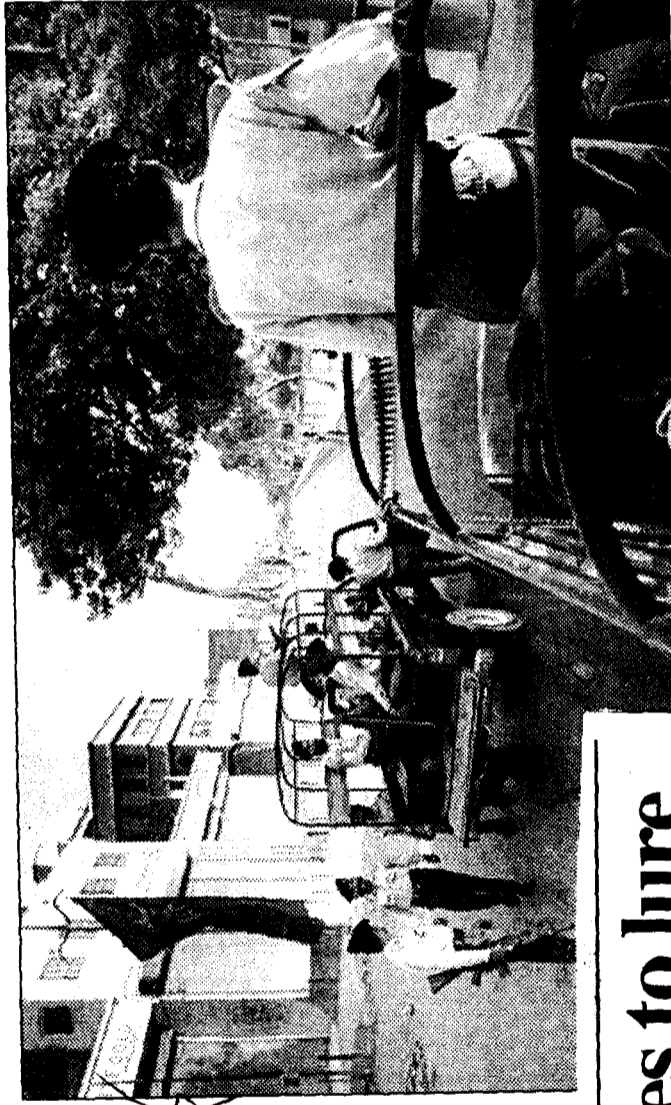


Karachi shuttered as Sunnis call strike

Karachi, May 28: The Pakistani port city of Karachi was mostly closed on Monday as residents obeyed a call by a hardline Islamic group for a one-day strike to protest against the murder of its leader.

Shops, schools and businesses were shuttered, while public transport stayed off the roads after a night of sporadic violence that saw at least six buses torched and isolated shooting incidents, witnesses said.

The hardline Sunni Tehrik, or Sunni Movement, issued the nationwide strike call over the weekend to protest against what it said was the failure of police to arrest the killers of its leader. Saleem Qadri was gunned down with five other people on May 18. A statement from the group issued



At the empty streets of Karachi on Monday as Sunni Tehrik, a Sunni protest against the May 18 killing of its leader Saleem Qadri and five of

Sharif did not sign mercy petition: Son

By G. CHANDRASEKHAR

Washington, May 28: The ousted former Pakistan Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, now in exile in Saudi Arabia, had not signed a mercy petition or accepted exile for ten years as made out by the military regime, his youngest son Hassan Nawaz said here.

Talking to Washington-based Pakistani newspapers on May 27, during his one-day visit, Mr Hassan, after visiting his father, said his father could return to Pakistan any time.

"Mr Sharif need not seek anyone's permission to return to Pakistan and he would take a decision in the matter once his family devised a plan and strategy for that."

"It is a combined decision of the Sharif family to keep a low profile at the moment and do nothing that may put the Saudi government in any awkward position," he added.

He said general Pervez Musharraf has, on various occasions, asserted that the ousted Prime Minister had signed a mercy petition. However, he had failed to produce any document in this regard.

It was also untrue that passports of Mr Sharif has been impounded by the Saudi authorities, he added.

The personal intervention of Saudi crown prince Abdullah alone was responsible for the release of his father and other members of family, he said, adding that it was like a fairy tale where a prince secures the freedom of the oppressed. (UNF)

...ates its nuke status

Mr Abdul Qadeer Khan, were retired recently, raising fears in the nationalist circles that the military side of the nuclear programme of the heavily indebted Muslim nation was being wound down under United States pressure.

Supporters of the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who was ousted by the military 16 months after he ordered the nuclear tests, celebrated the anniversary by displaying cardboard replicas of nuclear-tipped missiles at a political convention in Islamabad.

While India, with foreign exchange reserves of 30 billion dollars, withstood the economic impact of the 1998 nuclear tests, Pakistan had to freeze 11 billion dollars in private bank deposits because Mr Sharif and his predecessor, Ms Benazir Bhutto, had already spent heavily to finance the country's balance of payments deficits. (DPA)

ULFA tries to lure deserting comrades with lucrative jobs

By MANOJ ANAND

Guwahati, May 28: The banned United Liberation Front of Asom is trying to woo its old comrades who had left the organisation under the pressure of the security forces in Assam.

Disclosing this to *The Asian Age*, some of the surrendered ULFA rebels said they were under tremendous pressure from both the police and the ULFA.

"ULFA chief Paresah Baruah called me up and suggested that I should start work in a specific government department. He assured me that the minister will allot the work to me on priority basis."

Maoists attack Bihar police post, one dead

By SOROOR AHMED

Patna, May 28: In a daring attack, around 500 Maoist Communist Centre activists attacked the Mall police station under Aurangabad district of Bihar.

A sub-inspector was killed and five other policemen were injured in the attack late on Sunday night.

Pak pro-democracy campaign in Quetta

Pak 1-3
Karachi, May 22 (Reuters): An alliance of Pakistani political parties, undeterred by mass arrests, said today it would push on for the ruling military to step down and planned pro-democracy events in the western city of Quetta in early June.

"The ARD (Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy) meeting will be held on June 7-8 in Quetta," Khudai Noor, ARD secretary general in Baluchistan, Pakistan's largest province of which Quetta is the capital, said.

The ARD has had its last two bids to stage pro-democracy rallies — in central Lahore on March 23 and the port city of Karachi on May 1 — foiled. Security forces clamped down and arrested thousands of political workers.

On the day of the intended Karachi rally thousands of armed security personnel sealed off vast areas of the city.

22/5
Military ruler Pervez Musharraf grabbed power from former Premier Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup in October 1999. He has promised to allow free elections by October 2002 in line with a Supreme Court deadline, but has banned all public political activities. Noor said the ARD provincial committee would meet on May 25 to decide on a course of action and whether attempts would be made to stage another public rally.

"We have not yet decided whether to hold a public rally, the meeting on the 25th will decide whether the rally or public meeting will be pursued or not," Noor said, adding there would also be an ARD convention and an address to the bar council.

ARD chief, 83-year-old Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, said the events in Quetta would mark the first time the grouping had attempted action in arid and sparse-

ly populated Baluchistan.

"We are continuing our struggle until the restoration of democracy and the restoration of the 1973 Constitution," he said.

Nasrullah Khan added that under military rule friction and separatist tendencies were building between Pakistan's four provinces, the law and order situation was deteriorating, prices were rising and sectarian strife was worsening.

"For the sake of the integrity of this country there should be the earliest possible elections... to solve the domestic problems and external problems," he said.

The ARD includes Pakistan's two largest political parties — Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of self-exiled former Premier Benazir Bhutto and the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) of Sharif, who has been exiled to Saudi Arabia.

THE TELEGRAPH

7 MAY 2000

Hundreds of Sunnis protest

Riots break out in Pak

FROM AAMIR ASHRAF

Karachi, May 18 (Reuters): Riots erupted in Karachi today as hundreds of angry Sunnis protested against a shooting that left six men dead and three wounded.

Two police vehicles were set on fire and tear gas fired as a mob of around 500 supporters of the hardline Islamic group Sunni Tehrik, or Sunni Movement, confronted police near Karachi's Civil Hospital following the shooting that left the group's leader dead.

The victims of the shooting included Sunni Tehrik leader Saleem Qadri, two of his relatives, his driver, guard and a policeman stationed nearby, police and emergency workers said.

"It is confirmed that Saleem Qadri is among the dead and the others include one of his nephews, his brother-in-law and a guard," a doctor at the Civil Hospital said.

Police said the shooting occurred in Baldia town in Karachi's District West after the end of Friday prayers.

A Sunni Tehrik spokesman said two of Qadri's sons were also critically injured in the attack, which he said was staged by a rival Sunni group.

"There were six people on three motorbikes. They fired on the car and and fled from the spot within minutes," he said.

Senior Sunni Tehrik official Tahir-ul-Qadarisaid there could be more violence if the authorities failed to catch those responsible for the attack.

"If the government and authorities fail to do anything then I will

not stop our workers from coming on to the streets to take their revenge for the killing of Saleem Qadri," he told reporters at the scene.

He added that a decision on further action would be taken following the burial of Qadri, which could be tomorrow morning.

Witnesses said shops around the hospital began to close as a angry crowd gathered to shout slogans against the police and threaten revenge attacks.

Violence soon followed with hospital windows being smashed and parked cars attacked, while police fired tear gas in a bid to disperse the crowd.

Lulls in the violence were followed by public grieving with people openly crying.

Sunni Tehrik is a group known for its active Opposition to the rival Shia philosophy. Shia Muslims account for around 15 per cent of Muslim Pakistan's population of more than 134 million.

Disputes between the majority Sunni and minority Shias have claimed hundreds of lives in Pakistan over the past 10 years. It is rare for Sunni groups to target each other.

Heat kills Afghan boys

A heat wave has killed more than 25 Afghan children at an overcrowded make-shift refugee camp in northwestern Pakistan over the past two weeks, the UN refugee agency United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said today. A UNHCR spokesman said the children were among a total of 29 Afghans who died since May 1 at Jallozai camp.

THE TELEGRAPH

3 9 MAY 2011

Musharraf throws the gauntlet for Benazir

Luke Harding & Rory McCarthy
Rawalpindi, May 16

PAKISTAN'S DICTATOR, General Pervez Musharraf, last night gave his strongest signal yet that he has no intention of relinquishing power, and warned that the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto would be locked up if she ever returns home.

In an interview with *The Guardian*, he made it clear that Bhutto, who lives in exile, would face immediate arrest. "Legal action will be taken against her, certainly. She is accountable to this nation for her misdeeds," he declared.

Speaking at his colonial bungalow at the army's luxurious Rawalpindi headquarters, the original residence of the country's first prime ministers after independence in 1947, General Musharraf accused Bhutto of "mismanaging" and "corrupt-

ing" the country. "She has been Prime Minister twice. I would like to ask her, has this nation ever given so much opportunity to anybody and that person failed twice and yet tries to come a third time?"

The uncompromising comments suggest that the general, 57, is not prepared to strike a deal with Bhutto, the only politician who might pose a serious challenge to his military regime at present. Instead, he has set the stage for a dramatic confrontation if Bhutto, as she has suggested, returns to Pakistan after local elections in August.

Musharraf last night insisted that an outstanding corruption case against Bhutto, 47, would be sent for retrial; it was set aside the first time round after it emerged that the judge had been instructed to issue a guilty verdict.

"She has not been acquitted at all. She is trying to create this

misunderstanding that she has been acquitted. She is to be retried, absolutely."

The general, a former commander in Pakistan's special forces, seized power 19 months ago, hours after the man who was then Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, sacked him as army chief. Sharif was jailed, convicted of hijacking and corruption and last year sent into exile in Saudi Arabia.

Musharraf made no effort yesterday to disavow strong signs that he is manoeuvring to make himself president and give the army a lead role in running future civilian governments. He has pledged to hold a general election by October 2002, when a three-year mandate given to him by Pakistan's Supreme Court expires. The new prime minister would be elected not appointed, he said.

But asked if he would then carry on as president, and in

plined," he said. "I will not allow anything to happen in Pakistan which disturbs us from our main aim of reviving the economy and bringing good governance."

The coup was widely welcomed in Pakistan, but Musharraf's regime has begun to face discontent. His anti-corruption drive has been slow and the economy, burdened by \$37 billion in foreign debt, continues to weaken. In the local elections that are a key component of the general's reforms, women are getting a rare access to power in the villages but, as in previous military dictatorships, politicians have been silenced.

The general was scathing about the two big critics of his regime, the Commonwealth and Britain's foreign secretary, Robin Cook. "I think he is one-sided, biased. One expects the foreign minister of Britain to have unbiased views, especially over the Kashmir dispute which

civilian rule before his coup as the "decade of disaster".

He defended his sweeping arrests of 4,000 pro-democracy demonstrators in Karachi and Lahore in the past two months, insisting they enjoyed little popular support. He described them as "irritants" guilty of "hooliganism".

"We have decided there will be no outdoor political activity. We need to learn to be more disci-



I think was created by Britain originally," he said.

Musharraf said he was grateful to Westminster for finally providing documents detailing Bhutto's bank accounts and assets in Britain. They would be used in her retrial on corruption charges.

He criticised the home secretary, Jack Straw, for granting a British passport to Altaf Husain, the leader of the hardline MQM party in Sind province. He faces murder charges in Pakistan. When it came to Kashmir, claimed by Pakistan and India but controlled by the latter, Musharraf accused Delhi of wasting two recent "windows of opportunity" for peace.

"I would be prepared to go (to Delhi). But if India thinks I'm dying to go there let me clarify I'm not at all dying to go there to meet them unless they are very keen ... You can't clap with one hand."

The Guardian

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

17 MAY 2001

Pak jihadis give in to Musharraf, to keep low profile

New Delhi, May 15

SEVERAL MAJOR Islamic fundamentalist and militant outfits openly carrying out recruitment and fund-raising drives in Pakistan have 'agreed' to the Musharraf regime's appeals to be discrete about their activities, with the Government promising not to actively pursue them.

Pakistani media reports say "jehadi" outfits carried out "prolonged negotiations" during the past few weeks with Pakistani security agencies and decided to carry out their activities without attracting media glare.

"After prolonged negotiations

with Government agencies, the mainstream religious organisations involved in armed struggle against the Indian armed forces in Kashmir have agreed to be discrete in their drive to collect donations and recruit volunteers," said Pakistani daily 'The News' in a recent article. "In return, the Government has decided not to pursue too aggressively its pledge to force the closure of all such activities."

Even former PM Benazir Bhutto said in a recent article that the main agenda of these groups was "to gain time and create a parallel armed force. One that can take on the regular

armed forces should a slowdown be called for." In her article in *The News*, Benazir said: "The militants already field an irregular force of 150,000. In 10 years, they hope to have half a million men."

A foreign journalist Yvette Claire Rosser wrote in 'The Friday Times' that the possibility of an armed uprising by "half-million strong gun-toting madrassa-trained conservative militant jihadis... is more frightening and imminent than an American or an European can fathom".

According to Benazir, "the rise of intolerance in neighbouring Afghanistan, Pakistani

madrassas have a doctrinaire curriculum. Their graduates are singularly focused on the sectarian nature of their studies. Independent thinking is prohibited".

In the same vein, senior Awami National Party leader Asfandyar Wali writes in 'The News' that there is "complete Talibanisation" of several areas of Quetta, Bannu, Hangu and Laki Marwat. "Where is the state authority when private homes are broken into and their television sets taken away? If the state continues to keep its eyes closed, there would be complete anarchy... If state authority collapses, the only armed forces would be of

the fundamentalists and no force in the country would be able to take them on," Wali wrote.

An article in *The Nation* has estimated that the number of armed militants could range even up to 300,000. It says that while the army can at present "certainly take them on, there is also the justified fear that the militants have sympathisers in the army at every level. Some 20 per cent of the army are fundamentalists, even though we are constantly informed that the army is a highly disciplined force".

Columnist M H Askari wrote in 'Dawn' about the "rising sectarian and factional violence" in

the country. "The growing defiance of the Government's writ by the more militant among the religious parties and the setting of a deadline by an Islamist group for the introduction of Shariat in Pakistan are a clear indication of the daring that some outfits are showing in their bid to turn Pakistan into a theocratic state," he said.

This, Askari said, was "not without implications for Pakistan's internal peace and stability, already under strain from the growing militancy of religious forces on one hand and sectarian strife on the other".

PTI

Narrow escape for DC

MILITANTS MADE an abortive attempt on the life of Anantnag DC and killed a counter-insurgent associated with the Ikhwan in south Kashmir last night.

Anantnag DC G A Peer had a miraculous escape when militants detonated a powerful improvised bomb and fired at his motorcade near the district, police said. The windscreen of his bulletproof vehicle was damaged in the explosion, but no one was injured in the ensuing shootout. Militants also shot dead an Ikhwan activist, Manzoor Ahmad Rather, jurist Bijbehara. An encounter took place between militants and the BSF at Toosa-Maldan in Badgam early today.

