expected to disown the past completely given that attitudes and players are influential and entrenched, but at least an honest attempt could have been made given the enormous goodwill it enjoyed in the first few weeks after Mr. Sharif was ousted. Fundamental policy changes were imperative given the new global context. It missed the opportunity.

No doubt the rest of the world is concerned about a return to a civilian set-up in Pakistan. However, more than democracy, the real concerns of the international community vis-a-vis Pakistan are about the growth of fundamentalist forces, abetment of the Taliban regime and the consequent challenges to peace and prosperity in the region.

The military Government has simply refused to allay these apprehensions. In fact, it has pursued old policies with renewed vigour. For the first time, Jihad (holy war) as a concept was openly defended.

One year after the coup in Pakistan, disappointment with the military Government is growing for what is seen as its failure to live up to the hopes it had raised, reports
110-71 B. MURALIDHAR REDDY. 19/10

Of course, Gen. Musharraf sought to make a distinction between Jihad and terrorism but there were no takers for this hair-splitting.

Kashmir and Taliban are two examples of the doggedness of the military Government in the pursuit of policies that do not go down well with the rest of the world. As a result, questions are being increasingly asked within Pakistan whether Pakistan is for Kashmir or vice-versa. On the Taliban regime in

Afghanistan and its linkage with Pakistan, the less said the better. Pakistan is the only country in the world to have a functional embassy in Kabul.

All this has meant near complete isolation of Pakistan in the comity of nations. Barring China, Pakistan can hardly count another country on its side. Even China has made known its reservations on the Taliban in view of the suspicions that the regime is fomenting trouble in its Muslim-

dominated Zhiang Zang province.

Further, the economic sanctions imposed by the West and the international financial institutions have badly hurt Pakistan's economy. The economy is in such dire straits that without resumed assistance from the IMF, the World Bank and other lenders, there is every chance of default in the next few months.

For last 12 months, the military Government has been engaged in excruciatingly marathon discussions with the managers of the IMF for a bailout package. But there are no free lunches. So the country has been made to adhere to all sorts of conditionalities. Gen. Musharraf has been candid on this front on more than one occasion and told the people that they have little option but to comply as "beggars can't be choosers".

It should be said to the credit of the military Government that it has taken some bold steps on the economic front to arrest the rot. It has ventured into areas where past Governments did not dare. These include documentation of the economy and introduction of general sales tax.

These steps are seen as a response to pressure from the IMF and aimed purely at securing yet another loan. The country is deep in debt. As of now, 53 per cent of the GDP goes towards debt servicing. Forex reserves have plummeted to a new low, just enough to finance three weeks of import requirements.

The question in various circles in Pakistan is: is approaching IMF/WB the only option available to the Government? Would it not accentuate the debt-trap? In other words, one view is that the military Government has not been imaginative enough in tackling the economic crisis. The common man, moaning under the burden of all-round price hikes, feels the pinch.

The General is aware of the criticism of his Government but is convinced that it is part of a campaign by vested interests and the media to spread 'despondency'. This was evident from his spirited defence of the Government's performance at a press conference in Lahore on the eve of the coup anniversary. That leaves little chance of any major change in the situation as it prevails.



Pakistan's military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, sits under a portrait of the Quaid-e-Azam... inherited problems remain.

Pakistan's polity and its viability

By Asghar Ali Engineer

“**P**AKISTAN WAS the biggest mistake in the history of mankind,” once said Mr. Altaf Husain, chief of the MQM (Muttahida Qaumi Movement) of Pakistan, who is living in exile in London these days. Pakistan is in serious trouble 50 years after its creation. It had disintegrated into two parts in 1971 when Bengali Muslims seceded violently. Now, Pakistan is facing internal turmoil. Sindhis, Balochis and Pathans are highly discontented. Muhajirs, migrants from India, feel left out and let down by the Punjabi ruling classes.

Pakistan was created by M. A. Jinnah on the basis of the two-nation theory, more out of political expediency than the conviction that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations. He maintained that religion, culture, language and historical heroes of the two communities were different. Such superficial theories do not stand any critical examination. The underlying assumption of the two-nation theory is that a community can be homogeneous on the basis of religion alone. However, the fact is that no human grouping can be homogeneous on the basis of religion. Religion, at best, is one important factor for unity but not the only factor. The Pakistanis are discovering this today. The Bengalis discovered it yesterday.

In fact, the seeds of two nations were sown by the Britishers in the 19th century itself when they began to treat, first out of ignorance and later on out of political mischief, Hindus and Muslims as two homogeneous communities. And in the beginning of 20th century, i.e. in 1909, they introduced separate electorates on the basis of religion, deliberately to divide Hindus and Muslims. In fact, before the Britishers introduced the category of religion in their censuses and created the myth of religious communities no such clear concept existed. People were referred to by their castes or professions or regions such as the Bengali qaum or Mali qaum or Ansari qaum or Rajput qaum. Each religious community was subdivided on the basis of caste, region or lan-

Religious commonality alone cannot ensure political or even social and cultural homogeneity... Our own Hindutvawadis need to learn a lesson from what is going on in Pakistan.

guage. There never was any concept of pan-Indian religious communities with one language, culture or even political interests. Jinnah's two-nation theory, on the other hand, assumed that all Muslims, and all Hindus, were one in every respect, be it culture or language or history or political interests.

He got maximum support from the Urdu-speaking Ashraf (upper caste, upper class) Muslims of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. These were Muslim minority provinces of British India, and centres of Muslim rule at one time, where the Muslim upper class — zamindars, jagirdars and their scions in the higher echelons of Government service — lived and exercised a great deal of influence. And it was these classes which felt most threatened when Independence neared. The jagirdars felt that feudal estates would be abolished in independent India by the socialist Congress and their scions in Government service felt the Hindus would block their promotions in the future. Hence, they supported the Muslim League to the hilt. Neither the poorer masses of Muslims in these provinces nor even the ruling classes of Muslims in Muslim-majority provinces such as Punjab, Bengal, Sindh, Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province were very excited by the idea of Pakistan.

It is an irony of history that the upper class Muslims from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar who supported the creation of Pakistan most are at the receiving end today in that country. The Muhajirs when they went to Pakistan in 1947 controlled everything from the military to the bureaucracy to the economy to the political leadership. But soon the Punjabis asserted themselves and marginalised the Muhajirs. This process was further consolidated when Zia-ul-Haq captured

greater autonomy. Many Sindhis and Balochis told me that Kashmir was Punjab's and not Pakistan's problem. The Muhajirs too are cool to the Kashmir question. Mr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said "The MQM is quite clear on Kashmir. Let the will of the Kashmiri people prevail. Both India and Pakistan must facilitate this. Beyond that, we have not taken sides."

There was a time when north Indian Muslims saw Pakistan as their emotional refuge. Now, there is a reverse trend. Muhajirs see India as their emotional refuge. They are seeking their roots in India. A Muhajir had told me way back in late 1970s in London, when the MQM did not even exist, that "we committed a great mistake by migrating to Pakistan. We are much more discriminated against in Pakistan than Indian Muslims by Hindus".

The Muhajirs feel lost in Pakistan and a common religious identity is of no help to them. They have much greater affinity for Indian Muslims with whom they share common linguistic and cultural values. This is a very important development; India is democratic and values its pluralism whereas Pakistan has become an ideological state which suppresses pluralism. In fact, pluralism is always thought to be a threat in ideological states. There is no democracy in Pakistan and a feudal structure is still going strong there. Some Muhajirs describe Pakistani democracy as 'pseudo-democracy' or even more as 'feudo-democracy'.

Here there is lesson for all those who adopt the majoritarian attitude and deprive minorities — religious or ethnic — of their just rights and just share in power. In a democratic world, minority rights are human rights and no minority will take it lying down if its rights are trampled underfoot. Religious commonality alone cannot ensure political or even social and cultural homogeneity. Pakistan has proved this, if any decisive proof is needed. Our own Hindutvawadis need to learn a lesson from what is going on in Pakistan. Creation of a "Hindu Rashtra" will aggravate problems rather than solve any. It is democratic pluralism which is India's main strength.

power. He appointed Punjabis in all key positions. Zia first encouraged the formation of the MQM and then divided it by creating a rival organisation called MQM (Haqiqi). The Haqiqi group did not survive for long though. The MQM today represents the aspirations of the lower and middle class Urdu-speaking Muhajirs.

The Muhajirs have no roots in Pakistan unlike the Punjabis, Sindhis, Baluchis and Pathans. Before the creation of Pakistan religion was thought to be the most important identity and the Hindu was seen as the oppressor. Now in Pakistan ethnic and linguistic identities have become the most important and the majority ethnic community, the Punjabis, are perceived as the oppressor. It is not Muhajirs alone who have serious grievances against the Punjabis but Baluchis, Sindhis and Pathans too.

Thus the MQM leader, Mr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, who resigned from Nawaz Sharif's Government as Minister of Industries in protest against harassment of the MQM by Pakistan's army and police, said in an interview in Delhi that "we brought together acknowledged leaders of the Balochs, the Pathans and the Sindhis. These national minorities realise the need to come together. It is history in the making. It is sincere effort, let me assure you. We have a joint platform." The MQM leaders are also now appealing to the Indian people in general and to Indian Muslims in particular to help the Muhajir cause.

It is interesting to note that as far as the Kashmir problem is concerned, it is the ruling classes of Pakistan's Punjab province who are raking it up time and again. Ethnic minorities such as Muhajirs, Sindhis and Baluchis are not all that interested. For, they themselves are fighting for

Disillusion in Pakistan

BARELY A fortnight ago, General Pervez Musharraf obtained the resignation of his information minister and old buddy, Javed Jabbar, for 'failing to project the achievements' of his regime. While the 'achievements' of the dictatorship will remain a matter of speculation, news now comes that the men in *khaki* who run the show in Islamabad have chosen to cast doubts on the viability of the Musharraf dispensation. With the powerful corps commanders questioning the CEO on his Government's record and pointing to the growing public frustration, the General has himself been obliged to acknowledge the receding popularity of his putschist regime though he 'does not agree with the doomsday scenario'.

Nevertheless, the possibility of a non-military man taking charge, of course with the concurrence of the military, is being raised publicly in Pakistan for the first time since the armed forces seized power a year ago. The implications of this may be uncertain for the country and may well also have disturbing implications for the region. Civilian regimes in Pakistan have long been discredited because of the way both society and the State have functioned in the last 50 years. Quite rightly, questions have come to be raised concerning a failing or failed State. In these circumstances, the armed forces were looked upon by many, especially by Islamabad's Western patrons, as the only remaining institution capable of providing a modicum of systemic stability.

If this too is doubted, the outlook can only be full of foreboding in a land where lakhs of illiterate and unemployed young men armed with automatic weapons, and half-baked 'jehadi' ideologies, roam freely. In this context, it may not be without significance that the Jamat-e-Islami chief, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, has lately been engaged in fiercely attacking the Musharraf regime, and giving calls for a 'revolution' to be brought about by religious and political groups but without the participation of established political parties. The scene is evidently portentous both for Pakistan and the countries in its neighbourhood.

LORDS AND MASTERS: FEUDALISM IN PAKISTAN

Karachi: When you talk of democracy in Pakistan, you talk of the feudal elite. Many analysts have dwelled on the theme of democracy being hijacked by "feudals" during elections throughout the last decade. In their view, if you hold elections now, feudals will make a comeback. The local bodies elections have been billed as a way to stop feudals from stunting the growth of democracy at the grassroots level.

The word feudal has become a word of abuse. This is not new. From the Fifties, the Opposition has been dominated by feudals. On the other hand, several military governments snubbed demands for democracy. In their view, this demand was rooted in the machinations of feudals to gain power and thus tighten their stranglehold over the people. In this way, the influential background of local elite's in a typically peasant society such as Pakistan has been criticised for neglecting the very purpose of democracy in terms of serving the general public. According to this view, people only vote for their "masters", without holding them accountable for the delivery of services to the society.

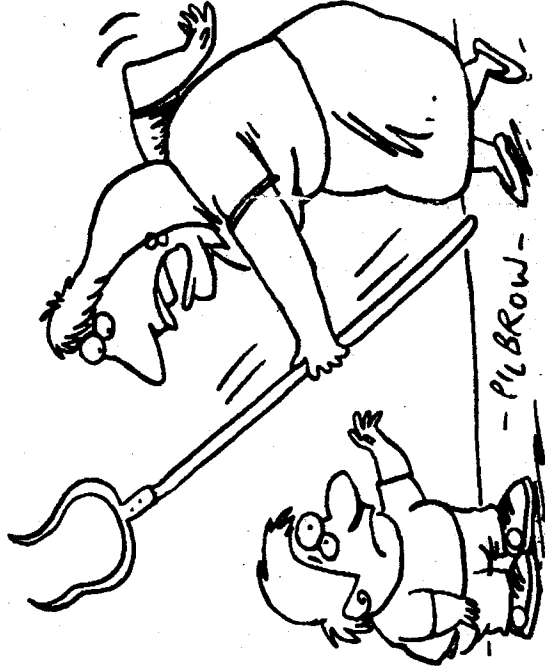
through the institutional apparatus of the state.

Landlords are effectively disenfranchised during a military government. Their vote bank is redundant in the absence of elections. Their dependence on district and provincial bureaucracy increases while their own strength vis-à-vis the state machinery decreases.

The current military government and its urban middle class constituency may not like to destabilise the prevalent social order by going for land reforms. However, it continues to dislike the fact that the social elite in large areas of Sindh and Punjab which is called feudal has the tendency to make a bid for political leadership. This is problematic.

Elites everywhere in the world provide political leadership be it the US, the UK, Germany, France or India next door. The agenda of

BY MOHAMMAD WASEEM



'Go and tidy your bedroom'

preventing "feudals" from coming to power through elections requires a radical move to bring down the level of landholding. This is what the ruling elite would not like to do. What it really wants is that feudals should continue to enjoy their land-based wealth but should not operate in the state system.

But is feudalism there at all in the country? Some think that feudalism is on the decline, if not already dead. They point to the fact that commercialisation of agriculture, rural-urban migration, farm mechanisation and conversion of tenants into farm labour in large areas has dealt a severe blow to the power of feudals. Occasionally, evidence to the contrary is presented in the form of discovery of private jails of feudals in remote rural or tribal areas or cases of abduction of women from the tenant class.

Large areas of the Indus plain return those candidates to elected assemblies who increasingly belong to non-feudal areas. A large majority of legislators elected from the populous central Punjab, including canal colony districts as well as old settled districts, do not fall in the category of feudals as understood by urban intellectuals. Perhaps, two thirds of legislators in whole of Pakistan can be considered non-feudal for our purposes.

This is significant because the urban-rural ratio of the population is just the reverse, i.e. one third urban and two-thirds rural. That means that at least half of the rural legislators are non-feudal in addition to the urban legislators. Even those for whom the appellation of feudal is generally used are not feudal in a dictionary sense. Many of them do

not control popular vote to the extent which was normal two generations ago.

Successive elections have brought about a new dynamics of party-based mobilisation which is inherently progressive. People bring party loyalties of contestants into consideration when they go to the polling station. These loyalties sometimes go against the candidates' volatile choices of seeking party tickets from the wrong side.

Increasingly, feudals, i.e. big landlords, represent a social far more than a political phenomenon. Political power under both military and civilian dispensations is widely diffused. Therefore, it can be maintained that feudals represent a lesser part of the constellation of powers ruling Pakistan at any given time.

By arrangement Dawn

Pak. takes serious view of MQM leader's speech

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, OCT. 19 The military government in Pakistan has taken serious note of the utterances of the MQM leader, Mr. Altaf Hussain, questioning the validity of the two-nation theory and the basis of creation of Pakistan.

A meeting of the Cabinet presided over by the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, on Wednesday night directed the Interior Minister, Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Moinuddin Haider, to prepare a note on the subject and consider stern action against 'anti-state elements'.

The Government's direction has come as a surprise as the 'objectionable speech' was made by Mr. Altaf Hussain at a rally in London more than a month ago. The reported comment of Mr. Hussain, who lives in exile in London, that partition was a big blunder and Muslims who had migrated to Pakistan had got nothing caused a stir in media and political circles in Pakistan. However, the Musharraf Government chose to maintain silence on the contents of the speech.

There were a number of commentaries in the press that the provocative observations of Mr. Altaf Hussain only revived the memories of 1971 that witnessed dismemberment of Pakistan and birth of Bangladesh. Besides, the publication of the supplementary report of the Hamoodur Rehman Report by an Indian magazine lent further credence to theories of possibility of another 71.

It appears that the Musharraf Government chose to ignore the fulmination of Mr. Altaf Hussain, as it did not want to open another front when it is confronted with serious problems. The MQM is known for its street power and Mr. Hussain continues to enjoy tremendous clout among those who had migrated from India. The growing concern within and outside the Government on the implications of the utterances of Mr. Hussain appears to have forced Gen. Musharraf to send a signal that thus far and no further. What has made matters delicate for the military government is the visit of a MQM delegation to New Delhi last month. During its stay in New Delhi the delegation not only repeated the statements of Mr. Hussain but also went a step further and urged the Indian Muslims to spare a thought for their brethren in the neighbouring country.

THE HINDU

29 OCT 2000

MILITARY POWER

Pakistani Army Must Be Tamed

By GURMEET KANWAL

ONE year has passed since the military jackboot returned once again to crush Pakistan's fledgling democracy and the hopes and dreams of its oppressed citizens. The international community has watched helplessly as General Pervez Musharraf, the Chief Executive, and his hawkish senior colleagues have gone about systematically undermining civilian administrative structures and placing in supervisory positions junior army officers to extend military governance down to the grass-roots levels. Bruised and battered into submission and disillusioned by many decades of either direct military rule or the military's watchful oversight over national affairs through a proxy civilian government, the people of Pakistan appear to have resigned themselves to their fate.

While enunciating the aims and objectives of his military regime, Musharraf had promised to rebuild national confidence and morale, remove inter-provincial disharmony and restore national cohesion. He had also indicated that he would strive to revive the economy and restore investor confidence; ensure law and order and dispense speedy justice; depoliticise state institutions; devolve power to the grass-roots level and ensure swift and across the board accountability. So far, his regime has failed to deliver on almost all counts.

GHQ SUPREME

Initial public support for the army has since waned and the people are despairing of one type of poor governance having been replaced by another and a more authoritarian one to boot. Musharraf appears to be modelling himself in the manner of the late Zia-ul Haq. He describes himself as the "nation's last chance". An increasing number of editorials and opinion pieces expressing dissatisfaction with the performance of the military regime are appearing in the Pakistan press. Writing in *Dawn*, columnist Ayaz Amir said: "Since dislodging a civilian government in Pakistan takes about as much time as fixing a complicated tyre puncture, sending Nawaz Sharif to the cleaners was the easy part. Creating some order out of the chaos of Pakistan's problems is more difficult. In coming to grips with this task, the senior officers who removed Nawaz Sharif with so much aplomb look decidedly less sure of themselves".

It is now clear that Musharraf's initial agenda of political and domestic reform and economic restructuring, enunciated in October 1999, has shifted to one of Islamisation, a more abrasive foreign policy and a tacit tolerance of the *jehadi* culture. All powers of governance and decision-making have been concentrated in the Pakistan army General Headquarters. The affairs of this military regime are being conducted mostly from the GHQ, unlike previous military rulers who had tried and mostly succeeded in keeping the GHQ out of day-to-day governance.

The think-tank that was to play a key role in advising the army, the National Security Council and the Cabinet has withered in importance. The

system of political patronage, developed into a fine art by both Bhutto and Sharif, is now being practised with equal finesse by the military. Meanwhile, Musharraf still finds himself unable to set a timetable for a return to democracy. He has announced that polls for a three-tier system of local bodies would be held between December 2000 and 14 August 2001. However, polls for the National Assembly still appear to be a long way off.

The military regime's concentration on a witch-hunt against Nawaz Sharif, rather than on

economic maladies that have been caused to a large extent by profligate defence spending.

The Pakistan army is becoming increasingly high-handed in its dealings with the public. Reports appearing in the Urdu press speak of increasing corruption at the lower level where young officers and other ranks come face to face with the public while collecting taxes.

Direct involvement in the running of administration is bound to corrupt the rank and file. As it is, the petty politician-bureaucrat-police-narcotics trader-arms dealer nexus in the Northwest Frontier Province, under the benevolent eye of local army commanders and ISI operatives over the last 20 years of the Afghan conflict, has already led to army troops stationed in the area and involved in imparting training and providing logistics support to the various militias being completely corrupted.

Relatively few offenders have actually been tried by military courts due to the tendency of the unit commanders

to shield their men as the malaise is widespread and every case tends to open a new can of worms.

Apprehensions that the Musharraf regime may be overthrown keep surfacing. Selig Harrison, Senior Fellow at the Century Foundation in the United States, has expressed the view that Lieutenant General Mohammed Aziz, the Chief of the General Staff, and Mahmoud Ahmed, the Director General of the ISI, both with long-standing ties with the Harkat ul Mujahideen, may "elbow Musharraf aside".

REAL PROBLEMS

Musharraf is a Mohajir with no ethnic base in Pakistan. Aziz, a Zia protege, is a Punjabi-speaking hardliner with his roots in POK. He directed the ISI's activities in Afghanistan for many years and is considered a Kashmir expert due to the long tenures he has served in POK. He is known to have masterminded the Kargil excursion. Aziz is a hawk with fundamentalist leanings and is against a rapprochement with India.

Though present apprehensions of Aziz and Mahmoud Ahmed posing a threat to Musharraf would appear to be exaggerated, they may fall out with their leader if Musharraf appears to give in and compromises with either India or the West on Pakistan's policies on major issues such as the resolution of the Kashmir issue, the continuation of Pakistan's covert support for the terrorist organisations, Pakistan's stand on the CTBT and Pakistan's ongoing involvement in Afghanistan.

The real problem between India and Pakistan is the Pakistan army and its abnormal influence in Pakistan's affairs, not Kashmir or any other issue. Till the Pakistani army is tamed and genuine democracy takes root in Pakistan, Indo-Pak problems will remain irreconcilable. Concerted international efforts must be made to ensure that the Pakistani army is not allowed to rule unhindered and develop into an even more powerful force.

India must influence Western democracies to refrain from conducting business as usual with the Pakistani military junta and from encouraging it in any manner.



the pressing problems facing Pakistan, has not gone down well with the people. Asking the senior judges to swear a new oath of loyalty to the chief executive and the sacking of those who refused to oblige, including the chief justice, has alienated the judiciary and the intelligentsia. However, "packing" the judiciary helped the military regime to get a favourable verdict in its case against Nawaz Sharif and the Supreme Court has justified Musharraf's coup on the "doctrine of necessity". Also, Musharraf has made no attempt to build bridges with the politicians, perhaps because he does not know with whom he should deal. He has gone on record to state that he would never hand over power to Nawaz Sharif or Benazir Bhutto. Completely ignoring the politicians would be a mistake in the long run.

Though the politicians are in disarray at present, there is a fair possibility of the emergence of a broad alliance cutting across the political divide. Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League, now led by a vibrant Kulsoom Nawaz, and Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party, may consider it wise to come together to oppose the military regime. If there is any section of the Pakistan elite that appears to be satisfied with the Musharraf regime's performance, it is the Muslim clergy and the terrorist outfits spawned by it. The so-called *jehadis* are the only ones who have received the military government's active support and that is because of the remarkable consistency in the Pakistan army's and the clergy's anti-India posturing and actions.

CORRUPTION

If the International Monetary Fund does not bail out Pakistan's crumbling economy with a \$1.5 billion loan soon, Pakistan will be well on its way to becoming a failed state by 2001 as, by December 2000, the previously rescheduled short-term debt of \$3.5 billion would also become due. Pakistan, of course, is working on the assumption that the P-5 and the G-8 would not let a state armed with nuclear weapons become a failed state. While that may prove to be true, Pakistan's current rulers fail to realise that the IMF and the World Bank will prescribe bitter medicine for Pakistan's eco-

The author is a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi.

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Court rejects terrorism charge, plea for death penalty

HC upholds Sharif hijack verdict

Part 1
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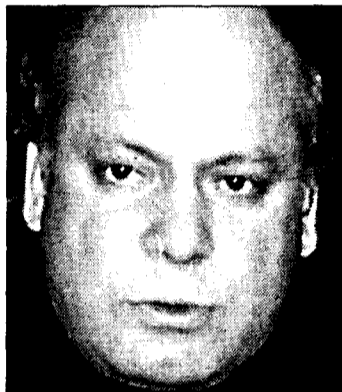
KARACHI, Oct. 30. — Sindh High Court today upheld Mr Nawaz Sharif's conviction on a hijacking charge and accompanying life sentence, but overturned the guilty verdict on a charge of terrorism.

The panel of three judges also denied a prosecution appeal which sought the death penalty for the former Prime Minister.

Mr Sharif will appeal to the Supreme Court, his last avenue of appeal, his wife said. Mrs Kulsoom Sharif has been crisscrossing the country championing her husband's cause.

Her head covered in a headscarf, Mrs. Sharif said the unsuccessful appeal was not a surprise. "We don't expect justice," she said. "The judges are helpless in the present situation."

The judges were divided in their ruling, with one of the three, Mr Justice Sermat Jalal Usmani, ruling in Mr Sharif's favour. But the majority



Sharif: will move Supreme Court

upheld the hijacking conviction and life sentence, which is sufficient under Pakistani law.

Mr Justice Usmani said there was evidence only of abduction which would carry a three-year jail term. The majority ruling also upheld the 500 million rupee fine against Mr Sharif, as well as the loss of all his property.

Mr Sharif was convicted on 6 April of terrorism and hijack-

ing charges and sentenced by a special anti-terrorist court, set up during his regime, to two concurrent life terms. One of the two terms was overturned by the Sindh High Court.

A life sentence in Pakistan is a minimum of 25 years in jail. Meanwhile the prosecution had appealed the jail term demanding the death penalty.

Prosecution lawyer Raja Quereshi said no decision has been taken on whether to appeal to the Supreme Court.

The charges against Mr Sharif stem from an incident on 12 October 1999, the day the army seized power in Pakistan.

Mr Sharif was charged with refusing to allow the commercial airliner returning General. Pervez Musharraf to land in southern Karachi. The aircraft, with more than 200 people on board, eventually landed after the army took power. When the aircraft landed there was barely seven minutes of fuel remaining.

Israel hardens stand

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM, Oct. 30. — Israel will take the offensive against Palestinian gunmen and deploy special army units trained in guerrilla warfare, the deputy defence minister said today, as embattled Prime Minister, Mr Ehud Barak, fights for his political survival in the Parliament.

The death toll in more than a month of Israeli-Palestinian fighting rose to 149 today after the body of a 20-year-old Palestinian was found in a West Bank olive grove that was the scene of clashes the night before.

In Gaza, a bomb went off near an Israeli military convoy, close to the border with Egypt, injuring an officer.

Israel's deputy defence minister, Mr Ephraim Sneh, said

today the army is changing its tactics in dealing with Palestinian gunmen who have been shooting at Jewish settlements and army posts in West Bank and Gaza, usually at night.

He said troops would no longer only respond to Palestinian fire, but take the initiative.

Heavy gunbattles erupted overnight at several places, including the West Bank resort town of Jericho. For the second time this month, the army sealed Jericho, barring Palestinians from entering or leaving the town.

Unidentified gunmen today fired at a branch office of Israel's National Insurance Institute in traditionally Arab east Jerusalem, injuring two people. If the assailants are Palestinians, the incident

would be the first attack in Jerusalem in the past month of fighting.

Israel's Parliament, meanwhile, resumed business today after a three-month summer recess, heightening Mr Barak's worries about his political survival. Mr Barak, who controls only 30 seats in the 120-member Parliament, has been courting the Opposition leader Mr Ariel Sharon to avoid a call for early polls.

Arafat meets Mubarak: Mr Yasser Arafat today met the Egyptian President, Mr Hosni Mubarak, at Sharm el-Seikh to discuss the West Asia turmoil and the stalled peace talks. The visit comes amid criticism in the Egyptian media of Palestinian protesters who reportedly burned Egyptian flags and Mubarak effigies.

Khatami visit to boost ties with Japan

By F.J. Khergamvala

TOKYO, Oct. 30. The Iranian President, Mr. Mohammad Khatami arrives here on Tuesday to herald a fresh start to a partnership that has frequently been disrupted by Japan's willingness to succumb to U.S. pressure.

The highlight of the visit will be a decision allowing Japan companies preferential rights to develop and operate the Azadegan oil field in Iran, near the border with Iraq. The basic terms of the agreement have been negotiated and when finalised it will be the largest oil field operated by Japan, yielding 300,000 to 400,000 barrels daily. Some knotty details like the duration of the concession will be finalised by the accompanying Iranian Oil Minister, Mr. Bijan Zanganeh. A formal accord will await the end of the period next year when U.S. sanctions apply to companies that make significant investments in Iran.

Mr. Khatami will address the Japanese Parliament, becoming the second foreign leader to do so after the South Korean Pres-

ident's address two years back. Mr. Khatami has been to Italy, France and Germany. He will also be the first Iranian leader to visit here since the Islamic revolution in 1979, but it was never Japan's intention to flout this visit as a sign of independent decision-making. Successive Japanese governments have had their Iran policy crafted by Washington DC, without attempting to get the U.S. to respect Japan's concerns about North Korea, not to speak of China. For almost the entire two terms of the Clinton administration, all that remained of the Japan-Iran relationship was that of a vendor and buyer of crude oil. Japan buys close to 10 per cent of its crude from Iran, its third largest supplier.

Ironically, what is now driving Japan's Mori Government to a quick reconciliation with Teheran is the fear of U.S. companies re-establishing themselves next year and the need to secure oil concessions. The Iran-Libya Sanctions Act is set to expire in August 2001. To help Japanese corporations re-enter Iran, for the first time in eight

years Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry intends to provide Iran with trade insurance to cover nearly yen 60 billions worth of exports for a few projects, including a telecommunications project and a petrochemicals plant. This could spur Japanese investments in Iran. By definition, trade insurance implies guaranteed payments even if Iran defaults on payment.

Late last week, Japan and Iran finalised a loan of \$69 million for the second phase of the Masjid-e-Soleiman hydro-electric power project, to be repaid in 25 years after a seven-year grace period, at an annual interest rate of 2.2 per cent. This tranche was due way back but in 1993 Japan succumbed to U.S. pressure after providing Iran with a \$354 million loan for the first phase of the dam project. Even that amount was nearly four times less than the \$1.3 billion that was originally set by the two sides. Also, the May 1993 loan came as a one-off exception after a 18-year freeze on loans to Iran.

Japan started re-building its bridges with

Iran soon after Mr. Khatami was elected President. It did not follow the lead of European countries in withdrawing ambassadors from Teheran in 1997 after a German court found the involvement of the Iran State machinery in the assassination of prominent Kurdish figures in Berlin.

Iran has recently asked Japan for some yen 20 billions in loans to finance a 770-km rail link from Mashad in eastern Iran to Bafq in the heartland, but there is political resistance among the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. One major reason why Japan has resumed loans to Iran is that it wants oil concessions in Iran. Mr. Mori and Mr. Khatami will issue lofty declarations about supporting Iranian reform but essentially the visit is to help Japan further its plan to gain in Iran what the Japanese company, Arabian Oil lost in the Saudi-Kuwait Neutral Zone, last February when a 40-year-old concession was given up. In a broader sense, the visit is meant to signal to Japanese companies to return to Iran, until the U.S. cracks the whip to suit itself.

THE HINDU

1 2 00

DEATH

DASS — On October 27, 2000, at Calcutta, Dr. Bijon Dass. Mourned by wife, Pratima; daughters, Manishita and Pramiti and his extended family of countless admirers, comrades and relatives. (39905)

GHOSE — On October 22, 2000, at Calcutta, Gour Chandra, ex-G.M., Bhalai Steel Plant. Sradh on November 1, 10 a.m. at EC-122, Salt Lake. (39896)

IN MEMORIAM

BOSE — In loving remembrance of our dear ma, Gita, wife of Sakti Sadhan Bose, who left us this day in 1995. — Mita, Bhuttu, Chitra. (B016729)

SIMICK — In loving birthday memory of Lily Simick, who left for her Heavenly Home on June 2, 2000. — Sadly missed by husband and loved ones. (39716)

PERSONAL

Thank you St. Jude for favours granted. — DC. (39898)

Art of Living: An evening with his Holiness Sri Sri Rav Shankar, November 7, Tuesday, 6-30 p.m., at Netaji Indoor Stadium. Entry open for all. (39829)

Attention, CMA members! Ms Piali Gupta, Organisation Consultant, will speak on 'Creative Thinking, today at 5.45 p.m. at CMA Auditorium. (B019001)

Crafts Council of Assam, a voluntary organization, invites you to an Exhibition of decorative baskets and bridal paraphernalia, household utility products, wrought iron and bamboo items, wood and cane furniture, eco-friendly bags in silk and cane, cane and bamboo lamps and exquisite weaves, at Calcutta Cricket & Football Club (Centenary Hall), 19/1, Gurusaday Road, Calcutta-700019, from Tuesday, October 31, 2000 onwards, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sponsored by The Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. (39521)

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31 OCTOBER 2000

Vol. CXXXIV 257

MUSHARRAF LOSING GROUND

Caught between Jamaat and Army

PERVEZ Musharraf's problems are manifold and he may not have answers to all of them. Having successfully evacuated the stage of the established political leadership with a "clean politics" decree that debars people convicted by law from holding office — both Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto so qualify — he is left with the only political force still operating in the country — the radical Islamists. The upshot is that the man who started out wanting to be the Ataturk of Pakistan has entered into abject compromises with the mullahs. He not only did not repeal the blasphemy law, but ended up including the Islamic provisions of the Constitution in his provisional constitutional order. His attempt to have the religious seminaries registered with the state and to disarm the jihadis operating on Pakistani territory ended in a similar fashion — retreat. It is certain that Musharraf is subject to a great deal of pressure from within the Army — Zia's Army — on all issues connected with Islam. The man who is second in command in his junta, former DG of the ISI, then chief of general staff and now corps commander Lahore, in line to succeed Musharraf as chief of army staff, General Mohammed Aziz, is a veteran of Afghanistan, deeply implicated in the militancy in Kashmir and, by all accounts, very favourable to the Islamists. If Musharraf slips up badly, Aziz and his cronies will not hesitate to take the logical step. Musharraf is a Mohajir and the Pakistani Army is 75 per cent Punjabi.

There has been a significant flight of capital, which Musharraf's economic advisors should have anticipated, and there are reports to the effect that instead of the Army, which now mans almost the whole of the administration and most public utilities, cleaning up the system, it is the system which is corrupting the Army — after the last spell of military rule got over, visitors would be taken on a tour of the defence colonies in Karachi and Lahore and shown the palaces Army officers had built for themselves. When the National Accountability Bureau started investigating defence deals concluded by serving and retired officers, Musharraf promptly stepped in to take the former out of its purview. All this is faithful to the general pattern in Pakistan.