PTI, Srinagar

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

16 MAY 2002

Benazir to return home before polls

Islamabad, May 14

FORMER PRIME Minister Benazir Bhutto will return from self-imposed exile between the completion of local elections this August and a national election promised by October 2002, her party said on Monday.

Bhutto, who faces retrial on corruption charges if she returns to Pakistan, has repeatedly promised to return to challenge military rule but without setting a specific timeframe.

A statement from her Pakistan People's Party (PPP) quoted a spokesman condemning the Government's intention to hold a second corruption trial for Bhutto and her jailed husband Asif Ali Zardari, following a court ruling that the original trial had been biased.



"He said Mohtrama (Bhutto) would return after the local bodies elections and before the general elections as part of a political programme," the statement said. "If the regime wishes Mohtrama to have defense rights it can wait for her to return."

The military Government of General Pervez Musharraf, which seized power from Bhutto's successor Nawaz Sharif in October 1999, is holding a series of local elections that conclude in August.

The avowed purpose is to create a new civilian political leadership after the chaotic years of Bhutto and Sharif in advance of national elections for a restoration of civilian Government that is promised by October 2002.

With Musharraf vowing that

country, alternating between London and Dubai, since before the now-quashed 1999 conviction on corruption. Her husband has been in prison all this time on other charges.

The court decision in Bhutto's favour this year had unleashed speculation she would quickly return and pose a challenge to the military Government.

However, the Government said it intended to retry Bhutto and Zardari on the corruption charges, which were originally brought by the Sharif administration. The court had set aside the conviction on grounds of political interference with judges in the case.

This month another court issued a warrant for the immediate arrest of Bhutto if she returns to Pakistan after she

failed to appear in a case investigating her accumulation of assets that allegedly could not be explained.

The re-trial would be conducted by an Accountability Court set up to try corruption cases. The PPP accused the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), which investigates corruption, of dictating the outcome.

"The previous manipulated judgement was set aside due to a fraudulent trial and it appears that the regime wants another fraudulent trial for propaganda purposes," the PPP statement said. "It is an open secret that the decision will be written in NAB on the junta's command so the threats of a new trial are little more than political revenge," it said.

Reuters

reforms introduced during military rule will continue, there is widespread speculation he will become president and assume powers allowing him to dismiss prime ministers.

Bhutto has been out of the

Pakistan's jihad doctrine: Targets and rationale

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf on Wednesday said Pakistan was committed to providing all diplomatic, moral and political support to the people of Kashmir in their just struggle for self-determination.

Talking to a senior leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), Shaikh Abdul Aziz, who called on him here, General Musharraf assured the Hurriyat leader of Pakistan's continued efforts for the cause of the people of Kashmir.

• *Report in The News International, May 10, 2001.*

• "THE LOGICAL objective of the jihad against India is the destruction of the US," Urdu daily *Ausaf* quoted in *The Friday Times*, January 29, 2001.

• "If US attacks Afghanistan, then we would start massacre of Americans. US is a global terrorist and wherever suppression is being committed in the world, behind that the US hand is definite," Maulana Abdul Gaffur, Central Secretary General of Jamiat-Ulema-Islam(F), quoted in Urdu daily *Khabrain*, October 31, 2000.

• "We will turn the US into hell is any damage is done to Osama," *Ausaf*, October 25, 2000, quoting Jamiat-Ulema-Islam statement at a conference held in Rawalpindi on October 24, 2000.

• "Clinton and Vajpayee are the biggest terrorists," Lashkar-e-Toyba chief, addressing a meeting at Gandiyal, Punjab, on November 4, 2000 quoted in *Khabrain*, November 5, 2000.

• "Attacks by *fedayeen* (suicide squads) have shaken the power corridors in Washington and made Vajpayee feel jittery," *Ausaf*, December 31, 2000.

• "If Vajpayee tries to build Ram Mandir in place of Babri Masjid, then we will make it a grave of

Vajpayee," Maulana Masood Azhar, Jaish-e-Muhammad chief, speaking in Lahore on December 8, 2000. Quoted in *Khabrain* December 9, 2000.

• "Delhi, Calcutta, Mumbai and Washington are the real targets of the militants. uslims should cooperate with militants for dominance of Islam in the world," Harkat-ul-Mujahideen chief, Maulana Fazlur Rahman Khalil's statement in Islamabad, quoted in *Ausaf*, December 27, 2000.

• "If the US dared to attack Afghanistan and Osama, we will teach them a lesson and will turn Afghanistan into a graveyard

of the US forces, the US attack on Afghanistan will be considered an attack on Islam and a

befitting reply will be given to the European world and to the US also," from a joint statement issued by Students of Pakistani Madrassahs at a meeting in Islamabad on October 20, 2000, quoted in *Khabrain*, October 21, 2000.

• "Sipah-e-Sahaba announced that one lakh militants will be sent to Israel, it demanded that Gen. Pervez Musharraf launch *jihad* against India and Israel immediately," Maulana Ziaul Qasmi at a press conference. Quoted in *The Nation*, October 26, 2000.

• "A billion and thirty crore Muslims of the world should wage *jihad* against Israel, India, the US and Russia. They will be no more and only Islam will rule all over the world," Al Badr militants quoted in *Nawa-I-Waqt*, November 21, 2000.

• "*Jihad* has become the foremost duty of the Muslim community against Israel, the US and India. They don't understand the language of talks.

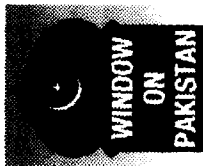
They only understand the language of sword," Bakht Zameen, Amir, Al-Badr, at a press conference at Mardan, North West Frontier Province, on October 25, 2000, quoted in *Khabrain*, October 26, 2000.

Mujahideen playing Indian game?

IN THE MIDST of attempts to piece together a new peace process to stabilise the region, a main character in the Kashmir drama had a close shave with death. The chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Farooq Abdullah, escaped an assassination attempt on his life when two rifle-propelled grenades exploded near the place where he was addressing a gathering after inaugurating a bridge in Srinagar on Sunday. Farooq Abdullah's reaction has been to call on New Delhi to launch a manhunt for the culprits, members of the Hizbul Mujahideen, which has already claimed responsibility for the attack. After Sunday's abortive assassination attempt, the Hizbul Mujahideen vowed to continue such attacks on Farooq Abdullah and other such pro-India Kashmiris.

While the mujahideen may be launching tit for tat attacks on Farooq Abdullah out of frustration and anger at his stance on the Kashmir issue, such attacks however may complicate the current efforts to build a peace process. This is because the mujahideen could well be playing into the hands of Farooq or that of the hardliners in New Delhi.

• Editorial in *The News International*, May 7, 2001.



Pak. conducts military exercises

By Our Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD, MAY 10. Close on the heels of the military exercises being conducted by India, Pakistan is holding similar exercises.

A spokesman for the Pakistan military, who confirmed the news about the exercises, said it was part of training and was an ongoing process, which gets accelerated in summer. Different formations of the Pakistan army were conducting exercises in their respective areas.

In a related development, the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, said Pakistan would abide by the 1991 accord with India on conduct of military exercises. "There exists an agreement between the two countries to give a 60-day notification about the exercises and India has violated it".

THE HINDU

17 MAY 2001

Court declares Jammat leaders absconders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, May 9. — Pakistan's fundamentalist party Jammat-i-Islami chief Qazi Husain Ahmad and three others have been proclaimed as absconders after the police failed to serve arrest warrants issued against them in connection with a case relating to rioting during Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's historic visit to Lahore in 1999.

A Lahore court declared Ahmad and his party's deputy leader Mr Liaqat Baloch, deputy secretary-general Mr Fareed Pricha and information secretary Mr Amir ul Azeem as absconders following their failure to appear before the court yesterday.

The court had issued arrest warrants against them on 30 April, virtually 26 months after they indulged in violence during Mr Vajpayee's visit.

The case was registered against them on 20 February, 1999, when the Jammat's volunteers staged a demonstration against Mr Vajpayee's visit and attacked cars of some of the VVIPs. The fundamentalist party party has reacted strongly to the court's directive saying it was part of the military government's strategy to intimidate party leaders who called for an end to the military regime.

THE STATESMAN

10 MAY 2001

Used and branded: Pakistan's trail of corruption

Karachi: There are aspects of life in our country that the whole world is talking about but not many of us are. Only a few years ago, Transparency International found and declared Pakistan to be the "most corrupt country" in the world. How many of us did feel hurt or ashamed? Hardly any. With us it has been business as usual, as if nothing at all had happened to merit our attention. At present we are, not quite the "most corrupt," still very much among the most corrupt. We do not have to be told by others. Don't we know it ourselves? Don't we encounter unabashed corruption at every step?

There is some saving grace. We can derive some consolation from the feeling that it is totally unfair to fasten the indignity of being the "most corrupt nation" on 99 per cent of the people of this country. They are completely untainted by any trace of corruption of any kind. It is wholly unjust and improper to paint the entire 135 million people with that broad black brush of corruption.

The people of Pakistan are not the "most corrupt". They are clean as clean can be. They are the victims of a few hundred of their own irredeemably corrupt countrymen.

Now comes an even more stunning shock. The World Bank, and presumably some other international finance institutions (IFIs) going about as the dogooders and doing the very opposite, have put Pakistan among the poorest nations in the world. This is not surprising. The billions of dollars which the

corrupt few of Pakistan have been playing with is the wealth robbed from the people of Pakistan. Millions of dollars are involved in defence deals with money changing hands from the Third World to the First World operators. Nobody ever heard any noise about the "most corrupt" in the First World.

This monumental plunder of the masses by utterly corrupt governments is not something peculiar to Pakistan. Which Third World client government of the World Bank, the IMF and the other IFIs presents the picture of a paragon of virtue, completely untainted with State corruption? What is happening right now in the Philippines? What is the situation in Nigeria, Nicaragua and so on? There is no denying the fact of plunder of people by corrupt governments. There is no denying that governments in Pakistan have plundered their people and the public treasury. Equally, there is no denying that the World Bank, the IMF and so on have been silent spectators of this plunder of the people because such governments were serving Cold War purposes of the bosses of the World Bank and other IFIs.

From the beginning of the Cold War, which predates the formal end of World War II in 1945, the performance of the Bretton Woods institutions has been, in essence, fighting the Cold War by other means. These other means have been installing governments throughout the Third World that would be anti-people and pro-West in the Cold War. There was no way people-friendly governments in the newly freed countries

administration, upright politics.

Because Pakistan was the front-line state in America's Cold War against the Soviet Union, particularly after the invasion of Afghanistan, this country was systematically corrupted as a matter of war strategy. The corrupters were forces too strong for the most well intentioned in Pakistan to resist. First, the political power holders (General Ziaul Haq and his tail-bearers) were corrupted. Then Zia took all political orphans under his umbrella. He did not have to look very far because the left-overs of the leeches of the Ayub regime were very much around. All this suited the Cold War powers.

To cut the long story short, now let us note that controlled by the corrupt few, nearly half of our economy is informal. It flourishes in open defiance of the government and the state. It cheats the national exchequer. It keeps its resources to itself not only out of the reach for the public exchequer, mostly out of the country, too. That suits foreign banks fine. Audacious corruption has been rampant in the highest echelons of political life. Pakistan's inexorable descent from the "most corrupt" position to the level of the poorest nations is something that was waiting to happen. There is no way you go on robbing the people. One day the robbed ones would be in dire penny. With corruption endemic in every sphere of national life, we have seen the banks plundered, utility services run to seed, social sectors starved, growth rate of economy fall into

stagnation, if not actually in the reverse gear. This is what poverty of a nation is. We have reached a point where we are now among the poorest.



BY A.B.S. JAFRI

'Grizzle, grizzle, grizzle. That's all you do. I'm sick of it.'

would willingly side with the colonialist exploiters of yesteryear. So puppet governments had to be installed, and such governments had no option but to be politically, financially and morally corrupt to serve the objectives of the new managers of the world. That's what they have been for long. Now being corrupt is their first habit.

Pakistan was born just when the Cold War was gaining momentum. It happened to be sharing borders with two giants, the USSR and China, that were the chief targets of the West's cold warriors. That was the beginning of military dic-

stagnation, if not actually in the reverse gear. This is what poverty of a nation is. We have reached a point where we are now among the poorest.

One minister, driven to the wall, snapped back, "Why don't the people speak out, now they are free to speak?" He fell silent when told that the people do not speak out because more than forty years of dictatorship has kept the people's mouth shut by use of brute force. The people have all but lost their tongue and voice.

The strong and influential among the power-wielding classes, the *wadera*, the billionaire, the bureaucrat remain in a permanent coalition of the corrupt in all seasons.

No political leader has spoken about corruption and how to combat it. There are scores of religious parties in Pakistan today preaching piety from a thousand pulpits. No redeemer of our souls has ever so much as mentioned the existence of the evil of corruption, and the curse of poverty in the country. They are firing away their cannons at vulgarity and obscenity. What can be more vulgar and obscene than public servants, high as well as low-grade, extorting bribes from helpless citizens?

It is obvious that the entire moral value system of our country has been subverted. When will the sense of self-respect of the saner and more senior citizens wake up to the need for a national protest against corruption in public administration? This country now needs a moral reformation therapy.

By arrangement with Dawn

Ban on rallies will continue: Musharraf

Hanoi, May 5

PAKISTAN'S MILITARY ruler, Gen Pervez Musharraf, today said his Government had released hundreds of arrested pro-democracy protesters but a ban on political rallies will remain until elections are held next year.

Musharraf said he did not know exactly how many members of the main anti-Government alliance had been arrested in last week's crackdown. "By now I'm sure that all the people must have been released," he said.

Musharraf said his Government would not allow "any violation of the rule set by this Government — that is, no political activity." The Government imposed a ban on rallies soon after it seized power in October 1999.

Last week it arrested hundreds of supporters of the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy to prevent a planned rally on May 1 for early elections. "There will be no lifting of the ban on political activity until we have elections next year," Musharraf said.

Musharraf, who finished a three-day visit to Vietnam today, said Pakistan and the South-East Asian nation have agreed to begin regular diplomatic consultations and greatly increase trade. "The future looks very bright between Vietnam and Pakistan," he said.

Musharraf was the first Pakistani leader to visit Vietnam after the two countries established diplomatic ties in 1972.

AP

Lonely Musharraf tells lies only for country

Dubai, May 4 (PTI): Describing himself as a "lonely" person at the top, Pakistan's military ruler Pervez Musharraf said he may have lied "here and there" in the national interest.

In an interview to Dubai-based newspaper *Khaleej Times*, Musharraf said he did not think he could tell a lie. But he contradicted himself by saying he may have lied in the interest of the country. "I don't think I can tell a lie. I don't think diplomacy which here means distortion of facts comes naturally to me at all.

"Certainly that is not what I understand of diplomacy," he said, adding: "In my book it means putting things politely. It does not mean telling lies, covering up and distorting.

"But of course in the national interest, sometimes we have to tell a lie, and may be I have told lies here and there in the na-

tional interest. But it must have been apparent from my face," Musharraf said.

He added that it is lonely at the top because as one goes higher one cannot share ideas and thoughts with others and has to learn to be discreet, to be able to absorb and to keep quiet.

"The higher you go the lonelier you become. Sometimes, it is too scary because this is such a big thing and there is nobody you can share it with.

"You may have to take very, very big decisions with extremely far-reaching consequences" Musharraf said. "I always make up my own mind finally," he added. Musharraf said he "prefers talking and discussing and picking the minds of people". He counseled his son's father-in-law and his wife's brother-in-law for opinion on various matters.

"I do believe in sharing with

people whom I trust. Sometimes, it is good to share and get views because you feel so lonely otherwise," he said. However, Musharraf said he would rather keep women out of it because "their shock absorption capacity is limited".

About his interest in reading and music, Musharraf said he is not an avid reader nor does he like pop music.

However, Musharraf said he liked Pakistani pop group Junoon which he felt was different. Musharraf, who prefers Urdu music and ghazals, said: "I do not like the new Indian songs. But I like the old ones very much. I like Pakistani songs but not the senseless ones."

A former Pakistani army official has called for an end to military rule in his country and establishment of Shariah even if it requires use of force and a jihad, either within or outside the country.

"All systems have failed. All other forces within Pakistan have failed to deliver," he said.

THE TELEGRAPH

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Musharraf 'lonely at the top'

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DUBAI, MAY 4. Describing himself as "lonely" at the top, Pakistan's Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has said he might have lied "here and there" as it was all right to lie occasionally in the national interest.