Musharraf says Pakistan "is ill, but not terminally ill". He talks of bringing in a civilian as prime minister, probably because he realises that the Army cannot be constituency for a ruler. A broader interaction with civil society has to be initiated, there has to be a semblance of a political programme, not just shuffling between the Jamaat and the Army. The Jamaat almost paralysed his tax proposals by mobilising the bazaris and Musharraf had no defence except brute force. If the idea was to build a liberal society, then he should have known whom to take along. Instead he orders raids on newspapers offices for unpaid electricity dues.

FOOTPATH FIASCO

Political interests prevail again

THE STATESMAN

31 OCT 2000

The Hindustan Times

Wheels of justice

THE ARREST of two people in Canada in connection with the bombing of Air-India's plane, *Kanishka*, off the Irish coast in 1985 carries a message to all terrorists. Even after their frenzy has died down and their 'movement' has petered out, the laborious wheels of retributive justice keep grinding in their relentless pursuit of the guilty. If, notwithstanding the time lag, the long arm of the law finally catches up with the perpetrators of a terrorist crime, the reason is, in essence, no different from what leads to the successful conclusion of a criminal investigation. The nature of a terrorist campaign cannot be anything other than secretive. It isn't only that its operators function in a clandestine manner, they are also usually new recruits to the cause and not old comrades who have long been involved in a popular movement.

In fact, it is the lack of a popular base which is the terrorist's Achilles heel, for it enables the police agencies to infiltrate the network quite easily. One reason why the *Kanishka* case was said to have remained unresolved till now was because of the Canadian police's reluctance to reveal the source of its information lest it should lead to the exposure of the identity of an undercover agent. But, clearly, the police had maintained its vigil and had decided to spring the trap when it believed that the time was ripe. What undoubtedly helped the investigators was the premature explosion in the Tokyo airport of a piece of luggage which was to be loaded on to another Air-India flight on that fateful day. It was a carefully crafted plot intended to show how the terrorists could strike almost simultaneously at two ends of the earth.

But the explosion, which killed two handlers in Tokyo, enabled the police to obtain clues which could be traced to their origin in Canada. It has to be said to the credit of the Canadian police that it neither lost sight of the trail nor the determination to nab the criminals. For those who lost their dearly loved relatives, the latest turn of events is bound to reopen old wounds and make them relive the terrible sorrow of those days in 1985. At the same time, they will have the satisfaction of knowing that the guilty will now be punished. But what may still be a despairing thought is the pointlessness of this particular act of terrorism. For, while the Sikh 'problem' has long died a natural death because it never enjoyed any support within the community in India, its few patrons abroad had always lived in a make-believe world of imaginary grievances. 'Khalistan' was not only a lost cause, it was never a cause at all. Yet it led to such a tragedy.

27/10 False guard 27-10

PAKISTAN'S CHIEF executive officer, General Pervez Musharraf, plays a delicate balancing game over terrorism. On the one hand, he continues to provide material support for the insurgency in Kashmir. On the other, he tells the United States that he is an ally in its battle against the anti-Western terrorists who operate from Afghanistan and Pakistan. But this two-faced position has begun to run afoul of reality. Pakistani foreign minister Abdus Sattar recently declared that his country would not grant the US permission to violate Pakistani airspace for attacks against Afghanistan. His statement follows growing evidence of the complicity of the Afghanistan-based terrorist, Osama bin Laden, in the bomb attack on the US warship, *USS Cole*.

If bin Laden's guilt is determined, a US missile or aircraft strike on Afghanistan will be almost inevitable. The Taliban have already warned the US not to attempt retaliation. So reportedly has bin Laden. Though Islamabad will take shelter behind talk of not infringing the sovereignty of a friendly neighbour, its diplomatic case is undermined by its being one of only three countries which recognise the Taliban regime. General Musharraf has peddled the line to Washington that there is a distinction between terrorists and *jihadis*. He argues that the former target the West, the latter struggle to free 'oppressed' Muslim populations in Kashmir and Chechnya. The Pakistani leader has helped the US crack down on the first variety. Islamabad tipped off the US about last December's attempt by bin Laden to smuggle explosives into the US from Canada.

Thanks to a number of policymakers who believe engaging Pakistan is necessary to the US' counter-terrorist operations, the US has gone along with General Musharraf's semantic game. The attack on the *USS Cole* has blown a hole in the Pakistani argument. Mr Sattar's statement makes it clear there are severe limits as to how far Pakistan is willing to cooperate in the battle against the Afghan-based terror. It also places a question mark over Islamabad's claims that it can be a sentinel for the West against terrorism. India should be taking this opportunity to press home its long-standing case that Pakistan has promoted Islamic terrorism and that the Taliban regime is not an innocent observer. Any expectation that Islamabad can be counted on in the war against terrorism is wishful thinking. Washington is banking on a hit man to bring down the murder rate.

Sharif puts Musharraf in Kargil

GA dock 13/6

FROM IDREES BAKHTIAR
AND REUTERS

Attock (Pakistan), June 12: Deposed Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has washed his hands of the Kargil conflict and blamed Pervez Musharraf for the "ill-conceived" plan, ending an enigmatic silence and contradicting a recent government statement.

"I was totally kept unaware of the planning for the Kargil operation," Sharif said in a statement at a court where he is being tried for corruption.

The statement came close to admitting for the first time that the Pakistani army took part in the fighting. It also acknowledged that the army was behind the planning for the infiltration, rather than the Mujahideen as claimed by Pakistan.

Sharif said he was informed of the operation four months after it was launched. The military government had last week issued a statement claiming that Sharif was kept fully informed about the Kargil operation.

Sharif said he would not have invited Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to sign the Lahore Declaration if he had known that the Kargil operation was under way. "If I was told before or during the planning, I would have stopped the Indian Prime Minister from undertaking the visit to Pakistan," he added.

Sharif, whose statement seemed certain to further complicate Musharraf's tense relations with India, said that "whole units" of Pakistan's Northern Light Infantry (NLI) were wiped out in the showdown in Kargil.

"I was told our loss of life was nominal, while (actually) whole units of the NLI were wiped out," said Sharif. Officially, Pakistan lost several hundred soldiers in cross-border shelling.

Sharif said that he had rushed to Washington for a July 4 meeting with President Clinton, at which he called for the withdrawal of the "militants" to prevent "an atomic war" with India.

Sharif added that the Kargil operation was "totally ill-planned and ill-conceived. Hundreds of our soldiers were killed and, because of obstacles in supply lines, the officers and soldiers on the front lines were crying out 'give us weapons if you can't give us rations'."

Sharif, breaking a taboo on the extent of losses in the conflict, said Pakistan lost more men in the operation than in the 1965 war.

THE TELEGRAPH

13 JUN 2000

Sharif's party ready for talks with military govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, JUNE 12

KULSOOM Sharif, wife of deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and leader of Pakistan Muslim League (PML), has said her party was prepared to hold talks with the military Government.

"We are ready for negotiations with the military rulers to explore the possibilities of country's return to democracy in the larger national interest," she said in an interview with PNI news agency yesterday. She said the military regime was damaging the country by being "vindictive" towards the Sharif family.

"But this revenge is only Gen Pervez Musharraf's and not the Army's. Army as an institution is not being revengeful and we respect it. Majority of people in the Army understand this and they realise that only Sharif can save the country," she said.

She asked all political parties to join hands for restoration of democracy in the interest of the country.

"Whenever Musharraf goes abroad, he is asked to set Nawaz Sharif free and restore democracy. This is a crucial time. If we remain silent at this stage and adopt 'wait and see' policy, it will tantamount to criminal negligence.

INDIAN EXPRESS

13 JUN 2000

Sharif vows to spill beans over Kargil

Karachi, June 13

DEPOSED PAKISTANI Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif today vowed to expose the Kargil debacle and launched another broadside on the military from the sidelines of his appeal against a terrorism conviction, AFP reports said.

Sharif said he would name those responsible for the bloody border conflict with India last year if he was allowed to testify before a military commission.

He described the Kargil conflict in Kashmir as one of the biggest debacles in the country's history and again called for an official investigation.

"Kargil was the biggest debacle after the 1971 war with India" which led to the dismemberment of Pakistan, Sharif said as he arrived at the start of an ongoing appeal against his life sentence for terrorism and hijacking.

He was moved yesterday from a cell at Attock Fort, near Islamabad, where he is on trial for corruption. He has denied all the charges brought against him by the military government following the coup in October. Sharif repeated his calls for a high-powered military commission or a panel of independent judges to investigate the Kargil conflict.

"I know the people who were behind this conflict but I will reveal their names at the commission", he said. He said he had "lot more to say" once the commission was set up. Sharif reiterated his claims yesterday that the operation was planned secretly by the Pakistani military and he was not aware of it until after the fighting erupted in May.

The military-led government under former Army chief General Pervez Musharraf has denied organising the operation. Military officials have rejected Sharif's

claims as absurd and designed to distract attention away from his alleged crimes.

Mubashir Zaidi adds from Islamabad: While talking to newsmen yesterday, Sharif claimed to have irrefutable evidence to prove that he, being the Prime Minister, was unaware of the Kargil operation. "This

ill-planned and ill-conceived operation was kept so secret that besides the Prime Minister, some corps commanders of the Army and the Chiefs of Navy and Air Force were also kept in dark," he claimed. Sharif said he would not have invited Prime Minister Vajpayee and signed the Lahore Declaration had he been informed about the operation earlier.

The ousted Prime Minister read out a written statement saying that he did not object later in the greater interest of

the country. Sharif said the country's worsening situation prompted him to spill the beans. "I ask three questions: Who sabotaged the Lahore Declaration? Who derailed the process of dialogue on Kashmir? Who was responsible for Pakistan's isolation in the comity of nations?"

'Fernandes vindicated': The BJP today said ousted Sharif's remark that he had got to know about the 1999 invasion of Kargil only after the conflict with India showed that Defence Minister George Fernandes was right in saying the Pakistan Army had kept the government in the dark, reports HTC from New Delhi.

BJP spokesperson M. Venkaiah Naidu said the party's stand on the Kargil conflict stood vindicated following Mr Sharif's statement.

"The statement by Mr Sharif fully corroborates the version of the Ministries of Defence and External Affairs that Pakistan military was initially involved and the political authority in that country came to know about it later," he said.



'I was chained'

NAWAZ SHARIF complained in court on Tuesday that he was handcuffed and chained to a seat during a flight from Attock Fort to Karachi this week. "He is the former Prime Minister and a respected citizen of the country," Sharif's lawyer Azizullah Sheikh told the three-judge panel during hearing of the appeal.

Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court Syed Saeed Ashhad said the complaint was serious and demanded an explanation from the security agencies responsible. "This is a very serious matter and we will not let it go unnoticed," he said.

AFP, Karachi

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

14 JUN 2000

GENERAL'S DESPAIR!

Pakistan situation is not improving *SRB*

IS Pakistan a no-hoper? General Pervez Musharraf insists that his country is not about to turn into another Somalia, but the external signs, so to speak, are disturbing. The *Sunday Mirror* did a story about a man in Peshawar who keeps weapons-grade plutonium and uranium in tin canisters and offers them for sale to whoever is interested. Subsequent to this, Peter Hain, deputy to Robin Cook, issued a statement saying that Pakistan was a threat to world peace. That the story should sound plausible to the British Foreign Office is itself an indication of Pakistan's standing in the world these days. This is, in fact, worse than Somalia which may be a no-hoper but has no private traffic in uranium. Italy, Sweden and Belgium have refused to confirm the appointments of Pakistan's ambassadors to their countries, ostensibly in disapproval of the regime's present status, while the National Commission on Terrorism set up by the US Congress has said Pakistan provides safe haven, transit and moral and diplomatic support to terrorists. International disapproval is not exactly raining down upon the country, but the number of frowns are on the increase. In Moscow last month, Karl Inderfurth and his opposite number in the Russian foreign ministry called upon Pakistan to break the nexus between *mujahideen* and the international terrorist network.

Musharraf's situation is further complicated by the fact that the political vacuum created by him has been rapidly filled up by radical Islamic elements who are now doing their best to thwart his agenda. His retraction on the blasphemy law seems to have encouraged them further. They are now demanding that the Islamic portions in the original constitution be reintroduced into the provisional constitutional order and that the government cease to have dealings with the World Bank and IMF. What is clear is that if Musharraf wants to implement his reform agenda, in a country which has 12 million taxpayers out of a population of 140 million and both industrial and agricultural sectors are dominated by powerful oligarchies, he will have to hurt interests that are both powerful and well-entrenched. Some of these interests may, in the end, converge with those of radical Islam, in the name of defending a social philosophy which favours their kind of authority, especially since there aren't any politicians around to bribe anymore. The *Friday Times* notes that Musharraf's regime is isolated, isolated within, which is another way of saying that reforms do not have a sound political foundation, which, according to the newspaper, opens the way for either martial law or another coup of fundamentalist inspiration. The conclusion that can be drawn from all this is that the military has been associated with the distinctly conservative idea of political and social stability to find acceptance, overnight, as an agent for change and Musharraf is having cope with the contradiction, both inside and outside the country, in a context determined by the politics of the religious Right.

THE STATESMAN

16 JUN 2000

Pakistan cuts military budget

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's military regime on Saturday announced a \$13.42 billion national budget for the fiscal year 2000-2001, allocating less money for the military than last year.

But the new year's allocation of \$2.57 billion is in reality higher than last year's as the military's pension account of \$500 million has been transferred to the civilian side as of the new fiscal year, beginning on July 1.

"There was no game plan (involved in the transfer). It is purely an accounting procedure practised by other countries also,"

finance minister Shaukat Aziz told reporters on Sunday, explaining "the 10 per cent increase" in the allocations to the military.

"We do not want an arms race in the region, but it is necessary to maintain a credible defence," he said. Nationalist elements in the Muslim country were hoping the regime would increase the military budget since India had raised its military budget by \$3.2 billion last March.

India announced its \$13.6-billion military budget in the wake of the near war the two countries fought in Kargil in the summer of

1999.

In his budget speech, the Pakistani finance minister told the nation that "the huge debt burden" of \$61.5 billion limited the country's policy options and sovereignty. Debt servicing alone would cost \$5.87 billion, or 44 per cent of the total national budget for the 2000-2001 fiscal year.

Mr Aziz said 56 per cent of the debt was foreign and the rest domestic. "Unless checked soon it would endanger our economy," he warned, announcing plans to broaden the tax base but reduce the number and rates of taxes. (DPA)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

19 JUN 2000

Pakistan suspended from Inter-Parliamentary Union

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MAY 9

PAKISTAN has been suspended from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) for overthrow of civilian government by the military, Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairperson Najma Heptulla announced on Tuesday.

"Pakistan has been suspended as there is no Parliament in that country," she said while briefing the press on the outcome of the 103rd IPU Conference in Amman which concluded on May 6.

Heptulla said another reason for Islamabad's ouster from IPU was that the regime of Gen Pervez Musharraf has failed to provide any time-frame for return of democracy. Pakistan's military regime has only given an assurance that elections to local bodies would be held but "local bodies do not represent a country at IPU. It is members of Parliament who do," she said.

Besides Pakistan, Sudan and

Ivory Coast have also been suspended from IPU as these two countries were being ruled by the military, Heptulla said. She said the issue of democracy would be at the top of the agenda of a United Nations conference of presiding officers just prior to the world body's millennium summit.

The next IPU conference in Jakarta in October this year would also focus on the issue of overthrow of democratic regimes by the military, she said. Another conference of members of parliament across the globe is scheduled for January next year in Geneva to discuss issues like World Trade Organisation and European Union following the fiasco at the Seattle WTO meet, she said. Heptulla said India had objected to the recommendation of the seven-day conference on signing and ratification by all states of the treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

This recommendation was part of the draft resolution unanimously

adopted by the Committee on Political Questions, International Security and Disarmament.

It expressed concern over the actions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for not being successful in reducing the gap between rich and poor countries. It said the inequitable distribution of wealth between countries and the considerable discrepancies in people's living standards are major factors of imbalance and a source conflict among nations.

The conference felt that inequalities within a country prevent sustainable development. It expressed concern at overarmament and felt that this generates mistrust between countries and financial waste. It was "greatly concerned" that poverty and its consequences, including hunger, malnutrition and illiteracy, result in helplessness and marginalisation as well as a lack of societal participation and an absence of opportunities for involvement in decision-making processes.

INDIAN EXPRESS

10 MAY 2000

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Sharif appeal
hearing from

PMR 22 May

REUTERS

SI-5 10/5
KARACHI, May 9. — A Pakistani court said today it would begin hearing an appeal by deposed Prime Minister Mr Nawaz Sharif on 22 May against his hijacking and terrorism convictions.

The court also said it would hear appeals on the same day from prosecutors who want Mr Sharif's two concurrent life terms changed to a death sentence and the acquittals of his six co-accused overturned.

"From the 22nd, it will be a day-to-day hearing and no further extension will be given," Sindh High Court Chief Justice Syed Saed Ashad said. He also ordered the authorities to allow Mr Sharif and his fellow accused to meet their lawyers.

THE STATESMAN

10 May 2000

PAK. COUP DECLARED LEGAL

Restore democracy in three years, says SC

By Amit Baruah

Pak 1
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ISLAMABAD, MAY 12. The Pakistani Supreme Court today "validated" the military coup of October 12, 1999 while setting a three-year time-frame for the handover of power to an elected Government by October 12, 2002.

The stamp of "legitimacy" has now been conferred on the military regime of General Pervez Musharraf by the new-look Supreme Court, half of whose judges had refused to take oath under a Provisional Constitution Order promulgated by the Army Chief.

Invoking the "doctrine of necessity", a 12-judge Bench said the "extra-constitutional step of taking over the affairs of the country by the armed forces for a transitional period to prevent any further destabilisation, to create a corruption-free atmosphere at the national level through transparent accountability and revive the economy before restoration of democratic institutions under the Constitution, is validated; in that the Constitution offered no solution to the present crisis."

Disposing of petitions calling for a return to elected rule, the Supreme Court, which held that fresh elections could be held on the basis of fresh electoral rolls, whose preparation required two years, allowed Gen. Musharraf three years from October 12, 1999 to achieve his "declared objectives" of putting Pakistan back on the rails.

The 27-page order, to be followed by a detailed judgment, said the "Chief Executive shall appoint a date, not later than 90 days before the aforesaid period of three years, for holding of a general election to the National Assembly and the provincial Assemblies and the Senate of Pakistan."

The Supreme Court stated unambiguously that Gen. Musharraf, Chief of the Army Staff, and Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, was a "holder of Constitutional post". His "dismissal" by the then Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, on October 12, 1999, was "void and of no legal effect". The court also said Gen. Musharraf was entitled to amend the Constitution and take "all such measures as would establish or lead to the establishment of the declared objectives of the Chief Executive". However, no amendment was possible in the "salient features" of the Constitution — independence of the judiciary, federalism and parliamentary form of Government

blended with Islamic provisions. The court also validated "all past and closed transactions, as well as such executive actions as were required for the orderly running of the state and all Acts, which tended to advance or promote the good of the people...."

The judgment upheld the contention of the military regime that those responsible for running the affairs of the state previously were themselves accused of corruption, were loan defaulters, had attacked the Supreme Court, destroyed institutions, wrongly declared their assets and undermined the economy.

It said the National Assembly, Senate and provincial Assemblies were "closely associated" with the former Prime Minister and there was no "real democracy" in the country which was, by and large, under "one-man" rule. An attempt was also made to "politicise the Army, destabilise it, and create dissension within its ranks...." The military take-over could have been avoided had the President's power (Article 58 (2) (b) to dismiss an elected Government not been taken away by Parliament in March 1997.

"With the repeal of Article 58 (2) (b) of the Constitution, there was no remedy...to meet the situation like the present one in which the country was confronted, therefore, constitutional deviation made by....General Pervez Musharraf for the welfare of the people rather than abrogating the Constitution or imposing martial law....is validated for a transitional period on ground of state necessity...."

"Legal recognition/legitimacy can be accorded to the present regime also on the principle that the Government should be by consent of the governed, whether voters or not. Here there is an implied consent of the governed i.e. the people of Pakistan in general including politicians/parliamentarians, etc. to the army takeover, in that no protests worth the name or agitations have been launched against the Army takeover and/or its continuance...."

However, the court claimed that "prolonged involvement of the Army in civil affairs runs a grave risk of politicising it, which would not be in national interest, therefore, civilian rule in the country must be restored within the shortest possible time after achieving the declared objectives which necessitated the military takeover...."

THE HINDU

13 MAY 2002

Religious parties in Pak propose protest strike on May 19

Mubashir Zaidi
Islamabad, May 15

THE MILITARY Government would have the first real taste of Opposition on May 19 as all the religious parties have decided to hold a countrywide strike against the Government announcement to amend the Blasphemy Law.

Hectic activities are already being made by different religious parties comprising the Milli Yakjehti Council and Tahaffuz-e-Namoos-e-Risalat Mahaz to muster support for the strike, the representatives of religious parties

announced after meetings in Lahore and Karachi on Sunday.

Several meetings of religious parties were held yesterday in the two cities to review the proposed agitation programme in case the Government does not withdraw the proposed procedural amendment in the Blasphemy Law.

These meetings were held by JUP, Noorani of Punjab, Jamaat Ahle Sunnat, Alami Tanzim Ahle Sunnat and TNRM.

Addressing the meetings, the leaders announced that the entire Sunni leaders and workers would

participate in the agitation.

JUP Punjab General Secretary Qari Zawwar Bahadur said preparations had been made to bring over 10,000 Ulema and workers in Lahore for the strike.

He said that over 20,000 students

full co-operation for the strike.

It may be mentioned that the traders have also announced to hold a strike on May 19-21 against imposition of General Sales Tax. Chief of Milli Yakjehti Council, the representative body of all the

religious parties of the country, Maulana Noorani

warned against amending the law of registering FIR against those involved in blasphemy changed as per announcement of the Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf.

However, he asked party youth

to remain peaceful and make the May 19 strike.

Senior Shia leader killed: Unidentified gunmen killed a senior Shia leader Advocate Syed Sardar Jafri in Karachi this morning, the city police said.

According to the police Mr Jafri, 55, who was president of Voice of Shia Organisation was on his way on a motorcycle when some unidentified armed men intercepted him near Gilani Railway Station in Gulshan-i-Iqbal area in Karachi and sprayed bullets from automatic weapons resulting in his spot death.

Amendment to Blasphemy Law

Musharraf backs down on blasphemy

Islamabad, May 17 (AP): Bowing to pressure from Islamic clerics and right-wing religious parties, military chief Gen. Pervez Musharraf withdrew a plan to make it more difficult to accuse someone of blasphemy, a capital offence in Pakistan.

The withdrawal comes as religious parties threatened to take to the streets on Friday to protest the proposed change. The withdrawal brought a strong condemnation from the human rights commission of Pakistan warning that it could embolden religious conservatives.

The right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami group welcomed the withdrawal and demanded the punishment of those "who initiated a debate on this very sensitive issue, thus causing unrest in society."

The country's controversial blasphemy laws have been widely criticised by human rights groups at home and abroad. The law calls for the death penalty for anyone found guilty of insulting Islam and its prophet, Mohammed.

Last month Musharraf announced changes in the way blasphemy charges would be laid, rather than in the law itself. The army chief said at the time that the change was intended to make it more difficult for the law to be abused.

There have been several reports of blasphemy charges being used as a tool of intimidation and revenge. Currently it is sufficient to accuse someone of blasphemy for a charge to be laid. Musharraf had attempted to institute a procedure of investigation prior to laying of charges.

Islamic clerics protested. Those protesting represented the country's right-wing religious parties, many of whom share similar interpretations of Islam as is practiced in neighbouring Afghanistan by the ruling Taliban religious militia.

The human rights commission of Pakistan sharply criticised Musharraf's reversal calling it a "craven retreat." The commission accused the military-led government of panicking in the face of criticism from the religious right.

The reversal, according to the human rights commission, reflects "the hollowness of the regime's commitment to human rights and human dignity."

The commission also warned that Musharraf's reversal could embolden religious parties. "There is now a clear danger that the so-called religious parties, puffed up on their present success will want to keep the momentum going," a statement said.

THE TELEGRAPH

1 MAY '00

Pak (1)
HD-14

Pak. Cabinet vows to implement S.C. order

19/5

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, MAY 18. The Pakistani Cabinet has resolved to implement the military Government's agenda by October 12, 2002, as laid down in the Supreme Court verdict of May 12.

The Cabinet, at its meeting on Wednesday, resolved to "accomplish" the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf's "declared objectives including introduction of true democracy as contemplated in the verdict".

"The Cabinet felt that the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court was truly reflective of the independence of the judiciary," an official release stated.

It expressed the hope that all state institutions "will make their contribution in accelerating the process of implementation of the declared agenda, including the pace of accountability".

The Cabinet decision reflects a recognition of the deadline set by the Supreme Court for a return to elected rule.

PML(N) to move S.C.

In another development, the PML(N), ousted from power by the October 12, 1999, military coup, expressed "disappointment" over the military coup and decided to file a review petition in the Supreme Court against the May 12 verdict.

"The Central Working Committee of the Pakistan Muslim League expressed its disappointment that for the third time in Pakistan's history, the Supreme Court has

validated a military takeover without defining the limits of the controversial doctrine of necessity, thus opening the door to similar interventions in the future," the party said in a resolution passed yesterday.

It held that the blanket condemnation of members of Parliament was neither fair nor justified. "As our experience clearly shows, allegations against successive political regimes on the basis of which several elected Governments have been dismissed in the past have not been endorsed by history. In fact, many of these chronic shortcomings have continued during the military regimes that followed and, in addition, (there were) much bigger national disasters causing irreparable damage to the territorial integrity of the country."

The party was also critical of the power granted by the Supreme Court to Gen. Musharraf to amend the Constitution if necessary.

In a related move, Begum Kulsoom Nawaz, wife of the ousted Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, formally joined the PML(N) by signing the "basic membership" form.

Strike as scheduled

Religious parties in Pakistan, meanwhile, have decided to go ahead with their planned strike for tomorrow despite the climb-down by Gen. Musharraf on the procedural change in the blasphemy law.

Terming the Chief Executive's announcement that no changes would be made in the blasphemy law as "welcome", the Milli Yakehti Council, an umbrella body of religious parties, said there were nine demands, of which only one had been addressed.

The Council said the "strike" would be peaceful and no protest demonstrations or meetings would be held.

The religious parties noted that their demands such as making Friday the weekly holiday and incorporating Islamic provisions in provisional constitutional orders had not been addressed. However, they were prepared to meet the Chief Executive if an invitation was extended to them.

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It is crunch time for Sharif's party

By Amit Baruah

KARACHI, APRIL 5. On April 4, 1979, a civilian Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was hanged to death. Twenty-one years later, a special anti-terrorist court (ATC) will decide on April 6, 2000, the fate of another civilian Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif.

The charismatic and controversial Bhutto had to be permanently buried since he remained a threat to the Zia-ul-Haq regime even



Gen. Pervez Musharraf

while he was inside prison. Removed from office in a military coup in July 1977, Bhutto, like Mr. Sharif, was guilty of abusing his power of office. However, the remedy proved to be worse than the disease.

Mr. Sharif is in a different league. Handpicked by the military to exercise power, he had little experience of mass politics, but had loads of ambition to exercise untrammelled power — a proposition that was unacceptable to the only "real" political party in Pakistan — the Army.

There is little doubt that Bhutto

was hanged because the military regime feared him. Mr. Sharif, on the other hand, does not pose any such challenge. Beyond nuisance value and the element of possible sympathy about his fate, the ousted Prime Minister has little to show for himself by way of support from the people of Pakistan.

Charged with hijacking, kidnapping and attempt to murder for his role in diverting the aircraft of the Army Chief, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, on October 12, 1999, Mr. Sharif's fate will be decided in the case where the trial lasted nearly three months.

Along with Mr. Sharif, his brother and former Punjab Chief Minister, Mr. Shahbaz Sharif; Mr. Saeed Mehdi, a senior official, Mr. Saif-ur-Rehman, former anti-corruption boss, Mr. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, former PIA chairman, Mr. Rana Maqbool, former IGP (Sindh), and Mr. Ghaus Ali Shah, former adviser to the Prime Minister, are facing midnight charges.

In a sense, the legitimacy of Gen. Musharraf's coup hinges on the judgment to be delivered tomorrow by the ATC judge, Mr. Rehmat Hussain Jaffri. A verdict against the military is not seen as a likely outcome by most political pundits in Pakistan.

Quite apart from midnight amendments to the special ATC on December 2, 1999, and transfer of the case from one judge to another, the legal aspects of the hijacking case have been under focus from day one. The defence has pointed to the delay in the filing of the FIR itself — one month after the offence was committed.

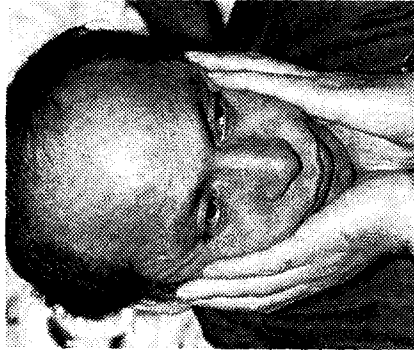
On January 19, 2000, Mr. Sharif and his six associates were formally charged with attempted murder, kidnapping and hijacking while Mr. Jaffri, dropped the charge of waging war against the State.

Earlier, on January 12, Mr. Justice Shabbir Ahmed of the Sindh High Court, to whom the case was sent, returned it to Mr. Jaffri after finding the presence of a large number of plainclothes policemen in his court. "I cannot provide a fair trial under the circumstances," Mr. Justice Ahmed stated then.

It is a sad fact of Pakistani politics that changes in Government have not come about through the ballot box. They have either come through direct intervention by the Army or through Article 58 (2) (b)

of the Constitution — which allowed the President to dismiss an elected Government. That provision was repealed by Mr. Sharif in March 1997.

Given the reality that the charge of hijacking carries death penalty, Mr. Sharif can theoretically be sentenced to death. If that happens, then the international community will start pressuring the Musharraf Government. On the other hand, if he gets a sentence of 10 years or above, then the issue is not likely to grab too much attention.



Mr. Nawaz Sharif (file photo)

The failure of Mr. Sharif's party to show any teeth and play along with the military Government is also an indication that everyone in the PML (N) knows that the Sharifs are a closed chapter in Pakistani politics. The military will ensure that.

However, Begum Kulsoom Nawaz has been trying her best to gather party activists in a bid to save her husband. Formally, she has not achieved much success. The judgment tomorrow and its response will show how much support she has been able to garner within the party.

Ranged against her are large number of leaders who are openly demanding that Mr. Sharif cease to be party president. It is crunch time for Mr. Sharif's party. A split could well be one of the first results of tomorrow's verdict.

Judge typing verdict himself

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 5. The judge during his recent tour abroad in which he reportedly stated that the court would announce the judgment and the President would hear Mr. Sharif's mercy appeal.

By saying so, Gen. Musharraf had announced the court verdict against her husband as a mercy petition could only be filed against a death sentence, she said.

At a press conference in Lahore, Begum Kulsoom said, Gen. Musharraf's statement amounted to interference in court affairs and therefore, a contempt of court. She said, her husband was innocent and the army took over the Government 10 minutes after the appointment of Gen. Ziauddin Butt as the Chief of Army Staff and the plane hijacking drama took place after the takeover.

Tight security has been enforced with police and paramilitary troops being positioned in and around the court. — UNI, PTI

Sharif wife's charge

Mr. Sharif's wife, Begum Kulsoom Nawaz, has asked the Supreme Court to take notice of the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf's remarks

Security ring as Sharif fate hangs in balance

PTI, AP & UNI

ISLAMABAD, April 5. — Security is tight around Karachi's anti-terrorism court as Pakistan waits for it to pronounce tomorrow the verdict on Mr Nawaz Sharif, his brother and five others on charges of hijacking, treason and attempted murder.

Amid mounting international appeals not to put the former Prime Minister to death, the country's military ruler has hinted that he may spare Mr Sharif's life if the court sentences him to be hanged. "I am not a vindictive man," General P e r v e z Musharraf, who overthrew Mr Sharif's elected government on 12 October, said in Jakarta. "After the decision, we'll take action."

Tight security has been enforced with police and paramilitary troops being positioned in and around the court.

Police commandos and troops will also be posted along the road between Landhi Jail on Karachi's outskirts, where the accused are lodged, and the court building, officials here said. The government has already imposed a ban on public rallies and meetings and has warned PML activists against holding street protests when the verdict is announced.

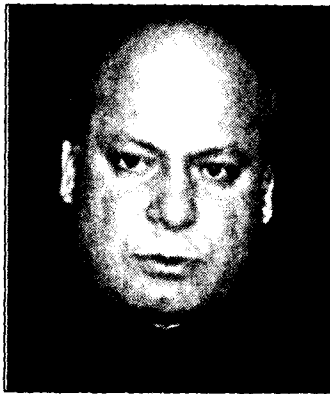
A spokesman of the party today said there would be no street demonstration. "We will not ask our party workers to break the law or stage violent

protests should he be convicted by the special court," said Mr Raja Zafarul Haq, PML spokesman.

But the PML will challenge a conviction in court. "Any decision against Nawaz Sharif will certainly be challenged in the High Court," Mr Haq said.

Mr Sharif's wife, Kulsoom, has asked her husband's supporters to demonstrate, but Mr Haq said the party would not support these protests.

Judge reticent: The judge of the anti-terrorism court, Mr



Sharif: hour of judgment

R e h m a t Hussain Jafri, has said he is typing the judgment himself and no one else is associated with it. The judgment, he said, would be entirely on merit. He was commenting on reports published in a Sindhi newspaper.

Meanwhile, Mrs Sharif has requested the Supreme Court to take notice of Gen. Musharraf's remarks during his recent tour abroad when he reportedly said that the court would announce the judgment and the President would hear Mr Sharif's mercy appeal. A mercy petition, she said, can only be filed against a death sentence. So Gen. Musharraf had practically announced what the verdict would be.

Blast in Hyderabad: At least seven people, including three lawyers, were today injured in a bomb blast at a court at Hyderabad in southern Pakistan.

THE STATESMAN

- 6 APR 2000

Sharif guilty, gets 25-year jail term



Former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's supporters outside the Pakistan Muslim League office in Karachi, hours before a trial court pronounced its verdict against him. Photo: AFP

25-year jail term

Seizure of assets ordered • Brother, 3 others acquitted

Mubashir Zaidi
Islamabad, April 6

THE ANTI-TERRORIST Court in Karachi today found ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif guilty of attempted hijacking and terrorism in the plane conspiracy case and sentenced him to two life imprisonment terms of 25 years each which would run concurrently.

Judge Rehmat Hussain Jaffery of AIC-1 in a short order announcing life imprisonment to the former Premier also ordered seizure of all his assets and property.

Judge Jaffery further directed Sharif to pay one million rupees fine for the above charges and Rs 2 million as compensation to the passengers of the PIA plane PK 805.

All the co-accused in the case, including Sharif's brother Shabaz Sharif, former Accountability Bureau Chairman Saifur Rehman, former Sindh advisor Ghous Ali Shah, former PIA Chairman Shahid Khakan Abbasi, former Sindh police chief Rana Maqbool and former Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Saeed Mehdi were acquitted by the court.

The judge also acquitted Nawaz Sharif on the remaining two charges of attempted murder and kidnapping. Sharif heard the ver-

dict with a flat face as the judgement was announced around 11:30 am before a packed court. His wife Kulsoom Nawaz was sitting beside him and continuously recited prayers from the Holy Quran.

Later, Sharif blasted the judgement in a message conveyed to the newsmen by one of his counsel by

THE VERDICT



saying: "Today's verdict proves there is no longer any justice in Pakistan."

Meanwhile, Nawaz Sharif's nephew Sharif told newsmen that the family of Sharif was very upset with the decision and most family members wept after hearing the

Verdict proof of no justice in Pak: Sharif

THE FORMER Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif today said the verdict finding him guilty of hijacking and terrorism was "engineered".

"This is most definitely an engineered verdict," he said in a written response to questions from a news agency after being sentenced to life imprisonment.

"I have full faith in the almighty and inshallah all this will be behind us," he said.

The questions were delivered to Mr Sharif by a relative who said the ousted Prime Minister wrote the answers while still inside the court after the verdict was delivered.

Mr Nawaz Sharif said the tactics used against him would neither "serve the cause of the future (of the country) nor in any way legitimise this illegal government".

"I want to let the people know that I have faith in God and have been encouraged by the love and support of the people," he said.

As the court read out the verdict, Mr Sharif's family members, including his wife Kulsoom, wept and shouted, "Long live Nawaz Sharif."

Mr Sharif, who heard the verdict with a grim face, told his family members in the courtroom later to have faith in God and hoped that things would be alright.

Agenciole, Karachi

ON PAGE 12

- Sharif's hometown quiet
- The rise and fall of Sharif
- Chronology of the court case
- Personal vendetta: Kulsoom

Prosecution to seek 'maximum sentence'

By Amit Baruah

KARACHI, APRIL 6. The prosecution and the defence have both decided to appeal to the Sindh High Court against the verdict holding the former Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, guilty of hijacking and acquitting six other accused.

"We will go to the High Court and the Supreme Court," Begum Kulsoom Nawaz, wife of the ousted Prime Minister, told reporters outside the courtroom this afternoon. Earlier, the Sindh Advocate-General, Raja Qureshi, said the prosecution would ask for the "maximum sentence" against Mr. Sharif and against the acquittal of the other six.

As the defence and the prosecution mapped out their future course in the legal battle, there is a sense of relief that the death sentence has not been imposed on Mr. Sharif.

As per the punishment applicable to an offence of hijacking, any person who "commits or conspires or attempts to commit, or abets the commission of, hijacking shall be punished with death or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable for forfeiture of property and fine". In the present case, it appears the anti-terrorist court judge, Mr. Rehmat Hussain Jaffri, used his discretion and awarded a lighter punishment to Mr. Sharif.

A death sentence would have increased international pressure on Pakistan and further isolated the military regime. The Adviser to the Chief Executive on National Affairs, Mr. Javed Jabbar, said minutes after the verdict was delivered that everything had been done in a fair and transparent manner.

However, by the verdict, Mr. Sharif will be put away for a long time and the Musharraf regime can go about doing whatever it pleases. The elected Prime Minister has been convicted by a duly constituted court on charges of hijacking and creating terror — a message that would not be lost on the political forces.

Mr. Sharif outside could prove a liability to the regime. While appearing reasonable internationally, the military government at the same time managed to put the former Prime Minister away.

Also, though the life term is for 25 years and Mr. Sharif will be 76 by the time he serves out his time, he has two legal avenues available — the Sindh High Court and the Supreme Court. If he fails to get relief from these judicial fora, there is the possibility of a future "civilian" Government looking at his case more sympathetically.

As far as the Sharif family is concerned, the silence of his brother and former Punjab Chief Minister, Mr.

Shahbaz Sharif, about the merits of the case has been noted. Some eyebrows have also been raised by the fact that all the other accused — Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, Mr. Saifur Rehman, former anti-corruption boss, Mr. Saeed Mehdi, senior bureaucrat, Rana Maqbool, former IGP Sindh, Mr. Ghous Ali Shah, former adviser to Mr. Nawaz Sharif, and Mr. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, former PIA chairman — have been freed. It is another matter that a couple of them could be booked in other cases.

With the curtains coming down on the trial stage of the case, the scene will now shift to the Sindh High Court which will be the first forum for appeal. As per the Anti-Terrorism Act, the appeal should be filed in a week's time from today's verdict.

Interestingly, the approver, Mr. Aminullah Chaudhury, has also been freed. "In this case, the approver Aminullah Chaudhury, in accordance with the condition of the agreement, is relieved of his obligation as no required certificate has been filed by the public prosecutor showing that the approver has failed to fulfill the conditions of the pardon, as such, the approver Aminullah Chaudhury is released...." the judgment stated.

Verdict faulty: PML

PTI reports from Islamabad:

The Pakistan Muslim League of Mr. Nawaz Sharif has termed "faulty" the verdict of life sentence for the former Prime Minister saying it would challenge the judgment in the Sindh High Court.

Mr. Sharif "has been wronged through this decision (of the court). He deserves the same reprieve the six others got," Mr. Raja Zafarul Haq, head of the party's central coordination committee, said.

The former Pakistan cricket team captain and head of the Tehreek-e-Insaf, Mr. Imran Khan, said it was "a sad and unfortunate chapter symbolic of an era of reckless politics."

'Setback for regime'

The former Pakistan Prime Minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party said the verdict was a 'setback' for the military regime which had "sought the death penalty."

"Mr. Nawaz Sharif had consistently expressed confidence in the Judge... and that has borne fruit. Neither was he sentenced to death nor were his co-defendants sentenced. Since they have been acquitted on the basis of the same evidence, this strengthens the appeal of Mr. Nawaz Sharif in the Sindh High Court," a PPP spokesman said in a statement.

The rise and fall of deposed PM

Mubashir Zaidi
Islamabad, April 6

NAWAZ SHARIF first came into the limelight in 1985 when former military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq had picked him to serve as the Finance Minister in Punjab Government.

When democracy was restored in the country in 1988, Nawaz Sharif was elected Chief Minister of Punjab. He gave a tough time to his political opponent and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto by initiating moves to dislodge Benazir's Government in the Centre.

After the death of PML president and former Prime Minister Mohammed Khan Junejo, Sharif was elected new PML chief in 1990 when the government of Benazir Bhutto was toppled on charges of corruption.

Nawaz Sharif became the Prime Minister in 1990 after the PML was able to secure a majority in the Centre as well as Punjab, his political base.

Sharif's first government was also toppled in 1993 on corruption and mismanagement charges paving the way for Benazir Bhutto to her

second term in power. Sharif acted as the Opposition leader till 1996 when Bhutto's Government was once again dismissed on corruption charges.

Nawaz Sharif became the most powerful Prime Minister in the history of the country by securing an unprecedented two-thirds majority in Parliament in the elections held in 1997.

Immediately after assuming office in 1997, he stripped the President of his powers to dismiss the elected governments.

He got engaged in a fierce battle with the Chief Justice of the country and the President simultaneously over the appointment of judges. The tussle resulted in the forced retirement of both the

Chief Justice and the President.

He initiated a dialogue with India in 1998 with Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee visiting Lahore in February. Both the leaders signed the historic Lahore Declaration, according to which

both the countries agreed to start a dialogue at the highest level on mutual disputes, including Kashmir.

In May 1998, Nawaz Sharif reciprocated to India's decision to hold nuclear tests by announcing that Pakistan has also conducted similar tests.

In July the same year, the Kargil episode hampered the

Indo-Pak relations like never before. Differences between the Army and Sharif began in early 1999 when Sharif tried to give the

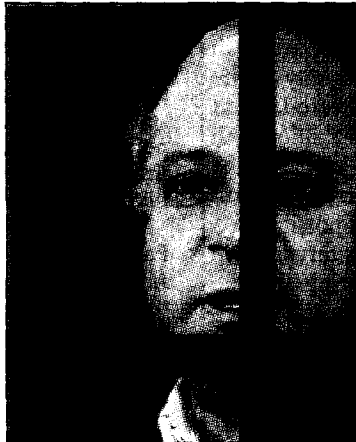
impression that the Kargil operation was purely masterminded by Army Chief General Pervez Musharraf and he was not taken into confidence.

The D-day came on October 12, when he sacked the Army Chief and appointed his confidante and former ISI chief, General Ziauddin, in Musharraf's place. Musharraf was airborne and was returning to Pakistan from Colombo. Sharif tried to prevent General Musharraf from landing anywhere in the country by ordering the Karachi airport staff to divert Musharraf's plane outside Pakistan.

The Army immediately took control of all the key government offices, including the Karachi Airport, and the Prime Minister's House in Islamabad. General Musharraf safely landed and announced on October 12 night that he had dismissed the Sharif Government.

Nawaz Sharif was immediately arrested and kept in one of the Army's 'safe houses' at Rawalpindi. He was presented before the court on November 18 after the military authorities registered a case against him.

THE VERDICT



THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

1 APR 2000

Commonwealth wants full amnesty

London 7, April 6

COMMONWEALTH CHIEF Don Mckinnon expressed concern today at the severity of the sentence passed on Nawaz Sharif and urged that he be granted a full amnesty.

Sharif was sentenced to life imprisonment after being found guilty of terrorism and hijacking, but he was spared the death penalty.

"I am dismayed by the severity of the sentence passed today on Mr Nawaz Sharif," said Mr Mckinnon.

"This was a trial conducted against an elected Prime Minister, unconstitutionally overthrown, under a regime whose legitimacy has not been recognised by the Commonwealth. The credibility of the Pakistani regime in the eyes of the world will not be enhanced by this judgment," he said.

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said that the British Government remains disturbed about aspects of the trial of Pakistan's former premier and reserves a 'final view' of the judicial

process.

"From the outset we have called for a fair and transparent trial," Mr Cook said here. He went on: "But we are disturbed about a number of aspects. These included chang-

No comment: Delhi

INDIA TODAY refrained from commenting on deposed Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif being awarded life imprisonment for 25 years by the trial court that held him guilty of hijacking and terrorism. An External Affairs Ministry spokesperson, when asked about the Indian reaction to the court verdict, said: "We have no comments to offer." **HTC, New Delhi**

ing the terms of the trial to include hijacking in the anti-terrorist law after the alleged event, and the questionable judicial climate given the forced oaths of allegiances for the senior judiciary."

Noting that Sharif's lawyers intend to appeal against the guilty verdict and life sentence passed on him in Karachi today, Mr Cook said "we will not, therefore, take a final view until the judicial process is exhausted. "We will watch the appeal process closely, together with our international partners."

Washington: The Clinton Administration today said it was 'inappropriate' for the United States to comment on the fairness of the trial of deposed Pakistani Prime Minister in which he was sentenced to life imprisonment as the judicial process was still not over.

An official spokesman, however, said "as in the first stage (of the case), we will be monitoring the appeal of (Nawaz Sharif) and we expect transparency and due process during the appeal."

Beijing: China, the closest ally of Pakistan, expressed hope that the Pakistani people would 'properly' handle the sentencing of the deposed Prime Minister, taking into account the country's interest.

(Agencies)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

APR 7 2000

China offers advice, Britain is disturbed, U.S. has no comment

BEIJING: China, Pakistan's closest ally, on Thursday expressed hope that the Pakistani people would "properly" handle the sentencing of deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif, taking into account the country's interests.

"We have taken note of the relevant reports and we believe that the people of Pakistan will, starting from the supreme interests of the state and the nation, handle this issue properly," foreign ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi said in response to a question on the life imprisonment.

However, Mr Sun did not respond when asked whether the Chinese government would plead for clemency for Mr Sharif, who is considered to be a "friend of China" for his key role in cementing Islamabad's close relations with Beijing.

In London, British foreign secretary Robin Cook said he was disturbed by aspects of the trial which had found Mr Sharif guilty of terrorism and hijacking and had sentenced him to life in jail.

"From the outset, we have called for a fair and transparent trial. But we are disturbed about a number of aspects," Mr Cook said in a statement. "These include changing the

terms of the trial to include hijacking in the anti-terrorist laws after the alleged event and the questionable judicial climate, given the forced oaths of allegiance for the senior judiciary," he said.

Mr Cook said the British government would watch the appeal process closely and would reserve its view until the full judicial process had been completed.

In Washington, the Clinton administration said it was "inappropriate" for the United States to comment on the fairness of the trial of deposed Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif as the judicial process was still not over.

An official spokesman, however, said, "As in the first stage (of the case), we will be monitoring the appeal of (Nawaz Sharif) and we expect transparency and due process during the appeal."

The White House said it was pleased Mr Sharif was spared the death penalty and called for a fair appeals process for his conviction.

"It's not for us to evaluate the verdict or its fairness," said P.J. Crowley, spokesman for the White House national security council. "But certainly, we are pleased that the death penalty has apparently been taken off the table. (Agencies)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

APR 7 2000

FOR LIFE OR NOT FOR LIFE, THAT IS THE QUESTION

Sharif lawyers prepare to challenge ruling

Karachi

7 APRIL

FORMER PAKISTANI Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's lawyers on Friday said they were preparing to launch an appeal against his conviction and life sentence for hijacking and terrorism while prosecutors get ready to challenge the acquittal of his six co-accused.

"We are going through the judgement and most probably will file the appeal in Sindh High Court by Monday or Tuesday," Sharif's main lawyer, Khwaja Sultan, said.

Judge Rehmat Hussain Jaffri, on Thursday, found Sharif guilty of hijacking and terrorism and sentenced him to life imprisonment but acquitted his brother, Shahbaz, and five other former senior officials.

Officials said the acquitted persons will not be immediately released as most of them will be investigated on charges of corruption and misuse of power.

Two of them have been detained under the Maintenance of Public Order Act and the four others, including Sharif's brother Shahbaz, will be moved to Attock Fort in Northwest Frontier province for investigation on charges of corruption and misuse of power, officials said.

"We are preparing the



Sharif: Between life and death

appeal against the acquittal and are going through this 157 pages judgement. But we probably will file the appeal early next week," the chief public prosecutor, Raja Qureshi, said.

Qureshi said by law the state has 14 days to appeal while the accused has seven days.

He said the prosecutors would also consider challenging the life sentence as they had demanded the death penalty.

Sharif has the right to appeal to the Sindh High Court within seven days. The defence lawyers then have the right to appeal to the Supreme Court before making an appeal for mercy to the President, Mohammad Rafiq Tarrar.

"We have a very good chance for Nawaz Sharif's acquittal as the same evidence has been set for the acquittal of the other six," Sultan said.

He said more leading lawyers will be hired for the appeal. A senior lawyer, Aijaz Batalvi, was also returning to the case, he said.

Batalvi, along with Sharif's other lawyers, withdrew from the case in protest against a ruling last month which could have restricted publication of Sharif's statements in court.

But other lawyers took on the case which took an ugly turn when Sharif's lawyer Iqbal Radh was gunned down in his Karachi office on March 10.

A prominent lawyer, Zia Awan, said, "I must say when the abettors were acquitted, he (Sharif) might get the benefit at the superior courts."

Tariq Aziz, a member of the Supreme Court Bar Association, said, "An offence like hijacking cannot be committed by a single individual. The judgement is apparently not sustainable." But Sharif said the verdict was "engineered" and could not legitimise the government. — PTI

The Economic Times

7 APR 2000

Kulsoom's charges absurd: Musharraf

Islamabad

7 APRIL

PAKISTAN'S MILITARY ruler general Pervez Musharraf has rejected as "absurd" Nawaz Sharif's wife Kulsoom's allegation that he had "influenced" the anti-terrorism court trial of the deposed premier in the plane hijacking case.

Kulsoom has been issuing statements every day, but he had not considered it dignified to comment on them, gen Musharraf told reporters on Thursday at the Punjab

University, where he was the chief guest at the 110th convocation of the country's oldest educational institution, The Dawn reported.

Kulsoom had said on Thursday, after the anti-terrorism court sent Sharif to life imprisonment in the plane hijacking case, that the verdict was the result of personal vendetta by the military ruler.

"It is a personal vendetta against my innocent husband who has not committed any crime. A lion cannot be caged," she had said.

Gen Musharraf said on being asked on several occasions about such statements, he had only explained to various people the legal procedure of the trial and that appeals in

such cases were referred for a final decision to the president.

The general said he had also made it clear to everybody that he figured nowhere in the "chain of command" dealing with such matters.



Musharraf: On the tightrope

Kulsoom had said a few days ago that gen Musharraf had pronounced a judgment ahead of the court's decision by saying that the appeal will go to the President.

About a call given by Kulsoom to PML workers to take to the streets

after the pronouncement of the verdict, gen Musharraf said the people were aware of the problems facing the country and also of the fact that it was the leaders who had created these difficulties.

About the future role of political parties and leaders, gen Musharraf said corrupt elements were left with no role to play but honest leaders would certainly play their role.

"Everybody knows who is corrupt and who is not," he said, without elaborating.

Answering a query about his recent visit to five Southeast Asian countries, he said the primary objective was to inform the host countries about investment opportunities in Pakistan.

— PTI

Clinton prevailed on order, feels Sharif's son

H.S. Rao

LONDON 7 APRIL

INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE, specially after US President Bill Clinton's visit to Pakistan, prevailed on the military regime and the anti-terrorism court in Pakistan not to impose death penalty on deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, his son Hasan Sharif said.

"President Clinton, during his brief visit to Islamabad last month, specially spoke to chief executive Pervez Musharraf about my father and that has created a lot of pressure on him to avoid death penalty for Nawaz Sharif," he said after Thursday's court verdict sending Sharif to life imprisonment.

"That is one of the strong reasons the court has avoided death penalty. At the same time, it wanted to compensate Gen. Musharraf by giving Nawaz Sharif life imprisonment," Hasan Sharif, a student here, said.

Claiming that his father was "innocent," Hasan said his entire family, particularly his mother, was "very thoroughly disappointed" by the decision of the court.

Stating that they would appeal against the judgement in the Sindh High Court, he said he hoped to get a "much better" decision from a full-bench there.

"We have a right to disagree with the decision and we are doing that and it is absolutely clear that we genuinely believe that Nawaz Sharif is innocent and this is a fight and the fight has begun.

— PTI

The Economic Times

7 APR 2000

Sharif lawyers preparing for appeal

KARACHI, APRIL 7. Lawyers representing the ousted Pakistani Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, may file an appeal as early as Monday against his hijacking and terrorism convictions, the head of his legal team said today. "We have to examine every aspect of the judgment and take a decision. If the grounds are not that extensive, we may file an appeal by Monday," Mr. Khwaja Sultan said from Lahore.

He said the lawyers were meeting in Lahore on Friday to discuss strategy.

Mr. Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League party was also due to meet in Islamabad on Sunday to discuss how to resolve the leadership crisis after Mr. Sharif's conviction.

"The party's leadership is bitterly divided and jockeying is on for the top slot that Mr. Sharif still occupies as the PML president," *The News* said in an editorial.

But sources close to senior party members said Mr. Sharif's loyalists would insist that no change be made for as long as the appeal process continued. The appeal would be filed in the Sindh High Court in Karachi. Mr. Sultan said acquittals of the six other accused of all charges, which also included attempted murder and kidnapping, strengthened Mr. Sharif's appeal.

"I feel that it is a case where the superior courts may not uphold the verdict," he said.

After the Sindh High Court, Mr. Sharif can also appeal to the supreme court of Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the former Prime Minister's brother, Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, and three others acquitted by an anti-terrorism court on Thursday, were today shifted to Rawalpindi, a jail official said.

The three others are the former Accountability Bureau chief, Mr. Saifur Rehman, the former Sindh police chief, Mr. Rana Maqbool, and the former Principal Secretary, Mr. Saeed Mehdi.

Charges absurd: Musharraf

The Pakistani military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has rejected as "absurd" Mrs. Kulsoom Nawaz's allegation that he had "influenced" the anti-terrorism court trial.

Mrs. Kulsoom Nawaz has been issuing statements everyday, but he had not considered it dignified to comment on them, Gen. Musharraf told reporters on Thursday at the Punjab University, where he was the chief guest at the 110th convocation of the country's oldest educational institution, *The Dawn* reported.

Gen. Musharraf said he had also made it clear that he figured nowhere in the "chain of command" dealing with such matters.

'Clinton pressure helped'

In London, Mr. Sharif's son, Mr. Hasan Sharif said international pressure, specially after the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton's visit to Pakistan, prevailed on the military regime and the anti-terrorism court in Pakistan not to impose death penalty on the former Prime Minister.— Reuters

Editorial on Page 12

- 8 APR 2000

SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 2000

119-12
LACKING IN CREDIBILITY GA

THE WHOLE LEGAL exercise in Pakistan, culminating in a life term for the ousted Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, has gone on predictable lines and lacks credibility. From November 10, when the police lodged a complaint of criminal conspiracy, hijacking, kidnapping and attempted murder, it became obvious that the military regime in Islamabad would go all out to end his political career. Perhaps because of international pressure and the recent stop-over by the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, Mr. Sharif escaped with a life sentence and was saved from the gallows — and the fate of one of his predecessors, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. It was ironical that Mr. Sharif was hoist with his own petard, the Anti-Terrorist Courts that he set up to speed up trial in special cases around the country. He also showed the way by tinkering with the judiciary and curtailing the powers of the President; and Gen. Pervez Musharraf has gone the whole hog suspending the Constitution, making the judges take a new oath of allegiance and replacing half of the judges in the Supreme Court who did not take that oath. Thursday's verdict has, for all practical purposes, the effect of legitimising the military coup and justifying the overthrow of Mr. Sharif. What has emboldened the present rulers is that not many Pakistanis are shedding tears for Mr. Sharif.

The judge of the special court, Mr. Rehmat Hussain Jaffri, found the deposed Premier guilty of hijacking the PIA aircraft (in which Gen. Musharraf was returning from Colombo) and terrorism. He even explained that Mr. Sharif had acted "in the heat of passion". What the judge conveniently ignored were the circumstances under which a democratically elected Prime Minister was functioning and that he was about to be overthrown in a coup. When Mr. Sharif removed Gen. Musharraf as army chief and tried to prevent the aircraft from landing in Karachi, the coup was immediate. The judge ordered that

all of Mr. Sharif's property should be attached and he should pay a fine as well as compensation to all passengers on board that flight. But the irony of it all is that all the other six accused, including Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, the Premier's brother, have been acquitted. The military regime refuses to release them and they may be tried for other charges to be framed — abuse of power and corruption, for instance. The swift trial and the process have raised many questions. The police took a whole month after detaining Mr. Sharif to file the complaint and the charges were formally laid only on January 12. As the trial reached its climax, his main counsel, Iqbal Radh, was shot dead by a masked gunman.

Even now it may not be too late for the Musharraf regime to restore the credibility of the judicial process. The international community will be closely monitoring the process of appeal open to Mr. Sharif — first before the Sindh High Court and then the Supreme Court. So long as Gen. Musharraf wants to keep the top politicians out of the game and install a puppet regime, there can be no change in the situation. The military regime's theory of a 'criminal conspiracy' has been rejected even in the first stage. How can there be a one-man conspiracy? All other accused have been acquitted. The murder of democracy in Pakistan is being repeated all too often. Mr. Sharif amended the Constitution to checkmate the President, who could dismiss elected Governments. But how can a country prevent a military coup, unless the armed forces steer clear of politics? Pakistan's military dictators have tried various editions of democracy to suit their ends and Gen. Musharraf now wants to provide a constitutional role for the armed forces in the political governance of the country. It is in the interests of the world and the region to bring an early end to the military regime and restore democracy and the rule of law in Pakistan.

APR 2000

'Pakistan at the crossroads'

PAN 10

By Amit Baruah HD-12

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 7. "Jehadi" organisations in Pakistan have welcomed the life imprisonment sentence handed to the deposed Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, by a special anti-terrorist court on Thursday.

The Harkat-ul-Mujahideen leader, Fazlur Rehman Khalil, said Mr. Sharif had been punished for the "treacherous acts" he had committed against the "martyrs" of Kargil. Khalil said the present rulers would also meet the "same fate" if they comprised on Kashmir.

The chief of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hafiz Saeed, stated verdicts were always "divine" and were handed through human beings. An Al-Badar spokesman was quoted as saying his group had always "predicted" that the "traitors of Kargil" would have an unfortunate end.

In a string of editorials today, the Pakistani press did soul-searching following the verdict — the third to a former Prime Minister after Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Ms. Benazir Bhutto (on a corruption charge).

"A State struggling to prevent an economic collapse, and with its civil institutions seriously weakened and diminished, cannot afford to face further upheavals. Already, in the relative brief period of 50 years, we have managed to convict three elected Prime Ministers," the *Dawn* said in an editorial today.

"The plane (hijacking) case was seen as crucial for the present administration as providing a moral (not a constitutional) rationale for the October 12 take-over and to that extent General Pervez Musharraf and his team will feel they have been vindicated," the paper stated.

Referring to the acquittal of all six co-accused, it stated: "Perhaps the court did not find the evidence against the others convincing enough, but some will argue that this may be seen as indicating that the main case was not without its weak points."

According to *The News*, though it may be too early to write off Mr. Sharif as a political entity, his future prospects looked rather bleak. "But that does not translate into an advantage for the Musharraf Government which, despite its repeated rejection of

string-pulling charges, still finds it difficult to convince its critics of its bona fides. Since Nawaz Sharif is the only who has been found guilty... it can strengthen the allegation that the case is essentially meant to teach the former Prime Minister a lesson for having tried to sack General Musharraf."

"Regardless of the hows and whys of the case against Mr. Sharif and whether he earned the verdict or not, it is another addition to the long list of sorry events that have marked Pakistan's 52 years' vain search for political stability," *The News* added.

In the opinion of *The Nation*, there was little likelihood of any strong public reaction to the verdict. "The Muslim League is not a party of agitation, and it had already announced that it would not go for public protest if the case was to be decided against its leader."

On future Government strategy, the editorial said: "Many people would, however, stress that instead of going for an appeal, it would be more advisable for the Government to close the chapter now and that it should henceforth divert its total attention to the pressing problems that Pakistan faces today. It should try to bring Pakistan out of isolation, revive the economy and increase the vigilance on the borders."

The *Frontier Post* wrote that the verdict was a "sad moment" in the country's history. "Mian Nawaz Sharif now stands guilty of a crime that he committed without reflecting on its consequences. He wanted absolute power... this is a moment of deep reflection, for Pakistan is now at the cross-roads. The military is now in control of the country, which is also unfortunate."

Police officer shot

SRINAGAR, APRIL 7. Militants shot dead a Special Police Officer (SPO), Mr. Pamposh Ahmad Mian and exploded an improvised explosive device even as the security forces arrested two top militants and recovered arms and ammunitions in the Kashmir valley. An activist of the militant outfit Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Mukhtar Ahmad Khan, was nabbed by police in Srinagar along with ammunition. — PTI

APR 7 2000

Sharif may appeal on Monday

REUTERS

KARACHI, April 7. — Lawyers representing Mr Nawaz Sharif may file an appeal as early as Monday against his hijacking and terrorism convictions, the head of his legal team said today.

"We have to examine every aspect of the judgment and take a decision. If the grounds are not that extensive, we may file an appeal by Monday," Mr Khawaja Sultan said from Lahore, Mr Sharif's home town.

He said the lawyers would meet in Lahore "to discuss our future strategy".

Mr Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League will meet in Islamabad on Sunday to discuss how to resolve the leadership crisis it faces after his conviction. The News daily said in an editorial: "The party's leadership is bitterly divided and jockeying is on for the top slot that Mr Sharif still occupies as president of the PML."

But sources close to senior party members said Sharif loyalists would insist that no change be made for as long as the appeal process continued.

The appeal would be filed in the provincial Sindh High Court in Karachi, where the lower anti-terrorism court convicted Mr Sharif yesterday and sentenced him to two concurrent life terms in jail.

Mr Sultan said acquittals of the co-accused — Mr Sharif's brother Shahbaz and five others — of all charges, which also included attempted murder and kidnapping, strengthened

Mr Sharif's appeal.

"I feel that it is a case where the superior courts may not uphold the verdict," he said.

After Sindh High Court, Mr Sharif can also appeal to the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Mr Sultan said government officials had told him that four of the acquitted persons — Mr Sharif's brother Shahbaz, former principal secretary Saeed Mehdi, former police chief Maqbool Rana, Saifur Rehman — were wanted in corruption cases. "We will challenge that before the NAB," he said.



Sharif: fight for liberty

Musharraf denial: General Pervez Musharraf has rejected as "absurd" allegations of Mr Sharif's wife that he had "influenced" the trial.

Mrs Kulsoom Sharif has been issuing statements everyday, but

he had not considered it dignified to comment on them, Gen. Musharraf told reporters yesterday at Punjab University. Commenting on the verdict against her husband, Mrs Sharif said yesterday: "It is a personal vendetta against my innocent husband who has not committed any crime. A lion cannot be caged."

Stocks rise: Pakistani stocks rose slightly today as institutions returned to the market after staying on the sidelines ahead of sentencing of Mr Nawaz Sharif, adds Reuters. They said a life term for Mr Sharif eased investor concerns, who feared a death sentence would have caused political repercussions for the military regime.

THE STATESMAN

APR 2000

'Pak. will act against jihadi outfits'

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 9. Islamabad would stop militants trying to cross its borders to fight Indian security forces in Kashmir, the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, was quoted as saying. The British newspaper, *Telegraph*, quoted Mr. Sattar as saying on April 6 that Islamabad would "act against" organisations that encourage volunteers to fight the "jihad" in Kashmir.

The Government, he said, would also identify madrassas where weapons training was being provided, with a view to stopping the practice. The Foreign Minister also called on India to help by "ceasing repression" in Kashmir. If one were to go by Mr. Sattar's statement, then it is for the first time that a senior functionary of the Pakistani Government has announced that it would take steps to stop "jihadi fighters" from crossing the Line of Control (LoC).

In the recent past, the Pakistani Chief Exec-

utive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, had stated that Islamabad could use its moderating influence on these "jihadi groups" if India, reciprocal move, pulled out security forces and stopped repression in Kashmir.

However, Mr. Sattar's remarks, as published in the daily, are a departure from the earlier Pakistani position. If this stand is serious and Pakistan intends to implement this promise, then there could be some breakthrough in the India-Pakistan impasse. Gen. Musharraf had also expressed his helplessness that Pakistan, with some 50,000 troops deployed in the area, could not prevent the crossing of the LoC. But, clearly, Mr. Sattar seems to think otherwise.

His comments also clearly signal that should Pakistan want to do something about stopping the export of terrorism, it can clearly do so.

In a related development, the Interior Minister, Lt. Gen. Moinuddin Haider (retd.), has been quoted as saying in London that Islamabad had asked Kabul to close down terrorist training camps under Taliban control.

"We have asked Afghanistan to close down these camps where people from Pakistani sectarian parties get armed training. We have also asked them to extradite all those (Pakistanis) who have taken refuge there after committing sectarian killings...I have made it clear to Sipah-e-Sahaba (Sunni extremist group) and Sipah-e-Mohammad (Shia extremist group) to stop (sectarian killings)," *The Dawn* quoted the Interior Minister as saying.

"We have to think now as a nation as to which path we should adopt — the one which leads us to become a civilised, liberal democratic society or the one where Shias and Sunnis continue to kill each other...religious killings must stop now," he said.

Ever since the Clinton visit, there have been some signs that Pakistan could shift gear on providing a safe haven for all kinds of militant elements. Clearly, a crackdown on sectarian groups would also impinge on militant outfits in the country, as many of them have umbilical links.

10 APR 2001

Sharif hires Zardari's lawyer to appeal against life sentence

KARACHI: Ousted Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif has hired a lawyer, who has represented some of his bitterest rivals, to appeal his life sentences for hijacking and terrorism now expected to be filed on Wednesday.

"I plan to file an appeal on Wednesday," Azizullah Shaikh, the latest addition to Mr Sharif's legal team said on Monday. Earlier, Mr Sharif's lawyers had said an appeal could be filed in the Sindh high court as early as on Monday.

Mr Shaikh will be part of a team that includes Khawaja Sultan and Ijaz Battalvi, lawyers Mr Sharif hired from his hometown of Lahore. Mr Sharif was given two life jail terms on Thursday by an anti-terrorism court here for hijacking and terrorism. If the appeal to the provincial high court failed, Mr Sharif can then also appeal to the SC of Pakistan.

Mr Shaikh has represented Mr Sharif's arch-political foes, including the husband of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and Altaf Hus-sain, the self-exiled leader of the Muttehida Quami Movement (MQM), a local political group which has fought the government for control of Karachi. But Mr Shaikh said he was a professional lawyer and had "nothing to do with politics."

"The only solace to me is satisfac-

tion of my professional ability and integrity," he said. "My only concentration is in the case, whether there is a legal evidence or there is any scope of saving the accused, which I have been doing and will do," Mr Shaikh said. He said he was studying the 167-page verdict given by the anti-terrorism court judge Rehmat Hussain Jafferri.

In Pakistan, an appeal must be filed within a week of the sentencing.

Meanwhile, in Islamabad, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) re-confirmed Mr Sharif as its leader despite calls that he be replaced since his jailing for life on terrorism and hijacking charges last week.

Senior members of the PML, which Mr Sharif has headed since 1992, approved a vote of confidence in the deposed prime minister who is on the fourth day of twin life terms imposed by an anti-terrorism court in Karachi.

Party vice-president Raja Zafar-ul Haq admitted there were some who wanted fresh party elections but he denied media reports that a faction wanted to jettison the twice-elected and twice-deposed Sharif and select a new leader. (Agencies)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

11 APR 2000

Sharif appeals against sentence

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 12 An appeal was filed in the Sindh High Court today by the former Pakistani Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, against the life sentence given to him on charges of hijacking and terrorism by a special anti-terrorist court in Karachi on April 6.

Mr. Ali Mohammed, Deputy Registrar of the Sindh High Court, said after the appeal was handed over to him by Mr. Azizullah Sheikh, the ousted Prime Minister's new lawyer, that a preliminary hearing would be fixed after a scrutiny of documents.