In an interview to the *Khaleej Times* in which he talked about his personal life, Gen. Musharraf first said he did not think he could tell a lie but contradicted himself later saying he might have lied in the interest of the country.

"I don't think I can tell a lie. I don't think diplomacy, which here means distortion of facts, comes naturally to me. Certainly that is not what I understand of diplomacy..."



In my book it means putting things politely and palatably. It does not mean telling lies, covering up and distorting.

"But of course in national interest, sometimes we have to tell a lie and may be I have told lies here and there but it must have been apparent from my face," the General said.

It was lonely at the top. "The higher you go the lonelier you become. Sometimes it is too scary, that this is such a big thing and there is nobody you can share it with. And you have to take decisions and they are very big decisions with extremely far-reaching consequences," he said.

'Expanding midriff'

In the frank and candid interview, the military ruler talked about various facets of his life, including his love for the Army, his philosophy of courage, his family and his concern for his expanding midriff. The business of running

the country did not provide him the luxury of indulging in much physical activity. "Before the coup, I was regular on physical activity and socialising." He played golf, badminton and squash but the coup changed all that.

Gen. Musharraf, known for playing his cards close to his chest, said he was not very secretive earlier. "I think I was not very secretive before 1993 when I became Director-General, military operations. I learnt to be discreet, absorb and keep quiet."

He had always been natural in life. "I think my natural self is the best. I am comfortable with myself. I am being absolutely normal and natural." His staff was often in a quandary. "My security staff gets quite flustered. I don't feel like a head of State. I actually forget being at the helm of affairs. I chat even with my peon," he said.

The General had never been an avid reader. "But in the Army, I started reading military books. I enjoyed reading about strategies and famous campaigns, though I still wouldn't call myself an expert

on the issue." He often told his forces that there was a very thin line dividing courage and cowardice.

"When you are faced with a situation where your life is in danger, it is the first few seconds or maybe half-a-minute that divide courage from cowardice... The first natural urge is self-protective but if you curb that natural urge during that half-minute, you will come up with a very balanced response to what is happening and you can shift to being courageous."

A move to buy peace?

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 4. Has the Chief Executive of Pakistan, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, decided to appoint a Deputy Chief of Army Staff (DCOAS) to 'buy peace' with belligerent religious groups?

If the Urdu daily, *Jasarat*, is to be believed this could be one of the reasons for the elevation of Lt. Gen. Muzaffar Usmani to the coveted post. The report assumes significance as it is the Jamaat-e-Islami's mouthpiece. (Most of the mainline papers have refrained from commenting on the development).

The JI chief, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, has been running a campaign for the last several weeks demanding that Gen. Musharraf quit as Chief of Army Staff in October, when he is due to retire, and appoint the senior-most General as his successor.

The report said the appointment of Lt. Gen. Usmani was being discussed for the last two days in Islamabad. Quoting an unnamed diplomat, it said relations between the three-star General and Gen. Musharraf had not been cordial for the past few months. According to the diplomat, by appointing Lt. Gen. Usmani as the DCOAS, Gen. Musharraf had hit two targets in one shot. Political circles were of the view that Gen. Musharraf was preparing to step into the Aiwan-e-Sadr (President's House). After becoming President, the General would not be able to concentrate on the Army and would need a deputy.

In a recent meeting of the Formation Commanders, Gen. Musharraf had taken his Army colleagues into confidence about the appointment of Lt. Gen. Usmani. He had briefed his aides of his future politi-

cal plan and there was a consensus that the Army should go ahead with its plan in order to give a new political system to the country.

At the same time, it was also being hoped that Lt. Gen. Usmani's appointment would help improve and strengthen the Army's relations with religious and political parties.

Quoting diplomatic circles, the report said Gen. Musharraf had been facing some problems from his close aides inside the Army. Under the new strategy, the work of promoting senior Generals in accordance with their wishes and expectations would continue. (Earlier, it was being said that Lt. Gen. Aziz, Corps Commander based at Lahore, might be appointed DCOAS but his appointment might have deprived many Generals of their due). A proposal to give some Generals political posts was also under consideration. Many reasons were also being given for the prevailing unrest in the Army. Topping the list was the slow pace in implementing the seven-point agenda. Through appointments and transfers, Gen. Musharraf had tried to give the impression that he was not against Islamist forces but had sufficient courage to accommodate them.

"However, the question is why has Usmani not been elevated to the (post of a) four-star General? The Army circles are of the view that he may be promoted to four-star General and appointed as Vice-Chief of Army Staff. What senior Generals think about the development would come in the open only after public pressure increases on Gen. Musharraf to take retirement in October," the paper said.

THE HINDU

5 MAY 2001

Musharraf with Usmani in Karachi recently.

Musharraf army appointment raises concern

Islamabad, May 2

IN A significant military appointment that could have wider political ramifications, Pakistan military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf has appointed a senior army commander as Deputy Chief of Army (COA), seen by observers as a move to pave way for himself to take over as President.

Musharraf, who is currently away in Myanmar on an official visit, appointed Lt Gen Muzaffar Hussain Usmani, commander, five corps, as the deputy COA staff, a post that existed only during the previous military regime headed by General Zia Ul Haq.

The appointment of Usmani, who will assume his charge on May 17, has led to speculation that Musharraf was likely to assume the presidency of the country. "It is a preparatory step for Gen Musharraf to become President and politically more active," former ISI chief general Hamid Gul was quoted by Dawn newspaper as saying.

The move assumes significance in the light of recent announcement by Gen Musharraf that he would not retire as COA scheduled in October this year but instead extend his services.

At present, Musharraf, hold the powerful posts of Chief of Army, chief executive of the country and the chairman of

Joint Chief of Staff Committee (CJCSC).

Musharraf recently in a press conference indicated that he planned to extend his service and continue both as CAO as well as chief executive, a post he created after acquiring power in a military coup in October 1999.

However, with the October 2000 deadline set by the Supreme Court for the return of Pakistan to democratic rule, Musharraf planned to take over as the President of the country.

In that event, Lt Gen Usmani could take over as the COA. Gen Musharraf said that he planned to appoint a deputy COA to take over the day-to-day functioning of the army. Accordingly, Lt Gen Usmani, believed to be a hardliner, has been appointed as deputy COA, which is a newly created post.

The new posting was also seen as a move by Musharraf to consolidate his hold on the army. Lt Gen Usmani held the key post of commander, Karachi corps, during the October 1999 military coup.

Lt Gen Usmani was commissioned in 1966 in an armoured infantry battalion and rose to the higher ranks by holding many key posts which included director-general military training, inspector-general training and evaluation, and vice-chief of general staff at headquarters.

PTI

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Benazir flays military regime for suppressing rally

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD MAY 1. The much-publicised May Day rally in the port city of Karachi turned violent after a group of political activists tried to defy the ban on political gatherings and attempted to march towards the heavily barricaded venue today.

Reports reaching here said that the police lobbed teargas shells to disperse 100-odd workers of the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD). The police thwarted the rally but in the process ensured a lot of publicity for the organisers.

The ARD intends to take full advantage of the publicity it has managed to attract in the last few days.

This was reflected in the statement issued by the former Prime Minister and Chairperson of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Ms. Benazir Bhutto. She denounced the military Government's "high-handedness and use of brute force" in stopping the rally, and said this had exposed the "sandy foundations" on which the regime stood. The reaction of the regime would only provoke the political forces and workers into giving "one last push to the usurpers and dictators".

The rally organised by the ARD, an umbrella outfit of 16-odd parties including the Pakistan People's

Party and the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), was intended to serve a notice on the military Government to order immediate elections. It was evident in the last few days that the Government was determined to prevent the rally. At a convention on the on-going multi-phase local bodies election on Monday, Gen. Musharraf declared, "Once we have said there will be no political activity, there will be no political activity."

The Government had prevented the ARD from holding a similar rally on March 23 — the Foundation Day of Pakistan — at Lahore.

The only difference today was that a handful of workers did make a valiant effort to break past the security cordon and managed to score a point.

The recent Supreme Court judgment quashing the conviction of Ms. Bhutto in a corruption case appeared to have bolstered the confidence of political workers. Besides, parts of Karachi are considered to be PPP strongholds.

The international community and human rights organisations, such as the Amnesty International, have denounced the Government for its curbs on political activity, including the blanket ban on gatherings. But the outcry made little difference to the Government's resolve to prevent the rally.

THE HINDU

1 MAY 2001

Police seal off pro-democracy May Day rally venue in Karachi

KARACHI: Pakistani police on Monday sealed the venue of a planned pro-democracy May Day rally here as the opposition vowed to defy the military government's ban on political gatherings, officials said.



Gen Musharraf

All the gates of the city's main Nishtar Park, known for big political rallies in the past, have been closed by hundreds of riot police, witnesses said. "The park has been closed for two days," said a police officer outside the park.

Officials said a massive force of 15,000 police and paramilitary troops was being deployed across the city to prevent a rally by the 18-party Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD).

The ARD announced earlier this month it would rally against the government of military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf to press its demand for the early restoration of democracy.

"There will be around 15,000 policemen beside paramilitary rangers to maintain law and order and prevent violence," provincial police chief Aftab Nabi said. Amid fears of possible showdown on the international Labour Day, Nabi said police will not allow any procession or any kind of violence."

Thousands of ARD supporters and leaders have been detained in a police crackdown over the past four days, opposition leaders said while officials put the number of arrests at around 800.

The detainees include members of Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan

People's Party (PPP).

Provincial PPP chief Nisar Khuhro said law enforcing agencies had practically cut off Karachi, the capital of southern Sindh province, from rest of the country. "This is nothing but martial law," Khuro said over telephone.

The ARD said most of its stalwarts have been sent to jails while several senior leaders, including the alliance chief Nawabzada Nasrullah, had been detained in their homes.

A similar crackdown against party members foiled a planned ARD rally in the eastern city of Lahore last month.

Senior PML leader Javed Hashmi, who was "expelled" from Karachi on Thursday, said the rally would go ahead "despite arrests, raids and unprecedented deployment. They will do their job and we will do ours," he said. (AFP)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

1 MAY 2007

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Opp. remains defiant

No rally, says Musharraf

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Islamabad, April 30 (Reuters): Pakistan's military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf said today he would not allow a May 1 demonstration planned by politicians demanding the immediate restoration of democracy.

"Once we have said there will be no political activity, there will be no political activity," Musharraf said at a convention dealing with local elections he is promoting as a source of a new civilian leadership.

The Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD), a grouping of political parties united in their opposition to military rule, has vowed to proceed with a May Day rally in the port city of Karachi despite mass arrests by authorities determined to halt it.

After Musharraf overthrew the elected government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in October 1999, the army banned public rallies. Authorities arrested thousands of people a month ago to prevent another ARD gathering in Lahore.

Musharraf has promised a return to civilian rule by October 2002 but has made clear his dislike for the previous civilian rulers. Sharif was exiled to Saudi Arabia

in December and Sharif's predecessor, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, faces corruption charges if she returns to Pakistan.

Ejaz Shaffi, a senior ARD official and a member of the suspended National Assembly, said more than 2,000 political workers had been detained in Karachi and surrounding Sindh province.

"The reports we have say they have closed down roads leading to Nishtar Park (rally venue)... but we still think we can manage it," Shaffi, a member of ousted premier Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML), said.

Shaffi, who has been hiding since the arrests began early on Thursday, said security personnel had raided his house daily and padlocked his party office. He added that with so many people under detention it would be impossible to attract large numbers but groups of political workers would set off to march from different locations tomorrow morning.

"We won't be coming in one group... we will be entering from different places and we were discussing why not change the venue," Shaffi said.

The rally has been called as part of a campaign calling for the military to step down immediately and restore civilian rule. Government officials contacted by Reuters today declined to comment but political sources say a few senior politicians have escaped arrest and remain in hiding pending an attempt to stage some kind of peaceful protest.

THE TELEGRAPH

1 MAY 2002

Pak. Govt. set to stop ARD rally

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 30. Authorities in Karachi have sealed the venue of a protest rally even as political parties demanding return to democracy vowed to defy the ban on political gatherings and go ahead with the demonstration. The rally organised by the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD), umbrella outfit of about 16 parties including the Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), is intended to serve notice on the military Government to return to the barracks and order immediate elections.

There is little chance of the rally being held, despite the proclamations by the ARD leaders to the contrary, as the Chief Executive Gen. Pervez Musharraf, declared during the course of the day the determination of his Government to thwart the rally. Addressing a convention on the ongoing multi-phase local bodies election, Gen. Musharraf declared that "once we have said there will be no political activity, there will be no political activity".

The international community and human rights organisations such as Amnesty International have denounced the Government's curbs on political activity including the blanket ban on gatherings. But the outcry, within and outside Pakistan, has made little difference to the resolve of the military regime.

THE HINDU

1 MAY 2001

Musharraf following a fascist agenda: Benazir

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 30. The former Prime Minister and chairperson of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Ms. Benazir Bhutto, has accused the Musharraf Government of following a "fascist agenda" and declared her determination to return home to fight for the restoration of democracy despite threats of arrest.

In an exclusive e-mail interview to *The Hindu* here today, she said, "I want to return to Pakistan sooner than later. I miss my home. My return is part of the democratic — rather than the legal — struggle."

Ms. Bhutto feels the verdict of the Supreme Court of Pakistan has changed the ball game. "On trial now are the trial judges who convicted me. The apex court decision frustrates the regime's efforts to throw me out of politics and deny the people of Pakistan my leadership."

Asked to comment on the possible Talibanisation of



Pakistan, she linked it to the lack of democracy. "The concentration of power in a single individual or institution can assist the pro-Taliban forces seize power in Pakistan. They lack public support and are unable to win elections. Their agenda now is to concentrate power in the Army/President and climb to

power through its veto of Parliament.

She also blames the military set-up for the present crisis. "The military regime came in to end fascism and then adopted the fascist agenda to stay in office. Consequently it lost the support of the Pakistani people. It concentrated on vendetta and failed at governance. Today, debt is 106 per cent of the GDP, a record high. The country is isolated internationally, the economy is worse and accountability a hoax for political foes. It has been tall on promises and short on delivery."

Ms. Bhutto, however, defers any decision on supporting any future presidential bid by Gen. Musharraf. "When Gen. Musharraf asks the PPP and or ARD for support to become the President, the matter can be considered. For now it is mere speculation," she said adding the PPP was opposed to the offices of President and Army Chief being rolled into one.

Text of interview: Page 14

THE HINDU

1 MAY 2001

'Musharraf out to oust me from politics'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 30. Ms. Benazir Bhutto, former Prime Minister and chairperson of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), is away from Pakistan on self-exile for over two years now and yet she keeps a close watch on the domestic developments. For over a few weeks now, just before she got a boost through the Supreme Court judgment quashing a lower court verdict in a corruption case against her, all attention is focussed on her future plans. Ms. Bhutto talks to *The Hindu* in an exclusive e-mail interview to B. Muralidhar Reddy in Islamabad about issues that matter in Pakistan today.

Muralidhar Reddy: What are your views on the current political situation in Pakistan particularly after the Supreme Court quashed the verdict in the corruption case against you?

Ms. Benazir Bhutto: I am pleased with the Supreme Court decision upholding my prayer for acquittal and setting aside the conviction. An intelligence officer released tapes proving the judgment against me was dictated by the regime to the judge. The Judges on the Bench rose to the occasion. Operating under difficult circumstances, they tried to uphold justice.

The SC verdict changed the ball game. On trial now are the trial judges who convicted me. The apex court decision frus-

INTERVIEW

trates the regime's efforts to throw me out of politics and deny the people of Pakistan my leadership. As a result this would have profound impact on the political situation in the country.

After the verdict, it was expected that your return to Pakistan would be a matter of days. But the meeting you had in London with senior PPP leaders decided to delay your return till August. What is the logic? Are you afraid that the Musharraf regime would put you behind bars?

I want to return to Pakistan sooner than later. I miss my home. My return is part of the democratic — rather than the legal — struggle. It's better for the Party that I return after the local bodies elections and before the general elections.

As for the Musharraf regime putting me behind bars, that possibility is there, given their announcement of the same. However, pegged into the election schedule, it works against the regime. Pakistani people note the regime freed from prison a former Prime Minister from Punjab (Nawaz Sharif) convicted by the court and allowed him to leave the country.

If the regime now wants to arrest another former Prime Minister from Sind who has been acquitted by the Supreme Court, on her return from abroad, it will expose the racial bias which led to the break-up of Pakistan. It will damage the regime. Regret-

tably, it will also weaken the federation.

I think that, as we get near the election campaign, my imprisonment can become an election issue. And I can contest the elections even from prison.

The Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD) tried unsuccessfully on March 23 to hold a protest rally in Lahore. Now it intends to hold a rally on May Day. Do you agree with the perception that the Alliance has not taken off?