A two-judge Bench, comprising Mr. Justice Abdul Hamid Dogar and Mr. Justice R.A. Rabbani would hear the case after the appeal was admitted.

In a related development, the Sindh Attorney-General, Raja Qureshi, said that the prosecution would file its open appeal against the judgment of the trial court acquitting the six co-accused "within four or five days". Mr. Qureshi said the State had not yet decided whether it wanted the High Court to award Mr. Sharif the death penalty — the maximum punishment for hijacking.

Among the ground for appeal, the defence has claimed that the provisions of hijacking in the Pakistan Penal Code had been completely misconstrued and that the



Mr. Azizullah Shalkh (left), a defence lawyer of the ousted Pakistan Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, submits an appeal before Mr. Ali Mohammad a deputy registrar (judicial) of the Sindh Provincial High Court, in Karachi on Wednesday. Reuters

finding that the offences were committed by Mr. Nawaz Sharif and Mr. Aminullah Chadhury, approver in the case, was vitiated by the fact that no such charge had been framed.

The defence has submitted that the conviction of Mr. Sharif under Section 7 (ii) of the Anti-Terrorist Act was against the law as none of the ingredients of the offence of terrorism was made out against the appellant. It argued that the special judge's verdict had been passed without adverting to the basic principle of criminal justice

which required that the prosecution case of the prosecution must stand on its own and the onus of proof in criminal cases never shifted to the accused.

Referring to the evidence of approvers and alleged accomplices, the defence claimed that one piece of tainted evidence could not be corroborated by another piece of tainted evidence. The judgment was based on mere speculation, conjecture and surmise and, therefore, inherently unsustainable.

THE HINDU

13 APR 2000

Appeal filed in Sharif case

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, April 12. — The defence lawyer of the deposed Pakistani Prime Minister, Mr Nawaz Sharif, filed an appeal with the Sind High Court today against the verdict of the anti-terrorism court judge.

The appeal, filed by Mr Azizullah Shaikh, sought to revoke the recent judgement of Mr Rehmat Hussain Jafri, who had given two concurrent life-terms to Mr Sharif in a plane hijacking case which in Pakistan means 25 years in jail.

The appeal was filed with the deputy registrar of the High Court within the prescribed period of appeal.

It will be heard by a two-member bench headed by Mr Justice Abdul Hameed Dogar and Mr Justice SA Rabani. The date for hearing will be announced later in consultation with the Chief Justice of the Sind High Court.

Mr Shaikh told reporters that he was "100 per cent" optimistic that he will get Mr Sharif freed.

The government is also preparing an appeal against the judgement of the anti-terrorism court judge for acquitting six other accused. The defence has prepared their case, saying since the six other accused had been acquitted, Mr Nawaz Sharif too deserved the same treatment. Mr Sharif, who appealed against two life terms today, now faced charges of corruption, the military government's top corruption prosecutor said.

The anti-corruption National Accountability Bureau has sent three cases or references to court and more charges of corruption and misrule were being investigated, NAB prosecutor-general, Mr Farouk Adam Khan told Reuters.

THE STATESMAN

1 APR 1999

Prosecution contests life term, Sindh court to hear ex-PM case

Death appeal against Sharif

Karachi, April 18 (Agencies): Pakistan prosecutors appealed against life jail terms for former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on terrorism and hijacking convictions today and sought a death sentence.

Raja Qureshi, advocate-general of Sindh province, filed two appeals at Sindh High Court seeking to turn Sharif's twin jail terms into the death sentence and to overturn the acquittal of six co-accused, including Sharif's brother.

"We are not satisfied with the judgment against Sharif," Qureshi said. "We want complete justice and in the case of hijacking the only penal action is maximum punishment."

Sharif was sentenced two concurrent life terms — which in Pakistan means 25 years — on charges stemming from October 12 when a commercial plane carrying army chief Gen. Pervez Musharraf was briefly prevented from landing in Karachi.

The army seized power that night and Musharraf took over. The appeals fly in the face of pleas by the international community while the Sharif trial was in process that he be shown clemency.

US President Bill Clinton asked Musharraf to show mercy during a brief visit to Pakistan last month.

Lawyers said the appeal process could take months or even years. In the meantime, Sharif, his brother and close aides are being investigated on several counts of corruption.

Musharraf has denied involvement in the trial but has also repeatedly said that he is not a vindictive man, a statement contested by Sharif's wife, Kulsoom, who says her husband has been "tar-



GLOBETROTTER: Pakistani military ruler Pervez Musharraf tours the Arab League headquarters accompanied by league secretary general Esmat Abdel Meguid in Cairo on Monday. (AFP)

geted" by the army for wrongdoing.

Six others, including Sharif's brother, were acquitted by the lower court judge, Rehmat Hussain Jafri.

Earlier today, a two-judge bench of the Sindh provincial high court agreed today to hear the appeal of Sharif's hijacking and terrorism convictions and concurrent life sentences.

The process will begin on May 2, but the appeal hearing could take several more weeks after that to begin. The judges, Abdul Hamid Dogar and S.A. Rabbani, will first decide on a stay order filed by Sharif's lawyers to prevent the

seizure of the former Prime Minister's extensive property and assets.

Sharif was convicted by a special anti-terrorism court on April 6 of hijacking and terrorism and sentenced to concurrent life sentences. His property and assets also were ordered confiscated. His lawyers filed a stay order requesting the seizure be delayed until the appeal processes are exhausted. If they fail to get an acquittal at the provincial High Court level, Sharif's lawyers can appeal to the federal Supreme Court.

Sharif was convicted of hijacking involving an incident last October 12, the day the army seized

power in Pakistan and arrested Sharif and several of his colleagues. His six co-defendants in the case were acquitted, however, several of them, including his younger brother, Shahbaz, have been charged with corruption.

Sharif was said to have ordered the commercial airliner returning Gen. Musharraf to Pakistan diverted to another country either in West Asia or to India.

The Pakistan International Airlines flight circled over Karachi for more than one hour, while below the airport had been shut down, with fire engines used to block the runway and the lights turned off.

THE TELEGRAPH

19 APR 2000

Sharif Kargil moves under junta scanner

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, April 28. — Pakistan's military government has reportedly decided to institute an inquiry into Mr Nawaz Sharif's alleged efforts to malign the army during the Kargil mission.

The Urdu daily, *Jung*, quoted responsible sources as saying that a Kargil fact-finding commission will probe the charge that the deposed Prime Minister wanted to get Gen Pervez Musharraf sentenced to death for endangering Pakistan's independence during the conflict.

But because of the unity in the army, Mr Sharif found it difficult to replace Gen. Musharraf, the report said. Even offers of crores of rupees and expensive gifts to corps commanders did not help.

The paper wrote that the army chief's Sri Lanka trip was also one of Mr Sharif's conspiracies.

SET TALKS MOOD: US

WASHINGTON, April 28. — The USA has asked Pakistan to help create necessary conditions for a meaningful dialogue between General Pervez Musharraf and New Delhi.

Under secretary of state for political affairs, Mr Thomas R Pickering, also reminded India yesterday of Gen. Musharraf's repeated offers for talks and urged New Delhi to consider very seriously the possibilities for resuming dialogue. — UNI

Jung said that it was revealed after the coup that Mr Sharif did not only want Gen. Musharraf replaced but also "removed from his way". The army chief was forced to go to Sri Lanka though another officer had been the original choice.

The idea behind his forced despatch was to charge him

with hobnobbing with his Indian counterpart in Colombo.

The commission will also probe why the Sharif government remained silent when foreign media were carrying advertisements describing the Pakistani army as a "rogue army".

The role played by Mr Sharif's son, Hussain Nawaz, and his information minister, Mr Mushahid Hussain in fuelling the campaign against the army will also be investigated.

The remark of the Pakistani high commissioner in London, in a drunken state, that Kashmiri *mujahideen* were terrorists would be under the scanner.

The panel will also see if the Sharif government had been playing into the hands of RAW.

Jung said Mr Sharif avoided sending condolences to the families of Pak soldiers killed during Kargil.

New panel: A new judicial panel will hear Mr Sharif's appeal against his conviction.

NEW DELHI

29 APR 2000

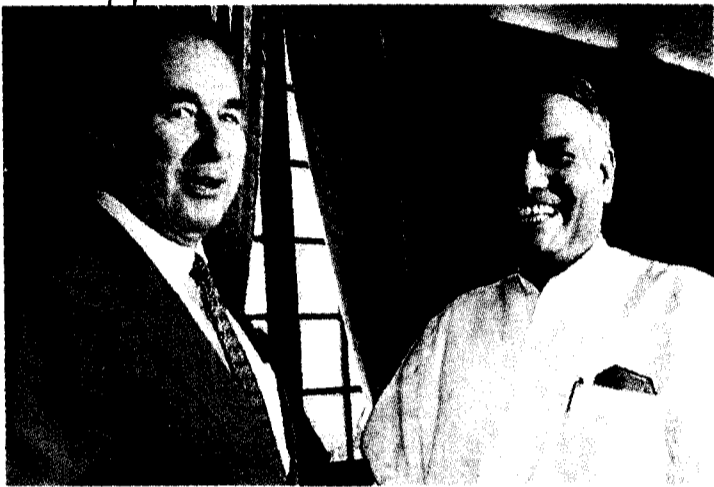
C'wealth may further isolate Pak.

By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, APRIL 19. The failure to come up with a credible road-map for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan could soon accentuate the international isolation of the military rulers in Islamabad. The Commonwealth, which took the first diplomatic initiative against Pakistan after the military coup there last October, might once again take the lead in turning the heat on Islamabad.

India, which is in the midst of its own international campaign to isolate the regime of Gen. Pervez Musharraf, finds that it does not have to preach to the converted in the Commonwealth.

The visiting Secretary-General of the 54-nation Commonwealth, Mr. Don McKinnon, told a press conference here today that the organisation would continue to exert pressure on Pakistan on the question of democracy. He said the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) scheduled to meet in London on May 1 to consider whether "further action or initiative" should be taken against Pakistan on the question of democracy.



The Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr. Donald McKinnon, calling on the Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, in New Delhi on Wednesday. — Photo: Anu Pushkarna

Meeting immediately after the coup, the CMAG had suspended Pakistan from the 'Councils of Commonwealth'. This decision was endorsed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Durban, South Africa, last November.

The summit had also called on the CMAG to monitor the situation in Pakistan and "be prepared to recommend further measures

to be taken by the Commonwealth if progress to democracy is not made speedily".

The decision on local body elections announced last month by Gen. Musharraf is not seen by many as a step towards the restoration of democracy.

Mr. McKinnon called on Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, Mr. Jaswant Singh, and Mr. Yashwant Sinha.

THE HINDU

2 APR 2000

Court ruling illegal: Pak. prosecution

HD-14

By Amit Baruah

Pak (1)

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 20. The appeal filed by the prosecution against the grant of a "lesser sentence" to the former Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, appears to have "privatised" the offense of hijacking to enmity between Mr. Sharif and the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf. Laying down the grounds for Mr. Sharif to have been given the death sentence, the prosecution appeal, filed in the Sindh High Court yesterday, stated: "That the respondent (the ousted Prime Minister) is the arch culprit having a motive in the case he had used members of the Government machinery for personal vendetta and for satisfaction of an urge in him to avenge himself upon the person whom he considered his enemy (Gen. Musharraf)."

"For his own personal ends, he (Mr. Sharif) has turned those persons into criminals and thus crippled them, hence under these circumstances no punishment lesser than the normal punishment prescribed by law ought to have been awarded by the learned trial court which is death," the text of the appeal stated.

The appeal also claimed that the trial court ruling was "perverse, completely illegal and on perusal of evidence no other conclusion could have been made except to award normal punishment which would have to be in consonance and in its true letter and spirit as mandated by Section 20 of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997. It is submitted that the normal puni-

shment prescribed under Section 402 is death".

The prosecution also invoked Islam to argue that Mr. Sharif should have been handed down the death sentence and not jail for life. Islam, the appeal argued, did not believe in the creation of privileged classes as it believes in equality before law — ruler and governed alike. In a separate appeal filed against the acquittal of the six co-accused in the case, the prosecution said: "The learned judge is not justified in arriving at a finding that the act of the principal accused was at the spur of the moment as the same is contrary to evidence and highly presumptive on the part of the learned trial court."

It may be recalled that on April 6, the trial court had acquitted Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, former Punjab Chief Minister, Mr. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, former PIA chairman, Mr. Saifur Rehman, former anti-corruption boss, Rana Maqbool, former IGP Sindh, Mr. Ghaus Ali Shah, former adviser on Sindh, and Mr. Saeed Mehdi, senior official, in the hijacking case.

The prosecution argued that the acquittal of the six co-accused was an "outcome of miscarriage of justice, in as much as the trial court has not entered deep into the merits of the case and has failed to discuss ocular as well as circumstantial evidence in juxtaposition as the same stands on judicial record".

It also claimed that the trial judge had failed to take into account that a "conspiracy was hatched in secrecy and it would be difficult to adduce direct evidence of the same".

THE HINDU

20 APR 2001

20 APR 2001

Pressure on Pak to restore democracy

NIRMALA GEORGE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 20

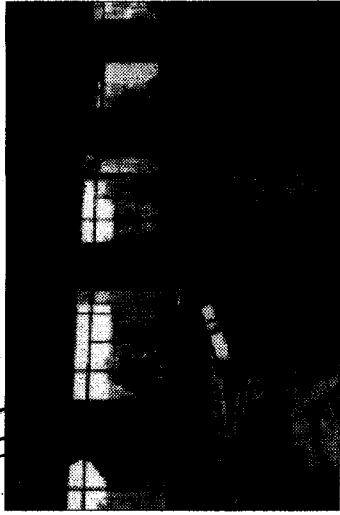
PAKISTAN will have to take additional steps towards the restoration of democracy, beyond what Islamabad promised US President Bill Clinton, before its rehabilitation in the Commonwealth.

"Unless Pakistan adopts a well-defined schedule for bringing the country back to democracy, there can be no question of its return to the Commonwealth fold", top Commonwealth officials told *The Indian Express*. Suspended from the Commonwealth councils late last year, soon after martial law was imposed in Pakistan, Islamabad is keen that its status in the 54-member global grouping is restored.

That hope was dashed on Wednesday by Commonwealth Secretary General Don Mckinnon who said the Commonwealth would continue to exert pressure on Pakistan for a return to democracy. "It is regrettable that the military authorities have not set any time-frame for holding national elections," Mckinnon said.

In a bid to deflect criticism and to create the right atmospherics during Clinton's visit to Pakistan last month, General Parvez Musharraf had conceded that elections to local bodies would be held by July next year.

This is clearly not enough for the Commonwealth, whose chief today sent an unambiguous message that Islamabad would have



Commonwealth chief Donald Mckinnon with students of Sardar Patel Vidyalyaya in Delhi on Tuesday

to try harder and come up with a road map delineating the route back to democracy. At the same time, Mckinnon said that it is obvious that Pakistan is not happy with its suspension. Pakistan's High Commissioner to the UK had strongly protested Islam-

abad's removal from the Commonwealth councils. "Pakistan does not wish to be expelled. It is sensitive about its relationship with the Commonwealth," he said. Indeed, the question of further action or any other initiative to lean on Pakistan over the democracy question would be taken up at a meeting of the eight-member Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), scheduled to be held in London on May one.

General Musharraf has given no time-table for national elections to restore democracy. This is a matter of concern for

the Ministerial group," said Mckinnon.

The CMAG was established at the Durban summit meeting last November.

The Commonwealth can only advise members on what to do, it has scant power to enforce its bidding, since unlike the UN it is not armed with powers like economic sanctions. Mckinnon said the Commonwealth would make available its expertise on updating electoral rolls and other poll-related tasks.

He offered the services of the group to serve as international observers whenever the polls are held in Pakistan. The Commonwealth had sent election observers when deposed Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif had been elected into office for the second time.

Musharraf pledge on rights

Islamabad, April 21 (AP): Pakistan's army ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, promised today to tackle the nation's grim human rights record. He vowed to end child labour, promote women's rights and try to end abuses of controversial blasphemy laws.

Musharraf, who is considered a moderate on domestic policies, gave his promise at the start of a two-day convention on human rights and human dignity. He also declared 2000 the Year of Human

Rights in Pakistan.

Local and international human rights groups have sharply criticised the country's human rights record. In Pakistan, where women routinely are killed in the name of honour, millions of children are put to work and members of minority religions are in jail accused of defaming Islam, Musharraf's promise is considered a major leap forward.

Last month the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan issued its

1999 report which was a scathing attack on the nation's record. The hardest hit were women, children and minorities.

The practice of killing women in the name of honour, where a woman can be killed for the flimsiest of reasons like talking to a man other than a male relative, has prompted human rights groups here to take to the streets. In many cases police either refuse to investigate reports of honour killings, or courts acquit the accused saying he had good cause.

But a big problem in Pakistan is lack of awareness. According to a survey conducted last year almost half of 1,500 women interviewed had never seen their marriage contract. More than 75 per cent of the women did not know that they could insist a marriage contract include a woman's right to seek a divorce. Most women did not know what inheritance rights

or child custody rights they had. "Human rights and fundamental freedoms only observed when awareness is common place," Musharraf said.

Musharraf also promised universal primary education, a big step in Pakistan where the literacy rate is barely 30 per cent and much less among women.

He promised a progressive reduction to child labour, which would mean educating children while gradually removing them from the workplace.

Pakistan has taken considerable criticism for its controversial blasphemy laws which give the death penalty to anyone found guilty of insulting Islam.

Human rights groups say people are accused of insulting Islam often to settle disputes. Musharraf said he will make it more difficult for charges to be laid under the law.

THE TELEGRAPH

22 APR 2000

'Pak needs action not words on rights'

ISLAMABAD: Human rights activists have welcomed military ruler Pervez Musharraf's announcement on steps to improve human rights in Pakistan but said they doubt his words will be put into action.

Gen Musharraf, who seized power in a bloodless coup in October, told a rights convention on Friday the "honour killings" of women would be deemed murder and the "indiscriminate" use of chains on prisoners would be banned. He also said the use of a controversial blasphemy law in Muslim Pakistan would be restricted.

"It is for the first time that such a convention has been held, and whatever the government has said is very good if its implemented," Joseph Francis, a Christian rights activist, told Reuters. "But keeping in mind the 52 years of Pakistan's history, what we have seen is that things are never implemented."

Francis's scepticism was widely

shared by other participants of the two-day convention held to develop a human rights policy. An Amnesty International representative, Angelika Pathak, told the gathering she was encouraged by Gen Musharraf's words.

"But the taste of the pudding is in the eating," she said. Pakistan plans to set up a commission on the status of women to promote their rights and cut on domestic violence. Another commission is planned to reform the police.

Honour killings — when families kill a female relative considered to have shamed the household — are common in Pakistan but have drawn condemnation from human rights activists in the West. Gen Musharraf said such cases would be treated as murder but activists said little would change if the pronouncement was not backed by firm action, which may be difficult in rural and tribal areas. (Reuters)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

24 APR 2000

EXIT STRATEGY-II

Mediation Needed For Restoring Democracy

By AG NOORANI

NEGOTIATIONS hereafter will centre on the powers of the President and the functions of the NSC. The 1956 Constitution, which Ayub Khan abrogated in 1958, set up a presidency which was largely a replica of that in India. The 1973 Constitution reduced the President to a cipher. He could not even demand information from the PM who became all powerful. His powers to dissolve the National Assembly and dismiss the PM, in extreme cases of grossly unconstitutional conduct, were taken away.

On 2 March 1985, Zia made the Revival of the 1973 Constitution Order. It restored the President's right to ask for information, the duty to abide by the advice of the council of ministers, but made three undemocratic innovations. The President could order a referendum on "any matter of national importance" even without such advice, and dissolve the assembly "in his discretion" if he felt "an appeal to the electorate is necessary". An NSC was set up "to make recommendations relating to the issue of a proclamation of emergency under Article 232, security of Pakistan and any other matter of national importance that may be referred to it by the President in consultation with the Prime Minister".

TURKISH MODEL

It would consist of the President, the Prime Minister, the chairman of the Senate, the chairman, joint chiefs of staff committee, the three service chiefs and the chief ministers of the provinces.

However, this was deleted in the deal struck by Prime Minister MK Junejo with Zia for revoking martial law. It was embodied in the famous eighth amendment to the Constitution on 9 November 1985. But it added a vicious provision empowering the President to impose President's rule at the Centre by sacking the PM and dissolving the National Assembly. Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif were united on its repeal which was accomplished by the 13th amendment in 1997. Sharif proceeded thereafter to secure ouster of the President, the Chief Justice and the army chief.

On 4 April 1997 the Supreme Court, rejecting a challenge to the 8th amendment, said "it has come to stay" and that the power to impose President's rule at the Centre "has shut the door to martial law forever which has not visited us after 1977". It had introduced "checks and balances" between the President and

the PM. It has not been so in India ... So, the army ... have a definite role to play in everything". But, he added, "I am not meaning (sic) at all that I'll take a unilateral decision of making sure that the military has a role ... It is for the people of Pakistan to decide whether the military should have a role, in not the politics, but in stabilising or bringing about structural stability into the politics of Pakistan."

That can well be accomplished by endowing the President with the powers he had under the 1956 Constitution — power enough to prevent subversion of the system but not enough to subvert it himself. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed failed to use that power in 1975. Zail Singh aspired to, for personal ends, in 1987. No Constitution can guarantee uprightness in holders of high public offices. The power to sack the PM in extreme cases and dissolve Parliament alone can prevent a prime ministerial dictatorship of the kind we suffered in 1975. True, it can tempt Zail Singhs. This dilemma is central to parliamentary government. Australia has been grappling with it since Gough Whitlam's dismissal as PM in 1975.

With the revival of the presidency must come establishment of an NSC appropriate to a democracy, yet satisfying to the *amour propre* of the army.

DIALOGUE

As Clinton put it so well, "the answer to flawed democracy is not to end democracy but to improve it."

In 1977, a Saudi envoy mediated between Bhutto and the Opposition. A far more appropriate mechanism exists today. The CE received the CMAG's mission in November. In 1994 the former Australian Governor-General, Sir Ninian Stephen, spent 39 days in Bangladesh as envoy of the Commonwealth secretary-general to mediate between the political parties.

The time for such mediation is yet to come. Pervez Musharraf's repression will increase popular alienation at the moment, understandably, Nawaz Sharif has ruled out talks with the CE. But, in the interests of democracy a dialogue must begin some day. The new Commonwealth Secretary-General, Donald C McKinnon, can initiate it by unpublicised, persistent approaches that, in the fullness of time the ground is prepared for a roundtable conference of major parties and the CE. An agreed set of constitutional amendments can be enacted following general elections — not later than February 2002.

(Concluded)



central ministers and the service chiefs. It withered on the vine.

But the NSC retained its hold on the minds of some who drew inspiration from Turkey. Its 1961 Constitution marked the transfer of military rule to civilian government. Article 111 established a National Security Council consisting of "the Ministers as provided by law, the Chief of the General Staff, and representatives of armed forces". It was to be presided over by the President and, in his absence, the PM. Its remit was to make "fundamental recommendations to the council of ministers with the purpose of assisting in the making of decisions related to national security and coordination".

Turkey's present Constitution, enacted in 1982, recalls in its Preamble "the operation carried out on 12 September 1980 by the Turkish Armed Forces in response to a call from the Turkish nation".

MILITARY'S ROLE

Article 118 establishes a National Security Council comprising the President, PM, chief of the general staff, ministers of defence, internal affairs and foreign affairs. Its remit is formulation and implementation of "the national security policy of the state". It can decide on measures for the preservation of the independence of the state "and the peace and security of society".

With his well advertised fondness for Turkey, Musharraf will press for emulation of its NSC, suitable for that country, perhaps; but, as retrograde for Pakistan as the NSC he established on 31 October. In a press interview to Malini Parthasarathy of *The Hindu* (16 January) he asserted, "here, the military has always played

MQM seeks Amnesty aid for release of leader

London, Feb. 29 (PTI): The Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) today sought the intervention of Amnesty International for the release of its leader Farooq Sattar, who is being kept in solitary confinement in a Pakistani prison.

"We request you to take note of gross violations of basic human rights of Mohajirs and Sindhis, particularly that of Sattar, who is being mentally and physically tormented," MQM's chief organiser in Britain and Europe Anwar said in a letter to the secretary general of the human rights body.

He alleged that intelligence agencies personnel raided Sattar's house in Karachi on November 17, 1999, and arrested him. "Subsequently, they shifted him from Karachi to solitary confinement in a dark cell in Attock fort".

Stating that the military regime had launched another round of crackdown against the MQM, Anwar alleged the new crackdown was in the garb of countering terrorism.

"In 1992, it was under the pretext of countering kidnapping for ransom and car lifting," he said, adding: "The agenda, however, remains unchanged — that of decimation of the MQM".

Anwar urged the Amnesty secretary general to raise his voice "pro-actively" against the "inhuman behaviour of the military rulers to bring the plight of the Mohajirs to an end".

The MQM has claimed that the strike called in Sindh yesterday against Sattar's imprisonment was successful. The strike was also called to protest against the "illegal screening of thousands of Mohajir and Sindhi employees from government institutions."

THE TELEGRAPH

: 1 MAR 2000

Pak generals resume talks with politicians

Islamabad, February 29

PAKISTAN'S MILITARY government has resumed talks with politicians at a time when the plane conspiracy case has entered a crucial phase, and the authorities have decided to hold local bodies elections in November.

The Awami National Party's key leader Aijmal Khattak was the first to hold talks with several generals and finally had a meeting with Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf.

Talking to *The News* newspaper, sources in the Army said: "The meetings between the politicians and the armed forces should be welcomed. This paves the way for a dialogue and a better understanding between the two sides."

When the Inter-Services Public Relations officials were asked to confirm the meeting between Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief General Mehmud and two senior politicians from the PML(N), they said: "We are not aware of these meetings."

Abdus Sattar Lalika and Syed Fakhr Imam are reported to have met General Mehmud, but no details are available. Fakhr first met the chairman of the National Reconstruction Bureau General

(Retired) Tanvir Naqvi.

Another PML(N) parliamentarian Khurshid Kasuri also met the NRB chairman where, according to the NRB sources, the mechanics of the local bodies' elections and devolution of powers to the district level were discussed. "Fakhr Imam specially has vast experience in local bodies," said the NRB sources.

Meetings with politicians during military rule are nothing new. During the martial law period of Zia-ul-Haq, General (Retired) Chishti was in-charge of the political cell and he had several meetings with senior politicians from the Pakistan People's Party at a time when the trial of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was in its final stages.

Commenting on the Leaguers' reported meetings with the government officials, Raja Zafarul Haq said: "Yes, I have also heard about these meetings. They have not taken permission from the party to do so. These individual meetings are of no use. I will ask the members about these meetings."

Recently released PML-N leader Khawaja Asif said from Sialkot: "I am at home now from Attock Fort and free to move. There are no cases against me." (ANI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 1 MAR 2000

Pak Army begins takeover of civic bodies

Karachi, March 1

SINCE THE coup of October 12, the Army regime has begun a course to take over the reigns of various government departments previously run by the civilian administration.

The utility services such as the water supply department, sewerage system, the municipal corporation, electricity supply corporation and major industries in public sector are today under the strict control of the Army.

The regime has also appointed a top Army official as the chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

"After the take-over of various departments by the Army, their performance has improved," said Tariq Yousuf, an industrialist and former chairman of SITE Association of Industries.

The Army regime of General Pervez Musharraf has set up the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) which has been assigned the job to initiate accountability of corrupt politicians, bureaucrats,

recover bank loan defaults and entertain general complaints against government department officials. These bureaux are proposed to be set up at provincial and district level.

"Fear of accountability has made the officials serious about their job," Yousuf said, adding the constant vigilance of the Army has facilitated in bringing general improvement in the performance of the civic agencies, which had made the life hell for industrialists and ordinary people. (ANI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 2 MAR 2000

Court asks Sharif to find new lawyers to defend him

ISLAMABAD: The Karachi anti-terrorism court (ATC), hearing the plane hijacking case against Nawaz Sharif and six others, on Wednesday adjourned the trial and asked the deposed premier to find new lawyers to defend him, as proceedings could not carry on without counsels.

"This case involves capital punishment and without advocates the case cannot proceed," ATC judge Rehmat Hussain Jaffrey said.

Senior defence counsel Ijaz Hussain Batalvi and Khawaja Sultan Ahmad stepped down on Sunday and the rest of the defence team the following day, in protest over the judge's order restricting Nawaz Sharif's testimony from being made public through the media.

Mr Sharif complained that "despite repeated requests we are not allowed to sit with lawyers. My cell is bugged. The APC (armoured personnel carrier) in which I am brought to the court is bugged. We are searched everyday. Our notes were stolen".

Mr Sharif and the co-defendants are without legal counsel after the entire defence team quit.

One of his former lawyers, Iqbal Raad, who met Mr Sharif in prison at Karachi on Tuesday was quoted by English daily *The News*: "Nawaz Sharif is feeling much better than yesterday (Monday). He has recovered from the shock which he received with the decision of the (defence) counsel to withdraw from the case".

Mr Sharif had been "shocked and disturbed... Now he is ready to face the court. He is not going to boycott the trial because he has nothing to be afraid of, as he is innocent".

Mr Sharif, his brother Shabaz and five other close aides have been charged with hijacking, abduction, attempted murder and terrorism in a case based on the October 12 military coup which overthrew the government.

All the accused have pleaded not guilty, but face the death penalty if convicted.

The prosecution has asked for the deposed premier's testimony to remain private, claiming it could breach national security. The judge has ruled that the court will decide how much of Mr Sharif's statement can be released to the public. (PTI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

- 2 MAR 2000

'Islamic groups, not India, Pak's biggest threat'

Paris, March 5

The biggest threat to Pakistan is not from India but from extremist Islamic organisations that are gathering in the country. This was the opinion held by former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

"Pakistan's economy, society and institutions are all under tremendous pressure due to increasing 'Talibanisation' of the country and the biggest threat to Pakistan comes from extremist Islamic forces that are gathering in Pakistan," she said in an interview during a visit to Paris.

"Pakistan is in a very delicate position right now and the country's territorial integrity is under serious threat," said Bhutto, who was here to meet French human rights organisations.

She said the large number of 'madrasas', or religious schools, that have sprung up all over Pakistan are the biggest threat since they train terrorists and extremists who would do anything in the name of Islam.

"When my government was in power, we tried to remove as many of these as possible. But for the last several years they have sprung up again

due to lack of any action by the government. And they are threatening the basic fibre of our society," she said.

Bhutto blamed the military for most of the problems faced by Pakistan saying that the military consumed a huge amount of the budget

"When my government was in power, we tried to remove as many of these as possible. But for the last several years they have sprung up again due to lack of any action by the government. And they are threatening the basic fibre of our society."

"Yet, our military expenditures have kept growing. And obviously, this money has been taken away from far more crucial sectors and needs of the Pakistani people," she said.

Bhutto said the West needs to pay more attention to the South Asian region, which she called "the most dangerous place in the world." The West should draw up a Marshall Plan for the region on the lines of the plan that was implemented in Europe after World War II, she added.

"You really need a lot of development in the whole region. Motorways and railways running across countries, more infrastructure to boost trade and also open borders. A better economy and standard of living is critical for the area," she said, adding she had proposed the plan to US President Bill Clinton during a recent meeting.

She expressed surprise at the lack of concerted action by the West for restoration of democracy in Pakistan since the coup staged by General Pervez Musharraf in October. "They are hoping that the General will lay a quick roadmap for holding free and fair elections in Pakistan," she noted.

(IANS)

PPP seeks restoration of democratic institutions

To launch a political struggle on April 4 from Sindh

Mubashir Zaidi
Islamabad, March 5

PAKISTAN PEOPLE'S Party has decided to launch a vigorous political struggle from April 4 to force the military regime of General Pervez Musharraf to hold immediate elections and restore the democratic institutions.

The movement would be launched initially from PPP's power base Sindh province. The decision was taken in a meeting presided by the PPP's provincial president Nisar Khuhro in Karachi yesterday.

Party sources told *The Hindustan Times* in Islamabad today that the decision to launch a movement was approved by party chairperson and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who is currently in self-exile in London.

Ms Bhutto's self-imposed exile is in protest of the court's decision convicting her and spouse Asif Zardari of seven years imprisonment and US\$ 80 million fine in corruption cases.

The party adopted a resolution vowing to wage the struggle on April 4, the day the party's founder late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged. The resolution called upon the military government to hold elections without any further delay.

The meeting was of the view that policies of the present regime were similar to those pursued by the Nawaz regime.

Addressing the meeting, Nisar Khuhro said that an attempt was being made to create an impression that political parties had become irrelevant and that all the politicians were corrupt.

Khuhro directed the party members to reinforce its contacts with the masses to make a historic beginning of the campaign against the regime on April 4. The meeting also called for stopping transferring Sindh economic and financial resources to the Federation. It demanded that biased and non-transparent process of accountability must be stopped.

The Pakistan People's Party also emphasized that maligning politicians for corruption was reflective of the regime's bias which was expressed by General Pervez Musharraf when he had declared that he would not hand over power to either to Benazir Bhutto or Nawaz Sharif.

Meanwhile Pakistan Muslim League, the party of ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, has announced today that it would hold its first showdown of political power on March 23 at Lahore in a convention to be presided over by Kulsoom Nawaz, wife of the deposed Prime Minister.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 6 MAR 2000

Recorded evidence to be presented in court on Wednesday

Sharif to depose on tape

Karachi, March 6 (DPA): Tape-recorded statements by Pakistan's deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will be offered as evidence this week in the conspiracy trial against him, his lawyers said today.

The recorded evidence is to be presented on Wednesday in the anti-terrorism court as part of Sharif's defence against charges that he and five others had conspired in an attempt to kill general Pervez Musharraf last October 12.

That same night a bloodless coup led to Musharraf becoming Pakistan's military ruler.

At the beginning of court proceedings today, defence lawyers objected to the playing of tape recordings of conversations between air traffic controllers and the cockpit of the Pakistan inter-

national airlines passenger that carried Musharraf and other people, including civilians, on the night of October 12.

Sharif, his brother Shahbaz Sharif and five other defendants in the case have been charged with hijacking, abduction, terrorism and conspiracy to kill

Musharraf.

All defendants have pleaded not guilty. If found guilty, they could face the death penalty.

"There was no reason to play the tape recordings", judge Rehmat Hussain Jafri said and adjourned the proceedings until Wednesday when Sharif's

lawyers plan to present the deposed Prime Minister's recorded statements.

Last week, the main defence lawyers, had announced that they would withdraw from the case.

But they returned to the courtroom later without their lead lawyer, Aijaz Hussain Batalvi.

The withdrawal was announced after the judge said he would scrutinise the statements of the defendants and decide which could be made public.

According to the defence lawyers, Sharif is now ready to let the court hear sensitive parts of his statement that were made in private.

"There is a change in the atmosphere of the court", Khawja Sultan, one of the defence lawyers, said.

52 die as bus plunges into ravine

Karachi, March 6 (AP): A passenger bus careened off a road in southern Sindh province today, plunging into a water-filled ravine killing 52 people, police officials said.

Another 24 people were injured, some of them seriously, they said. The bus was packed with 92 people, some of them riding on the top of the bus and most of them heading toward a wedding.

The accident, which occurred near Jacobabad, some 350 km north of Karachi, is being investigated.

Rescue workers at the scene said the death toll could rise still further. It is not clear how the accident happened, but a state-run Pakistan Television report said the bus was speeding.

Sharif links coup to Kargil

DEUTSCHE PRESSE AGENTUR &
AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

KARACHI, March 8. — Giving evidence for the first time in a Karachi court today, Mr Nawaz Sharif linked the 12 October military coup to his call for withdrawal from Kargil earlier in 1999. The deposed Prime Minister denied charges of hijacking, attempted murder and terrorism.

He alleged the coup was a "pre-conceived conspiracy", hatched after his call for withdrawal of pro-Pakistan guerrillas from Kargil sector.

"My removal is linked to the Kargil crisis," he said in his testimony before a special anti-terrorist court. The crisis ended after Mr Sharif, under pressure from the USA, called for withdrawal from the valley. Mujahideen groups had then called Mr Sharif a traitor to their cause.

"I could not give more details on the Kargil issue. But I will tell the court in private about this," he said. He said his policy on the Kargil issue was meant to "save the nation and

its dignity. I saved the nation but unfortunately I could not save myself."

Mr Sharif throughout his disposition called General Musharraf a "retired general".

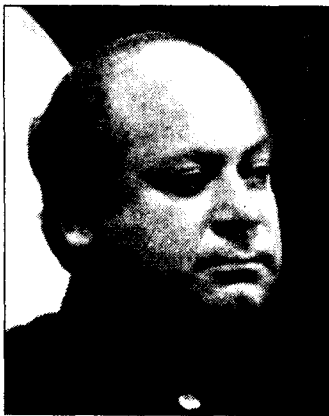
Mr Sharif told the court he did not try to stop General Pervez Musharraf's plane from landing in Pakistan. "It is

incorrect that I have ordered that the plane should not land in Pakistan," a relaxed looking Mr Sharif said.

He claimed Gen. Musharraf himself was in control of the Pakistan International Airlines flight as it headed into Karachi.

He said the decision to sack Gen. Musharraf was his alone. "It is correct that I ordered that Gen Pervez Musharraf should be removed and General Ziauddin should be appointed as the new Army chief but it was my own decision."

Mr Sharif stood in the dock close to the judge and spoke calmly in English as he answered the questions put to him.



Sharif: gives evidence in court

Sharif says rift with Musharraf began over Kargil

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KARACHI, MARCH 9

DEPOSED Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday took the stand for the first time that his government was thrown out by the Army because of a rift with the military over last summer's conflict with India in Kargil.

Appearing before a special anti-terrorism court, Sharif accused Army Chief, General Pervez Musharraf, of manufacturing the charges against him "because he

bore a grudge against me".
The former prime minister is facing charges of terrorism, hijacking, kidnapping and murder - that carry the death penalty or life imprisonment for events of October 12 last year when General Musharraf overthrew Sharif's government. Sharif said the feud with Musharraf was the result of last summer's "dangerous dispute" in Kargil. "All of this goes back to Kargil... It was the most serious crisis. It necessitated a resolution which saved the country, to which

I had to respond," Sharif told the court. He accused Musharraf of creating dissension as a result of the pull back from Kargil following talks with the US.

"He tried to create misgivings. I saved the country from a grave crisis but unfortunately I could not save myself," the deposed prime minister said. "I will not elaborate anymore on that (Kargil) because it carries some sensitive matters related to the security of the country," said Sharif. "I am a patriotic man. I know my responsibility." But he

said that deteriorating relations with neighboring India is the result of a military dictatorship in Pakistan.

He claimed his government had sought to reduce tensions. "This is the difference between democracy and dictatorship, he said. As he spoke, his wife and daughters whispered readings from the Koran, the holy book. They cried quietly as Sharif spoke and occasionally his wife sobbed when he spoke of his prison conditions and those of his son, Hussein, who is in custody on corruption charges.

INDIAN EXPRESS

10 MAR 2000

Sharif lawyer shot in trial last lap

Karachi, March 10 (AP): Just days after receiving death threats, a key lawyer for Pakistan's deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was killed by gunmen who burst into his office wielding automatic rifles and pistols.

Iqbal Raad, Sharif's lawyer in a hijacking case, was killed along with two other people in the attack. Closing arguments in the trial of the ousted premier, who faces capital charges, were to have begun from Monday in Karachi.

Jolted by the killing 10 days before President Bill Clinton arrives in the subcontinent, Pakistan's military ruler Pervez Musharraf scrambled to fend off accusations that might be levelled at his administration.

Musharraf called the attack an "act of terrorism" and ordered the immediate arrest of the

killers. "The killing of an eminent lawyer by terrorists is the most heinous crime which could only serve the purpose of vested interests."

These "vested interests" could only be Musharraf's opponents bent upon embarrassing his government before Clinton's visit.

Sharif's wife told reporters in Punjab that Raad had received death threats warning him to get off the case. "He received telephone calls and letters threatening him. He was very worried," said Kulsoom Sharif. "They told him to quit the case."

Despondent and wiping tears from her eyes, Kulsoom said: "I have given up hope. If such a prominent lawyer involved in

such a high-profile case can be killed, why will anyone want to take our case?"

Witnesses said three men, one with a Kalashnikov and two with pistols, entered the second floor office and opened fire. The three died immediately. A fourth gunman was seen standing guard outside the office building. The gunmen fled the scene and so far police say they have no suspects.

The other two victims were Shehzad Kathri, also a lawyer, and Raad's helper Ghulam Abbas.

"We are looking into the possibility of terrorism," said senior superintendent of police Akther Hasan Gorchani. "We are also looking at whether there is any el-



Raad (AFP)

ement of personal enmity."

Sharif is on trial in Karachi on charges of hijacking, terrorism, attempted murder and kidnapping. All the charges carry either the death penalty or life in prison.

The charges stem from an October 12 incident in which it is alleged that Sharif refused to allow a PIA passenger plane, returning from Musharraf to Pakistan, to land in Karachi, endangering the lives of those on board. The aircraft finally landed with barely seven minutes of fuel left.

There was no immediate evidence of a connection between the shooting and Sharif's trial.

Raad was a former advocate-general of Sindh in Sharif's government. "He (Raad) was in the forefront of Sharif's defence team," said Khawaja Sultan, another of Sharif's lawyers.

Musharraf promises new system

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, March 11. — General Pervez Musharraf has said he will announce on 23 March a new system to run the country.

"We are trying to evolve a system, the outlines of which I will announce on Pakistan Day (23 March). It will be put to debate to give it a final shape," the General told the NWFP Bar council in Peshawar yesterday. "A lot of things are happening, I do not want to declare (them), the people will know within a few months. In the beginning I had doubts, but now I am confident that the mess will be cleared," he said.

Describing the backlog in court cases as a "negation of justice", the General said the nation was "looking towards the armed forces and the judiciary and they are expecting that these two institutions would take the country out of the present crises ... Great responsibility devolved on both the military and the judiciary".

Devolution of power at the district level would ensure speedy justice at the people's doorstep, he said.

On promulgation of the provisional constitutional order suspending the constitution, Gen. Musharraf said more important "than the army, judiciary or anything else, Pakistan is most important for me".

On the suggestion of establishing a judicial commission, he said: "I have talked to the Chief Justice of Pakistan and I'm sure he'd help us."



Iqbal Raad's wife, Sarwat Jehan (left), mourns over her husband's body in Karachi on Saturday. — AP/PTI

Sharif party blames RAW for Raad murder

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ISLAMABAD, March 11. — Mr Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League today blamed RAW for lawyer Iqbal Raad's killing, saying the murder was aimed at "sabotaging" the US President's Pakistan visit.

In Washington, White House spokesman, Mr Joe Lockhart, said: "obviously we condemn this kind of horrific act of violence, and call upon them to investigate fully this assassination."

In Karachi, authorities today turned down Mr Sharif's request to attend the funeral,

because the law gives permission only if a family member dies.

Previously the former Prime Minister was allowed to attend the funeral prayers of his mother-in-law.

Pakistan's military government has condemned Raad's shooting and promised to track down the killers. No one has been arrested.

Witnesses said one man with a Kalashnikov rifle and two men with pistols entered Raad's second-floor office and fired at the lawyer and his two assistants, Shehzad Kathari, and Ghulam Abbas. A fourth gunman was

seen standing guard outside the building.

Mr Sharif's wife yesterday said Raad had been receiving death threats warning him to get off the case. "He received telephone calls and letters threatening him. He was very worried," Mrs Kulsoom Sharif told reporters in eastern Punjab province. "They told him to quit the case."

A senior Pakistan Muslim League leader has held the military government responsible for the murder of Raad, who he said was denied protection despite having received life threats.

Sharif lawyers want court

500' shifted *ny3*

INDIA ABROAD NEWS SERVICE

ISLAMABAD, March 11. — Mr Nawaz Sharif's lawyers have said they would withdraw from the case unless the anti-terrorism court hearing it is shifted from Karachi to a "safer place".

Yesterday, a member of Mr Sharif's legal team, Iqbal Raad, was killed in his Karachi office by unidentified gunmen.

"We are terrified," said Mr Khawaja Sultan, one of Mr Sharif's lawyers. "We are too vulnerable to such incidents; it is very easy to target us."

US reaction: The White House has indirectly hinted that the rule of law has ceased to exist in Pakistan following the murder of Iqbal Raad. Mr Clinton's visit, of course, is on.

White House spokesman Mr Joe Lockhart, asked if he believed there is rule of law in Pakistan right now, avoided saying a direct "no". He said: "Well, with the Constitution suspended, it makes it difficult to answer that question affirmatively."

■ More reports on page 10

THE STATESMAN

12 MAR 2000

Cops register treason case against wife of Sharif

Mubashir Zaidi
Islamabad, March 12

HF 14
13/3

PML (I)

POLICE HAVE registered a treason case against Kulsoom Nawaz, wife of deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, 13 Pakistan Muslim League (PML) leaders and several party activists. The case has been registered against them for delivering provocative speeches against the State and the Army at a party workers' convention in Hyderabad on Thursday.

The PML leaders were charged with inciting the people against the present government and the Army. They were also charged with an attempt to create hatred and enmity against the government, making an



announcement that they would commit self-immolation. The FIR also accused the leaders of trying to create unrest among the people and inciting them to take the law into their hands.

The police said that Begum Kulsoom Nawaz and other PML leaders at the convention had blamed the Army Generals for damaging democracy in the country.

The complainant in the treason case is Inspector Hamid Thaheem, Station House Officer (SHO) of Cantonment Police Station, Hyderabad. He also registered the case under Sections 153, 153(A), 124(A) of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), 16 MPO, 7(A) and (B) of the Anti-Terrorist Act (ATA). The Sections of PPC, which have been included in the FIR against the PML leadership, relate to sedition and waging war against the State.

Lawyers stay away, strike countrywide Sharif given 24 hrs to persuade counsel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, March 13. — The anti-terrorism court today gave Mr Nawaz Sharif a day to persuade his lawyers who boycotted the trial demanding the case be shifted out of Karachi.

Throughout Pakistan, lawyers struck work protesting the killing of key defence counsel Iqbal Raad.

The former Prime Minister, who along with other co-accused including his younger brother, Shahbaz, was produced in the court trying them of hijacking and other charges, told the judge, Mr Rehmat Hussain Jaffrey, that he needed "some time" to persuade his lawyers to return to court.

Mr Jaffrey, while adjourning the case for the day, granted Mr Sharif permission to speak to his lawyers over a mobile phone in his presence, which he did.

Mr Sharif's lawyer, Mr Khwaja Sultan Ahmed, however, told PTI over the phone from Lahore that the five Lahore-based defence counsel would not appear in the Karachi court as they were not sure of their safety and security.

Chief prosecutor and advocate general of Sindh, Mr Raja

Qureshi, told PTI from Karachi that it was not possible to shift the venue of the trial as demanded by defence lawyers, as the court did not have the power to do so.

Mr Sharif, while seeking



Mr Nawaz Sharif

adjournment of the case said that he came to know about his lawyers' decision to boycott the trial through newspapers. "I haven't had any contact with them and their decision has not been taken with my knowledge. We should be provided the facilities to contact our lawyers and find out what is in their minds".

Mr Qureshi told the court that the Sindh government has offered additional security to

Mr Sharif's lawyers to attend the court in Karachi, where Raad was killed by unidentified gunmen on Saturday.

Lawyers throughout the country abstained from court work in response to a call given by Pakistan Bar Council in protest against Raad's killing.

Meanwhile, Mr Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (N) demanded a thorough probe by a Supreme Court judge into the killing of Raad.

The secretary of PML's media committee, Mian Anwarul Haq Ramay, criticised Mr Qureshi's statement that the hijacking case would not be shifted from Karachi. It reflected a bias which is against the demands for justice, PPI news agency quoted him as saying.

The government's attitude, Mr Ramay said, had been "deplorable" from the beginning. "No action was taken when Mr Sharif's notes were stolen from his jail cell. Notes from Raad's office were stolen but no action was taken. Also nobody took notice when senior counsel, Mr Ijaz Hussain Batalvi refused to represent Mr Sharif before the court owing to harassment by agency personnel." All these incidents, he said, "point to the mindset of the government".

THE STATESMAN

14 MAR 2000

Sharif's defence counsel stay away from court

Mubashir Zaidi
Islamabad, March 13

THE DEFENCE counsel representing ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif today refused to turn up in the plane conspiracy case demanding change of venue of the trial following the murder of one of their colleagues Iqbal Raad last week.

The judge of Anti-Terrorist Court adjourned the hearing till tomorrow asking Sharif to consult his lawyers about the future course of action. The lawyers, however, were adamant in their position for not appearing in the case unless the court agreed on change of venue. Citing reason the defence team said it is feeling insecure after the broad daylight murder of their colleague Iqbal Raad.

On the contrary, leading prosecution lawyer and Advocate-General Sindh Raja Qureshi dismissed the defence protest blaming them for applying negative tactics to delay the outcome of the case.

It may be mentioned that the plane conspiracy case is in concluding stages and the verdict is expected after the US President Bill Clinton's visit to Pakistan late this month. Nawaz Sharif also submitted a statement

in the court supporting his legal team's stance of change of venue.

"The government has failed to provide security not only to the common people but to lawyers as well. The brutal killing of Iqbal Raad is a move to stop a brave voice. My heart goes out to the family. He was not only a sincere and good friend but also a great lawyer," he said in the statement.

Mr Sharif also told the court that Raad's murder exposes government claims on security and is a direct threat to lawyers. Raad's murder shocked Pakistan's legal community and came two before US President Bill Clinton was to visit Islamabad, but White House officials said there were no plans to announce any change to Mr Clinton's trip, a planned stopover at Islamabad at the end of a five-day trip to India.

Meanwhile Nawaz's wife Kulsoom Nawaz, who was booked on treason charges for making anti-state and provocative statements against the Army today blasted the Musharraf regime for registering a case against her. "Now they have gone to the extent of framing a woman like me on treason charges," she told reporters on her arrival at Karachi airport to attend the hearing of her husband's trial.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

14 MAR 2000

Sharif's lawyers decide to return to court

Mubashir Zaidi
Islamabad, March 14

THE LAWYERS, representing ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and other accused in the plane hijacking case, have decided to return to the court, chief prosecutor and Advocate General, Sindh, Raja Qureshi told a briefing

in Karachi on Tuesday. He said the trial of Mr Sharif would resume from March 20 when the prosecution will submit its arguments.

He told newsmen that principal accused Nawaz Sharif had spoken to his senior lawyer Khwaja Sultan in Lahore on phone with the permission of Judge Rehmat Hussain Jafri and convinced Khwaja Sultan

to come to Karachi. Sultan later confirmed in Lahore that he would be coming to Karachi this evening and will meet Sharif tomorrow. "We would see the security arrangements promised to be provided by the Sindh Government," he said.

Meanwhile, the defence team representing Sharif, stayed away from court for a second day on Tuesday following the murder of a senior member of the defence team Iqbal Raad last week. They have also refused to come to Karachi for security reasons and have demanded that the trial be switched to another city after lawyer Iqbal Raad was gunned down in his office in Karachi.

Hot air in Pakistan

ONE OF the possible side effects of the Clinton visit to the Indian subcontinent may well be a further deterioration in Indo-Pakistani relations. The reason is that Islamabad would not like to lose this opportunity to make a fresh effort to convince the US about the need for an intervention in Kashmir. Pakistan's moves in this direction will perhaps be all the greater because in the context of its belief that the US is now perceptibly tilting towards India, this may well be the last chance Islamabad will have to persuade Washington about its long-standing appeal for intercession. It is not impossible that, to achieve this objective, Pakistan will act and speak in a manner which is calculated to raise the temperature in this region.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar's observation that he saw "great danger" of a conflict with India has to be noted in this connection. That Kashmir will be more in focus is obvious. As it is, the area has been seen as a nuclear flashpoint by the international community ever since the nuclearisation of the subcontinent. Mr Clinton may even have inadvertently fuelled Pakistani hopes about an American role by his comment about Kashmir currently being one of the most dangerous places in the world. Mr Sattar, on his part, has held India's "proactive policy" in Kashmir as a reason why he perceived the "great danger". Reports about the Federation of American Scientists noting the deployment of nuclear-tipped missiles in Pakistan aimed at Indian cities are significant in this context.

However, it is also true that Pakistan's reputation for reckless and provocative behaviour, which made the US come down heavily on it during the Kargil conflict, may also compel the Musharraf regime to take two steps back after a step forward. Islamabad will have to be careful that it does not court American displeasure again, especially when the Pakistan-Afghanistan region is seen by the West as the new focal point of Islamic terrorism. So, apparently to counter Mr Sattar's perception of danger, General Musharraf himself has expressed the view that he did not think that the "situation will get out control". The General may want to avenge the humiliation which the Pakistan army and its mercenaries suffered in Kargil. But he also knows that any provocative step will prove even more disastrous militarily and diplomatically for his country than during the earlier misadventure. Therefore, Pakistan will tend to blow hot and cold for the moment, hoping to catch American attention but, at the same time, affecting innocence and pretending that it is not looking for trouble.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

16 MAR 2000

Pak. ban on rallies, strikes

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 16. Pakistan's military government has banned open air political rallies and strikes saying the step is to restore "order and harmony in society".

A statement after a Cabinet meeting yesterday said indoor political meetings would be allowed but the use of loudspeakers there would be prohibited. It came just ahead of the U.S President, Mr. Bill Clinton's brief trip to Islamabad.

Despite the absence of such a ban after the October 12 coup, few political rallies had been held. But Mr. Sharif's wife, Kulsoom, had addressed some rallies in recent weeks denouncing the coup and the arrest and trial of her husband on charges for which he could be sentenced to death.

Militants based in Pakistan have been ordered not to make provocative statements or issue threats against the U.S. and India, according to the Interior Minister, Mr. Moinuddin Haider. — AP, Reuters

THE HINDU

17 MAR 2000

Pak imposes ban on political activities at public places

Mubashir Zaidi
Islamabad, March 16

PAKISTAN'S MILITARY Government has imposed a countrywide ban on all political activities at public places for an indefinite period and barred the political parties from holding outdoor meetings, strikes and processions with immediate effect.

In an official order, released by Ministry of Interior to the press late last night, stated that the decision was taken as the country could not afford the luxury of agitation and violence-prone politics that disrupts the normal public life. Though the order allowed indoor political meetings but the use of loudspeakers for such political meetings was prohibited.

Instructions have been issued to the provinces for ensuring strict implementation of the ban. The order said that an independent and vibrant press was already expressing the views of all the segments of society.

The decision to ban political activities was taken, following the Cabinet meeting held yesterday headed by Chief Executive

General Pervez Musharraf.

The Interior Ministry claimed that the prime objective behind restricting political activity was to restore order and harmony in society with a view to providing security to citizens. "For this purpose clear goals have been set in the reforms agenda announced by the Chief Executive," the statement maintained. A similar ban was clamped on political parties by former military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq in his decade long rule (1977-87), when thousands of political activists were put in jail for violating the ban.

CRITICISM: The leaders, belonging to various political parties, have strongly reacted to the military Government's decision to impose a ban on political activities, dubbing the move highly regrettable and retrogressive.

Commenting on the Government decision, head of 19-party opposition Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) Nawabzada Nasrullah said the decision was against the fundamental rights. He said on the one hand, the Government claimed that it was sincere in introducing real and genuine democracy, while

on the other hand, it had been taking anti-democratic steps.

Nawabzada Nasrullah said no civilised country could even imagine imposing such a ban. He said if the ban was imposed as a precautionary measure even then it was wrong. He added that already political parties had assured the Government that they had no plans to stage protest on the arrival of Mr Clinton, as he was the country's guest. Such measures on the part of the Government shattered the public confidence that the Government was sincere in restoring democracy in the country.

PML (N) leader Raja Zafar-ul-Haq termed it as a retrogressive move. He said PML (N) had decided to hold its public meeting on March 23 in Lahore and it would go for the meeting as per schedule despite the ban.

Another PML leader Ejaz-ul-Haq termed the ban as a move "one-step-back". He said the decision was quite surprising for him as the Government had been claiming that it wanted to restore democracy and that the local bodies elections was a step in this direction.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

17 MAR 2000

Govt to challenge Lahore court sentence

Pak serial killer faces 'barbaric' execution

FROM IDREES BAKHTIAR
AND AGENCIES

Karachi, March 16: A Pakistani serial killer found guilty of murdering 100 children was sentenced to death today. Javed Iqbal Mughal will be strangled at Minar-e-Pakistan and his body will be cut into 100 pieces.

The additional district and sessions judge in Lahore, Allah Bukhsh Ranjha, said Iqbal would be executed in front of his victims' parents, his body cut into 100 pieces and then dissolved in acid in the same way he killed the children.

Interior minister Moinuddin Haider said the government will challenge the sentence. "This kind of punishment is not permitted," he said. "We are signatories to the human rights convention which does not permit this."

A leading human rights lawyer called the sentence "barbaric".

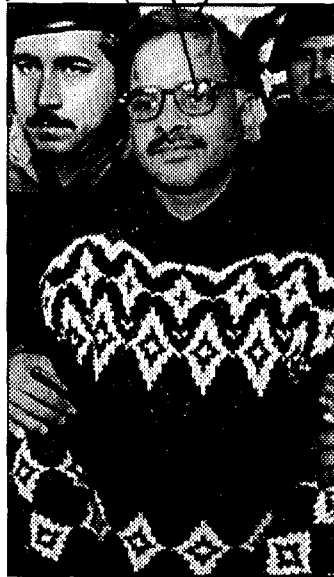
"You don't answer back a sick man in a sick way by the state," said Asma Jehangir, who also is a special human rights worker for the UN. "This is judicial anger and emotionalism. This is unheard of. It is barbaric and arouses the fascistic instincts in a society."

It was not decided who would carry out the death sentence, but under Pakistani law, family members are allowed to kill a convicted murderer in the same manner as their relative was killed.

Or they can show mercy.

"In this case you will have to get all 100 families to agree to show mercy," said Jehangir.

The judge also sentenced Iqbal to 700 years in prison for destroy-



Javed Iqbal: Showing the way

ing evidence. The jail sentence was seven years for each of the 100 bodies that Iqbal is said to have destroyed by dissolving in acid.

The court awarded 98 counts death penalty to co-accused Sajid Ahmed alias Shahzad and 686 years of imprisonment. His body would be cut into 98 pieces.

"Your honour, I am innocent," Iqbal declared, after hearing the judge convict and sentence him. His lawyer will appeal the verdict.

As he was being led out of court, Iqbal told reporters that he did not kill anyone. During his trial, he testified that he was only a witness to the killings. He said his earlier confession and letter was sent to police as a message to the parents of the missing children, whom he accused of neglect.

Some of Iqbal's victims had

been missing for more than six months before their parents reported their disappearance to police.

Three accomplices, including a 13-year-old boy identified only as Sabir, also were found guilty.

One accomplice, a 17-year-old Sajjid, who was found guilty on 98 counts of murder, was sentenced to death and 686 years in prison. The second, Nadeem, was convicted on 13 counts of murder and sentenced to 14 years on each murder count. Both Sabir and Nadeem, 15, were spared the death penalty. Sabir was given an 42-year prison sentence.

Iqbal and the others were charged with killing 100 children and dissolving the bodies in acid. He and the accomplices lived together in the house where the children were killed. Sajjid and Nadeem were arrested at a bank when they tried to cash a cheque.

Throughout the trial, parents of the missing children held a vigil outside the courtroom, screaming abuse at Iqbal and demanding the death sentence.

'Pak will stay suspended from C'wealth'

Vijay Dutt
London, March 17

PAK 1
UKIA

THE SCHEDULED stopover of US President Bill Clinton at Islamabad has not affected the policy of the Commonwealth towards General Pervez Musharraf's military regime. Retiring Secretary General of Commonwealth Chief Anyakou averred that Pakistan would remain suspended from the 54-member States Commonwealth until the military rulers announced

18/3

a firm time-table for restoration of democracy in the country.

In case, democracy is not restored within two years, the Commonwealth would review the situation, said Chief Anyakou. He was addressing mediapersons at the Secretariat headquarters in Marlborough House. On Kashmir, he iterated that it was for the two countries, India and Pakistan, to broker a solution.

"Kashmir is the root of unhappy relations between India and Pakistan and is an on-going con-

cern to friends of the two countries. Commonwealth continues to hope that relations between these two key members would improve," he said.

Chief Anyakou, who relinquishes office after 10 years on April 1, admitted to have tried to broker a peace deal between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE. He informed that he had been in touch with both in the past 18 months. "The truth is I have not succeeded. But, I have not given up (hope)."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

18 MAR 2000

Clinton to plead for Sharif's life

N C Menon

Washington, March 17

US PRESIDENT Bill Clinton will personally urge General Pervez Musharraf not to execute former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif even if he is found guilty of the charge against him.

This was revealed here yesterday by National Security Adviser Sandy Berger during a news briefing about the presidential trip.

Berger said the issue of the missing American, Donald Hutchinson, who was abducted by militants in Kashmir five years ago, was also likely to come up in the discussion in Islamabad.

Jane Shelley, wife of Hutchinson, has been trying to get information about what happened to her husband and whether he was alive. "We have talked to the Pakistani on many occasions about this, and I believe this will come up while we are there," Berger said.

Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Karl Inderfurth, also referred to the Nawaz Sharif issue in a briefing yesterday.

"We have made very clear in our exchanges with the new government in Pakistan our concern about Nawaz Sharif and other who are detained," Inderfurth said. "We have asked through our Ambassador that these people receive due process and their trial be fair and transparent, and we are watching them closely," the Assistant Secretary of State said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
18 MAR 2000

Ban on rallies not to curb political activity: Pak Govt

Mubashir Zaidi
Islamabad, March 17

PAKISTAN'S MILITARY Government has clarified that the latest ban on political rallies and strikes was neither meant to curb political activity in the country nor it had any connection with President Clinton's visit.

"The national political parties are an asset of the country and the military government is not working on any agenda aimed at their annihilation," Interior Minister Lt-General Moeenuddin Haider told a Press conference yesterday.

He also indicated that these restrictions might be lifted in a few weeks provided if the political parties upheld healthy traditions and desisted from activities that were detrimental to the country's economy.

"We can't afford to have politics of killings, strikes and damage to state property," the Minister said adding that the government has not arrested any political leader merely because of his political activities since the military coup last year.

Lahore court verdict flayed:

Leading lawyers and human rights activists have criticised the verdict by a Lahore court to child serial killer Javed Iqbal yesterday saying there was no example of state

'Pak producing plutonium'

PAKISTAN, WHICH already produces enriched uranium for atomic bombs, has now begun processing Plutonium at its Khushab reactor, CBS-TV reported on Friday quoting Pentagon sources.

The sources pointed out that uranium bombs are larger, but plutonium bombs are much more compact for delivery by aircraft of the M-11 mobile missiles Pakistan has reportedly obtained from China.

PTI, Washington

ordering to cut into pieces the bodies of convict and dissolve them in acid.

The country's top human rights activist and UN rapporteur Asma

Jehangir said heinous acts of an individual could not be paid back through State barbarism.

"This only dehumanises society and gives rise to fascist tendencies. The law in Pakistan allows interpretation of a nature imposing such punishments. This has to be tampered with mercy and justice. The ends of justice are never met through anger and emotion," she stated.

Pakistan Bar Council member and former Lahore High Court Bar Association president Hamid Khan said it was cruel and unusual punishment because the state could not match the barbarity of a convict how cruel he may be. "It has to be reasonable," he said.

Sharif shifted to Naval Hospital: Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his brother Shahbaz Sharif, the principal accused in the plane conspiracy case, were shifted to a naval hospital, PNS Shifa, in Karachi after they had complained of health problems.

However, Nawaz Sharif was shifted back to prison after an overnight stay at the hospital after thorough medical check-up.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

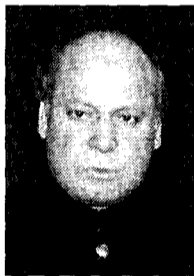
18 MAR 2000

Prosecution demands death for Sharif

Pakistani
55-11
22/3

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, March 21. — The prosecution yesterday demanded the death penalty for Mr Nawaz Sharif, his brother Sh h a b a z and five others in the plane hijacking case.



Mr Nawaz Sharif

The Chief Prosecutor and Advocate-General, Sindh, Mr Raja Qureshi, told the Karachi anti-terrorism court judge, Mr Rehmat Hussain Jaffrey, that "the maximum punishment" should be awarded to all the accused in the case.

The prosecution began its final arguments today after a week's delay following the refusal of Mr Sharif's lawyers to participate in the trial in Karachi because of the killing of their colleague Iqbal Raad.

The prosecution has two more days to wrap up its arguments. Mr Qureshi read out excerpts from the testimony of several witnesses to argue that Mr Sharif and the co-defendants had taken control of the PIA flight from Colombo, endangering the lives of Gen Pervez Musharraf and others on board.

Alleging that the deposed Prime Minister had conspired with the other accused at his house in Islamabad, Mr Qureshi said: "It is established that

the accused were present in the process of hatching a conspiracy. They stand fully implicated in the commissioning of the crime." He said the mandate of the anti-terrorism court in which Mr Sharif was being tried required that the maximum punishment be handed out if the crime was established.

Referring to the evidence of Mr Aminullah Chaudhry, former chairman of Civil Aviation Authority who has turned approver, Mr Qureshi said that Mr Sharif and the co-accused conspired at the deposed Prime Minister's house to prevent the plane carrying Gen. Musharraf back from landing in Karachi.

Later, Mr Sharif's counsel, Khawaja Sultan, said over the phone from Karachi: "These are all arguments. After all we knew from the very start that hijacking is punishable with death sentence. "We have to argue yet and we will. We begin our reply on 24 March."

PML strategy: The Pakistan Muslim League will go to superior courts if Mr Sharif is given death sentence, a party leader said. "First, I don't think that he will get death penalty. But if there is any such situation, we will go to superior courts and I've every confidence that we will get relief," Mr Raja Zafarul Haq said. He said the prosecution's demand of death penalty was based on malafide intentions. "It is a false case in which the FIR was lodged after one month. No passenger was presented as witness," he said.

Kashmir crucial for Pakistan's survival: Tarar

Musharraf announces local bodies' elections ahead of Clinton's visit

ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan Rafiq Tarar on Thursday stated that Kashmir was crucial for Pakistan's survival. Extolling the role of the militants in Kashmir, referred to in Pakistan as 'freedom fighters', he said, "The brave people in Kashmir have shown their determination to achieve the right of self-determination with their blood. Even a day of independence is better than a thousand years of slavery."

Speaking at the military parade to mark the 60th anniversary of a resolution which eventually led to the creation of Pakistan in 1947, celebrated as Pakistan Day here, Mr Tarar said his country was against an arms race but could deliver "a

telling riposte" to any aggressor. "We seek a peaceful solution to the Kashmir dispute," he said, reiterating Pakistan's political, moral and diplomatic support to the insurgency. He also expressed the hope that the world community would not be a silent spectator to what he called India's brutal repression of the Kashmiris' struggle for their right of self determination.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf announced nationwide local elections — considered a first step toward a return to democracy.

Gen Musharraf's promise came two days before U.S. President Bill Clinton is scheduled to visit Pakistan, where he is expected to press the military ruler for a time-frame for general elections. Pakistan Day celebrations included a display of the country's military hardware, including new tanks and missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. Praising his nation's military might, Mr Tarar said, "Not only is this country surviving, but it has become a nuclear state and the first Muslim nuclear state."

On display were missiles in camouflage colours with a range of up to 1,500 km — capable of hitting most locations inside India

— a new small MB183 tank manufactured in Pakistan and an assortment of small and heavy weapons.

Soldiers in uniform marched down Islamabad's wide boulevards and trucks carrying missiles rumbled passed the shuttered, white marble Parliament building which has been closed since the military took power last October 12. Gen Musharraf has rebuffed international pressure to return Pakistan to democracy quickly, saying the task ahead is onerous. But on Thursday he said the first round of local elections would be held between December and May 2001. A second round of local elections — at the district level — would be held in July 2001, effectively putting municipal governments back in power.

"We want to empower the impoverished, the people at the grass-root level," Gen Musharraf told a news conference in Islamabad. "Democracy starts here at the district and local governments," he said. "From here, we will move up step by step to provincial and federal (elections) in due course of time."

Gen Musharraf's scheme for staggered local elections also involves a complete restructuring to give a greater voice to the village level, where councils are referred to as union councils.

His scheme also allocates seats for women, for the minorities in Pakistan and, for the first time, for the poorest whom he referred to as "workers and peasants."

Union councils, to be elected between December and May 2001, will have 26 seats — 10 reserved for women, four for peasants and workers and one for minority religious groups. At the district level, the 66-seat councils will include 50 general seats, which can be contested by men and women, as well as 10 seats reserved for women, three for workers and peasants and three for minorities.



Rafiq Tarar



Gen. Musharraf

Musharraf lays down return to democracy plan

Mubashir Zaidi/Agencies
Islamabad, March 23

FORTY-EIGHT HOURS before the scheduled visit of US President Bill Clinton to Pakistan, Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf today laid down the Government's plan for return of democracy.