The purpose of the ARD rallies is to build the tempo against the Musharraf regime, to show that it is unpopular, repressive, reneging on promises of good governance and violating fundamental rights. The ARD succeeds if it holds the rally and it succeeds even if the regime breaks it up.

It's important for the world community to see how unpopular the regime is and to keep a distance from it. In such ways we can build domestic and international pressure for the holding of fair, free and impartial elections and the restoration of representative rule. Incidentally pro-Taliban forces are allowed to hold meetings. The ARD still plans its May Day meeting. Small processions will come out from different parts of the city to Nishtar Park.

I disagree with the perception that the ARD has still to take off. Its popular support is such that the regime is on the defensive in seeking to prevent the public meeting.

What is your assessment of the Musharraf regime now that it has completed half of the three-year period given by the Supreme Court for implementation of its agenda and restoration of democracy?

The military regime came in to end fascism and then adopted the fascist agenda to stay in office. Consequently it lost the support of the Pakistani people. It concentrated on vendetta and failed at governance. Today the debt is 106 per cent of the GDP which is a record high. The country is isolated internationally, the economy is worse and accountability a hoax for political foes. It's been tall on promises and short on delivery.

There have been statements attributed to you suggesting that you would not mind Gen. Musharraf taking over as the President of Pakistan.

That statement suggesting my agreement to General Musharraf becoming President was wrong and immediately clarified by my press spokesperson. When Gen. Musharraf asks the PPP and/or ARD for support to become the President, the matter can be considered. For now it is mere speculation. The PPP is opposed to the offices of President and Army Chief being rolled into one.

How serious in your perception is the threat of Talibanisation of Pakistan?

The concentration of power in a single individual or institution can assist the pro-Taliban forces seize power in Pakistan. They lack public support and are unable to win elections. Their agenda now is to concentrate power in the army/president and climb to power through its veto of parliament. That is indeed worrying.

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With the departure of Mr. Nawaz Sharif from Pakistan, leaders of the three major parties are away from the country. Do you agree that there is a leadership vacuum in Pakistan?

Yes. The PPP is concerned. My Party has reposed full confidence in my leadership and has in fact asked me to continue to lead the Party. The military regime is trying its best to oust me from politics and deprive the people of my leadership through artificial means and by use of the coercive apparatus of the State. That however has not worked so far. If the regime insisted upon foisting artificial leadership on the country by squeezing out the genuine leadership it will create a political vacuum leading to a political crisis the consequences of which would be serious for the country.

What is your reaction to the manner in which Mr. Sharif cut a deal with the Government? Do you feel that Mr. Sharif used the ARD to bargain?

That's the past. ARD formation did put pressure on the regime and facilitated the release of Nawaz Sharif. It was kept in the dark about the deal which was struck in secret without the court, the National Security Council or even the Cabinet being taken into confidence. We reject the regime's version that the deal was struck in the larger interest of the country. If that was so, the people would have been taken into confidence.

There have been suggestions from several quarters that the military government has offered a similar deal to your husband, Mr. Asif Zardari.

Yes, they did offer Senator Zardari a similar deal which he refused. He is in a different category. Unlike the Sharif family, the Zardari concerns did not owe six billion ru-

pees to the banks nor had mortgaged the same. So what were they supposed to give to the regime? The Zardari business and trading concerns suffered losses due to the imprisonment of the father and son. Legally, it's the State that should compensate the Zardari group for the forced losses.

Sooner than later the regime has to release Senator Zardari. He has completed prison terms without being convicted. Nawaz was just beginning his conviction.

The politically motivated charges are meant to hound us and cause mental and physical torture. They are unjust and should be withdrawn in the interest of justice. The military apparatus is frightened of the people's support for my leadership and keeps a sword of Damocles over my head through so-called charges.

You have been advocating peace between India and Pakistan. What according to you is the way forward for improving relations?

The PPP believes in conflict management in South Asia and has its own formula for it. We are also open to ideas from others on this issue. From our perspective, our goal should be open and safe borders in the disputed Kashmir region without prejudice to the views of either country on the Security Council Resolutions. The way forward is to manage the conflict and proceed step by step for building confidence. There is so much, which can and must be done before we take up the more intractable issue facing the two countries.

You have very strong views on the growing influence of the intelligence apparatus in Pakistan. What, according to you, needs to be done to curtail their role?

The military intelligence network can be regulated by law to stop its domestic interference and its illegal acts. Such illegal acts include plunder of public sector banks, formation of political parties, rigging of elections, illegal wire-tapping of the Prime Minister, Cabinet, judiciary and others. It also includes the destabilisation of governments through smear campaigns and attempts to fabricate evidence through torture and intimidation of the judiciary and the police.

Legally the intelligence is under the Prime Minister but in fact it is a free operator. I was unable to remove those officers who wrote concocted stories and did many other illegal acts or protect those officers who did good service. Accountability of responsibility is essential to good governance.

It is also important in proper conduct of foreign policy. It's wrong when the Government of the day decides on one policy and another is clandestinely followed by its own operatives.

These are important issues which is why we have been calling for a dialogue between the military and the politicians for the exit of the Army and the restoration of democracy.

Pak extends ban on political rallies

Islamabad, April 29

PAKISTAN'S MILITARY regime has said the ban on political rallies would continue till the scheduled general elections in October 2002 even as a section of the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD) has gone into hiding to make preparations for the planned May Day pro-democracy rally in Karachi.

The ARD alliance includes Benazir Bhutto's PPP and the arch-rival Pakistan Muslim League of ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who was exiled to Saudi Arabia in December.

Bhutto has urged the world

community to take note of the crackdown by the country's military Government to block the May Day political rally.

The rally, organised by the 16-party Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD), is planned for the port city of Karachi to express solidarity with the working classes and kick-start a campaign against military rule.

"ARD would not be permitted to hold public rallies till October 2002, the deadline fixed by the Supreme Court for the military Government to hold elections," Pakistan's Interior Minister, Gen (Retd) Moimuddin Haider said here yesterday.

The ARD is free to hold a reference to express solidarity and pay tributes to Chicago martyrs but that should also take place within four walls, he said.

The Government would not allow anybody to violate the ban on outdoor political activities and ARD would not be permitted to hold a public rally in Karachi on May Day, he said.

The provincial Sindh Government has already banned the proposed ARD rally on May Day, which was called to demand an end to the military rule in the country.

The ARD's local leadership of Sindh province, who managed to escape the police dragnet, held a

secret meeting in Karachi to chalk out their strategy.

ARD leaders have appealed to the Supreme Court to intervene in the matter.

Bhutto, who has lived abroad in self-imposed exile since early 1999, said, the world community should "take note of mass arrests and force the military regime to release the detained political leaders."

In a statement issued by her Pakistan People's Party (PPP), she said, Musharraf's Government had begun a "reign of terror" by arresting hundreds of political activists to pre-empt the May 1 rally.

"The brutal and barbaric

manner in which the police have been raiding the houses of political workers for the past week has only confirmed the vulnerability of the regime," she said.

The Government of Sindh province, of which Karachi is the capital, said on Friday it had arrested 539 people and that more could be detained to prevent the banned rally from taking place at the city's Nishtar Park ground.

"The days of the regime are numbered and such strong-arm tactics cannot rescue it from doom, which is writ large on the wall," Bhutto said in her statement.

Agencies

Military regime talks with Benazir's party

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, April 27. — The military regime has initiated talks with former Prime Minister, Mrs Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party on the formation of an interim national government and Gen Pervez Musharraf's plans to get elected as President.

The first round of talks had been held between government officials and PPP senior vice president Mr Makhdoom Amin Fahim here. Few army officials had also called on Mrs Bhutto in London earlier this month, the daily "Dawn" reported today.

PPP sources said the Musharraf government has sent feelers to the party after the Supreme Court recently set aside her conviction in a corruption case. Following the judgement, PPP

2,000 OPPOSITION ACTIVISTS ARRESTED

ISLAMABAD, April 27. — Pakistan's military regime has arrested over 2,000 activists of various political parties to prevent them from taking part in the planned May Day pro-democracy rally in Karachi, even as the chairman of Alliance for Restoration of Democracy, Mr Nasurullah Khan, today said he would approach the Supreme Court to question the ban against holding rallies. — PTI

is also eager to reach an understanding with the regime to enable Mrs Bhutto to end her self exile and return to Pakistan to take part in active politics.

Mrs Bhutto was, however, hesitant to return as she feared arrest in connection with other cases, they said. With the court verdict and the subsequent judgement by the Supreme Court drastically toning down the powers of the National Accountability Bureau, set up to prosecute cor-

rupt politicians, the government was willing to reach a compromise with Mrs Bhutto, they said. According to PPP, Gen Musharraf is willing to provide an important role for the PPP in an interim government provided Mrs Bhutto gives an undertaking to stay away from politics for few years and supports Gen Musharraf's presidency with enhanced powers.

Gen Musharraf, who is under pressure from the Supreme

Court to hold elections by 12 October 2002 and hand power to an elected government, plans to get elected as President by reviving the suspended national and provincial assemblies, PPP sources said.

Benazir offers to cooperate: Mrs Bhutto says she is prepared to cooperate with the military regime and give up the idea of launching a movement for its ouster if it agrees to hold talks with the grand alliance of political parties on holding elections in the country, UNI reports from Dubai say.

"If the military regime calls upon the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy to discuss the holding of elections, then a settlement can be worked out (with it)," Mrs Bhutto said in an interview with the *Khaleej Times*.

THE STATESMAN

20 APR 2002

Pak. parties firm on protest rally

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 27. Political parties in Pakistan are gearing up for a confrontation with the military government which is determined to stop them from holding the May Day rally at Karachi in support of the demand for return to democracy.

Even as hundreds of workers of the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD), a conglomerate of 16 parties, were detained by authorities in different parts of the country in a mid-night swoop, the leaders announced that they are determined to go ahead with the protest rally.

The proclamations of the leaders may in reality mean nothing as they could do precious little when the military government thwarted their plans to hold a similar rally on the Foundation Day of Pakistan on March 23 in Lahore.

The steps taken by Punjab to prevent the Alliance leaders and cadres from reaching anywhere near the venue attracted flak from all quarters. The dominant view was that the administration made the rally that could never be held a great success by its strong-arm

methods. The same trend might be witnessed in Karachi as well.

Political observers are surprised over the decision of the authorities to round up political parties and ban entry of prominent leaders of the Alliance into Karachi five days ahead of the proposed rally.

The reaction of the Government suits the Alliance leaders. Without doing anything they are getting all the attention they are looking for as left to them it would have indeed been a Herculean task for them to mobilise people particularly in these summer days.

It is not just the Sind administration that is hype active over the proposed rally. The administration in Punjab is equally worked up. On Thursday the Punjab authorities issued notices banning the entry of ARD leaders and workers into Sind.

In a related development the human rights organisation, Amnesty International, has called on the military government to release the detained cadres of the ARD. The Amnesty said the ban imposed by the Government on political rallies and demonstrations was against international human rights standards.

IN-1000

28 APR 1979

Court blow to Pak anti-graft decree

Islamabad, April 24 (Reuters): The Pakistani Supreme Court today asked the country's military government to amend a controversial anti-corruption decree, partly meeting concerns of critics who had called the law draconian.

A four-judge bench of the country's top court, ruling on challenges to the decree from Opposition politicians, gave the government up to two months to make the suggested amendments in the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) ordinance.

"We allow these petitions with the observations that this order and directions contained therein shall come into force with immediate effect," the judgement said.

"However, the federal government is directed to formally promulgate appropriate legislative instruments as soon as possible, but preferably within a period of two months from today," it said.

Military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf had issued the decree after seizing power in a bloodless

coup in October 1999, increasing the severity of an earlier law brought by ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to fight white-collar crime, mainly by politicians.

Politicians and human rights groups had criticised the new decree mainly for empowering the NAB to detain people for up to 90 days without charge, barring courts from granting bail, assigning burden of proof of innocence to the accused, and carrying a mandatory disqualification of convicts from politics for 21 years.

Today's judgment said an accused must be produced before an accountability court within 15 days of being arrested, saying that prolonged detention for 90 days without sufficient cause violated personal liberties.

It called for a restoration of the bail facility and ordered the reduction of the "excessive" 21-year disqualification period to 10 years after a prison sentence has been served by a convict.

But the court did not accept ob-

jections to the provision placing the burden of proof on the accused, saying it was not an unfamiliar concept in legal parlance.

It also upheld the NAB chairman's power to fix the venue of a trial of an accused.

The NAB had arrested scores of politicians and former bureaucrats under the new law and several were convicted, including Sharif, who was later pardoned and sent on a 10-year exile to Saudi Arabia in December.

Opposition rally

The government warned political leaders today not to travel to the southern city of Karachi for a banned pro-democracy rally on May 1, saying that if they did they would be arrested. "We are not going to allow other political leaders to travel to Karachi to take part in the rally and if they defy that order we're going to arrest them," Brig. Mukhtar Sheikh, Sindh provincial interior minister, said.

THE TELEGRAPH

25 APR 2001

Mandarins resent out-of-turn promotions in Pak

New Delhi, April 22

WITH DISCONTENT brewing among top army officials against Pervez Musharraf regime's decision to supersede about a score of them by promoting juniors, the Pakistani bureaucracy is now up in arms over induction of retired army officers in plum postings in the Foreign Ministry.

A "large group" of senior officers of the Foreign Ministry has planned to move court "against the backdoor induction" of retired Army officers by the military government in plum posts, according to a report in *The Nation*.

The "unrest" in the bureaucracy has also been caused by the Musharraf regime's reported directive to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to go slow on inquiries against several former and serving military officers on allegedly questionable deals.

According to an estimate, national exchequer has lost upto \$1 billion as alleged kickbacks and commissions in these deals, a story in the *Friday Times* website said.

The reports also said the military regime was facing rough weather not only due to discontent among the military officials and the bureaucracy, but also because of movements launched by political parties in Sindh, Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province against the alleged high-handedness of Punjab, especially on water-sharing.

While an umbrella body of political parties has demanded immediate formation of an interim government to carry out polls within a specified time-frame, Pakistan Supreme Court yesterday asked the military regime to stick to the October 2002 deadline given by it for conducting the polls.

"We, hereby, reaffirm by way of emphasis that validation and legitimacy accorded to the present



Government is conditional, inter-linked and intertwined with the holding of general elections to the national assembly, the provincial assemblies and the senate within the timeframe laid down by this court," the apex court said.

Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD), umbrella body of major opposition parties, has accused the military regime for taking the country to "a verge of collapse" in its 18-month rule and demanded immediate formation of an interim national government to oversee the polls within a time-frame.

ARD also demanded lifting of ban on political activities, restoration of 1973 Constitution and creation of an "impartial" election commission to hold the elections, according to Jung.

It quoted a leader of ARD partner PPP, as saying that foreign exchange reserves had dipped enormously, GDP growth rate declined substantially and trade deficit gone up to 1.14 billion dollars.

Resentment over the river water-sharing with Punjab has also seen strikes in Sindh and Baluchistan, with ARD constituents blaming the regime for its pro-Punjab tilt on all major matters, the report said.

PTI

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

23 APR 2001

Pak police swoop down on Opp. leaders



A Pakistan Muslim League activist protests against the arrest of Opposition leaders in Karachi. (AFP)

FROM ANDY SOLOMAN

Karachi, April 26 (Reuters): Pakistan's leading politicians scurried into hiding today as the country's military rulers arrested hundreds of people in the second major clampdown within a month, Opposition sources said.

Police and security forces launched raids through the night and into today in a bid to stop the 16-party Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) from pushing ahead with plans for a banned rally set for May 1 in Karachi, they said.

"The whole night there was an operation against (political activists)," said an official of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of self-exiled former Premier Benazir Bhutto.

A similar rally planned for the central city of Lahore late in March was blocked after security forces detained thousands of political activists. But many of today's raids proved fruitless as the authorities discovered their prime

targets had long gone. "My house was raided, but I'm still but," said Ejaz Shaffi, a member of the suspended National Assembly and of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) of ousted and exiled premier Nawaz Sharif. "They are still looking for me so I'm not in my usual places."

The number of arrests was unclear as police officials contacted by Reuters refused to comment, and officials of the Sindhi provincial government could not immediately be reached.

Political partyworkers said hundreds of their colleagues had been detained, but the total could run into the thousands.

Leaders determined

"(We) strictly condemn this situation including the arrests, it's a conspiracy against the federation of Pakistan, a conspiracy against the constitution... and a conspiracy against democracy," the PPP official said. He added that political leaders would still attend the rally. "Several leaders have gone

underground because of the current arrests and harassment... Our senior leaders will be there in Karachi on May 1," he added.

Military authorities earlier this week warned political leaders not to travel to Karachi for the May 1 event, saying they would be arrested if they did.