At a crowded Press conference in Chaghi auditorium, Gen Musharraf announced the holding of local body elections at district level between December this year and May next year. He said the general elections in the provinces and at the Centre will follow. However, he did not spell out a specific date for these.

Addressing one of the major concerns of the US—restoration of democracy, ahead, the General said that district level polls from December to May will be followed by another round of district elections in July. "From here, we will move forward, step by step, to provincial and national levels, in due course of time. In the second and third stages, provincial assemblies are to be followed by elections to the National Assembly and

Senate," he said.

However, like his predecessors and former military dictators—Ayub Khan in the 1960s and Zia-ul-Haq in the 1980s—Gen Musharraf declared the elections will be held on non-party basis. The voting age has been lowered from 21 to 18 years.

CLINTON REMARK REFUTED: In another development, General Musharraf today contradicted a statement by President Clinton blaming elements in the Pakistani Government for supporting violence in Kashmir.

"No part of the Government is involved in any violence," he told a news conference, when asked to comment on the remarks made by Clinton yesterday in an interview to ABC

News. "I totally disagree (with that)," he said.

In his interview, Mr Clinton came closer than ever in the past to explicitly blaming Islamabad for violence in the Himalayan region. "I believe there are elements within the Pakistani Government that have supported those engaged in violence in Kashmir," President Clinton had said.



Musharraf rolls out poll carpet for Clinton

AP & AFP

ISLAMABAD, March 23. — Two days before the US President stops over in Islamabad, General Pervez Musharraf has announced local polls in Pakistan next year, to be followed by the general elections.

The first round of district-level polls will be held from December 2000 to May 2001, with the second round in July. The polls will effectively put municipal governments back in power.

"From here we will move forward, step by step, to provincial and national levels, in due course of time," the military ruler said today. "In the second and third stages, provincial Assemblies will be followed by elections to the National Assembly and the Senate."

He said all district-level elections would be on a non-party basis. Before the elections, the government wants to revise a 20-year-old electoral list and issue new identity cards that cannot easily be forged.

Gen. Musharraf has rebuffed international pressure for months to return Pakistan to democracy quickly, saying the task ahead was onerous. Mr Bill Clinton was expected to press him to set a deadline for general elections.

White House spokesman Mr Joe Lockhardt said today's announcement was a positive step, but the USA wants a time-table for the return of

SANCTIONS

NEW DELHI, March 23. — The US commerce secretary, Mr William Daley, today sought to link total lifting of economic sanctions to New Delhi signing the CTBT. He hoped that both would take place.

"India signing CTBT will not only remove sanctions but reduce tension in the world," Mr Daley said after an hour-long meeting with Mr Yashwant Sinha. — PTI

democracy.

Kashmir: Earlier, President Rafiq Tarar, speaking at the National Day Parade, said Kashmir is crucial to Pakistan's survival. He warned India that the Pakistani army is prepared to defend the country's integrity and sovereignty.

But Gen. Musharraf denied Mr Clinton's charge that "elements within the Pakistani government have supported those engaged in violence in Kashmir". He asserted that "no part of the government is ever involved in any violence."

The US President had made the remark in an interview to the US network, ABC News, aired yesterday.

Gen. Musharraf told reporters today he was confident that he would "moderate" Mr Clinton's viewpoint on Kashmir. "I do not think that President Clinton will go away from the re-

gion having endorsed India's stand," he said.

Asked if Mr Clinton's visit had brought New Delhi and Washington closer, the General said: "America's relationship with India is its own. We need to develop our own relations with the USA."

At Saturday's meeting, he would press the US President to bring peace to South Asia, by assisting in resolving the "real issues". However, Mr Clinton's role would be "in the background" since India had rejected suggestions of mediation by Washington.

"I will tell him lots of things. But my message is we want peace in the region because no progress is possible without peace," he said in reference to Kashmir.

On reports that Mr Clinton might ask him not to execute Mr Nawaz Sharif even if the court awards capital punishment to him, Gen. Musharraf said: "nobody will dictate to us. Let the court decide first. We are not vindictive. I don't need anyone's approval."

USA concerned: US Democrat congressman Mr Gary Ackerman today said Washington is concerned about an arms race in South Asia with India and Pakistan testing nuclear bombs. He asked the two neighbours not to commit the blunder the USA and the USSR made in the Cold War era.

■ More reports on page 6

THE STATESMAN

24 MAR 2000

Civic polls in Pak. from Dec.

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 23. The Pakistani military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, today ruled out holding elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies till their term expired in February 2002 even as he announced three-tier local body elections under a new structure to be held from December 2000 to July 2001.

Signalling that he intended to stay in power for another two years at least, Gen. Musharraf did not use his press conference to offer any concessions to the United States on the eve of Mr. Bill Clinton's visit to Pakistan. The General, however, said he wanted Mr. Clinton to play a "background role" in resolving differences between India and Pakistan.

On the all-crucial issue of a return to elected rule at the national and provincial level, the General said he had not yet decided on a



time-frame and would take the process in stages. Gen. Musharraf, however, made it clear that he would not be sitting around for another 20 years.

Gen. Musharraf also contradicted Mr. Clinton's assertion that elements within the Pakistani Government had supported those who engaged in violence in Kashmir. "I completely disagree with him," the General stated.

To a question if he felt that Mr. Clinton had endorsed the Indian position on Kashmir, Gen. Musharraf said the U.S. President had

made his comments after talking to Indian leaders. "It would be premature for me to comment on it till he comes and sees out point of view."

When it was pointed out to the General that Mr. Clinton would not be "satisfied" with his announcements made today, the Chief Executive said he does not need "approval" from anyone.

Asked about the CIA's latest assessment of a possible war between India and Pakistan, the General said Pakistan's conventional and nuclear deterrence was in place and the country had nothing to fear.

To a question how he expected a resolution of the Kashmir issue when India had ruled out mediation, Gen. Musharraf said India had always rejected the mediation option. He regretted that while India spoke about bilateralism it was not ready to engage in a dialogue.

THE HINDU
24 MAR 2000

Musharraf announces structure for local bodies

By Amit Baruah
ISLAMABAD, MARCH 23. An elaborate, complicated, non-party structure for local Government comprising Union Councils, Tehsil Councils and District Assemblies was announced by the Pakistani Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, today.

Gen. Musharraf told reporters that the District Assemblies would have a Chief Mayor who would be directly elected and all district officials would be answerable to him and the District Assembly. He said the voting age would be lowered from 21 to 18.

The General, who announced

that this new "structure" could be discussed and debated till August 14 this year, stated that the Provinces would allocate funds to the District Assemblies and would also have the power to raise taxes.

Though he stated that the District Assemblies, to be headed by a directly elected Chief Mayor, would remain within a Provincial framework, it would appear that the structure as announced would completely undermine State Governments and their powers.

Interestingly, no decision has been taken on whether the system of separate electorates introduced by Gen. Zia-ul-Haq would

continue. "We are analysing whether the minorities should vote through a joint or a separate electorate," the Chief Executive stated.

Clearly, even the military Government has not demonstrated the desire to take bold decisions like doing away with the system of separate electorates which has been a consistent demand of the human rights community in Pakistan and elsewhere.

The Army Chief also stated that brand new electoral rolls would be prepared for the local body elections to be held in a staggered manner between December 2000 and July 2001. These rolls, after

preparation, would be verified on the ground by the Army.

The General, who said a "revolution" had begun as of today in Pakistan, said the concept of elected community governments would ensure an "unprecedented transfer of power" from the elites to the vast majority.

"I would like to emphasise that these new vastly empowered local bodies are not going to be a substitute for the provincial Assemblies or the National Assembly and the Senate and neither are they going to be used as an electoral college for other levels of democracy," he told reporters.

Innocents implicated in Sharif case: defence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KARACHI, March 24. — The defence lawyer for deposed Prime Minister, Mr Nawaz Sharif, today said the military regime had implicated innocent people in the criminal case.

Mr Kawaja Sultan, who opened final arguments in the case, said the FIR of the case was registered 28 days after the alleged hijacking incident and sufficient material evidence was not produced in the court.

"The statement by Mr Aminullah Chaudhary, a key prosecution witness, was not supported by other witnesses", Mr Sultan said.

Mr Chaudhary was accused in the case along with Mr Sharif and six others.

But he later turned state witness against Mr Sharif and was pardoned by the authorities.

"Delayed registration of the FIR creates doubts that the story was fabricated, and innocent people have been implicated in the case," Mr Sultan said.

Names of three accused were not mentioned in the FIR that shows even after almost one month there was no proof of their involvement in the case.

Mr Sultan cited statements of the prosecution witnesses and said when the alleged hijacking incident occurred, the army was in control of the air traffic control and all actions were done on the instructions of the army.

He said the presence of the army at Karachi airport on the fateful day shows that their action was to frustrate Mr Sharif's order of dismissing General Pervez Musharraf, who was sacked at 4:30 p.m.

Referring to the statement of the key witness Mr Aminullah Chaudhary, who was then director general of Pakistan's civil aviation authority, Mr Sultan argued that the statement was exhort-ed through pressure.

"Mr Chaudhary had complained when produced in the court at the initial stages of the case that he was being pressurised," Mr Sultan said.

The judge, Mr Rehmat Hussain Jafri, adjourned the trial until Saturday when the defence lawyer would continue his arguments.

The case is in its final stage and likely to be concluded this month. The judgement is expected some in April.

The charges carry death penalty.

THE STATESMAN
25 MAR 2000

Singapore, March 30



Musharraf rules out quick return to democracy

PAKISTAN MILITARY leader General Pervez Musharraf today ruled out a quick return to civilian rule and defended the slow pace of his government's economic and political reform.

Gen Musharraf, who came to power in October when he overthrew Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup, also said he would not engage in an arms race with India.

"I want a return to civil government as soon as possible, but I don't want to bring a system that is going to do away with whatever good we have done," he told a gathering of the Pakistani community on the second day of a two-day visit

here.

His comments brought loud applause from the crowd, mostly businessmen. He said his government was involved in a structural overhaul of the economy and society, which would take a long time, and until then, plans for national elections would have to be put on hold.

"There is no lack of resolve and commitment (to reform) but we have a lack of resources to do it," he said.

Gen Musharraf said the Army would be conscripted to help track down commercial criminals and to help audit the economy to strengthen the tax net.

He added his March 23 announcement of local elections was a first step.

"Then we will go to the provinces and national. Then we'll bring back civil government. But no dates will be given," he said. According to the local election timetable, polls for a three-tier system of local bodies will be held between

December and August 14, 2001.

Citing growing Press freedom, General Musharraf, said there was more democracy in Pakistan now than during civilian rule. The revival of the moribund economy was also a priority and efforts were being made on numerous fronts, including correcting trade and budget deficits, he said.

The Government was keeping up its privatisation programmes and would use 90 per cent of proceeds to retire its crippling \$38 billion national debt. Steps were also taken to turn bulky state enterprises and government bodies into efficient entities, he said.

Pakistan would not enter into an arms race with India. "We are not entering an arms race. India has raised its defence budget but we've not. A minimum level of deterrence has to be maintained," he said.

Turning to Kashmir, Gen Musharraf said it was an internationally recognised issue.

Sharif legal challenge put back by a month

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ISLAMABAD, Jan. 31. — Pakistan's Supreme Court today adjourned for a month several lawsuits challenging the 12 October military coup that overthrew Mr Nawaz Sharif's elected government.

[The Chief Justice, Mr Irshad Hussain Khan (who replaced Mr Justice Saeed-uz-zaman

Siddiqui, sacked on Wednesday for defying the junta), heading a full seven-member Bench, told the petitioners to concentrate on two basic issues, the Provisional Constitutional Order No. 1 of 14 October, and the proclamation of Emergency the same day by the military government, says PTI.

[The main petitioner, Mr Sharif's Pakistan Muslim

League, sought time from the court to go through the 900-page reply filed by the government.]

Five lawsuits have been filed by the deposed Prime Minister's party and several private citizens. They call the military takeover "illegal and unconstitutional," and urge the court to restore Parliament and the elected government.

In its reply submitted last week, the military-led government asked the court to dismiss the case, saying the courts don't have powers to pass orders against the army ruler's decisions.

Mr Chaudhry Farooq, a PML lawyer, said he and other lawyers had requested extra time to prepare a rejoinder to the government's reply.

THE STATESMAN

1 FEB 2000

JUDGE NOT THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED

Karachi: Every effect has a cause. Political problems like common diseases, too, must have their causes. Our problem has been frequent interruptions in the democratic political process. Some of these have been frightfully violent. The elements causing these upheavals have been variously diagnosed and identified. Those inclined to take shortcuts, seeking simple answers to our complex questions, end up saying that every time it is the politicians that betrayed the country.

This theory has a history, dating back to October 24, 1954, when Pakistan was precisely seven years two months and ten days old. Three hard-boiled bureaucrats, two civilian and one military — Ghulam Mohammad, Mushiaq Ahmad Gurnani and General Iskandar Mirza — together conspired to bring the democratic edifice down. They were not politicians. This is a bald statement of fact. It would not admit of two opinions.

Several governments by then had come and gone. Their coming and going was strictly according to the fundamental law of the land. No heads fell. No accusations of wrongdoing were hurled between those coming in or going out. No accountability investigations were launched by any party. Those who went out went home with a clean bill of political and moral health. And when their time was come, they honourably crossed the street into history.

Bureaucrats and generals have damaged Pakistan

By A.B.S. JAFRI

General Iskandar Mirza wanted to fight politicians to the finish. For more than 10 years, a self-promoted field marshal had been engaged in rescuing Pakistan from the "ravages of politicians." General Yahya did the same.

What Yahya's battles with politicians caused the nation is too tragic to be recalled without unbearable heartaches. Yahya's defender, his own hedonistic mate General Hamid, had the audacity to declare that "Yahya saved West Pakistan and got rid of East Pak-

Let us remember that Pakistan was born in grim turmoil. This event had few parallels in modern history. Powerful forces were at work — some in the open — to have the child state strangled at birth. Its financial assets had been frozen beyond its reach. It had almost no established government apparatus. Whatever of the personnel and apparatus of the government of Pakistan had arrived from New Delhi had nowhere to be set up.

Infant Pakistan had no armed forces to protect its geographical or "ideological" frontiers. It is no exaggeration that it was a country governed, rather served, without a complete government in the normal sense. But it was a living state. It was respected and admired all over the world. It was indebted to no one. It held its head high.

Then, the three hard-boiled bureaucrats burst upon the stage to "save Pakistan from its politicians." From the moment Governor General Ghulam Mohammad upset the applecart to this day, this country has been relentlessly ravished by illegitimate adventurers whose only mission has been, according to their own claim, to repair the damage caused by the politicians.

A judicial massacre in

BY BENAZIR BHUTTO

In a move that stunned the legal community, the Chief Justice of Pakistan and 14 other judges were swiftly and arbitrarily sacked by fiat. The savage massacre of the judiciary took place as it geared to hear an application for the restoration of the ousted government of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. That segments of the judiciary in Pakistan have been deeply politicised is no secret. Had the generals taken the high moral ground and targeted the controversial members of the judiciary, they could well have won public acclaim.

Instead, while sacking some of the most independent-minded members of the judiciary, the generals sought to retain those whose reputations had been tarnished by their accepting favours and rewards. The shock action against the senior members of the judiciary, three months after the military takeover, clearly betrayed the nervousness of the new regime. It also alienated public sentiment, particularly from the bar associations and the human rights organisations.

The judicial massacre was precipitated by reports swirling in Pakistan that the Chief Justice, who enjoys enormous powers in the Pakistani judiciary, was about to snub the generals by demanding a timetable from them for the restoration of democracy. That the generals were unwilling to give. By defiantly refusing to swear a new oath of allegiance to the new legal order proclaimed by the generals, Chief Justice Saeeduzzaman Siddiqui challenged the constitutional authority of the new regime, throwing up questions once again of its legitimacy. He declared that he would only "work under the Constitution."

Interestingly, the Chief Justice revealed the bargain that the military ruler had struck with him when he seized power last October. According to Siddiqui, General Musharraf had agreed with him to retain those parts of the Constitution that dealt with the judiciary. The judges and the generals fell out when the generals issued an executive order forcing the judges to take an oath of allegiance to the new order. Publicly, the sacking of the judges has been viewed as an echo of the steps taken by Pakistan's previous military ruler. General Ziaul Haq, to pack the judiciary with judges loyal to him. This poses a challenge to the sitting judges of the Supreme Court under their new Chief Justice, Irshad Hassan Khan. Most of these judges enjoy a good reputation. In having taken the new oath of office

Pakistan

swearing allegiance to the new order, the justices would be barred from hearing the application for the restoration of the Nawaz regime.

However, the judicial mess highlights the inability of the new regime to win friends and its proclivity to make foes. Increasingly, the generals are seen as taking arbitrary decisions to manipulate the judi-

While sacking some of the most independent-minded members of the judiciary, the generals sought to retain those whose reputations had been tarnished by their accepting favours and rewards. The shock action against the senior members of the judiciary, three months after the military takeover, clearly betrayed the nervousness of the new regime

cial and political process. The political parties, the bar associations and the human rights activists had welcomed the removal of the fascist Nawaz regime. Yet, these very social classes which welcomed the end of the Nawaz regime, have been systematically alienated.

The inability to formulate an independent mechanism for accountability, the failure to undo the wrongs of victimisation by the Nawaz regime of its political opponents, the lack of communication with the combined opposition and now the brutal sacking of known independent judges have eroded the political support which the regime enjoyed when it took power last October.

It has also opened the federal question. For, ominously, the bulk of the sacked judges of the Supreme Court came from the alienated southern province of Sindh. General Musharraf, when taking over, had criticised the ethnic policies of his ousted predecessor. Yet, the ethnic slant of the sacking can only add to the sense of grievance felt by the people in Sindh.

The judicial crisis reflects the growing divisiveness of civil society in Pakistan and the increasing importance of the judiciary in determining political matters. In democracies, elections determine

issues of governance. In Pakistan, the judiciary has been determining the right of different players to govern. The effect has been the politicisation of the judiciary and the collapse of freedom and law.

Since democracy was restored in 1985, the death of three different governments, enjoying a parliamentary majority, was pronounced through the blessings of the judiciary. In the last four years, the Pakistan People's Party blamed one Chief Justice for conspiring against it whilst President Leghari blamed another Chief Justice for saving the Pakistan Muslim League government. Given the proclivity of justices to act on known political

The judicial crisis, coming as it does on the heels of India's campaign to declare Pakistan a terrorist state, does not bode well for the stability of Pakistan. The divisive nature of civil society, the crumbling institutions, and the marginalisation of the major political parties is creating a vacuum that can degenerate into chaos. The disintegration of civil society poses a threat to regional peace

inclinations, the generals simply could not take the risk of Chief Justice Saeeduzzaman Siddiqui, a Nawaz appointee, hearing the case for the restoration of the Nawaz government.

In other countries, judges with known political sentiments do not hear cases in which they have an interest. Consequently, the judiciary remains untainted. In Pakistan, this is not the case. Politicised judges have insisted on hearing cases in which they are interested even when the parties protest, as the Bhutto-Zardari trials showed. The inability to separate themselves from political issues has undermined the independence of the judiciary and made courts controversial.

Even darker days may lie ahead for Pakistan's embattled judiciary. Despite published reports of judicial impropriety, the courts have failed to take action against errant justices as provided under the law. There is a growing body of public opinion which believes the allegations of corruption and misconduct against justices should be investigated. Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, ousted in a 1997 power play, has been in the forefront of demanding the accountability of the members of the judiciary. Yet, even as Pakistanis call for accountability, they shirk from asking for an accountability mechanism that is independent and a law which is fair. Resultantly, moral cries for accountability degenerate into pathetic plays of retribution.

The judicial crisis, coming as it does on the heels of India's campaign to declare Pakistan a terrorist state, does not bode well for the stability of Pakistan. The divisive nature of civil society, the crumbling institutions, the economic malaise and the marginalisation of the major political parties is creating a vacuum that can degenerate into chaos. The disintegration of civil society in Pakistan poses a threat to regional peace and stability. Chaos in Pakistan, the world's only nuclear capable Islamic state, bordering fanatic Afghanistan, bodes ill for the international community.

The judicial crisis is illustrative of the challenges Pakistan faces as it begins the 21st century. It is time for the generals ruling Pakistan to take stock of the last three months and correct negative developments. This can be done if the generals show they have a will to create political consensus for reform. Without that will, the outlook for the country will remain bleak.

BENAZIR BHUTTO is a former Prime Minister of Pakistan and leader of the Pakistan People's Party

THE ASIAN AGE
• 1 FEB 2000

Pakistan

JUDICIARY ON TEST

HD-10

PAKISTAN'S CHIEF EXECUTIVE, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, is performing to script. If he also happens to behave like Mr. Nawaz Sharif, the man he deposed in a military coup in October, neither is to be faulted. It is the bane of Pakistan's politics that the tolerance level of its rulers is zero. The result is that the country's democracy is condemned to be in perpetual suspension. Nearly 30 months ago, Mr. Sharif, heading a government that enjoyed an unprecedented majority in Parliament, dragged justice to the streets, letting his party hordes storm the premises of the Supreme Court and otherwise doing everything in his supreme power to denigrate a vital arm of democratic society. The country's judicial system carries the scars, remaining bruised still from that brawl. But the ordeal by fire in November 1997 has also helped forge some brave men as the happenings of the last few days demonstrate. In the half century of its existence, those hours were perhaps the finest for Pakistan's judiciary. By refusing to surrender to the diktats of the new rulers, the few judges — "hardly 15 per cent" of the total strength of the country's judiciary, reminds a spokesman of the military government in Islamabad — who preferred dismissal to swearing allegiance to the military regime have demonstrated extraordinary courage in these testing times and upheld the dignity of their profession. The legal fraternity in this country, preparing to celebrate the golden jubilee of the Supreme Court, has cause for cheer that the judicial fire has not been totally extinguished in neighbouring Pakistan, which shares the same legacy.

By dismissing the country's Chief Justice and a dozen of his colleagues in the Supreme Court, Gen. Musharraf has removed one potential roadblock as he seeks to tighten his grip on power. There was urgency to act since a clutch of petitions challenging military rule and the over-

throw of the civilian government is to come up for hearing before the Supreme Court in a week's time. If the court's record is any guide for him, there was no guarantee that his coup will not be declared illegal or even the Sharif Government reinstated. The possibility for such a dreadful course existed as long as the judiciary owed allegiance to the Constitution that Gen. Musharraf suspended when he seized power on October 12. It was essential that the judges hearing the petitions against him knew and acknowledged the new rules: they had no authority, under the Provisional Constitutional Order No. 1 he had promulgated, to entertain complaints against the actions of his Government. Judges considered too inconvenient to the military rulers were got rid of using this ploy. One illegality to cover up another. Pakistan has seen similar blatant distortions before as the new strongman puts to use the experience of his uniformed predecessors.

Gen. Musharraf's coup against the judiciary delivers one more knock to the legitimacy that he has been assiduously seeking, taking some of the shine off the endorsement he received during a hurriedly-arranged visit to Beijing. As he puts in to practice the Stalinist dictum, "when in doubt liquidate", it must be clear to the international community that the former army chief is in no hurry to set a timetable for a return to democracy and civilian rule. With friends of the regime in the West showing increasing signs of impatience, particularly with his failure to initiate vital economic reforms at home, the choice before Gen. Musharraf is clear. Rein in the fundamentalist parties which seem to be having a free run and are threatening the country's stability and secondly move credibly toward democratic elections. The alternative is the beaten path, traversed by earlier military rulers with disastrous consequences for Pakistan.

THE HINDU

29 JAN 2000

After dismissal, Pak CJ faces bribery charge

The Times of India News Service

KARACHI: Dismissed chief justice of Pakistan, Saeeduzzaman Siddiqi, is now being linked to a conspiracy theory involving Sharif's father. A graft charge has also been slapped on him and his wife.

Pakistan's chief justice, five supreme court judges and several other senior judges were replaced on Wednesday after refusing to swear an oath of allegiance to the country's military regime.

Giving the official view, the *Jung* reported on Thursday, quoting official sources, that in the petitions challenging the October 12 military takeover, Justice Siddiqi had made up his mind to rule in favour of the ousted government of Nawaz Sharif, and was insisting on immediate restoration of democracy.

"The former chief justice is probed for attempting to sabotage the military government's drive to weed out corruption and put real democracy in place after bringing in electoral reforms," the daily said.

An investigation for graft will also be opened against Justice Siddiqi, who has been accused of accepting huge amounts of money to give favourable judgments in political cases.

"A Lahore-based trio had planned the conspiracy to force chief executive Pervez Musharraf into imposing martial law, thereby causing his government to lose face in the international community," the *News* reported, quoting sources.

The paper said that Justice Khalilur Rehman Khan—who also refused to take fresh oath—

the Lahore-based editor of a pro-Nawaz Sharif Urdu daily and a top bureaucrat close to deposed Punjab chief minister Shahbaz Sharif were the three involved in the conspiracy.

"Intelligence sources discovered that fabulous sums of money were involved in the conspiracy which was to be implemented in the next few days through a supreme court decision in the case challenging the military coup," the daily said. The petitions challenging the coup were to be heard on a regular basis by a full bench of the apex court from January 31.

"Their objective was to thwart attempts by the military government to arrange a stopover in Pakistan of U.S. President Bill Clinton," the daily quoted officials as saying.

THE TIMES OF INDIA
28 JAN 2000

istan which had begun to pose a threat to the survival of Pakistan."

As long as the maligned politicians were in charge, Jinnah's Pakistan was intact and getting along famously. Those who wanted to displace the politicians from Pakistan's firmament blithely dismembered it. Ever since, the pursuers of politicians have made a virtue of that act of dismemberment.

Yahya's shameful exit brought to the fore Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a self-styled politician, allied to what he himself called the "bastions of power." That was the refrain of all the song and dance he orchestrated. ZAB flattered his ego with the illusion that he had wrested power from the mighty "bastions" and given it back to the elected people. His own tragic end on the gallows tells us how gullible he was to believe he could be a cat's paw of the "bastions" of power and then storm the same "bastions" to be the lord and master of all in front of him.

Thus we see that three bureaucrats — two civilian and one military — with no credentials of acceptable nature whatsoever, set the fashion of blaming the politicians for the problems of Pakistan and holding the country hostage, pretending they were protecting it from the politicians.

What caused these anti-politician elements to make so bold as to indulge, repeatedly, without warning or apology, in their unabashed extra-constitutional exploits, amounting to treachery and sedition? Why we, who proclaim to be the great and sovereign people, cast in the image of divinity and vicegerents of the Almighty in this God-given state (Mumlikat-e-Khudadad) failed, equally repeatedly, to demand of the traitors: "How dare you!"

We have preachers in this country who insist that "to proclaim the truth in front of the tyrant ruler is the real *Jihad* ." How many pious Islamists have embarked on that *Jihad* ? We have had great thinkers who proclaimed even more gallantly:

Batil say dubnewaley aiyee aasma nahin hum / Sau bar karchuka hai

tu intihan hamara...

(We are not the ones that submit to the illegitimate. O sky thou hast tested us a hundred times...)

Take a look at the seven-minister government of Pakistan sworn in by Mohammad Ali Jinnah. It did not have a feudal or a *mullah* . They were politicians. Ghulam Mohammad then was the only one picked up from the bureaucratic class. And he was the one who commenced the process that was to extinguish the genuine political culture. Ever since, this country has been the hunting ground of the implacable foes of politicians — and the politics of the people. It has been on the decline in the eyes of the world. What is worse, also in the eyes of its own distraught people, reduced to haplessness.

One hears the lament that in the politicians' era governments were falling at short intervals. So, what? Governments in those days were also rising with equal frequency. Only governments were falling, not heads. That process was quite natural and in complete conformity with the fundamental law. That is how nations live in democratic decency. And that is exactly how nascent democracies progress towards maturity, self-confidence and stability.

Now, for a moment, a slight diversion.

When Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government was toppled to plunge the country into its longest, most corrupting and ruinous military dictatorship, I happened to be in London on a short trip. In those days I used to work, on the side as it were, for the BBC in Rawalpindi-Islamabad. My journalist friends in London asked me to explain why "Pakistan has a tendency to get derailed ever so often, just when it appears to have set itself on the right rails and moving?"

My answer was in the form of a question. Why you in Britain change your governments so peacefully? No heads fall, no disagreeable accountability stage plays are put on show for the world to watch. Because that's

your culture. We have our ways of changing governments. Period.

How long would we take to admit that what we are doing to ourselves is exactly what we can do. In our present state, we just cannot do better, unless we become capable of doing better. There are, Allah be praised, more than 40 independent and sovereign Muslim states. They are members of the United Nations. They have their flags and national anthems, and the whole panoply of statehood. Most of them, if not all, are fairly rich and would be much richer if they learned to be prudent with their abundant resources.

Which of these Muslim countries is not subject to the sudden change wrought by civil and military bureaucracies? Where have sudden and violent changes of government been ruled out by superior courts? Which one lives by credible democratic culture with the vote being the final decider?

So many wisecracks in Pakistan shake their heads and insist that unless "our people are educated they would remain unfit to govern themselves under the rule of law." This is said by some of the wisest in Pakistan. They do not realise that this is the excuse that has provided unlimited legitimacy and sustenance to autocrats who means no good to anyone, least of all to Pakistan and its people.

History knows of no country where universal education preceded democracy. History moves in the other direction. Only the people's governments think of educating the people. In countries like ours, the fake rulers are afraid of education. We have thousands of "ghost" schools. In the premises meant to hold classes, you find accommodated the animals or serfs (a distinction without much difference) of the area feudal.

First, the bureaucrats manoeuvred themselves into power, outwitting the novice and gullible first generation politicians. The bureaucrats knew the ins and outs of the government mystique, having for generations served the colonial power. They presided

over a reincarnation of the colonial culture, having outplayed the politicians. Then, the feudal- *mullah* -military coalition hijacked the bureaucratic oligarchy, luring it into its web through a mixture of bribe and intimidation.

Here, perhaps, we are victims of an illusion. No matter what changes took place after October 24, 1954, nothing really changed. The three-some never really abdicated. Look at the results of the several elections we have gone through since dictator Zia perished in that crash outside Bahawalpur on August 17, 1988. Did those "elections" produce any weeding out or pruning of the wild growth in our vandalised political garden?

How is one to explain the results of those elections? Each time the result was exactly as desired by the coalition that rules the roost from the "bastion of power," to use a notorious Bhutto phrase. Elections have ceased to change anything except the faces. But the last four elections did not change even the faces.

Whoever is under the impression that what has followed the drop-scene on the Zia dictatorship has been the restoration or revival of the political culture in Pakistan is either of feeble mind or just pretending to be clever. Put in front of the mind's eye all those characters that have been the government in post-Zia Pakistan. Is any of these protagonists an honourable person?

Compare these persons with the gentlemen and a sprinkling of ladies who were in the Pakistan movement and who ran Pakistan when it had little to support itself except honourable intentions, indomitable courage and unshakable faith in themselves and their commitment to this country and its good people. They were politicians.

What we have today around us is a caboodle known for bank loan defaults, massive tax evasion, pilferage of power, theft of irrigation canal water, running slave camps, patronising highwaymen, dacoits, drug traffickers, smugglers, killing their women in the name of honour, building palaces and pleasure hideouts, buying jewellery worth millions of dollars, riding the most expensive sports cars, acquiring palatial estates in foreign countries, transferring millions of dollars to foreign banks, taking hefty cuts on government contracts, playing polo on imported ponies, absconding from their country to escape the nemesis. It is an endless list of gross misdemeanour and felony.

Only wooden heads would equate this kind of people with politicians. They are not politicians by any stretch of definition. Indeed, there are no politicians in Pakistan. Not any more. The ubiquitous feudal-military- *mullah* coalition has destroyed even the seed of upright politics. We shall have to re-invent politics and wait for the politicians to be born and mature to rescue the country from the fake saviours who have bled it white and corrupted the governing apparatus to the core. The Politician is Pakistan's extinct species. Face this fact.

By arrangement with Dawn

THE ASIAN AGE
• 2 FEB 2000

Sharif pawn against Musharraf may face court martial

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, Feb. 2. — Former ISI chief Lt-Gen. Khwaja Ziauddin is being questioned by a high-level Intelligence team whose findings might decide whether he would be court-martialled, *The News* has said.

Mr Nawaz Sharif had appointed Ziauddin as army chief on 12 October last year after sacking Gen. Musharraf who later led a coup the same day. Lt-Gen Ziauddin is under detention of the military.

"The investigators will determine the areas where Ziauddin may have overstepped his authority and misused his office before the military takeover," a senior general headquarters official told *The News*.

"They will also determine whether the general actively colluded with the conspirators to create dissension within army ranks.

"The investigators will further gauge the intensity of Ziauddin's involvement, if ever he was involved in conspiring against his own institutions and the army chief. The subsequent findings will determine whether his case is fit for a court martial."

The newspaper's "bureau of investigations" said the official denied reports that the army had granted a "general amnesty" to the ISI ex-boss.

"No question of that. Action against Ziauddin will be based on the outcome of these investigations... We have got irrefutable proof that the ousted Prime Minister was busy in insidious conspiracies against the army.

"We have documentary evidence that Sharif planned to defame and divide the military in active collusion with certain army officials. Once investigations are completed and (if

charges are established, Ziauddin will definitely be tried," the daily reported.

The News said it had asked an Inter-Services Public Relations spokesman why Ziauddin hadn't been named in the FIR of the hijack case.

The spokesman replied: "The military establishment wanted to deal with the armymen (accused in any conspiracy) separately, and not differently. If the former ISI chief is found involved in the plane hijacking conspiracy, he will be tried accordingly by the military itself."

The newspaper said: "If tried, this may become the first case in the history of the Pakistan army when a Lt-Gen. suspected of involvement in a conspiracy against his own institution is court-martialled by a military regime."

Sharif witness: An air traffic controller, testifying today at Mr Nawaz Sharif's trial, said he was ordered to block the runway at Karachi airport on 12 October and thought the instruction was linked to a hijacking, adds AP from Karachi.

Mr Nadeem Akbar said he received the order from Pakistan's civil aviation chief just as a PIA plane approached the airport on a flight from Sri Lanka. The plane carried 188 passengers, including Gen. Musharraf.

Mr Akbar ordered three fire engines parked across the runway to prevent any planes from landing. He was then told to switch off the runway lights.

Mr Akbar said he was not told why this was being done, but that such measures are usually imposed "only in cases of hijackings". So he initially thought an international flight had been commandeered.

Pak referendum in March: Report ^{9/2}

^{Pakistani} IN A bid to legitimise his rule, Pakistan's military ruler Pervez Musharraf is reportedly planning to hold a referendum next month.