The ARD, which includes both the PPP and the PML, intended the rally as part of a campaign demanding that the military stand down and immediately restore democracy. The military regime of Gen. Pervez Musharraf, which dislodged Sharif in a coup in October 1999, has banned all public rallies but pledged to restore civilian rule around October 2002, within a three-year deadline set by the Supreme Court.

The detained included former justice minister and PPP deputy secretary general Mian Raza Rabbani and Fauzia Wahab, who heads the PPP's human rights office. "There are a lot of our workers being arrested... and we are getting more information from

the interior of Sindh (province) of more arrests," the PPP spokesman said.

Haleem Siddiqui, Sindh province general secretary of the pro-Sharif faction of the PML, which split following the coup, said about 150 of his workers had been detained. "The city administration is arresting people who have nothing to do with the May 1 rally," he said.

Senior ARD leaders, including its 83-year-old chief Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan and the PML's Javed Hashmi, were detained at Karachi airport on their arrival and forced back on to a plane for their home city of Lahore, witnesses said.

The families of a number of senior politicians told Reuters police visited their homes during the night. "Eight mobile police cars came last night, he wasn't at home," said the wife of one top PPP leader. "They came at around one o'clock."

There was a heavy police presence at Karachi's Quaid-e-Azam

international airport where security personnel stopped a group of about 130 PML activists — mostly women — from chanting anti-government and pro-Sharif slogans.

Some Western countries have demanded the military step down, restore the suspended Constitution and hold free and fair elections.

19 killed in accident

At least 19 people were killed and 24 injured in a collision between two passenger buses in the central Pakistani town of Jhang today, police said.

The condition of at least seven injured was serious and they were being treated at a nearby hospital, police officer Sikandar Hayat said. "The collision was head on, when one bus coming from Jhang city tried to overtake a cyclist but its driver lost control and the vehicle rammed into another bus coming in the opposite direction," he said. All the victims died before police or medical aid could reach them, Hayat said.

Supreme Court says Benazir's trial biased

Mubashir Zaidi
Islamabad, April 16

THE PAKISTAN Supreme Court today ruled that the trial of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, was biased. Justice Malik Mohammed Qayyum of the Lahore High Court had earlier convicted both to five years in prison on corruption charges.

As a result, Benazir was disqualified from contesting polls for 21 years.

The Supreme Court has already ordered re-trial of Benazir on April 7. The apex court ruling would help Benazir shore up her sagging image and

drooping political career that was tarnished by the corruption charges leading to the downfall of her two Governments in 1990 and 1996.

The Supreme Court observed that Justice Qayyum was hand-in-glove with former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Qayyum was issued a diplomatic passport, which he was not entitled to, in exchange for a biased verdict.

The apex court also observed that there was a unholy nexus between Qayyum, former accountability bureau chief senator Saifur Rehman and Nawaz Sharif, a sworn enemy of Benazir.

The court noted that Benazir Bhutto

was not given a fair chance to defend herself and Justice Qayyum denied her the opportunity to even record her statement.

The apex court went on saying that Qayyum, being the senior member of the Bench, had exerted his influence on the second member S Najamul Hassan Kazmi, who being an unconfirmed Lahore High Court judge was ready to oblige Qayyum.

"We have taken judicial notice of the relevant notifications issued by the Government of Pakistan, in the Ministry of Law, Justice, Human Rights and Parliamentary Affairs dated May 27, 1997, May 26, 1998 and May 13,

1999, that the said learned member of the Bench was appointed as additional Judge of the Lahore High Court for a period of one year but the tenure was extended for a further period of one year with effect from May 28, 1998, and he was ultimately appointed as a permanent Judge on 13 May, 1999," the apex court added.

The court said that outcome of the trial was designed to put an end to Benazir's political career. "There is no need to take the help of the audio-tapes and their transcripts as there is sufficient material on record which substantiates the allegation of bias," the court concluded.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

19 APR 2001

Karachi wakes up from nightmare to twin blasts

Karachi, April 18 (Reuters): A night of violence in the Pakistani city of Karachi was followed by two bomb blasts today that killed one person and wounded two, police and witnesses said.

The blasts, in the upmarket Clifton and defence areas, came amid tight security as a one-day strike gripped Karachi and major towns and cities throughout the southern province of Sindh, forcing an almost complete shutdown.

"We have confirmed reports there is a bomb blast in which a person died," a police official said of the first explosion.

Karachi bomb squad chief Moin-uddin said a second "low-intensity device" exploded near a fast-food shop, wounding one person and smashing windows.

Police said the dead person, originally thought to be a bomber, was a drug addict who had an explosive device placed in his bag while he slept. Doctors

1-2 19/3
said one of the wounded was in stable condition and the other suffered superficial injuries.

It was unclear whether the blasts were related to the strike.

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), the biggest political party in Karachi, and the Jiye Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM) issued the strike call to protest against government clampdowns on political activities and a failure to solve a chronic water shortage.

The stoppage follows a night of violence in which 238 people were arrested and dozens of vehicles torched. MQM officials said the strike was successful and blamed the violence on state agencies out to discredit strike supporters.

"We have called a peaceful strike and all business groups in the city have supported us. We have a mass support...so violence by our party is out of question," senior MQM leader Nas-

reen Jalil, a senator in the upper house suspended following Pakistan's 1999 military coup, said.

"Intelligence agencies and the establishment always play a dirty role in Pakistani politics and they are again doing that to malign the MQM," she said.

Police said the overnight violence had helped force people to observe the shutdown.

"We have arrested 238 people in different parts of the city on public order offences," said a senior police official, adding seven had been caught trying to burn public vehicles.

He said security forces had raided houses belonging to known MQM and JSQM activists, and there had been shooting into the air to scare people.

Today, groups of armed paramilitary personnel patrolled Karachi streets and most shops, schools and businesses remained shuttered and few buses were running.

THE TELEGRAPH

17 APR 2001

Join the Pak Army to become a millionaire

Q: Would you consider the revocation of Mr Nawaz Sharif's exile if you became Prime Minister?

A: It is a very speculative question because I have yet to see what his exile agreement is. I think that this decision of the Supreme Court. I personally believe, is the sweetest revenge. The fact that what he tried to do to me happened to him is enough to make me feel vindicated. His return really depends on extraneous factors, on the exile agreement he has signed. It depends on who wins in the next elections and who wins the constitutional battle and who is the President. It depends on so many imponderables.

But Mr Sharif is an institutional player. My strength is amongst the people. His strength is amongst the institutions. He's got a lot of money at his disposal. It helped him become Prime Minister twice, and I assume it would help him to return to Pakistan at some stage in the future. I don't want that to sound catty because it is not, but just that he does have abilities at political manoeuvring.

Q: Pakistan has more or less either overtly or covertly, been, in a sense, ruled by the army. Do you think that will ever change?

A: Well part of this is domestic and the domestic answer is that people want a professional army that they can be proud of, that does its professional duties. There are international compulsions also, where many international players look towards the military. For example, during the Cold War it was the compulsion of the international community to go with military dictatorship. Now the Cold War is over but there is still a lot of networking of friendships. So the domestic and external pressures have to mesh before a situation arises. But as long as Pakistan's politicised army is seen as able to deliver on various fronts then it becomes very difficult... to have the kind of professional army that Pakistani people want. For example, right now so many incentives have been given to allow for politicised military. It is the most lucrative job available. You go from being working class to being multi-millionaire, so unless that is addressed and people see that joining the military would pay them as much as it would had they joined the police and the judiciary, then certainly that would affect what sort of a military we would have.

Q: How do they become multi-millionaires?

A: For instance the generals take over prime commercial and agricultural property. They allot themselves, benefit themselves. If anybody else did that it would be called a corrupt act but in Pakistan that is the law. It is a fact that people who are working class become multi-millionaires, far richer than anybody in the police or in the judiciary. So there is a tendency to go and join it because you can benefit yourself by allotting yourself rich agricultural lands and prime commercial property and if you are lucky enough to become a chief you get a house that is worth several hundred thousand dollars. You get it for free, for life, for your children. But in politics what your grandfather gave you can be taken away from you. And also every time you become a chief you get a budget worth several

FORMER PAK PRIME MINISTER BENAZIR BHUTTO SPEAKS WITH NABANITA SIRCAR IN LONDON

PART II

hundred thousand dollars to redecorate the army chief's house. The houses in which they live is on a grander scale than the Prime Minister's. So they feel they are the real rulers.

The commander's live-in is grander than the houses of governors. Politicians are answerable to the people, Parliament and their party but they are answerable to no one. It's all "Yes sir". Then all the money that is there from the arms deals. Politicians have very little to do with it. The specifications are set by the armed forces and the specifications that they set only fit what they want that to fit. So by the time it comes to the DCC it has already been predetermined what's going to be bought. So this situation needs to change and there has to be domestic pressure which is certainly there. But internationally, they have marketed themselves as the one organised force that can keep

I think India behaved in the correct fashion (when Fernandes resigned after the Tehelka exposé). There is a consensus that there ought to be a rule of law. That consensus is a challenge for us to create in Pakistan

order in Pakistan and they have discredited all others and weakened all other institutions. So there is a fear in the international community that we need them and so there is very little media interest in rectifying it.

For instance, if you join the police or judiciary you work for 35 years and you get one pension. But if you work in the army then you take leave in the middle to go and do whatever you want to do, whether it's business or *jihad*, and you can come back then and rejoin. You can't do that in the police or the judiciary or the civil service or as an ambassador. And then if you are in the military you get two pensions, two pays and you get lavish support, if you are put in civilian duties.

As long as we have uneven laws why should people join the police, or the civil service or the foreign office or the political parties? If they join the political parties where are the rights you have? There is a tendency to join this huge behemoth.

As part of these reforms we understand that the generals have reservations about how politicians conduct themselves. But the politicians also have reservations about the way the generals conduct themselves. And for Pakistan to advance forward there is need for a meaningful and substantive dialogue which can make all of us, as Pakistanis, proud of all our institutions, political, military and

so on. That can also help bring stability to a region that has lacked stability for almost half a century.

Q: So if General Musharraf offered, would you like to have a dialogue with him?

A: The ARD is prepared for a dialogue. It has been talking about a dialogue since October 1999. Well, the ARD has come in now, but, the GDA earlier, of which PPP was a part, welcomed the military intervention and the overthrow of Mr Nawaz Sharif and they said now the army should sit down with the political leaders and devise an exit strategy to go back to the barracks. But what the GDA had asked for was not implemented.

Then the GDA leaders and some of us decided to make a larger alliance and we went in for the ARD. But the ARD public agitation programme, like every agitation, ends at a negotiating table. So whether it's tension with India, it will also ultimately end on a negotiating table. The question is do we want to put ourselves through all this before getting to the negotiating table? Our position is very clear, it is and has always been that it is wrong to accuse the politicians for the ills that beset society and that we are all part of the problem, we are all part of the solution. And if we need stability then we have to have an order that recognises that the people should decide their affairs. And that every one and all are equal before law. This matter that there is the people, and then there is another super-class, that has damaged us.

Q: What do you think about the Tehelka revelations in India?

A: I think it is marvellous the way, ironically, the tapes in India and in Pakistan, had such enormous significance for our political direction. I really think that India did the right thing in acting immediately. The defence minister resigned, though he was not on the tapes. Ironically, the judges who are on the tapes (in Pakistan) are still sitting there. And the military which says they are committed to fight corruption are allowing judges Qayum and Rashid to continue sitting. And the tapes show that both the judges were taking dictation from the government.

So I do think that Pakistan needs to see what other countries do when confronted with evidence of wrongdoing and act accordingly. It makes me sad as a Pakistani, when I see those two judges continuing to sit on the bench after they have violated the provisions of the Constitution. And then the law minister, he took over the proceedings of the court. I wasn't allowed a single defence witness. Now I know why, because the law minister was telling the judge, "Hurry up and conclude." So how could the judge conduct the proceedings when the proceedings had been taken over by Mr Khalid Anwar? This is what is disgusting, that there is total lawlessness in our country. They say they are upholding the law against politicians but they are not. It's lawlessness. And here there are people caught with their fingers in the cookie jar. So I think India behaved in the correct fashion and that is why there is the rule of law there. And there is a consensus amongst Indians that there ought to be a rule of law. That consensus is a challenge for us to create in Pakistan.

■ CONCLUDED

High drama marks departure of PPP team to London

HD-19
12/19
By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 16. A group of 11 senior leaders of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has left for London for consultations with the former Prime Minister and party leader, Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, on the course of action in the wake of the recent Supreme Court order quashing the lower court conviction against her in a corruption case.

High drama preceded the departure of the leaders as the authorities in Karachi stopped five other top leaders of the party from boarding the flight. No reasons have been given for the decision and the leaders have claimed that none of them is on the Exit Control List.

The meeting between Mrs. Bhutto and the PPP leaders is being watched with keen interest as they are supposed to decide the date of return of Mrs. Bhutto from self-exile.

An immediate announcement on the date of return is unlikely for more than one reason. The apex court is yet to spell out the grounds on which it has quashed the order of the lower court and the military government could be expected to plan its next move only after the details of the judgment are out.

Mrs. Bhutto would also obviously like to await not only the details of the verdict but also the next course of action of the Musharraf Government. She has given enough hints that her return may not be possible before the end of the elections to the local bodies in

the last week of May. The decision of a district magistrate in the United Kingdom to hand over 22,000 pages of documents on the reported details of assets and bank accounts of the family members and friends of Mrs. Bhutto could also complicate the process of her return.

As things stand most PPP leaders are in favour of Mrs. Bhutto's return soon after the local body elections. They believe that she should risk the chances of being detained by the military government as only such a daring act could help the party to win back the confidence of people.

There have been hints from the top functionaries of the military government that she could be arrested if she returns. She is accused in several other cases and at least in one case a non-bailable warrant is pending against her.

In another development, authorities in Lahore on Monday reportedly bulldozed the office of the Jaish Muhammad outfit. A report in the Urdu daily *Nawai Waqt* said the action was taken without any prior notice and office furniture and other equipment worth more than one lakh rupees was destroyed. A spokesman of the Jaish has been quoted as saying that the office was sealed three days back and two activists of the outfit were arrested. Jaish Muhammad office-bearers have condemned the action. Sipah-e-Sahaba leaders have also deplored the government's action terming it as evidence of the 'anti-jihad' policies of the regime.

THE HINDU

17 APR

Benazir's plan for homecoming hangs in balance

Britain hands over documents relating to Asif Zardari's assets to Pakistani authorities

By **Rashmee Z. Ahmed**
The Times of India News Service

LONDON: Less than a week after the Pakistani supreme court set aside the corruption conviction of Benazir Bhutto and her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, the Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) jubilant juggernaut appears to have run into rough weather.

On Wednesday, the British government handed the Pakistani authorities more than 20,000 documents relating to Mr Zardari's alleged UK assets, ending a two-year legal battle by Ms Bhutto and Mr Zardari to prevent Britain from cooperating fully with Pakistan in its search for alleged missing millions. The PPP is making much of the timing of the latest developments, describing it as opportunistic and a conspiracy against Pakistan's former first couple.

The British home office refused to be drawn on the timing, describing it only as the "logical next step after the ending of Mr Zardari's judicial challenge of the home secretary's decision to hand over documents requested by the Pakistani government".

Britain had agreed in September to hand over the documents requested by Islamabad in its attempt to trace the overseas network of properties and bank accounts allegedly held by Mr Zardari, formerly investments minister in his wife's government and Pakistan's so-called "Mr 10 per cent". But Mr Zardari's lawyers had challenged the decision, requesting confidentiality. Britain decided to assist the Pakistani government two months after General Musharraf criticised the UK for doing less than it should to help the country nail its corrupt political elite.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in Islamabad is understood to be delighted with what it alleges is a paper trail left by Mr Zardari and Ms Bhutto as they accept-

ed kickbacks. The reams of British documentation of Zardari-Bhutto's alleged kickback accounts are reported to pertain to bank accounts held here by the couple and their close associates.

Ms Bhutto's spokesman told *The Times of India* that this was a "desperate move by an administration that wanted to do something decisive after last week's supreme court judgment". He stressed that Ms Bhutto knew nothing of the case, which related only to "a fishing expedition on drummed-up charges against Mr Zardari". He said that Pakistan had fabricated a drugs-related case against Mr Zardari in order to enlist Britain's help under international treaties and the "documents offered to the UK to support the allegations were the same ones used to persuade the Swiss authorities that Mr Zardari and Ms Bhutto were implicated in money-laundering cases".

The spokesman admitted that the documents appeared to have persuaded the Swiss authorities that Ms Bhutto and Mr Zardari

had a case to answer and the end result was their damaging decision to freeze their bank accounts. The British government is stressing that its "role is now at an end and it is up to Pakistan to deal with the case against Ms Bhutto and Mr Zardari as it sees fit".