Soon after his military coup in October last year, the general had announced that he would hold a referendum, but soon he dropped the idea. However, Karachi's Business Recorder paper quotes sources as saying that he is planning to hold the referendum next month. The paper wrote yesterday that preparations for the event have already started. It said, "The referendum is planned for March and aims to acquire the stamp of public approval to its ambitious programme of reforms and accountability."

The paper said the basic objective of this referendum was to deflect international demands that Gen. Musharraf announce a time frame for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan.

UNI, Islamabad

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

4 FEB 2000

Musharraf to head Pak nuclear command

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, Feb. 3. — Pakistan has set up a command for handling its nuclear weapons programme, with chief executive General Pervez Musharraf as its overall in-charge, media reports said here today.

Approval of National Command Authority by the National Security Council was announced late last night, following a series of meetings at various levels and among military commanders.

Following a lengthy debate in the NSC, Pakistan made it clear that the NCA "will be responsible for formulation" and "will exercise employment and development control over all strategic nuclear forces and strategic organisations", reports said.

Since 28 May 1998, when Pakistan conducted nuclear tests, the framework of establishing a nuclear command and control authority has been debated to regulate the management of weapons of mass destruction, the dailies reported.

The NCA will be led by the head of government and will consist of top civilian and military leaders who will decide about the deployment and use of nuclear weapons, an official announcement said.

The NCA will comprise two committees — Employment Control Committee and Development Control

Committee. It will also constitute a Strategic Plans Division which will act as a secretariat already established at the joint services headquarters under chairman, Joint Chief of Staff Committee.

It has been announced that the ECC will be the apex body, chaired by the head of the government. It will include minister of foreign affairs (deputy chairman), minister of defence, minister for interior, chairman JCSC, service chiefs, director general, SPD (to act as secretary) and technical advisors/others as required by the chairman.

The reports said, the Development Committee, comprising the country's entire defence leadership under the present set-up, will also be chaired by head of the government and include CJCS (deputy chairman), service chiefs, director-general of strategic plans division and representatives of the strategic organisation and the science community.

The committee will control development of strategic assets. To serve as secretariat to the NCA, the SPD will be headed by a senior army officer (a 3-star general). It has been established at the joint services headquarters under CJCS. It will plan and coordinate reliable command, control, communication, computers and intelligence network for the NSC.

Karachi refused landing, pilot tells Sharif court

REUTERS & AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

KARACHI, Feb. 3. — The pilot of the PIA plane flying General Pervez Musharraf to Karachi from Colombo on the day of the coup today told the court trying Mr Nawaz Sharif he had feared the aircraft would run out of fuel and crash after it was denied permission to land.

"I advised the Karachi air traffic control that I have 198 souls, limited amount of fuel and that if we are not allowed to land ... we will lose the aircraft and that will be the end of the story," Capt. Syed Sarwat Hussain said. He said the plane was first denied and then given permission to land. Army officials subsequently assured him it was safe to land. Within hours, Gen. Musharraf had pulled off his bloodless coup.

Capt. Hussain said the plane had 80 minutes of fuel when it was denied landing rights. He did

not say how much fuel was left when he finally landed at Karachi over hour later.

"Karachi air traffic control informed us that you are not permitted to land at any airfield in Pakistan and to proceed outside at your own risk. It was a grave situation.

"I reached the conclusion that it was because of the presence of the Chief of Army Staff, General Pervez Musharraf".

He consulted flight operations chiefs at the airline and was advised to head for Nawabshah, Karachi's alternative landing field, though he had been told that airport was also closed. He also alerted Gen. Musharraf's security officers.

Then air traffic controllers in Karachi told the pilot he was now cleared to land at the city.

Referendum?: In a bid to legitimise his rule, Gen. Musharraf is reportedly planning to hold a referendum next month, says UNI.

THE STATESMAN
- 4 FEB 2000

Recasting the polity

Pervez Musharraf's action reflects a determination to proceed, as Zia-ul-Haq did, by stealth to mould Pakistan's polity after his heart's desire, writes AG NOORANI. He has repeatedly given notice of this in press interviews

BY prescribing a new oath of office to judges of the Superior Courts of Pakistan on 25 January just before the Supreme Court could hear, on 31 January, a petition challenging the legality of the coup, Pakistan's military dictator has done worse than fiddle with the law; worse than ape the hated Zia-ul-Haq. He has betrayed the trust of those who, disgusted with the ways of Nawaz Sharif, fondly believed he would cleanse the system and quit. But Pervez Musharraf is no Cincinnatus. He intends to stay put and alter the system radically, not restore it. The new oath was crafted to avert a judicial verdict.

On 14 October 1999, two days after the coup, the Chief of Army Staff issued a Proclamation of Emergency. Unlike previous proclamations after the coups (1958 and 1977), it was made explicitly "in pursuance of deliberations and decisions" not only of the corps commanders but also the "chiefs of staff of the Armed Forces". He said "I hereby order and proclaim" that the constitution "shall remain in abeyance". The President would remain in office but the legislatures, central and provincial, "shall stand suspended", not dissolved. Hopes of their revival were merrily aired, especially since the Provisional Constitution Order No 1 of 1999, issued simultaneously, laid down that Pakistan would be governed "as nearly as may be, in accordance with the Constitution". The fundamental rights would remain in force but subject to the Proclamation.

The courts would continue to function as before, with a vital proviso: "Provided that the Supreme Court or High Courts and any other court shall not have the powers to make any order against the Chief Executive or any person exercising powers or jurisdiction under his authority" (Para 2(2)). For good measure, Para 3(2) added: "No judgment, decree, writ, order or process whatsoever shall be made or issued by any court or tribunal against the Chief Executive or any other authority designated by the Chief Executive."

5-7-99

Since the PCO was made "in pursuance of the Proclamation of the 14th day of October 1999", acceptance of the PCO by a judge necessarily entailed his acceptance of the legality of the Proclamation and of the coup it sanctified and, with these, the immunity not only of the CE but "any person exercising power... under his authority".

On 15 November, Syed Zafar Ali Shah filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the coup, the Proclamation and the PCO and demanding restoration of the *status quo ante*. A lawyer by profession, he was parliamentary secretary, Law and Parliamentary Affairs in Sharif's government. In a concise, well drafted petition he accused Pervez Musharraf and Lieutenant-General Mahmood, Corps Commander, Rawalpindi, of "an attempt to subvert and abrogate the Constitution which is a Constitution offence" (high treason).

The original oath of office bound judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts to discharge their duties "in accordance with the Constitution" and, incidentally, to "abide by the code of conduct issued by the Supreme Judicial Council" also. Eighty-nine of the 102 judges affected refused to take the oath. If not defeat, dissent in the Supreme Court's judgments was certain. And that would have robbed the majority ruling of all moral authority. The regime was not prepared to take any chances. It bound the judges to accept the impugned PCO in advance before they heard the petition challenging it.

In the past, the Supreme Court gave three rulings on coups. One was the Dosso case. On 7 October 1958, President Iskandar Mirza abrogated the 1956 constitution and proclaimed martial law with General M Ayub Khan as Chief

Martial Law Administrator. Headed by Justice M Munir, who was also advising the new regime in private, it validated the coup. AK Brohi, cited in support Hans Kelsen's work, *General Theory of Law and State* (1945). It was no authority on what the law is but an analysis of legal theory. Munir lapped it up readily. Quoting copiously from Kelsen, he held that a "victorious revolution was an internationally recognised legal method of changing a constitution".

In 1972, the court overruled Dosso in Asma Jilani's case. It held both the coups, of 1958 and of 1969 (by Yahya Khan), to be "entirely without any legal foundation". Kelsen's was a theory of the law, not an exposition of the law itself. It could not serve as the basis for a court judgment.

In 1977, Nusrat Bhutto filed a petition challenging Zia's coup. The court professed to reject Dosso's case and to follow Asma Jilani's; but in fact, it opted for the former in the guise of the "doctrine of necessity". It, however, ruled that the constitution of 1973 remained "the supreme law" and judicial review survived. The court recorded the assurance of Zia's counsel, AK Brohi, that he intended to hold elections soon.

Attorney-General Sharifuddin Prizada, now the CE's legal adviser, mentioned a period of six months. The coup was validated only in reliance on "the solemn pledge given by him (Zia) that the period of constitutional deviation shall be of as short a duration as possible". The Chief Martial Law Administrator enjoyed powers "under the 1973 Constitution". But the Court gratuitously added "including the power to amend it". Zia used this *carte blanche* to great advantage.

On 22 September 1977, just three days after Nusrat Bhutto filed her petition, Zia removed the Chief Justice of the Supreme

Court, Justice Yaqub Ali, and appointed in his place Justice Anwarul Haq. He presided over the Bench as also the one which confirmed the death sentence on ZA Bhutto in 1979 by a five-four majority.

Since, under the 1977 ruling, judicial review had survived, Zia inserted, by a Presidential Order 21 of 1979, a new Article 212A in the constitution ousting the courts' jurisdiction to review any order of the martial law authorities, despite the ruling in Nusrat Bhutto's case. On 26 May 1980, he made another Constitution Amendment Order amending Article 199 to bar the High Courts from making any order affecting the jurisdiction or judgment of a military court or tribunal or from entertaining any petition against any martial law authority. The Proclamation of 5 July 1977, after the coup by Zia, and all orders made by the CMLA were declared "notwithstanding any judgment of any court, to have been validly made".

Sindh High Court upheld the amendments to Article 199 by a

majority of three-two. But a full Bench of three judges of Balochistan High Court unanimously declared both the new Article 212A and the amendments to Article 199 to be unconstitutional. The Supreme Court was to consider appeals from the High Courts in March 1981 when Zia struck. He promulgated a Provisional Constitution Order on 24 March 1981. Judicial review of martial law orders was barred completely, and the Nusrat Bhutto ruling was nullified. The CMLA "shall have, and shall be deemed always to have had, the power to amend the Constitution". The Court's gift of the amending power to Zia was rudely returned. A new oath was prescribed for the judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts binding them to accept the PCO. A judge "shall not continue to hold that office if he is not given, or does not take oath in the form set out in the Schedule".

Five High Court judges, including the Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court, were not invited to take the oath. The

Court, now reconstituted, vacated the stay of the death sentence given to Abdul Hameed Baloch. He was executed. More than 15 judges of the superior courts ceased to hold office. However, seven of the nine judges of the Supreme Court readily took the new oath. Only Chief Justice Anwarul Haq and Justice Dorab Patel refused. Thereafter some superior courts declared supinely a number of cases to have abated under the PCO — without even hearing counsel.

This time it was not only a possible adverse ruling but the thunderclap of a powerful dissent in the apex court that the CE sought to stifle. "A dissent in a court of last resort," Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes of the US Supreme Court wrote in 1928, "is an appeal to the brooding spirit of the law, to the intelligence of a future day."

In Pakistan it would have galvanised the growing opposition to

a military rule noted for lack of direction and competence. Musharraf's action reflects a determination to proceed, as Zia did, by stealth to mould the polity after his heart's desire. He gave notice of that repeatedly in press interviews. In the latest, to Malini Parthasarathy of *The Hindu* (17 January), he said, "We'd like to examine what kind of a political structure best suits the interests of the people of Pakistan. And we will return to civil rule with some modifications... in the interests of better democracy." He has asserted a right to amend the constitution. The reconstituted Supreme Court will grant it.

If he is opposed in this, it is unlikely that he will forbear from repression. However, the political climate in Pakistan and in the world is altogether different from what it was in 1977. Besides Chief Justice, Saeeduz-Zaman Siddiqui, five other judges of the Supreme Court also refused to swear the new oath. Seven others complied. In the High Courts the picture is depressing.

In such a situation, it is not the courts but the people of Pakistan, like those of any other country, who will battle for and regain their liberties. No wiser words on this reality were spoken than those by Judge Learned Hand: "I often wonder whether we do not rest our hopes too much upon constitutions, upon laws and upon courts. These are false hopes; believe me, these are false hopes. Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it. No constitution, no law, no court can even do much to help it. While it lies there, it needs no constitution, no law, no court to save it."

(The author is a lawyer and commentator on current affairs.)

THE STATESMAN

- 5 FEB 2000

Militant chiefs warn Musharraf

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 5. The Lashkar-e-Taiba chief, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, today said he was 'very happy' that the Pakistani Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, had declared that 'jihad was not terrorism,' but warned the General not to interfere with Islamic madrasas where 'jihad' and not terrorism was taught.

He said Gen. Musharraf was the first Pakistani ruler to have made such a distinction between 'jihad and terrorism', a point that was made before him by Mr. Hamid Mir, Editor of the Urdu daily, *Ausaf*.

Both Saeed and the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen chief, Fazlur Rehman Khalil, made vicious anti-India and anti-U.S. speeches during a 'jehadi rally' organised by the Lashkar at the Aabpara Chowk in the heart of Islamabad to express solidarity with the 'Kashmiri people'.

Saeed also declared that the Pakistani mujahideen groups operating in Kashmir would not tolerate any 'ban' on their activities as demanded by the U.S. in return for a visit by the American President, Mr. Bill Clinton.

"Clinton, you are welcome to visit without conditions, but don't come, you will not be welcome if you force these conditions on Pakistan," the Lashkar chief told a gathering of a few thousand supporters.

In his speech, Fazlur Rehman Khalil said that the U.S. and other Western countries had

labelled them as 'terrorists' for fighting a 'jihad' in Kashmir. He wondered what their reaction would be if a 'global jihad' was launched. "You call us terrorists when we fight for our own Muslims (Kashmiris being Pakistanis for Khalil)," he remarked.

Like Saeed, Khalil stated that the CTBT was not a political issue, but a religious one. "Not adhering to the CTBT is Allah's order. Nuclear power is our shariat. If the U.S. asks us to sign the CTBT, it is interference in our religious affairs," he maintained.

In a clear warning to the Musharraf Government, Khalil stated that the mujahideen would not tolerate any "sabotage" of Pakistan's nuclear capability. If this were to happen, then the mujahideen would "sabotage" the Government, Khalil maintained.

Referring to American concerns, Hafiz Saeed said U.S. diplomats behaved like "vice-roys" in Pakistan. "They want Governments to pander to their every whim," he said, lampooning the diplomats.

He challenged the U.S. to take its case against terrorism relating to Islamic outfits to any court in the world. "We will prove that you (the U.S.) are terrorists. We are prepared to face you in any court of law," the Lashkar chief said. Saeed wanted to know which "court of law" had banned the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen. "Is this justice," he asked.

He said that the mujahideen did not expect

anything from the U.S. and maintained that Mr. Clinton was visiting India despite its "State terrorism" in Kashmir.

He said that U.S. had let Pakistan down in 1971; an action that transformed East Pakistan into Bangladesh. "No American decisions will be acceptable. All decisions will be taken by jihad," he maintained.

Saeed urged the Pakistani leadership to conduct one more, powerful nuclear test which would bring the U.S. and the rest of the world to its senses. "Our problems will be solved by this test," he claimed.

Describing Kargil as the 'first round' in the jihad against India, Saeed said the post-Kargil "fidayeen attacks" on Indian military camps constituted the 'second round' of 'jehadi attacks' by the Lashkar mujahideen. "Very soon, we will be starting the third round," he warned.

Another Lashkar functionary, Abdul Rehman Makki, claimed that the Lashkar had a "network" in Hyderabad which would become active in the next six months. "They will be making a declaration of separation," Makki claimed.

Lashkar volunteers distributed leaflets at the rally asking households to send a 'brother or son' for the cause of 'jihad'. They also gave addresses in Islamabad and Rawalpindi where 'military training' to participate in jihad could be acquired.

THE HINDU

- 6 FEB 2000

Masood Azhar 'arrested'

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 7 Has Masood Azhar, a one-time Harkat-ul-Mujahideen leader who has now formed a new militant outfit, been arrested? Or was he merely picked up for interrogation by the Pakistani authorities?

A report in the Urdu daily, *Pakistan*, speculated that Azhar, one of those released by the BJP-led Government as part of the terrorists-for-hostages deal, claimed today that he had been arrested and taken to an unknown destination. The paper, however, said the report could not be confirmed.

Another information available here suggests that the Pakistani authorities have been putting pressure on Masood Azhar for some time now. This indicates that Azhar was taken away for questioning and released after some time.

Apparently, the authorities have been asking him questions on the whereabouts of Ibrahim Azhar, the militant's brother and believed to be the chief hijacker of the Indian Airlines Airbus aircraft.

Though it will soon be two months since the hijacking, Ibrahim Azhar has so far not surfaced in Pakistan. No convincing explanation has been offered by Masood Azhar or his family about Ibrahim's location.

If he was not involved in the hijacking, then nothing stops him from putting in an appearance in Pakistan. But the longer he does not surface, the greater the evidence that Ibrahim Azhar was the brain behind the operation to get his brother—the hysterical Pakistani cleric— from jail.

Interestingly, the Pakistani Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has said that a 'splinter mujahideen group' could have been behind the hijacking of the Indian Airlines aircraft.

"There are some splinter groups, some misguided people who bring bad name to the Mujahideen. Those are the people who should desist from any form of terrorism, whether it is the hijacking of planes or...killing innocent civilians or bomb blasts...." Gen. Musharraf was quoted as saying in Muzaffarabad (PoK) on Saturday.

In a related development, Mr. Fazlur Rehman Khalil, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen chief, has dismissed as "bogus" reports that Masood Azhar had either been arrested or interrogated as reported in a section of the press. "It is a false report," Mr. Khalil told this correspondent.

Asked if he was aware of the whereabouts of Ibrahim Azhar, Mr. Khalil said that Ibrahim Azhar had possibly still not returned after going to perform "umra" in Saudi Arabia.

THE HINDU

- 8 FEB 2000

Pak opposition alliance rejects new ordinances

ISLAMABAD: The Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) of the Pakistani opposition has rejected the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO), the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) ordinances of the military regime terming them as "black laws" and said they would be challenged in court.

The GDA cannot accept the PCO as it is a "conspiracy" to put the judiciary under military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf and curb its independence, GDA leader Aftab Shaik was quoted as telling reporters in Karachi after the first day's meeting of the Alliance on Tuesday.

The NAB ordinance is also a "black law" in which the benefit of the doubt goes to the prosecutor, while the burden of proof is on the defence, he was quoted as saying by the *News Daily*.

The GDA has directed its legal committee, headed by Ihtezaz Ahsan, to challenge the PCO, ATA, NAB ordinances in court, the daily said.

The GDA is also against any attempt to change the basic structure of the Constitution or the parliamentary system and demanded that the army regime announce a time-frame for restoration of democracy in the country, Mr Shaik said. The GDA has also demanded an independent election commission with financial autonomy to prepare the new voters list and demarcate the new constituencies, Mr Shaik said.

He said the GDA considered the remarks of Gen. Musharraf that former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif would not be allowed to return to power as a "message to the courts" that the government wanted "judgement" against these leaders, the daily reported.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the performance of the army regime as it had "failed to obtain" a single loan from the IMF and the World Bank, Mr Shaik alleged the junta had inducted a large number of ministers and advisers in the cabinet "with full perks and benefits, while friends and relatives are being promoted in the services". (PTI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

10 FEB 2000

Coup wasn't planned, says Pervez Musharraf's aide

KARACHI: Pakistan's army chief General Pervez Musharraf did not plan in advance the October military coup which swept him to power, his secretary told a court here on Friday. Brigadier Nadeem Taj, a prosecution witness in the trial of deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif, told the anti-terrorism court how Gen. Musharraf was told by a general on the ground speaking through the aircraft cockpit radio that he had been sacked. Although Gen. Musharraf spoke to the general, Brig. Taj insisted the coup was not planned in advance.



Pervez Musharraf
Nadeem Taj, a prosecution witness in the trial of deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif, told the anti-terrorism court how Gen. Musharraf was told by a general on the ground speaking through the aircraft cockpit radio that he had been sacked. Although Gen. Musharraf spoke to the general, Brig. Taj insisted the coup was not planned in advance.

Taj quoted Gen. Musharraf as saying: "Make sure that this information is not passed to the passengers because it will create chaos, panic and confusion."

Brig. Taj said he tried to contact people on the ground using three mobile phones, but none worked. Brig. Taj, Gen. Musharraf and the pilot talked about which other airfields the plane could divert to.

"The pilot was in a state of confusion. The situation was getting grim, tense and disappointing by

the minute," Brig. Taj said. He said the plane circled around Karachi until General Ifkhar Ali Khan came on the cockpit radio and said the airport was under army control and it was safe to land the plane.

"They were trying to divert the plane so that it did not land here. We have taken over the airport and you are coming here," Brig. Taj quoted Gen. Khan as saying. Gen. Musharraf was sacked on October 12 last year as he flew back to Pakistan on a commercial jet from a visit to Sri Lanka. Hours after the plane landed the Gen. had seized power and detained Mir Sharif who is now on trial with six of his officials, accused of denying the Pakistan International Airways jet landing permission in Karachi.

The seven men pleaded not guilty to hijacking, abduction, attempted murder and terrorism but face the death penalty if convicted. (AFP)

Sharif trial: Testimony may end soon

REUTERS
KARACHI, FEB 13

LAWYERS prosecuting former Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif on charges of hijacking said today they hoped to finish presenting their witnesses by the end of next week.

"Hopefully, we will conclude our witnesses by the end of next week, probably by as early as Friday," Sindh provincial advocate general Raja Qureshi told reporters after the end of the third week of testimony. The trial against Sharif, his brother Shahbaz and five others on charges that also include attempted murder, kidnapping and terrorism, resumes on Wednesday.

The charges stem from October 12 when a civilian plane carrying Gen Musharraf and 198 passengers was briefly denied permission to land at Karachi airport. The prosecution alleged that Sharif ordered the aircraft, then running low on fuel, be denied landing approval. Qureshi said a list of a further 24 prosecution witnesses had been given to the anti-terrorism court and Sharif's lawyers, but added that not all of them were likely to testify.

Sharif sacked Musharraf before coup: Witness

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
KARACHI, FEB 13

seized control of Pakistan, deposed Sharif and proclaimed himself Chief Executive.

DEPOSED Pakistani premier Nawaz Sharif sacked his army chief just hours before the army launched a coup, his military secretary told a Karachi court on Saturday, Sharif signed the papers sacking General Pervez Musharraf and appointing a replacement on October 12, while the general was flying back to Pakistan from a visit abroad.

Hours after landing, Musharraf said Sharif turned down advice by a top defence official to discuss his decision to sack Gen Musharraf. "The time for this discussion is over," Malik quoted Sharif as saying to former Defence Secretary Ifkhar Khan.

Malik said Khan asked Sharif to discuss the issue with either Gen Musharraf or with his brother Shahbaz, former chief minister of Punjab province, and former petroleum minister Nisar Khan. Malik said Sharif was un-

happy that a general, Tariq Pervez, was forced to take early retirement by Musharraf a few days earlier because of media reports that Pervez was forced out "because he met the prime minister without the prior approval of GHQ (General Headquarters of the army)".

Malik told the court that he and most of the staff at prime minister's house on October 12 were in the custody of the army, but he did not say if he faced charges against or a court martial.

At about 6:15 pm, the prime minister asked me to go to the television centre and disarm soldiers who had taken over the television centre," Malik said. Several minutes later the army halted broadcasts and announced the coup.

Malik said Khan asked Sharif to discuss the issue with either Gen Musharraf or with his brother Shahbaz, former chief minister of Punjab province, and former petroleum minister Nisar Khan. Malik said Sharif was un-

happy that a general, Tariq Pervez, was forced to take early retirement by Musharraf a few days earlier because of media reports that Pervez was forced out "because he met the prime minister without the prior approval of GHQ (General Headquarters of the army)".

Malik told the court that he and most of the staff at prime minister's house on October 12 were in the custody of the army, but he did not say if he faced charges against or a court martial.

Pakistan generals must return to barracks: Benazir

London, February 17

FORMER PAKISTAN Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has appealed to Islamabad and New Delhi to end their "war of words" and said army generals in Pakistan must return to barracks, hold elections and help build peace in the region.

India and Pakistan must end their "war of words and come to terms with each other. A lot of rhetoric has been used by both sides and it is time they rose above such rhetoric," she said, adding that it is only then the people of the two countries could prosper.

"I would like to see men and women of goodwill on both sides of the border (India and Pakistan) together to put aside the poisonous past but the military regime in Islamabad makes it difficult," she said here last night.

"Instead of trying to run the municipality, revenue collection and foreign office, the generals must go back to barracks and order elections," Ms Bhutto said. The Pakistan People's Party

chief said "as a patriotic Pakistani" she is worried about the internal situation in Pakistan. "That is why I and my party are urging the generals to go back to barracks," she added.

Ms Bhutto, who attended a function to celebrate publication of a book, "India: Colours of continent", said in reply to a question that negotiations between India and Pakistan suffered a serious setback because of Kargil episode.

"Gen Pervez Musharraf is not trusted (by India) because of his perceived role (in Kargil)," Ms Bhutto said. Admitting that it was difficult to build confidence under the military rule, she said ever since the military coup, relations between India and Pakistan had deteriorated.

She had reached five agreements with her Indian counterpart Rajiv Gandhi during her prime minister-ship she said. Stating that the Pakistani economy was suffering,, Ms Bhutto said the country had come to a standstill as it was "mis-managed by successive finance ministers." (PTI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

18 FEB 2000

Mujahideen wanted Sharif out

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ISLAMABAD, Feb. 19. — Pakistan-based militant groups today said Mr Sharif's last days were difficult ones for them, as he had begun a crackdown on Islamic extremists here. The pressure on them eased after the military took over in October, Abdullah Muntazir, a spokesman of Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, said.

"A few weeks before the coup, police arrested more than 500 supporters of four major groups waging "jihad" against India," he added. "We were worried and prayed to Allah to remove the obstacles in our way, he stated." He said their prayers were answered with Mr Sharif's removal. After the set back in Kargil "in several cities, including Lahore, our offices were raided and rumours were rife that the government planned to ban our annual gatherings," he said.

"Some of those arrested were released during Mr Sharif's time, but most were released after the military took power," he explained.

'Probe delayed charges': An army officer today told an anti-terrorism court that official investigations had delayed formal charges

against the ousted Prime Minister, Mr Nawaz Sharif, by 28 days. Colonel Atique Kiyani filed the complaint, accusing Mr Sharif of denying landing permission to a commercial jet carrying the country's army chief, General Pervez Musharraf, on the night of the October coup.

Col. Kiyani, a protocol officer in the army, had filed an FIR at a police station in Karachi in November. During a cross-examination, Col. Kiyani said he wanted to lodge the FIR on 13 October, and had consulted his superiors on the issue. The delay occurred because "fact-finding probes" were conducted to pinpoint the people behind the incident.

Arms display ban: Pakistan has banned the display of arms in public from next month, to ensure the common man's safety, the interior ministry said, adds PTI.

Such a display can invite imprisonment terms of up to seven years, a fine, or both, a ministry spokesman said. The same punishment will be applicable for those who fire to celebrate at marriage parties, it was said. Instructions in this regard have already been issued to the provincial governments for strict compliance, he added.

THE STATESMAN

20 FEB 2000

Lawyers set to build Sharif's defence

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
ISLAMABAD, FEB 24

THE prosecution concluded its case in the trial of deposed Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday after calling 27 witnesses, thus paving the way for the defence to commence its work within the next few days.

"We are satisfied that we have presented ample evidence to prove our case," said Attorney General Raja Qureshi. Sharif and his six co-accused are on trial charged with terrorism, kidnapping and attempted murder. All

four charges carry either the death penalty or life in prison.

Qureshi asked the anti-terrorist court to have the accused give their testimony in camera saying the prosecution fears the men will betray state secrets "and harm the security and integrity of the country."

There are predictions that the former prime minister will make some important disclosures in his testimony and will also give statements that may rouse passions out of the court room.

The judge is to announce his decision on Thursday before the

defence launches its case.

Lawyers for Sharif and his co-accused strongly opposed an in-camera session. One of Sharif's lawyers, Khawaja Sultan said, "It is against the fundamental rights of the accused and is tantamount to suppressing their defence."

According to the testimony of prosecution witnesses, that included the pilot of the aircraft, air traffic control officials and aides of Sharif's, the aircraft was ordered to divert to a country in the Middle East.

The order was issued after Sharif dismissed Musharraf and

appointed another army general as army chief of staff. The orders dismissing Musharraf were issued while the army chief was en route to Pakistan from Sri Lanka.

The pilot of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) passenger plane with 200 passengers and crew aboard testified that he was unable to divert to the Middle East because of lack of fuel. The aircraft circled over Karachi seeking permission to land because it was running out of fuel.

When the aircraft landed it apparently had only seven minutes of fuel remaining.

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INDIAN EXPRESS

25 FEB 2000

Top Sharif lawyers resign

Lahore, Feb. 27 (AFP): Two lawyers representing deposed Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at his trial withdrew from the case today, criticising a court order which may impose a reporting ban on their client's evidence.

Ajaz Batalvi and Khwaja Sultan said they could no longer represent their client.

"We are withdrawing from the case," they said in a joint statement at a news conference here.

"This is ridiculous. We cannot contest the case when such measures are taken by the court hearing a historic case," they said.

Sharif, his brother Shahbaz and five other officials have been charged with hijacking, abduction, attempted murder and terrorism.

All the accused have pleaded not guilty but face the death penalty if convicted.

The two lawyers were the most senior of the nine-member defence team and represented both Sharif and his brother.

Prosecutors last week asked the anti-terrorism court hearing the case to hold sessions in private when Sharif and his co-accused gave evidence, fearing the Premier's testimony could breach national security.

On Friday, judge Rehmat Hussain Jafri ruled Sharif could give

● **Pakistan's military rulers might ease an austerity ban on serving food at wedding parties by allowing a single chicken dish. The ban, imposed to spare the poor from social pressures for throwing lavish wedding parties, was affecting poultry sales.**

26/2/77
evidence in public, but that he would decide what could be reported.

"We also protest that a former elected Prime Minister of the country was tried in such a manner and in a court which was created to deal speedily with terrorism cases," the two added.

Batalvi said it was the first time he had pulled out of a case.

A senior lawyer, he represented the prosecution in the trial of another former Pakistani Premier, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was sentenced to death and hanged in April 1979.

"Can I defend my client when he has been denied that freedom of speech which law gave him," Batalvi said.

"For me as a counsel of Mian Nawaz Sharif the last two days have been a period of acute anxiety and tension."

He said the judge had stepped beyond the law in his decision. "I say it with great respect that law has not given him any such authority nor has law fixed any parameters by which the statement of the accused can be scissored by the judge," he said. "To say the least, this is not justice."

One of Sharif's remaining lawyers, Nihal Hashmi, said the withdrawals showed their client was not getting a fair trial.

"It is a serious blow. The resignations show that the trial is not fair," he said. "Now when his turn has come they are depriving his right and the right of the masses to know about the real picture on the day of October 12."

Sharif, meanwhile, has accused the West of collaborating in

the overthrow of democracy and insisted that he is not receiving a fair trial.

Sharif's told the *Sunday Telegraph* in the smuggled written answers to questions given to him by an intermediary in his prison cell.

"I am extremely disappointed that the preachers of democracy in the western world are acquiescing in the one-man dictatorial rule. They are indirectly supporting destruction of democracy in Pakistan," Sharif told the newspaper.

Sharif's lawyers quit over order to 'gag' him

LAHORE: Two lawyers defending ousted Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif in a trial in which he faces a possible death sentence have withdrawn in protest over a court ruling that gags him, one of them said on Monday.

Ijaz Batalvi, the main defence lawyer, said in a statement in Lahore, his home town, that he and colleague Khwaja Sultan Ahmad withdrew because of a ruling by the court in Karachi on Friday that a statement by Sharif should be made in private.

"The whole world, for the last two months, heard the prosecution malign and scandalise Mian Nawaz Sharif and now when it was his turn to tell the truth he has been asked to shut up," he said. "To say the least, this is not justice."

Mr Sharif, his brother Shahbaz and five others are facing charges that include hijacking, attempted murder and terrorism. Hijacking carries a maximum penalty of death.

Judge Rehmat Hussain Jafri of the anti-terrorism court made the ruling after the prosecution asked that Sharif's statement be given in camera because state secrets might be revealed. Jafri

ruled: "If they give a written statement, then that can be examined by the court and if the accused give an oral statement, whatever they will say in it will be recorded and then the court will decide at the appropriate stage as to whether the same or part of it should not be released to the public or media for public consumption." Mr Batalvi said the ruling "tantamounts to an unlawful restriction on the accused" and that he and his colleague would not be able to defend Sharif in these circumstances. "After deep thought and deliberation I along with my learned friend and colleague Khwaja Sultan Ahmad have decided to withdraw from the case," he said.

The prosecution had asked the court to "certify" that Sharif's statement did not tarnish the image of the military-led government and affect the security, integrity and solidarity of the state.

Mr Batalvi said a special law governing the anti-terrorism court barred him from appealing against the ruling to a higher court. It would be "against my legal training and juristic conscience to submit to such an order", he added.

Batalvi told BBC's Urdu service on Sunday

that the ruling of the court was without any constitutional or legal validity. The court, he said, was not following the law of the country. He could not work in these circumstances, he said.

The blackout imposed on the statements of Sharif and other accused by the court is something, which was not resorted to even by Gen Ziaul Haq during the trial of then deposed prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the 1970s although he, too, used courts to get a death sentence passed on him, Mr Batalvi added.

Raja Zafarul Haq, acting head of Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League party, said a party meeting in Karachi on Thursday would consider a course of action about the trial, which is due to resume on Wednesday. "We feel that they were forced to do it," he said in Islamabad.

The charges against Mr Sharif and his co-defendants stem from October 12 when a Pakistan Airlines plane carrying army chief General Pervez Musharraf and 198 passengers was briefly denied permission to land at Karachi. The prosecution alleges that Sharif ordered that the aircraft should be denied permission to land. (Reuters)

Troops keep up attack on Grozny

Russians advance southward

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SOUTHERN CHECHNYA, Jan. 2. — The Russian military today claimed to have made inroads into rebel-controlled territory in southern Chechnya, capturing strategic heights overlooking a key rebel stronghold.

Federal forces also kept up air and artillery bombardments of the Chechen capital Grozny, as a major offensive to take the city entered a second week. Russian commanders said their forces fought off an overnight rebel attack on federal artillery positions northwest of Grozny, on the Tersky Heights.

After days of fighting, Russian paratroopers yesterday overran the strategic heights near Vedenov, a major rebel center in southern Chechnya, the military said. The Russian forces can now position artillery on the heights, making it easier to drive the rebels out of Vedenov.

Russian artillery also continued to pound the nearby southern village of Serzhen-Yurt.