PPP sources here say that Mr Zardari plans to fight the new charges, but the prospect of a new front opening up in General Musharraf's war against the "corrupt political elite" is likely to be damaging to Ms Bhutto's hopes for a swift and complete political rehabilitation.

Last week, Ms Bhutto and her husband won a legal battle in Pakistan when the supreme court ordered a retrial in the only case in which she had been convicted for corruption. The judgment had raised hopes of Ms Bhutto returning to Pakistan from self-imposed exile in London and Dubai to lead the multi-party Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy against military rule.



Benazir Bhutto

SC dubs Pak anti-graft panel 'draconian'

Islamabad, April 13

AFTER DELIVERING a stunning judgment setting aside the conviction of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, the Pakistan Supreme Court has locked horns with the military regime over the "draconian" National Accountability Bureau Ordinance (Nabo) brought in by the military regime to crack down on corrupt politicians and officials.

The ordinance is harsh as it vests "draconian" powers with the officials, the court said yesterday and told the State counsel it had ample jurisdiction to ask the Government to remove the acunae in the legislation.

The apex court was hearing petitions filed by top political parties, including Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League, questioning the equality of the ordinance, The Statesman reported today.

"The court has ample jurisdiction to interpret the law. It is the duty of the court to interpret the law for delivering justice without being dependent on any concession from the Government," Chief Justice Irshad Hasan Khan was quoted as saying by the daily.

He said the judiciary was independent and would not succumb to pressures from the Government in performing its duty.

The Government informed the

court that it was ready to amend Nabo on the lines directed by it. "The Government is bound to amend the ordinance if the apex court decides," State counsel Abid Hasan Minto said.

The military regime in Pakistan is to extend its investigation of corruption allegations against Benazir after the release by a British court of 22,000 pages of documents detailing her bank accounts and assets. Benazir, won a significant victory last week when the Pakistani apex court overturned a conviction for corruption against her and her husband and ordered a retrial.

She said she intended to return to Pakistan soon and would try to become prime minister for a third time. But yesterday Bow Street magistrates court in London released detailed financial documents about the couple and statements taken from nine associates.

The Pakistani National Accountability Bureau, which investigates corruption, has been trying to secure the documents since the army seized power 17 months ago. It has not yet had sight of them. Almost all the political parties that filed the petitions seeking scrapping of Nabo alleged the law was being indiscriminately used to bring them under submission.

Agencies

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

18 APR 2001

Pak in a spot over diplomat's arrest

Keshav Pradhan
Kathmandu, April 13

PAKISTAN IS desperately trying to shield its diplomat, who was caught with at least 16 kilograms of RDX here last evening.

The detention of Mohammed Arshad Cheema, a first secretary (counsellor) in the Pakistani embassy here, strengthens Delhi's claims that the ISI has been using the kingdom as a conduit to send subversive elements armed with deadly weapons and explosives to India.

AFP reports said that the Pakistani diplomat today denied the explosives belonged to him, a Home Ministry official said.

"Cheema said he was living in the rented house in Kathmandu but said he had nothing to do with the explosives and does not know how they found their way into the house," an official said on condition of anonymity. He would be declared persona non grata and expelled from Nepal within the next 24 hours, the source said.

AFP reports said that the Pakistani diplomat today denied the explosives belonged to him, a Home Ministry official said.

"Cheema said he was living in the rented house in Kathmandu but said he had nothing to do with the explosives and does not know how they found their way into the house," an official said on condition of anonymity. He would be declared persona non grata and expelled from Nepal within 24 hours, the source said.

As the Nepalese media flashed news about the detention of Arshad and his wife Rabi this morning, a red-faced Pak-



Nepal police arrest Pakistani diplomat Mohammed Arshad Cheema (right) in Kathmandu on Thursday night.

istan embassy, in a statement, described the action as "a violation of the Vienna Convention."

Exhorting Nepalese authorities, it said, "Adherence to the provisions of the Convention is in the interests of diplomatic relation between two States." It alleged Pakistani officials were not allowed to meet Arshad after his detention.

Indian and Nepalese agencies had earlier linked Arshad to the seizure of 20 kgs of RDX from a hotel here three years ago.

Police said they stepped up vigil on Arshad, who was to fly back to Pakistan today after completing his three-year tenure here, about two months ago.

Three months ago, Mohd Saf-

Nepal expels Cheema

NEPAL ON Friday expelled Cheema. The Nepali Foreign Ministry ordered the First Secretary at the Pakistani embassy to leave the kingdom by Saturday. "Since it is incompatible with his diplomatic duties, HMG (His Majesty's Government of Nepal) has decided that Mr Cheema should leave the country within 24 hours," the Foreign Ministry said.

Reuters

dar, an assistant in the Pakistan embassy's education wing, was sent back to his country for

Hrithik-baiter network's channel launch delayed

HT Correspondent
Kathmandu, April 13

CHANNEL NEPAL, the kingdom's first private satellite television channel slated to be launched on Nepalese New Year's Day tomorrow, has again run into rough weather.

The Koirala Government, which is believed to be under pressure from India to stop the proposed channel, has asked its owners, Space Time Network, to hold back the project till further "technical examinations" of its equipment according to the 1992 National Broadcasting Act.

The network submitted an appeal to the Government yesterday seeking immediate investigation so that the channel launches on schedule.

The network also submitted certificates to prove that it has followed ITU standards while setting up installations in collaboration with Telecom of Thailand.

A Space Time official said, "We hope that we'll be able to launch the channel soon. We've fulfilled all the criteria required for the launch."

Earlier in January, the Government had cancelled the network's licence for uplinking facilities after Delhi allegedly raised objections about its role during the December 2000 anti-Hrithik Roshan riots.

treatment after he was allegedly injured in a shootout before the Indian Gorkha Soldiers' guest-house here. Intelligence sources identified him as an ISI official assigned to lure Nepalese nationals into clandestine transfer of explosives to India.

Exactly a year ago, A Saboor a Pakistani embassy official, was deported to Pakistan after huge sums of fake Indian currency notes were recovered from his residence.

The Pakistani embassy claims Arshad is "framed in a false and fabricated case." It alleged the couple was "forcibly confined to the first floor though the contraband material was allegedly seized from the ground floor."

Pak SC locks horns with military regime

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, April 13. — After delivering a stunning judgment setting aside the conviction of former Prime Minister Mrs Benazir Bhutto, the Pakistan Supreme Court has locked horns with the military régime over the "draconian" nature of the National Accountability Bureau Ordinance (NABO) which seeks to crack down on corrupt politicians and officials.

The ordinance is harsh in nature, the court said yesterday and told the state counsel that it had ample jurisdiction to ask the government to remove the lacunae in legislation.

The court was hearing petitions filed by top political parties, including Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League, questioning the legality of the ordinance.

"The court has ample jurisdiction to interpret the law. It is the court's duty to interpret the law for delivering justice without being dependent on any concession from the government," the Chief Justice, Mr Irshad Hasan Khan, said.

He said the judiciary was independent and wouldn't succumb to pressures from the government in performing its duty.

The government informed the court that it was ready to amend NABO on the lines directed by it. "The government is bound to amend the ordinance if the apex court decides," state counsel Mr Abid Hasan Minto said.

Yesterday's comments followed observations by the court on 9 April in which it said powers vested with NABO officials to arrest anyone for 90 days without registering a case was "very harsh and unreasonable."

The government counsel said though the ordinance was "a good piece of legislation, the federation is prepared to bring amendments to it if ordered by the court."

He said it was enacted to recover huge sums of money embezzled by corrupt politicians.

Commenting on the government counsel's submissions, Mr Justice Hassan said once the court got hold of a matter, its power to decide the matter becomes unlimited. "We are answerable to our conscience and know the economic conditions of the country. We don't want to be a party to the deterioration of economic conditions."

Almost all the political parties which filed the petitions seeking scrapping of NABO, alleged the law was being indiscriminately used to bring them under submission.

Mrs Bhutto's lawyers argued that if the court struck down or drastically modified the legislation, the PPP leader could return to the country without any fear of arrest.

THE STATESMAN

14 APR 2001

Musharraf reshuffles army brass

HF 4
1679

Islamabad, April 15

CONTINUING HIS efforts to consolidate hold on the army, military ruler General Pervez Musharraf has effected a major reshuffle transferring the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief from a powerful corps commander posting to head the army training institute and promoting the ISI chief to the rank of lieutenant general.

PCB chief Lt Gen Tauqir Zia, who headed the Mangala Division, has been posted as Inspector General, (training and evaluation) of army, an official announcement here said adding he will retain his job as the PCB chief.

The Nation today said that Zia was shifted as he was perceived to have been too occupied with his job with PCB. Maj Gen Muhammad Akram, presently serving as chief of the Pakistan's all powerful intelligence agency, ISI, too has been promoted to the rank of lieutenant general.

Akram being retained in his present posting, reports said, raised speculation that he was likely to be made the deputy chief of the army later this year.

Musharraf, who is also chief of the army, recently said that he would not retire in October as scheduled and would extend his service. At present he holds three important posts, including the chief executive of Pakistan, a post which was created after the October 1999 military coup incorporating the powers of the Prime Minister. Musharraf is also the Chairman of Joint Chief of Staff Committee (JCSC).

While retaining the post of army chief, Musharraf is expected to appoint senior generals to

the posts of vice chief of army and CJSC.

The process of reshuffle at the top army level was set in motion last month by Musharraf to consolidate his hold among the top brass. The ongoing reshuffle assumed significance as 12 corps commanders of the army formed the policy and power structure of the present military Government. The commanders would hold their monthly meeting on April 23 to review political and military issues.

"It (reshuffle) is strictly a routine affair and there is nothing political about it," a senior military official told AFP.

"The shuffle is to accommodate the six major generals who have been promoted as lieutenant generals," the official who did not want to be named said. Maj Gen Tariq Majeed was appointed as director-general military intelligence replacing Maj Gen Ehsanul Haq who has been appointed as Corps Commander Peshawar.

Maj Gen Ghulam Mustafa has been appointed as Corps Commander Mangla, replacing Zia.

The outgoing corps commander Peshawar Lt Gen Imtiaz Shaheen has been posted as chief of logistic staff at General Headquarters.

Besides Akram, three other major generals have been promoted to the rank of lieutenant.

In a more significant reshuffle in September, Musharraf changed some of his key military officials who took part in the coup. He replaced the chairman of the anti-corruption national accountability bureau and appointed a new chief of general staff.

Agencies

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

16 APR 2001

PAK GENERALS CAN DO SOMETHING IN KASHMIR TO DIVERT ATTENTION

Q : When do you plan to return to Pakistan, now that all charges against you have been suspended by the Supreme Court?

A : It is a party decision. I have called my party colleagues over and we are going to sit down and discuss it. Obviously there is a limited window and that window is after the conclusion of the local party's elections and before the general elections of next year. A lot of it depends on what the regime plans. If they are going to do a vendetta then it might be more useful for me to be there at a time... in prison, when it is an election asset. So all sorts of factors have to be kept in mind but if they give up this vendetta after this decision of the Supreme Court then it will be possible, perhaps, to return.

But at any event it depends on the movement amongst the people. How soon people are mobilised, how soon they can come out. But even if we are unable to mobilise people in an agitational sense, nonetheless I have to go back because it can become an election issue. So there are now two aspects to look at only from the agitational point of view, that how soon can I go back to be part of the democratic movement. And our party's efforts were geared towards making the alliance called the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD), and after the alliance was made we had certain setbacks, like the departure of Mr Nawaz Sharif to Saudi Arabia. As soon as we recovered from that we had the setback of the MOM quitting the ARD. Then there were rumours that the regime was working on other component parties. Simultaneously we had managed to hold the first meeting in March in which there were widespread arrests. So we were just getting our act together and we were hoping that as this mobilisation built up I'd be able to go back as part of the democratic movement. But there was always a charge that the regime would play games with our own alliance and factionalise it. So now we have a major hurdle shifted out of our way. We have the chance of the agitation paying off and in case the regime tries to pull the carpet from under our feet we have the chance of my going back anyway and becoming an election issue.

The way for my return is now facilitated although there are still challenges ahead.

Q : Do you have any signals about what the military regime is thinking?

A : The only signals we have are from the press. And inside the press, there is one statement by General Musharraf in which he has said the court decision will be accepted. Now that is a bit ambiguous. We don't know whether this court decision will be accepted so that we can get another court decision that suits us. That's to be clarified. The second impression that we have from the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) people is that they want to go ahead full steam and that they have got many more cases that they can do. Sometimes they say five and sometimes they say nine. They are unable to count how many charges they actually want to bring about. And they say even if they don't have any new charges, new evidences can be manufactured and we can come up with new charges. As far as the NAB is concerned they are frothing at

FORMER PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER BENAZIR BHUTTO SPEAKS WITH NABANTA SIRCAR IN LONDON

the mouth. As far as General Musharraf is concerned he has made a less hostile statement, but not a friendly statement.

Q : When General Musharraf had taken over, you tried to establish contact with him. Do you plan to do so again?

A : No. That time they had taken over and they had made certain promises to end the one-sided accountability, to take the country back to democracy and to have institution building and it was in that context that I had made a telephone call that went unanswered. Since then all those objectives, to my view, have been abandoned. So there is little point in establishing contact. But my people are in contact. There have been meetings with our party people and we have been urging both privately and publicly that there has to be a restoration of the democratic process. Rather than confront the people it is important to enter into a dialogue with the ARD which is spearheading the operation with a view to establishing an interim government of national consensus and holding elections which are fair, free and impartial. We have yet to succeed in having that political settlement come about which can lead to a facilitation of democracy. That is the ARD position which is also the PPP position.

Q : What do think about the CMAG warning to Pakistan to decide on election dates by October this year?

A : I hope that happens. But so far we are yet to get the signals. But the CMAG decision was a very important one. In fact it makes the Commonwealth relevant in the world of today, the support that the Commonwealth has been giving to democracy through its actions in other countries before Pakistan and now Pakistan. In pushing for democracy it is making the Commonwealth very much relevant to young people today who live in countries with fragile democracies. The PPP has welcomed CMAG's decision.

We would like to see elections within three months. Elections can be held within three months. The local body election will be over by the end of May. Then the secondary elections will be held till August, but general elections can be announced any time after May. And they can certainly be held in time for Pakistan to attend the CMAG. Anyway, it is difficult right now to say what is going to happen. For us there is a miracle.

The regime had a certain script. It had very little to do with jus-

tice. According to the script they wanted to oust the leaders of the two major parties who had been in government and they wanted to bring in new inexperienced people who would be in awe of the generals and therefore adopt their agenda. According to this script they succeeded in December by sending Mr Nawaz Sharif off and they decided to send me off, having this case held immediately after the winter vacation. Now a spanner has been thrown in the works of that script and it has dramatically changed the political situation in Pakistan. There is a deadline of 2002 for the regime. If it now wants to again use judicial abuse to eliminate my leadership, it is facing a quandary as to how it will do that before the deadline.

First they had the deadline. They thought they had the judgment which they will uphold. And I think they would have put much more pressure to uphold it, if it hadn't been for the tapes. I am very grateful to all the press and media, including the Zee TV, which played those tapes and changed the dynamics of a court verdict that impacts on Pakistan and more importantly, has the prospects of impacting on South Asia in South Asia's own quest for peace.

Q : Do you think the Commonwealth and the US will support you in your campaign for the restoration of democracy?

A : I have yet to receive any such signals of whether they would support me. There has been so much propaganda that perhaps people feel a bit apprehensive about going back to people who have been there in the past. I don't know. But I think they do support democracy from what we see. The CMAG, in particular made a landmark statement in which they called upon Pakistan to hold elections by October this year. They said 'the deadline your Supreme Court has allowed you, but we have our own Supreme Court (I am putting the words) which has its rules and laws and under those rules you either do it by October or you are out. I think it was a very important support for democracy in Pakistan.'

How many countries and people and institutions have been making demands for democracy, thinking I would be eliminated before them, I am unable to answer. But what I can say is that I am a known player. I am firstly, a known player, and secondly I am the player with the popular support. Therefore I am the political leader with the experience and the team to address issues of concern with popular sanction. There is no one else that can do that.

Q : What do you think of the Bush administration? Will it be different from the Clinton administration in its relations with Pakistan?

A : It is difficult to assess the Bush administration just yet. I have been to America twice and I had very good relations with Bush senior's administration. We worked very closely together to get Pakistan military and economic assistance, on a scale larger than the one during the Afghan war. The 41st President was also known to my father whom he

PART I



RETURN TO PAKISTAN

A lot of it depends on what the regime plans. If they are going to do a vendetta then it might be more useful for me to be there at a time... in prison, when it is an election asset. So all sorts of factors have to be kept in mind but if they give up this vendetta after this decision of the Supreme Court then it will be possible, perhaps, to return

admired, but 43rd President Bush is unknown to me. I have met one of his brothers but I have yet to have a meeting with him.

When I went to America on the two occasions that I have been there, their important slots were yet to be filled up in the State department and so on. So I find it hard to make an individual assessment just yet. But, overall, the impression that I got from meetings that I had held and those meetings had been in state and commerce and defence departments, that the policies that were begun by the Clinton administration would continue. I wonder if I can describe them as the policies begun by the Clinton administration because the policies that were there were bi-partisan rather than Clinton specific. If there has been a departure that's been a departure more in terms of China but less in terms of Pakistan.

Q : Mr Clinton did show his displeasure towards the military regime during his visit last year. Do you think the Bush administration will keep to that line?

A : Well if I could I would certainly advise them to do so because South Asia is an opportunity for an American President to help achieve peace in the larger world area. America has certainly improved its relations with India over the recent past. It also has good relations traditionally with Pakistan which have come, of course, under a cloud due to certain events. But there is an

opportunity, so I would certainly make that advice.

Q : India is a very important member of the Commonwealth. Do you think it can play any role in pressuring General Musharraf and helping to restore democracy in Pakistan?

A : Yes, I think India has influence, very much so. I think what India does also will impact on what happens in Pakistan. India has influence in the Commonwealth and its support for democracy in Pakistan was also significant during the CMAG, not of course on the ministerial commission but I am sure behind the scenes it must have very much been there.

India also has a lot of clout in America. So what it promotes there, as a way further in South Asia, is important. And the third aspect is that India has, ironically, clout with General Musharraf, because General Musharraf has said he is prepared to talk to India anytime, anywhere. So in a sense, for General Musharraf the litmus test is whether he can achieve a breakthrough for South Asia and that that he needs to get on with New Delhi. So ironically by General Musharraf's own stated agenda of talks anytime, anywhere, he has placed the burden of influence on India. Willingly or unwillingly is something else.

Certainly if India does business as normal with a military dictator it will strengthen General Musharraf. Conversely if it fails to do that it brightens the prospect of democracy. Now

what India does, is something for New Delhi to answer. But traditionally India has taken pride in being a democratic country. Traditionally India has kept an arm's distance from military dictatorships and, I remember the times when Mrs Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister during our last military dictatorship, there certainly was an arm's distance. India liked to emphasise that it was a democracy and dealt with democratic leaders. So far Prime Minister Vajpayee has also kept a distance but I am really unable to say what their thinking is. Or what is going on there.

Q : Do you want to lead the campaign for democracy and then take over as prime minister?

A : I would like to lead it. If all goes well, yes. But Pakistan is a very difficult and complicated country. There are concerns that need to be addressed. For example the generals have a certain worldview on why the last decade was a failure and they blame the politicians and they want to put the checks and balances on the politicians. We politicians have a different worldview and we believe things went wrong because there was an imbalance of power and there should be checks and balances in the military. Now, what is going to be the end of this differing worldview as we plan for the future is beyond my knowledge.

If we prevail in having a more balanced system then certainly I envisage myself running for and becoming prime minister. But if it is to go back to the flawed system of the past then I would be setting myself up for failure. And what is there to be gained by my country if I set myself up for failure once again? So right now we are back fighting a battle for the restoration of democracy which is the holding of elections. But we are also fighting, partly, a battle for constitutional restructuring where all institutions, other than the military have been dismantled.

Q : What if General Musharraf changes the Constitution and becomes President with the power to throw out prime ministers?

A : That is where we have our reservations. We see that as a repetition of the past. In the past the president had the power to throw out Parliament and it led to five different Parliaments in 14 years. Now if he has the right to throw out the prime minister and the cabinet, we'll have a new government every five months and it will play havoc with the fragile party system. Carrot for becoming prime minister will be dangled before the person willing to stab the party in the back and go for a chance at power.

It will also lead to corruption and horse-trading as money is once again offered to parliamentarians to defect from their parties. So really that is a very ugly situation that is being discussed and I would like to keep away from any such situation personally. But as far as what the ARD decides it is for them to decide. Press reports indicate that Musharraf is going to become the president and there is this pack-

age that is under view. The PPP and ARD have been themselves opposing this and saying that look if he wants to become president these terms are unacceptable to at least us in the Opposition.

We have these apprehensions that you have these powers and that you get rid of a popular prime minister. From our own experience when they got rid of me they could hardly say that we are getting rid of her because we think it is wrong that she signed this non-attack on each other's nuclear facilities agreement, or they could hardly say we are getting rid of her because she is becoming too powerful a prime minister with her own president under her belt and then where are we going to be. So they had to drum up allegations of corruption. But drumming up was insufficient so then they had to rig the elections.

Rigging the elections was insufficient because I still had the popular support so they had to keep me busy in the court system. How could they keep me busy in the court system without attacking the judiciary and pressuring the judiciary and then arresting bankers, businessmen and others to get perjured statements? So getting rid of a popular prime minister or a leader of the House that enjoys a majority is a very dirty process and it leads to the unravelling of the entire social fabric. So you don't just get rid of the Parliament but then start undermining the judiciary, the election commission, the political parties as a consequence.

Q : How secure do you think General Musharraf himself is vis-à-vis General Aziz and General Mehmood?

A : It is difficult to say. Certainly these two people played a pivotal part along with General Usmani in bringing him to power. He was in the aeroplane and basically they got rid of Nawaz and he was able to land. So they are very close to him. Perhaps he is indebted to them. There are always talks of hardliners and softliners but he is the chief of Army staff. Really he has the power to replace and over the last year he has also promoted many. So he does have power but whether that power is exercised or whether there is a will to exercise that power is a question only he can answer.

Q : If General Musharraf becomes president with power over prime ministers, in that scenario, would you then like to become prime minister?

A : No, I've been there before and it is going to lead to more insta-

bility. If I can stop it I will stop it. If I am unable to stop it and they think it will lead somewhere, let them try it. I would rather be distant from a flawed system. My country needs my leadership. I am capable, I can tackle the issues but I am unable to become a pawn in the hands of others who set the agenda because that agenda has failed ever since I was overthrown in 1996. A different agenda has been followed but that agenda has failed to deliver anything to Pakistan and its people. I want to go back if I can deliver something. If I can't deliver something, merely for the exercising of power, no, I would rather then wait out and see what the next government does. I can only speak for myself. The ARD has to, of course, decide what it wants. Obviously the ARD is very important to all of us and I want to keep my political supporters and my political allies intact even if I disagree with something. I doubt the ARD would be happy to accept such a position but ultimately they must decide. For myself, I am unable to go back pretending there is a democracy in the country and setting myself up once again for manufactured corruption charges, for a media campaign that demonises us to the extent that we are denied even the very basic elements of a fair trial because everyone has already been judge and jury and concluded that we are demons. I've been there, done that. It was ugly, the country suffered, turned bankrupt, international isolation, threats of terrorism — not once but twice. So why go back for a third time? I would rather be there, able to piece up the pieces when others realise the mess it would create. So now I am in a very difficult situation where everything, as far as I am concerned, is undecided. The date is undecided because if there is a good agitation then I go back. If there isn't then I am an election issue. The election itself is undecided. What is decided is that I can take part, which, before was undecided. So that is the good thing that it is decided that I can take part so they can't stop me. I can take part even from prison. But the problem is supposing I win the elections from prison, do I want to become Prime Minister where there is an 8th amendment?

Q : In case the agitation builds up in Pakistan do you think the generals will do something in Kashmir to divert attention?

A : That is always a danger. We have seen that whenever there has been a military dictatorship or indeed a dictatorship in Pakistan, not just a military dictatorship but like during Mr Nawaz Sharif's dictatorship we had the whole Kargil episode. So, whenever there is a dictatorship there is the danger of a conflict erupting. Pakistan's history proves that the only time conflicts have been avoided is when there is a democratic government in the country. Even what I did as a popular and democratic Prime Minister has helped avert a full-fledged conflict. In my first term as Prime Minister we established the hotlines between the military headquarters of India and Pakistan. And it is this hotline that has helped preserve the peace at times when it was most threatened in the last decade.

■ TO BE CONCLUDED TOMORROW

INDO-PAK DIALOGUE

For Gen. Musharraf the litmus test is whether he can achieve a breakthrough for South Asia and for that he needs to get on with New Delhi. So by his own stated agenda of talks anytime... he has placed the burden of influence on India. Certainly if India does business as normal with a military dictator it will strengthen him

TOMORROW: THE GENERALS ARE MILLIONAIRES

Jaya's clout

Why is Samata Party's Jaya Jaitly so powerful? So much so, she has managed to control most of the senior NDA leaders, from Atal Behari Vajpayee to George Fernandes. Does anyone remember her press conference held at the residence of former defence minister George Fernandes when the match-fixing controversy was at its peak? She had announced at that time that her daughter Aditi was not going to marry tainted cricketer Ajay Jadeja, ever. But her daughter did marry him and the most prominent invitee to the function was Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpay-

ee. But most of his advisers were against his attending the function. They thought that he should not attend this function because both Jaya Jaitly and Jadeja are mired by controversy. His advisers are also convinced that George Fernandes has always been in touch with a number of anti-India terrorist outfits including those operating in Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab.

No. 13

While the Prime Minister has successfully pacified the Sangh Parivar to save himself, some of his advisers have collected a crowd of tantriks to save him from evil forces. Senior leaders involved in this operation are

Uma Bharati and Murlidhar Manohar Joshi, both die-hard believers in the occult.

At present 13 yagnas are going on in different places to save the chair of the Prime Minister. These anushthans are being conducted by 13 highly paid tantriks. According to sources close to Uma Bharati, 13 places have been selected to conduct these yagnas because 13 members of the Lok Sabha have deserted the Vajpayee government since its formation in 1999.

Absolutely raw

Union Home Minister L.K. Advani has taken over India's diplomacy vis-à-vis Pakistan in context of talks with militant outfits. He was responsible for

dilli durbar

D. E. NIZAMUDDIN

LOST PROPERTY

'So you only want to reclaim the umbrella?'

appointing K.C. Pant as the point man to negotiate with the Hurriyat leaders and Pakistan diplomats. Now he is also preparing a draft for these proposed talks with the anti-India outfits. Thus the North Block, it is said, is in total control of the situation. Meanwhile the Group of Ministers on National Security has admitted in writing that Indian Intelligence agencies have ceaselessly failed to feed the PMO on the way things are changing in the country. The home minister feels that India's intelligence set-up is not adequately equipped to deal with the situation faced by the country. This report has also pointed out that RAW is not very effective with former RAW chief G.C. Saxena himself condemning the way the

present organisation functions saying, "There is no accountability procedure to ensure that national interests are seen as paramount in intelligence process."

A thief's status

Mahavir Prasad, AICC general secretary of Bihar affairs has declared an all-out war against RJD chief Laloo Prasad Yadav. He wishes to break his party's relationship with the RJD in Bihar. He was heard telling Bihar Congress leaders that the RJD chief should come to receive him at the airport as after all he is an AICC general secretary and Laloo is mired in scams. "Akhir ek chor ke haisiat kya hoti hai (What is the status of a thief anyway)?" he

asked. The result of this speech was, needless to say, shocked silence from the Congress leaders.

Target George

Who is responsible for the onslaught against Vincent George? No it is not the RSS or anyone from the coterie surrounding Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. The man responsible is K. Karunakaran, former Kerala chief minister who has publicly announced that he would politically finish AICC president Sonia Gandhi and her secretary V. George in the year 2001. He is the politician who is supplying the material against V. George in connivance with Dr Subramanian Swamy.

Will she, won't she?



Gen. Pervez Musharraf and Ms. Benazir Bhutto.

THERE IS never a dull moment in this land that is supposedly under the iron grip of military rule. Virtually no week passes without an event that triggers speculation of a revolution round the corner. Call it the height of optimism or anything else. But that is the simple truth about Pakistan which is experiencing its third spell of military rule.

And no one would dare call it a passing phase. After all, "the khakis", as the Army is referred to, have been at the helm for more years than all the civilian leaders put together. And yet society has not given up hope. It sees a silver lining behind every development. So there is nothing extraordinary in the euphoria over the recent Pakistan Supreme Court ruling quashing the conviction by a lower court of the former Prime Minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, in a corruption case. There have been commentaries galore on what it holds for the future of the Pakistan.

The expectations have reached a feverish high. Will the lady who has been Prime Minister twice choose to end her self-exile and return home to confront the military? How will the military react? Will the military return to the barracks and hand back the power it usurped in the bloodless coup in October 1999? The speculations is endless.

It is necessary to recall the events of December last year to highlight how fast the mood changes in Pakistan. As the former Prime Minister and supreme leader of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), Mr. Nawaz Sharif, struck a deal with the military and chose a safe exit to Saudi Arabia, few could resist the temptation of jumping to the conclusion that the military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, had emerged the unquestioned king of Pakistan.

However, through its verdict in the case against Ms. Bhutto, the Supreme Court is perceived to have changed it all. But is it so? An objective and dispassionate look at the

Will Benazir Bhutto end her self-exile and return? How will the military react? These are questions, writes B. Muralidhar Reddy, that are exercising Pakistan society.

ground realities suggests that Ms. Bhutto will require much more than a simple reversal of the Lahore High Court judgment to realise her dream of being Prime Minister once again.

There are simply too many odds against her. It is over five years since her departure from office as Prime Minister and in this time Pakistan has changed beyond recognition. Whether she likes it or not, Ms. Bhutto is at odds with virtually all those who matter in Pakistani society.

The all-powerful Army, the intelligence agencies and the religious fundamentalists not only do not trust her but almost detest her. It can be argued that the situation was not much different when she took over the reins in 1986 and again in 1993. But the difference is the influence of the security agencies and the Mullahs has grown enormously in the last few years.

There is a discernible anti-West (particularly anti-U.S.) sentiment in Pakistan in recent years among these elements and Ms. Bhutto is seen as too close to the Americans. The Army, the intelligence agencies and the fundamentalists can never tolerate Ms. Bhutto given her views on the Taliban and to some extent even on Kashmir. After all Afghanistan and Jihad in Kashmir are the sheet-anchor of these forces.

There is total convergence in the world view of the military and the religious and militant organisations based in Pakistan on

Taliban and Kashmir. And logic dictates that anyone who differs with them has little chance of capturing power. Even according to Gen. Musharraf the strength of the religious bigots in Pakistan is around one per cent of the total population. This means there are a mind-boggling 1.4 million extremist elements.

Theoretically, it can be argued that 99 per cent of Pakistan is on the side of Ms. Bhutto. But, alas, the majority is silent in the face of gun-wielding extremists. The harsh reality is the former Prime Minister is no longer the darling of the masses particularly after her two stints in power. She has nothing spectacular to show for her tenure between 1986-88 and again between 1993-96, not certainly anything like the impressions left behind by her illustrious father (Zulfikar Ali Bhutto). The middle class of Pakistan is no longer enamoured by her. Ms. Bhutto can certainly take pride in the fact that compared to any other political party in the country, the PPP continues to be the most well-oiled machinery despite her absence from Pakistan since April 1999. But such a prolonged absence from the field has taken a toll on the capabilities of her organisation.

The shrewd politician that she is, Ms. Bhutto is fully conscious of the serious odds she faces in realising her dream of getting back in the saddle. Hence, the contradictory statements. She is blowing hot and cold vis-a-vis the military regime.

Ms. Bhutto has sent enough signals of her willingness to compromise with the military top brass. She knows that Gen. Musharraf has come to stay and will not vacate the chair easily. In an interview to a Pakistani Urdu daily, *Ausaf*, Ms. Bhutto said she would have no problem if Gen. Musharraf were to take over as President of Pakistan. In a previous interview she has been quoted as saying she would any day prefer Gen. Musharraf to Mr. Nawaz Sharif.

But the trouble for her is that Gen. Musharraf is totally identified with the policies of the military on the twin issues of Afghanistan and Kashmir. In a lengthy special write-up in an English daily, *The News*, a day after her interview to the Urdu daily, Ms. Bhutto virtually accused Gen. Musharraf of paving the way for takeover by fundamentalist forces in Pakistan. "Planned first is the election of military ruler Musharraf as President. Planned second is to arm him with a formidable array of weapons. These include dismissing a Prime Minister, as opposed to the Assembly, according to his discretion. Given that five assemblies were dismissed in the last 14 years, Pakistan can look forward to a repeat of the past," Ms. Bhutto said.

The next few weeks promise to be exciting as Ms. Bhutto plans her strategy. That the Musharraf Government will do everything in its power to keep her away from domestic turf is evident from the latest decision of a British Court to hand over details of the banks accounts of the Bhuttos.

THE HINDU

15 AUG 2000

MQM chief accuses ISI of fanning riots in Pakistan

London, April 10

ALTAH HUSSAIN, chief of Mutahida Qaumi Movement, has blamed the Inter-Services Intelligence for fomenting sectarian violence in Pakistan through "their hired assassins and so-called religious leaders".