Russian forces have been trying to crush rebel fighters concentrated in the mountainous south of the republic. Russian jets and combat helicopters flew about 100 combat missions over southern Chechnya during the past 24 hours, the military said today.

After taking the heights, the

Russian forces seized a large cache of arms and ammunition, including grenade-launchers, two anti-aircraft rocket-launchers and a number of flame-throwers, a military spokesman said.

Russian commanders claimed their ground forces were making progress in Grozny, but the federal forces still appeared to be nowhere close to taking the city center. Rebel fighters in heavily fortified positions have inflicted steady losses on the Russians.

The military claimed Sunday that its forces had eliminated seven Chechen commanders, including prominent warlord Arbi Barayev. But the military commandant of Grozny, Isa Munayev, denied the claim, the Interfax news agency reported.

Bomb defused: Explosives experts defused a bomb found today near a mosque in the restive Caucasus Mountains region of Ingushetia, averting an explosion that could have killed dozens of people, officials said, adds a report from Nazran.

The mosque in the Ingush capital Nazran is located near a railway station, and the bomb was found by railway security guards, Ingush police spokesman Lieutenant Akhmed Tursayev said.

Ingushetia, which borders Chechnya, has been plagued by violence since the end of the 1994-96 war.

POLL DATE ADVANCED / ELECTION SET FOR MARCH 26

Russia to elect President

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, JAN. 5. Russians will go to the polls on March 26 to elect a new President in the wake of the surprise decision of Mr. Boris Yeltsin to resign on Dec. 31, six months before his constitutional term was up.

The Upper House of the Russian Parliament, the Federation Council, set the date of snap presidential elections at an emergency meeting on Wednesday.

The new vote date advances the elections by 10 weeks, which gives the Prime Minister, Mr. Vladimir Putin, who automatically became

Acting President when Mr. Yeltsin stepped down, a clear advantage over other candidates, who will now have just over four weeks for official election campaigning.

In a television interview on Tuesday Mr. Putin admitted that Mr. Yeltsin's move was motivated by the desire to boost Mr. Putin's chances of winning the elections.

"He wanted the presidential campaign to develop according to his wishes, he was helping me," Mr. Putin said. "To put it flatly, he gave me a head start in the current presidential campaign."

Mr. Putin, who rides an unprecedented wave of public support thanks to the hugely popular war in Chechnya, is widely expected to sweep the elections, quite possibly in the first round. A candidate must win more than 50 per cent of votes to be declared the winner in the first round. If no candidate wins in the first round, the two leading candidates face off in a runoff, held three weeks after the first round.

A top Kremlin aide said no other presidential candidates had "any chances whatsoever" against Mr. Putin.

"Vladimir Vladimirovich [Putin] does not need to run any special election campaign," Mr. Igor Shabdurashv, deputy head of the presidential staff, told a press conference in Moscow. "His work as the head of the government and the acting head of the state will be a sufficient form of election campaigning."

So far, two politicians announced their decision to run — Mr. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the maverick leader of the nationalist Liberal Democratic Party, and Mr. Grigory Yavlinsky, leader of the liberal Yabloko party. Their parties polled about 6 per cent of the votes each in elections to Parliament last month. The former Prime Minister, Mr. Yevgeny Primakov, the only likely contender who could put up a credible challenge to Mr. Putin, is yet to confirm the decision to join the race that he made on the eve of the parliamentary vote. The election coalition Mr. Primakov headed, Fatherland-All Russia, did far worse than expected, giving rise to speculation that Mr. Primakov may drop out. On the other hand, there are reports that Mr. Primakov may be moved as a candidate of a broad coalition of opposition forces.

A leading member of the Communist Party told the Interfax news agency today that the party may take a "surprise" decision on a presidential candidate they would back, suggesting that the party leader, Mr. Gennady Zyuganov, who lost to Mr. Yeltsin in the runoff in 1996, may not run again.



The acting Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin (right), shakes hands with the Russian Communist leader, Mr. Gennady Zyuganov, during a meeting with top legislators in Moscow on Wednesday. — AP

Judge refuses to hear Sharif case in army presence

INDIA ABROAD NEWS SERVICE

ISLAMABAD, Jan. 12. — In a major setback for the Pakistani junta, a High Court judge has refused to hear the hijacking case against Mr Nawaz Sharif, saying a fair trial was not possible with Intelligence agents and army personnel present in the courtroom.

The judge, Mr Shabir Ahmed, was quoted by NNI news agency as saying: "A fair trial could not be conducted in the presence of Intelligence agents and army personnel." The Karachi court adjourned the case in just 40 minutes.

"I cannot hear the case in the presence of Intelligence personnel in the courtroom," Mr Ahmed said, ordering that the case be referred back to the lower court judge who had been hearing it earlier.

The lower court had sent the case to Mr Ahmed after the military government amended the law against terrorism in November, ostensibly to make the trial more transparent.

One of the accused in the same case, Mr Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, former chairman of Pakistan International Airlines, was the first to complain about the presence of Intelligence agents in the courtroom, said NNI. He told Mr Ahmed that his conversations were being monitored and recorded.

Mr Ahmed immediately ordered the guards to arrest

the Intelligence agents present in the room. But some managed to escape. NNI said the Intelligence agency officials had arrested outside the court premises several people who had drawn the attention of the judge to their presence in the courtroom.

Mr Ahmed adjourned the hearing till 17 January and returned the case to the anti-terrorist court headed by Mr Rehmat Hussain Jaffry, where initial proceedings started in November.

The judge, however, rejected a petition filed by Mr Sharif's lawyers that the court was not competent to hear the case against the former Prime Minister.

Mr Ahmed's refusal to hear the case lodged by the government of General Pervez Musharraf, who dismissed Mr Sharif and his Cabinet after a bloodless coup on 12 October last year, is being considered a major setback for the military regime.

The military government has charged the deposed Prime Minister and some of his close aides with treason and plotting to murder Gen. Musharraf on the day of the coup by denying a plane carrying him permission to land in Karachi even though it was running low on fuel.

Among the others charged is Mr Sharif's younger brother, Mr Shahbaz Sharif, the ousted chief minister of Pakistan's

Punjab province.

"We were taken by surprise," Mr Raja Qureshi, chief prosecutor and Attorney General, said of Mr Ahmed's stance. "But the judge has exercised his power. He has the power to assign the case to any other judge. We respect the law".

Mr Qureshi, however, insisted: "We don't consider it a setback because we feel we have a strong case."

Legislation which governs anti-terrorist courts in Pakistan requires a High Court judge to preside. However, Qureshi said, Mr Ahmed can waive that requirement and pass the case on to any judge. It was not immediately known whether Mr Sharif's lawyers would argue against a lower court judge hearing the case.

The anti-terrorist courts were set up by Mr Sharif's government to ensure quick justice, obviating lengthy delays in Pakistan's regular judicial system.

Today, the former Prime Minister and his co-accused were brought to the court in armoured personnel carriers, surrounded by dozens of paramilitary rangers and police personnel. Mr Ahmed also objected to the strong presence of troops and police.

Mr Sharif has steadfastly maintained his innocence. He has accused the army of hijacking democracy and fabricating the charges against him to justify the coup.

THE STATESMAN

13 JAN 2000

Sharif case judge objects to sleuths' presence in court

Orders arrest of one intelligence operative

Mubashir Zaidi
Islamabad, January 12

JUSTICE SHABBIR Ahmed refused to conduct the proceedings of the Nawaz Sharif case today, objecting to the presence of intelligence personnel in the court.

Justice Ahmed is the administrative judge of the anti-terrorist court hearing the plane conspiracy case against ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

The judge was so furious that he also ordered the case to be referred back to the lower-level judge (Rehmat Hussain Jafferi) who had been hearing it earlier.

Justice Shabbir ruled on the objection of one of the co-accused in the case, former PIA chairman Shahid Khakan Abbasi, who complained that intelligence personnel were monitoring the proceedings.

The judge ordered the sealing of the court after the objection was raised.

Later, two men were produced before him. After identifying them, Justice Ahmed ordered the arrest of one of them.

Justice Ahmed also disposed off an application by Mr Sharif chal-



Mr Nawaz Sharif

lenging the jurisdiction of the ATC court for the trial plane hijacking case.

He dismissed the plea ruling that the anti-terrorist court has the power to hear the case against the Mr Sharif and six others.

Mr Sharif, his brother Shahbaz, former accountability bureau chairman Saifur Rehman, former PIA chairman Shahid Khakan Abbasi, former Sindh advisor Ghous Ali Shah, former Sindh police chief Rana Maqbool and former principal secretary to the

prime minister Saeed Mehdi were arrested shortly after the coup.

They were charged with serious offences of conspiring to kill Army chief General Pervez Musharraf.

Earlier, the agency people had heated arguments with newsmen after they had a brief chat with the deposed premier.

Mr Sharif said that while the world had entered a new millennium, the Pakistan Prime Minister was in jail.

"We are facing the threat of being declared a terrorist state. We have been isolated. Our membership in the Commonwealth has been suspended," he stated.

Soon after, the Colonel of the Rangers brought intelligence people in the court. Three were posted just in front of the newsmen. Two were asked to stand near Mr Sharif and the other accused.

Contempt case: The Supreme Court dismissed objections on the proceedings of the contempt case against Mr Sharif and his party PML raised by their counsel.

A full 12-member bench of the Supreme Court stated that the contempt case proceedings were initiated by the court after applying its full mind.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

13 JAN 2000

Musharraf on Notice

The drama in a Karachi courtroom on January 12 during the trial of former Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif will be studied, interpreted and analysed by jurists and observers all over the world. Asserting that it was not possible to hold a free and fair trial in their presence, the judge ordered the arrest of intelligence men in the courtroom and remitted the trial to a subordinate court. Such a ruling was unheard of in the three previous bouts of military rule. Though Pakistan has not lacked courageous and principled judges, it is very unusual, to put in the mildest terms, for the judiciary in a military regime to be so autonomous. It is also noteworthy that the person who objected to the presence of intelligence men in the court is the designated approver in the trial, the former chairman of the civil aviation authority. It has been reported that the tape in the cockpit voice recorder, which would have provided clinching evidence for or against Mr Nawaz Sharif, had been erased. Three months after the coup, the military regime has not come out with a shred of evidence against the accused. These developments raise some serious questions about the future of General Parvez Musharraf. The general was not in Pakistan when the coup was staged by two of his deputies who installed him as 'chief executive'. There are conflicting accounts about the delays on the part of the Karachi corps commander in clearing the runway to get General Musharraf's plane to land. Supporters of Mr Sharif have claimed that he was compelled to dismiss the army chief earlier that day since the army was divided and its unity had to be sustained.

The present era is very different from the 1970s, when Zia-ul-Haq overthrew Z A Bhutto. Either the Pakistani people are not afraid of military rule or General Musharraf is not in a position to induce the kind of fear and submissiveness that Zia was able to generate. In either case, it is valid to ask how effective General Musharraf can be as a ruler without any legitimacy, and also how long he can last. These are very important questions for not only the people of Pakistan but also for India and other countries as well. General Musharraf is a *mohajir* without any constituency in Pakistan. The generals who wield real power may be using him as a convenient facade to beguile the rest of the world; they would like to convince the US that he is the best bet for them and that if he is not supported there will be a deluge after him in which mullahs — either robed or uniformed — will take over a nuclear weapon-wielding, narco-terrorist Pakistan. In the past three months, the US has been held hostage to this threat of a fanatical mullah succeeding General Musharraf if Pakistan is not supported. However, the internal contradictions stemming from the coup have already begun to surface. The military chief executive may not be able to lay down the law without a dose of terror but if he does so, Pakistan will become even more isolated. If he continues to fumble in this manner, General Musharraf may well meet the fate General Neguib of Egypt did years ago, with the real rulers then stepping forward from the shadows.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

14 JAN 2000

Sharif case adjourned again

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KARACHI, Jan. 18. — The anti-terrorist court adjourned a case of treason and hijacking against deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif today while the judge decides whether the prosecution is withholding evidence.

The case will resume tomorrow when formal charges may be laid, court officials said. Mr Sharif's lawyers are arguing that the prosecution is withholding crucial tapes of conversations in the Control Tower of Karachi Airport on 12 October — the day the army took control in Pakistan.

The army has accused Mr Sharif and six other men, of trying to kill the army chief on 12 October by refusing to allow the commercial airline returning him to Pakistan to land at Karachi Airport. Mr Sharif has denied the

charges.

The case against Mr Sharif has been postponed several times, including last week when a High Court judge refused to proceed with the case to protest the presence of intelligence agents in his courtroom. He ordered the case returned to a lower court judge.

Today, Mr Sharif's lawyers again protested the presence of plainclothes intelligence officials in the courtroom. "We are not satisfied with the situation in the court," said Mr Iqbal Raad, a member of Mr Sharif's defense team.

Mr Raad said there are paramilitary rangers and intelligence agents in the courtroom. "They are quite intimidating and we don't see how under these circumstances we will get an open and fair trial," he said.

The army-led government has promised an "open, transparent and fair" trial.

THE STATESMAN
19 JAN 2000

SHARIF'S TRIAL-I

A Murder Has Been Arranged?

4-6 2001
A T long last on 19 January 2000 the special court has charged Nawaz Sharif with kidnapping, attempted murder, hijacking and terrorism. What precisely are the intentions of General Pervez Musharraf in putting the former PM, Nawaz Sharif, to trial on charges which he knows to be false? Is it to put him out of harm's way for sometime, while he consolidates his regime after the army coup of 12 October 1999? Or, has a murder been arranged?

Pervez Musharraf, the self-styled Chief Executive, reckoned without the host. He might have caught a Tartar not in the simple-minded Sharif but his recently briefed counsel Eijaz Batavi, one of the ablest criminal lawyers in the sub-continent. He has lost no time in raising a point which would put the President, Rafiq Tarar, in acute embarrassment. He is certain also to ask that Musharraf be summoned as witness for a proper grilling. On the facts, no court worth the name can decline the request.

The CE has made the task of the defence far easier by his reckless charges and breaches of every rule in the book. Hours after the coup, he said "I was in Sri Lanka on an official visit. On my way back the PIA commercial flight was not allowed to land at Karachi but was ordered to be diverted to anywhere outside Pakistan despite acute shortage of fuel, imperilling the life of all the passengers."

PERSONAL ROLE

"Thanks be to Allah, this evil design was thwarted through speedy army action". This was a charge of "design", not recklessness. Even so, he did not allege hijacking, waging war against Pakistan, nor, for that matter, explicitly, an intent to kill him and the 198 persons on board the flight.

All the accounts have it that immediately after being informed of the order for the plane's diversion, Musharraf entered the cockpit and ordered the pilot to fly back to Karachi, ordered the Air Traffic Control (ATC) there to remove the obstructions and allow the plane to land, and alerted the army which swiftly went into action.

By AG NOORANI

The General's personal role has two legal consequences. One is that since he knows the facts personally and alleged the offence in his broadcast, he or anyone else should have filed the first information report with the police immediately, as is invariably done whenever an offence is committed. The courts take a very dim view of belated FIRs and of the credibility of such informants. The other is that Pervez Musharraf is a star witness whose testimony is indispensable to a fair trial. He is the *de facto* complainant.

The author is a lawyer and commentator on current affairs.

The FIR, however, was filed a month later, on 10 November. The law is clear. The FIR is the starting point for police investigations. Any investigations conducted prior to it are devoid of legality; the statements recorded during this phase are worthless. In the instant case, the army, not the police, intervened and grilled witnesses in its own manner.

Before the FIR was filed, the media was treated to a welter of versions to prejudice the defence case. But these very statements reveal the army's illegal probes prior to the FIR. The interior minister, Lt Gen (ret'd) Moinuddin Haider, said on 11 November that "the black box's transcript has to be translated and all the recording that take place at the Air Traffic Control (ATC) have to be interpreted."

The complaint was launched (sic) after all the evidence was collected." But evidence is collected only after the complaint, not before it. A complaint is based on what the complainant has seen or heard. That sets the investigative machinery in motion. Here, the army went to work on key witnesses and filed the FIR. The subsequent police investigation was window-dressing. It was not independent of executive influence. The entire investigation has been vitiated.

BLACK BOX

"An official" told *News* (11 November), "The conversation between the ATC tower and the pilot and between Gen Musharraf and the GOC (Army) Karachi recorded in the black box cannot be disputed... the black box is the most solid piece of evidence." Indeed; hence the refusal to give it to the defence. The *News* was told of statements by former IGP Sindh, Rana Maqbool Ahmed, and former DIG Sukkur that "they had orders to arrest Gen Musharraf". Who recorded the statements? "Military investigators" who also deciphered the black box.

The inconsistency is glaring. If the PM wanted to arrest the sacked army chief, he clearly did not intend to kill him. Statements to the effect that in ordering the diversion of the plane he "had no regard to the threat to the lives" of the passengers do not add up to an intent to kill.

The FIR reeks of contradictions. It was filed by Lt Col Atiquz Zaman Kiyani, protocol

officer army HQs, Karachi. He reached the airport at about 6 pm to tie up arrangements for receiving Musharraf. The estimated time of arrival of flight PK-805 from Colombo was 6.55 pm. At about 6.40 pm corps commander 5 Corps, Lt Gen Musaffar Usmani, arrived. He came to know that the plane had been refused permission to land at Karachi airport by the ATC. The airfield was closed, runway lights were switched off and the runway was physically blocked by parking crash tender vehicles.

"While other flights scheduled to land at Karachi were diverted to Sukkur and Nawabshah, flight PK-805 was refused landing even at Nawabshah which was the planned alternative airfield of flight PK-805. I also came to know that flight PK-805 was ordered not to land anywhere in Pakistan. Despite critical low fuel endurance, the pilot had been ordered to proceed to a foreign country at his own risk. Later on after landing of flight PK-805 at about 1948 hours, I came to know that only approximately 10 minutes fuel was left which showed an intent and criminal conspiracy to cause the plane to crash, thus physically eliminate and murder COAS General Pervez Musharraf and passengers by an act of terrorism of hijacking with an intent to cause crash of the plane by lack of fuel for the reason as no airfield was allowed to be open for its landing." It was done with "deliberate criminal intent".

DOCTORED

At 7 pm the PM's advisor on Sindh affairs, Syed Ghaus Ali Shah, and Rana Maqbool Ahmed, IGP, arrived at the airport. "It was also learnt that a heavy police contingent had been deployed at Nawabshah airfield under the supervision of Mr Ahsanullah Gondal, the then SSP Nawabshah, and Akhtar Hussain, ex-DIG Sukkur Range, on the orders of the Adviser to Prime Minister on Sindh Affairs, Syed Ghaus Ali Shah, and Raja Maqbool, ex-IGP Sindh, with orders to take General Pervez Musharraf into custody in case flight PK-805 lands at Nawabshah." Surely, if a "heavy police contingent had been deployed at Nawabshah airfield" and not at Karachi, it was because the flight was to be diverted there to secure Musharraf's arrest there.

The army took over the ATC at 6.45 pm — an hour before the plane landed at 7.48 pm — after it had removed the obstructions. One vital omission in the FIR betrays its doctored character. There is absolutely no reference to the active intervention, on the plane, of the person most affected, the one whom the PM allegedly plotted to kill, Gen Pervez Musharraf, as if he was a passive spectator rather than the decisive man he proved to be. Why the omission?

(To be continued)

THE STATESMAN
20 JAN 2000

Sharif under probe for links with RAW

Karachi, January 20

HT-22 21/1 PAK (1)

DEPOSED PRIME Minister Nawaz Sharif, who already faces charges of high treason and hijacking, is now being investigated for links with the Indian Intelligence Agency--the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).

The investigation was launched following allegations that the RAW enjoyed the patronage of Mr Sharif and had gained unhindered access to top offices in the Government, the Jang reported quoting official sources.

The reports said Mr Sharif held unscheduled and unannounced meetings, on all overseas tours, with top ranking Indian officials including RAW agents.

Mr Sharif's son Hussain, close associate Saifur Rehman, a former head of the accountability bureau, and several former federal Ministers are also accused of direct involvement in the network with the intelligence agency, the report said.

The report claimed a top ranking RAW official, J D Khanna, had a long meeting with Mr Sharif on October 11, a day before the Army took over following the sacking of its chief, Gen Pervez Musharraf. The RAW official reportedly stayed in Pakistan for a week and returned to India by road on the day of the military coup, it said.

The paper also claimed that the business interests of Mr Sharif in India were safeguarded by the RAW and other Indian government agencies. Mr Sharif is believed to have supplied sugar worth millions of dollars to India last year from mills owned by his Ittefaq group of industries.

Earlier, Mr Sharif's wife Kulsoom Nawaz had dismissed media speculation that the former ruling family had a close personal relationship with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. (UNI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

SHARIF'S TRIAL-III

International Lawyers Should Monitor

ON 18 November, judicial magistrate Fareed Anwar Qazi began recording statements of three witnesses under Section 164 CrPC. Captain Sarwat Ali, chief pilot of the plane said he was told to take the plane outside Pakistan "at his own risk". He added: "Even on my insistence the ATC refused to allow landing of the plane at Karachi after which I changed the direction of the flight towards Nawabshah airport. Meanwhile I received a message from ground control at 7.40 pm that now the plane can land at Karachi. It happened after troops took over the airport." He said that when the plane descended, only seven minutes' fuel was left and a little delay could have caused a crash and loss of over 200 lives. He, obviously, was free to go to Nawabshah. Two other witnesses were also examined.

On 20 November, Wing Commander Ahmed Farooq, secretary to the DG of CAA, Shahnawaz Dara of PIA, and Ahsanullah Gondal, former SSP of Nawabshah deposed. The first two said that plane had been refused permission to land in Pakistan.

TELLING EVIDENCE

Farooq admitted to having made a similar statement to "a committee of military men" on 13 October and to army personnel again on 19 October. He spoke to the police on 12 and 16 November. Dara admitted that permission was given to land in Nawabshah, albeit for refuelling. His reference to a "bigger conspiracy" gave him away. Gondal, the former SSP of Nawabshah, said he had been instructed by Rana Maqbool, IGP, to arrest Musharraf and confine him to a resthouse. The DIG of Sukkur, Akhtar Hussain, was informed of this.

Thus the entire technical staff confirmed the directions to land at Nawabshah. When Lt Gen Iftikhar directed the pilot to return to Karachi it had fuel for 42 minutes, not 7. Some contradicted their statements to the police. Aminullah Chaudhry, the DG of CAA, complained in court of harassment one day only to turn approver the next (23 November). The former IGP Maqbool Ahmed appears to be the next target.

The flight engineer, Amir Rasheed, dutifully followed the line that the flight was to be diverted to Muscat; but, explained: "We didn't have fuel for going to Muscat, and thus I informed the captain about his instruction from airline. We were hovering over Marvi

when we were allowed to land at the Nawabshah airport." On the same day (25 November) Aqeel Ahmed, former general manager, Air Traffic Services, CAA, deposed that on the day of the incident Aminullah had ordered him on the telephone to close the Karachi airport for all flights and to divert domestic flights to the Nawabshah airport. When the plane hovered over Marvi it had fuel for 40 minutes' flight. He testified that the pilot was asked by Yusuf Abbas, chief operation officer of PIA to proceed to Nawabshah. The plane had "turned" towards it when it was recalled to Karachi.

Even more telling was the evidence of the Nawabshah airport manager, Mohammed Salman. The ATC informed him of diversion of flights to this airport. He received a query about providing fuel to an airbus; the PK-805 obviously.

Akhtar Hussain, former DIG Sukkur range, testified in detail to arrangements by the SP to arrest Musharraf at Nawabshah. The IGP ordered him, however, to refuel the General's plane so that it could be flown to some other destination. Sharif was out of his senses to plot all this; be it arrest or expulsion. But murder or plane crash was no part of his design.

By now three more persons were arraigned before the anti-terrorism court presided by sessions judge Rehmat Hussain Jafri - Shahbaz Sharif, Nawaz's brother, his Man Friday, Saifur Rehman, and principal secretary Saeed Mehdi.

In the night of 2-3 December, the President promulgated the Anti-Terrorism (Third Amendment) Ordinance, 1999 amending Section 13 of the AT Act of 1997 to empower the government - to establish, besides the special courts, one "additional Special Court in Lahore or Karachi and appoint a Judge of the High Court as its Judge where a high Court Judge sits on the Special Court he will be the Administrative Judge for that area, with power to transfer, withdraw or recall any case pending before any other special court for trial by himself or any other Judge".

TRANSCRIPTS

It also provided that special courts will consist of a high court judge. The schedule to the Act was also amended to include hijacking and criminal conspiracy, kidnapping and waging war. It was tailored for Sharif's case.

Eventually a chargesheet was presented to the AT Court on 8 December. It added to the four offences alleged in the FIR five more - waging war against Pakistan; collection of arms for the purpose; concealment of acts aimed at waging war and under Section 7A and 8 of the

Act (stirring up sectarian hatred). Five audio and two video cassettes were relied on besides the black box, 53 prosecution witnesses were cited. The defence instantly applied for the transcripts of the recordings.

Justice Shabbir Ahmed of the Sindh High Court, now the administrative judge for AT Courts, ordered: "The prosecution is directed to supply the transcript as well as the copies of audio and video cassettes to defence counsel." He also expressed his dissatisfaction with the conduct of security personnel. "When I entered the court, it was definitely a camera (sic) trial," he said on 8 December. His annoyance at their presence on 13 January is understandable.

The charge sheet quoted the FIR copiously.

But the prosecution refused to obey the order for providing the defence with the transcripts. Iqbal Raad, Sharif's counsel explained why (13 November). The black box will make it clear under whose command the plane flew. "The pilot was obeying someone else" (read: Pervez Musharraf). The prosecution sought leave to play them in court. The judge declined.

On 15 December, Raad alleged erasures in the black box recordings. Two days later transcripts of the five cassettes were supplied to the defence but not of the recordings of the black box. The prosecution made a shocking disclosure on 20 December. The black box recordings had been erased due to the automated system. It records voices for a 30-minute-period which "automatically" get erased after that span and start fresh recording.

The approver Aminullah Chaudhry deposed on 20 December to Sharif's orders not to let the plane land anywhere in Pakistan. However, finally a call came from Brig Javed Iqbal, military secretary to the PM that the plane be allowed to halt at Karachi, refueled and sent to Sharjah.

ON RECORD

Yusuf Abbas was thereafter directed to let the plane "go half-way to Nawabshah, brought back to Karachi ... refueled and sent to Sharjah". But Musharraf is on record in interviews to the highly respected Karachi monthly, *Newsline*, and to the BBB saying that they were finally given landing permission for Nawabshah. How can he avoid the witness box?

In this state of pre-trial evidence the prosecution case on attempt to murder cannot survive at the trial. Witnesses who affirm their prior statements will be of no help. If they contradict themselves they make matters worse. To sum up, on this one charge where a trial is permissible the prosecution's evidence cannot possibly support a conviction. On the rest no evidence can sustain conviction when the allegations do not constitute offences in law - hijacking, kidnapping and terrorism.

On 20 December Ejaz Batahri questioned the Court's jurisdiction to try the case. He argued that the court has no powers to take cognisance of the matter as Section 196 CrPC was not complied with.

Under the section, which deals with prosecution for offences against the state, no court of law can take cognisance of any offence against the state unless a complaint is made by the order of the central or the provincial government concerned. Who can give the sanction - President Tarar or the usurper of power, Pervez Musharraf? Indeed, it is arguable that for other offences too, sanction under Section 197 is required for offences committed in course of duty. The sanctioning authority will be Tarar, the one who had the power to remove the PM.

The case was transferred back to Judge Rahmat Hussain Jaffry, a sessions judge. It is time the international legal community sent observers to watch the proceedings in this "show trial" as the British foreign office minister, Peter Hain, aptly called them. As author of the mini-classic *Political Trials in Britain* his credentials are impeccable.

(Concluded)



Sharif booked for jail-break plan

Pak (1)
Karachi, January 21

HT-24

22/1

THE PAKISTANI police have registered a case against deposed Premier Nawaz Sharif for planning a jail-break here, police and government officials said today.

The case was registered at a local police station on the complaint of Nusrat Hussain Mangi, Superintendent of Landhi prison, where Sharif and others are being held, they said.

Sharif, Saif-ur Rehman, former head of the Accountability Bureau, and Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, former head of Pakistan International Airlines, were accused of taking part in planning the jail-break.

A senior police official, who did not want to be named, said the plan was unearthed on January 9 when the prison authorities caught the daughter of one of the accused, Rehman, leaving her father's prison with a sketch map of the jail. Qureshi said Sharif and two others accused in the case could be punished with a maximum 10

years' imprisonment, if found guilty.

"Since these are not scheduled offences, the case of jail-break would be tried in the normal courts and not in the special anti-terrorism courts," he said.

But a lawyer for Sharif, Arshad Khan Jadoon, insisted the former Premier was innocent. "It is a lie.

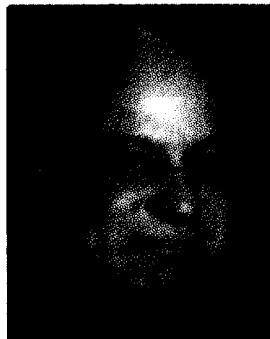
The former Premier, Mian Nawaz Sharif, does not need to plan jail-break while he is already facing charges in the court," Jadoon said, adding: "It is just an attempt to humiliate the political leader."

On Wednesday, a Pakistani anti-terrorism court judge formally charged Sharif, his brother Shabbaz

and five other senior officials with abduction, attempted murder, hijacking and terrorism.

If convicted of the hijacking charge, they could face the death penalty. Sharif, who pleaded not guilty, was ousted in a military coup by Army Chief General Pervez Musharraf on October 12.

Sharif has been held in detention since. (AFP)



THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

22 JAN 2000

'Major setback to Pak. judiciary'

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 26. Responding to the Pakistan Government's move asking judges to take a fresh oath and the subsequent refusal of 15 judges to toe the line, Ms. Hina Jilani, secretary-general of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), said a "grave situation" had arisen in the country as far as the judiciary was concerned. This does cast a doubt about the Supreme Court," Ms. Jilani told *The Hindu* from Lahore. "We are very disappointed," Ms. Jilani said about the military Government's action, adding that the human rights community was "slightly encouraged" that six Supreme Court judges had asserted their independence.

In a related development, the Musharraf Government had on Tuesday submitted

before the Supreme Court that the PML(N) petition challenging military rule was not "maintainable" under the provisions of Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) No. 1 and the Proclamation of Emergency.

"Further under the provisions of Para 4(1) of the PCO, no court shall call or permit to be called in question the Proclamation of Emergency and the PCO issued in pursuance thereof..." the Government said in a written rejoinder to the PML(N) petition, which was to be heard on a day-to-day basis from January 31.

"The said proclamation and the PCO were duly accepted and welcomed by the people of Pakistan and acted upon by all persons/ functionaries of the state and the same were accepted by other countries of the world, as is confirmed and apparent

from the public statements/ pronouncements made by various political parties... and pronouncements from high dignitaries of foreign countries," the Government submitted.

It argued that the petitioners are "not entitled to seek relief or restoration of former Prime Minister, his Cabinet and other functionaries as well as the Federal and Provincial Cabinets and Assemblies and the Senate... which reliefs are only sought *malafide* to perpetuate dictatorship and misgovernance in the country by the former Prime Minister and his supporters."

"Parliament was made to pass the 13th (depriving the President of his powers of dismissing an elected Government) and the 14th (anti-defection law) amendments hurriedly without any debate... the Senate

and the Assemblies were made rubber stamps, hardly had quorums, failed to discharge their constitutional duties and obligations inclusive of legislation and were used as instruments to establish despotism at the whim and caprice of the former Prime Minister for malpractices and corruption," the Government stated.

"The so-called heavy mandate claimed by the former Prime Minister was a farce, and was fully exploited by him for his own wrongful designs to amass enormous wealth in and outside Pakistan through kickbacks, commission, white-collar crimes and through illegal sanctions of loans from banks, financial institutions, cooperatives, defaults in repayment, so-called rescheduling, writing off debts, etc." the rejoinder added.

THE HINDU
27 JAN 2000

H-9-19

PAK. CHIEF JUSTICE REPLACED

Six SC judges refuse to toe Musharraf line

By Amit Baruah

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 26. In a major setback to the Musharraf regime, six judges of the 13-member Supreme Court, including the Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Saiduzzaman Siddiqui, refused to take oath under the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) No. 1 and consequently "ceased" to be judges of the apex court.

The remaining seven judges, including the new Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Irshad Hasan Khan, took oath under the PCO No. 1 issued on October 15, 1999, which was supposed to allow the Constitution to remain in force, subject to the orders of the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf. They were administered the oath of office by the President, Mr. Rafiq Tarar, in the uniformed presence of the Army Chief.

These dramatic developments took place after a notification was issued by Gen. Musharraf in the early hours of Wednesday that all judges of the Supreme Court, the Federal Shariat Court and the four High Courts would have to take a fresh oath under the PCO No. 1 at 9 a.m. today.

In a show of independence, six judges — Mr. Justice Saiduzzaman Siddiqui, Mr. Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid, Mr. Justice Wajihuddin Ahmed, Mr. Justice Mamnoon Kazi, Mr. Justice Khalilur Rehman Khan and Mr. Justice Kamal Mansur Alam — refused to take a fresh oath of office under the diktat of a military ruler. Reports said 15 out of a total of 100 judges at different levels had also refused to take oath.

Interestingly, five of the six judges have been Chief Justices of

the Sindh High Court — four are Mohajirs while the fifth (Mr. Justice Mamnoon Kazi) is a Sindhi. Mr. Justice Khalilur Rehman Khan is the only judge from the Pakistani Punjab.

The notification seeking a fresh oath from the judges came after Mr. Justice Saiduzzaman Siddiqui, the Chief Justice till yesterday, announced that all the 13 judges of the Supreme Court would hear a clutch of petitions challenging the military coup and calling for a restoration of all democratic institutions.

The decision by the Musharraf Government has led — in effect — to a purge of the higher judiciary. It has also knocked the bottom out of the military Government's claim that it had respect for the

independence of the judiciary.

The PCO No. 1 itself stated that though the Supreme Court or any other court would not have the power to make orders against the Chief Executive, the country was to be governed "as nearly as may be, in accordance with the Constitution". An accompanying emergency proclamation had placed the Constitution in "abeyance".

Now, this fig leaf too has been removed. The military rulers of Pakistan can no longer claim that the judiciary is functioning independently. It is now apparent that the military Government wanted to test the "loyalty" of the judges, a test nearly half the judges of the apex Court failed today.

Setback to judiciary: Page 14



The President of Pakistan, Mr. Rafiq Tarar (centre), administers the oath of office to the new Chief Justice, Mr. Irshad Hasan Khan (right), as Gen. Pervez Musharraf, Chief Executive, looks on. — AP

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