Launching a scathing attack on the ISI, Hussain said he was firm in his conviction that "a very organised and powerful institution of the establishment, that is the ISI, is behind the conspiracy of rising sectarian violence in the country."

"The ISI through their hired assassins and so-called religious scholars, carry out murders, organise armed attacks on mosques and imambaras, and then put the blame on foreign hands or the MQM," Hussain, who is in exile here, said in a message to the scholars in Karachi.

Hussain, whose message was quoted in the MQM website, said "everyone is witness to the establishment of jihadi organisations in Karachi and the open display of arms by their members".

In Geneva, MQM asked the UN HR Commission to urgently address the "systematic destruction" of Pakistani civil institutions, warning that an "unstructured" Pakistan with nuclear

Pak may open border to UN to skirt sanctions

PAKISTAN MAY ask for UN observers to be placed across its 2500-km boundary with Afghanistan to oversee its compliance with UN sanctions against Taliban for countering the joint moves by Russia and France to press for similar sanctions against Islamabad for its continued support to Afghanistan's ruling militia.

As Pakistan diplomats, both in UN and several European capitals, geared up to counter the Russian and French attempts to bring about a UN Security Council resolution to impose sanctions against Pakistan, sources here did not rule out Pakistan throwing open its Afghan border, the Durand line, for an effective UN supervision.

The Russian and French moves come ahead of the scheduled Security Council review of the implementation of the UN sanctions against Taliban on Friday.

Pakistan has already stated on eve of the implementation of the UN sanctions against Taliban, which came into effect on January 19, that it would fully enforce sanctions and asked for UN monitoring mechanism to oversee the implementation.

PTI, Islamabad

capability would "not take a second to push the nuclear button".

In a memorandum to the UN body, MQM said unless UNHRC took immediate note and addressed this, "the day shall not be far when every edifice on which the Pakistani nation is based, goes up in smoke in a manner not dissimilar to the once towering Bamiyan Buddhas".

It warned that "an unstructured Pakistan with its nuclear capability and the nuclear button

in the hands of religious extremists including the army, incensed at the fervour of jihad, would not take even a second to push the nuclear button in desperation".

The MQM sought urgent steps to meet the situation saying "you are aware of the potential consequences of a collapsing Pakistan or Pakistan in the clutches of the extremist and radical forces, whether civilian or military, who are gaining strength."

PTI

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

T 1 APR 2001

...AND CONTINUITY!

109 Under Musharraf of course 5/6

THE Eighth Amendment is back to resolve the problems Pervez Musharraf is having with his tenure. At present, he derives all of his legitimacy from the Army as whose chief he is due to retire in September. He had the option of having his term as Army chief extended, but Musharraf, obviously, has other things on his mind, namely a more durable career as a politician. Musharraf has consulted with his civilian advisors on "the sustainability and continuity of policies being implemented now", and the cabinet was "unanimously of the view that all steps...should be considered strictly within the limits of the Supreme Court decision". One doesn't see how the question of sustainability and continuity can come up if the Supreme Court decision is to be respected, since it envisages handover of power to a civilian authority by October next year. The meaning of this apparent contradiction became clear a few days later: Article 58(2)(b) of the Constitution, previously known as the Eighth Amendment, which, before Nawaz Sharif had it removed, authorised the President to dismiss an elected government and dissolve the national assembly, is to be restored before October 12, 2002.

If Musharraf wants to put in place a strong presidential authority before the formal transition from army to civilian rule, that probably means that he has himself in mind as the future president of the country to ensure sustainability and continuity. Theoretically, there should be no problem extending army rule beyond October 2002, even the Supreme Court mandate can be taken care of – is there anyone left to stop the Army from doing what it wants? But there are two problems: first, Musharraf can't keep extending his term as Army chief indefinitely, second, internationally, it would be taken rather badly at a time when external debt takes up 95.9 per cent of Pakistan's GDP and so much depends on the IMF. There are other indications that Musharraf has presidential ambitions: there has been a crackdown on the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy, several prominent leaders of principal parties in opposition, the PPP and the Awami National Party, were detained. This is not the kind of gesture one would expect from a genuine democrat, especially when the military regime has shown so little spine in disarming the *jehadis*. Musharraf knows where the immediate danger to his continuing in power lies. On the other hand, the Pakistan Muslim League has split and Musharraf is said to be talking to Mian Mohammed Azhar, the leader of the splitting faction. These are classic manoeuvres of a military dictator who has long-term plans for himself, is thinking about constitutional legitimacy and is on the lookout for suitable stooges.

THE STATESMAN

10 APR 2001

Graft prosecutor warns Benazir of arrest on return

Islamabad, April 9

PAKISTAN'S SUPREME Court on Monday started hearing petitions by Opposition parties challenging a controversial anti-corruption law enforced by the military Government.

Former Prime Ministers Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto are key petitioners in the case. National Accountability Bureau prosecutor-general, Raja Muhammad Bashir, meanwhile, warned that ex-premier Benazir Bhutto would be arrested on her return to the country.

Pakistan's military toppled Sharif's elected Government in a bloodless coup in October 1999. Soon afterwards, the Government set up a National Accountability Bureau, giving it sweeping powers to arrest, investigate and try corrupt politicians and industrialists.

"The accountability law is unconstitutional and violates fundamental rights," Sharif's petition said.

The Bureau has recovered billions of rupees (millions of dollars) worth stolen money and convicted several former lawmakers and ministers.

But Opposition parties and human rights groups criticise



Benazir Bhutto

the law for allowing officials to jail anyone suspected of corruption for 90 days without a trial. Several businessmen have been held for months then released because investigators found no evidence of wrongdoing.

Zafar Ali Shah, a lawyer for Sharif, said the law gives massive judicial powers to investigators, who deny the accused a fair chance to defend themselves.

A five-member bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice Irshad Hasan Khan, will hear arguments for several

weeks before giving a verdict.

Corruption is a major issue in Pakistan, where four elected Governments have been thrown out of power on such charges since 1990. Bhutto and Sharif were removed from power two times each.

Benazir, who is on a self-imposed exile and lives in London and Saudi Arabia, last week got a psychological boost when the Supreme Court set aside a Lahore High Court conviction against the former premier and her husband Asif Ali Zardari.

The apex court ordered a retrial of the corruption case against the couple. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party has since been looking forward to her return to the country.

"Benazir would be arrested on her return as arrest warrants are pending against her," Bashir said clarifying confusion prevailing over her arrest in the light of the Supreme Court verdict.

"We expect the detailed judgement of the Supreme Court to be issued in the next few days. In the light of the short order, the case will be referred to the High Court first and later to the accountability court. This may take a week or ten days," he said.

PTI/AP

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

T O APR 2001

MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2001

HO-12 ✓
A RAY OF HOPE IN PAKISTAN? 9/4

THE SUPREME COURT of Pakistan seems to have raised hopes of a fair deal for that country's civilian leaders who are struggling under a military rule. The apex court has set aside the verdict delivered by a provincial bench against Ms. Benazir Bhutto, a former Prime Minister for long in exile, in a case of alleged corruption. Surely, the latest verdict pertains to a case decided during a democratic phase that preceded Gen. Pervez Musharraf's coup of October 1999. Yet, the new judgment, which calls for a retrial, will turn the spotlight on the style and substance of the military government's prosecution of a twice-elected former Prime Minister. In one sense, Ms. Bhutto, who faces several other cases of suspected corruption, may not be able to count on the possibility of a new accommodation between the civilian political elite and the present military regime. Nor can she see in the judgment itself any ray of hope that the military rule may end sooner than later. From her perspective, such reasoning has much to do with the plurality of pending cases against her and the uncertainties of the practices which the military regime's prosecutors may follow. However, Ms. Bhutto tends to see the prospect of a positive new reality. In her view, the verdict can be a signal that Pakistan's judiciary will not be cowed down by the military dictatorship which, in fact, had argued against her successful appeal in the present case. It is in these circumstances that Ms. Bhutto is now seeking the mystique of a leader of democratic resurgence. However, she knows that her political slate is not clean, given the controversies that she had stoked while in power despite her prime asset of a certain charisma and ability to communicate with the masses. There is, of course, little doubt that she was undemocratically unseated twice in the 1990s, even if the methods adopted were arguably 'constitutional' in scope.

What the Supreme Court has now overturned pertains to an adverse verdict that an Ac-

countability Bench of the Lahore High Court had passed against Ms. Bhutto and her husband, Mr. Asif Zardari, in 1999. The conviction was handed down when her prime civilian adversary, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, was still the Prime Minister with the experience of having been dismissed once before. The Supreme Court has not yet spelt out its reasoning. But the judgment itself was preceded by much media speculation about the existence of an audiotape in support of the allegations that the trial court judges had received telephonic instructions from the Sharif administration to punish her. The argument in appeal was that the trial court had sentenced her in a politically vitiated atmosphere. Now, the Musharraf administration is reported to have taken the line that such recorded evidence does not really exist. This aspect may be materially relevant to the retrial which will take place under an accountability ordinance promulgated by the military regime in 2000.

With Mr. Sharif having gone into exile last December in circumstances that remain largely unexplained, it is understandable that Ms. Bhutto should wrestle now with the temptation to emerge as a resurgent votary of civilian rule. The international community, led by the Commonwealth, appears to have sustained the pressure on Gen. Musharraf to restore democracy in Pakistan. So, a cynical question in focus is whether the military, which often prides itself as the messiah of 'stability', can seek to co-exist with Ms. Bhutto within the country's current political space. The notion of such coexistence is compounded by the intrinsic contradiction between Ms. Bhutto's wish-list and Gen. Musharraf's choices. The question that the domestic campaigners for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan need to ponder is whether hotch-potch alliances, such as the one now led by Mr. Nawabzada Nasrullah, can at all deliver the goods. It is time for fresh thinking by Pakistan's democracy campaigners.

THE HINDU

9 APR 2001

HD-1

Verdict against Benazir set aside



By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 6. The Pakistan Supreme Court today set aside the verdict of a lower court against the former Prime Minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, in a corruption case, and ordered a retrial.

The case pertains to the conviction of Ms. Bhutto and her husband, Mr. Asif Zardari, by the Ehtesab (Accountability) Bench of Rawalpindi in April 1999. The conviction was on the basis of a case filed by the Nawaz Sharif Government for alleged irregularities in awarding a contract to a firm in violation of rules.

Ms. Bhutto was accused of awarding the contract for monetary considerations and depositing the commission in a Swiss bank. Both Ms. Bhutto and her husband were awarded five-year imprisonment terms and a fine of \$8.3 million. Ms. Bhutto, who was abroad when the lower court pronounced its verdict, has been in self-exile since then. Her husband, charged in several other cases, recently completed five years in jail.

"We accept the titled appeal (by Ms. Bhutto), set aside the judgment and order a retrial of the case by a competent court," the apex court said in its short order. The reasoning would be



A file photo of Ms. Benazir Bhutto, Pakistani Opposition leader, with her husband Mr. Asif Zardari.

spelt out in detail later.

The military government under Gen. Pervez Musharraf, which fought hard in the Supreme Court seeking validation of the lower court verdict against Ms. Bhutto, said it would abide by the order. However, the Musharraf regime was at pains to emphasise that there were

other cases against Ms. Bhutto and that the "law would take its own course", if she returned to the country. Predictably, there was jubilation in the headquarters of the Pakistan People's Party, and senior party leaders said they would soon have an audience with the former Prime Minister to decide on her possible

return here from self-exile.

With Ms. Bhutto's announcement in London that she would decide on her return after consulting her party colleagues, the military and the PPP appear headed for a confrontation in the coming days and weeks.

A special meeting of the PPP executive committee is scheduled for tomorrow to decide the future course of action. A meeting of the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD), umbrella organisation of 18-odd parties, including PPP and Pakistan Muslim League led by Mr. Nawaz Sharif, is meeting in Peshawar on April 8 to take stock of the situation.

There were also indications that the military government would not allow Ms. Bhutto to return in view of her being accused in several other cases and a non-bailable warrant issued by a lower court a few weeks ago for her arrest is pending.

Lawyers for Ms. Bhutto said the former Prime Minister had obtained bail in all the four cases including the disproportionate assets case. They, however, said a non-bailable warrant against her was pending in one case for non-appearance in court.

THE HINDU

7 APR 2001

Pakistan denies helping Taliban

Islamabad, April 6: Pakistan on Friday rejected a renewed Afghan Opposition allegation that it was giving military aid to Afghanistan's ruling Taliban movement.

"There is no evidence to justify such an allegation," a Pakistan foreign ministry spokesman told reporters about the charge made by main Opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masood at a news conference in Paris on Wednesday. Masood, making a rare trip to the West, accused Pakistan of aggression, which he said gave him "the right to seek aid everywhere."

The Pakistani spokesman, Riaz Mohammad Khan, speaking at a

news briefing, said Pakistan was fully complying with a UN Security Council embargo on arms supplies to Taliban although it felt "the one-sided embargo will encourage the (Opposition) Northern Alliance to push for a military solution" of the Afghan conflict.

He said Pakistan, one of only three countries which have recognised the Taliban government, along with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, wanted a comprehensive settlement in Afghanistan. The Taliban controls more than 90 per cent of Afghanistan, but ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani, who heads the Opposition Alliance, still holds

the Afghan seat at the United Nations.

A second set of UN sanctions ordered last December were mainly aimed at forcing the Taliban to hand over Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden for a US trial on the charge of masterminding the 1998 bombing of two American embassies in East Africa that killed more than 200 people.

The sanctions included an arms embargo that applied only to the Taliban and not to its opponents now holed up in northeastern Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation chief, Koichiro Mat-

suura, said on Friday that despite their disregard for world opinion, Afghanistan's ruling Taliban should not be isolated.

"We have to act within the United Nations resolutions, but we should not isolate them excessively," Mr Koichiro Matsuura told reporters in Islamabad at the end of two-day visit to neighbouring Pakistan. Mr Koichiro Matsuura said the Taliban destroyed world-famous Bamiyan Buddhas in defiance of world appeals, but Unesco "would like to continue engaging them in dialogue" to preserve any historic pre-Islamic finds in Afghanistan in future. (Reuters, DPA)

1,000 more Afghans come to Pak daily: UN

Islamabad, April 6: The United Nations said on Friday that 1,000 Afghans were arriving each day at camps in the western city of Herat seeking food and shelter.

The office for the UN Coordinator for Afghanistan said in a statement that the situation in western Afghanistan was deteriorating with the approach of summer. "While arrivals slowed in January, due to a combination of weather and assistance to families in their areas of origin, truckloads of families have again begun arriving in the provincial capital," the statement said. Most of these Afghans are fleeing drought, the worst in 30 years, and fighting between the ruling Taliban and the Northern Alliance Opposition.

The statement said the six UN-run camps in Herat held a combined 110,000 people, with 65,000 of those in Maslakh, the largest camp and the only one that is accepting new arrivals. It said sanitary conditions, especially in Maslakh, were poor. "As summer is approaching, the implication of the lack of adequate sanitation for public health are obvious, and the World Health Organisation is seriously concerned about the risk of epidemics," the statement said.

According to the United Nations, some 800,000 Afghans have left their homes since early last year because of factional fighting and drought. (Reuters)



THE DEVOUT: A Pakistani Shia Muslim whips himself with a chain studded with knives during a Muharram procession in Rawalpindi on Thursday to mourn the death of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Mohammed. (Reuters)

To protect heritage, talks with Taliban a must: UN

By TAHIR IKRAM

Islamabad, April 6: The United Nations cultural agency said on Friday it was important to keep the Afghanistan's ruling Taliban engaged in talks to preserve whatever remains of the war-ravaged country's cultural heritage.

Koichiro Matsuura, director general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation told a news conference that the dialogue was necessary to persuade the Taliban to change its stance on statues. "It is important for us to persuade them to change their stance on pre-Islamic statues," he said. "There is a need for a continued dialogue and engagement with the Taliban." The Taliban last month said it destroyed all pre-Islamic statues in Afghanistan, despite an international outcry and appeals to spare two giant Buddha statues in Bamiyan in central Afghanistan. The two statues — described as the cultural treasure of Afghanistan — were hewn into a cliff about 1,500 years ago and towered 53 metres and 38 metres before being blown up by the Taliban last month. Mr Matsuura said there was no hope the statues could be restored but keeping line of communications open with the Taliban was crucial for any future archaeological finds in Afghanistan. (Reuters)

IT WAS THE LONGEST INTERVIEW I THINK. BUT THERE IS GOOD REASON TO GIVE SUCH AN INTERVIEW TO SOMEBODY FROM INDIA.

Q: Benazir Bhutto, by the way, has declared victory in these elections.
A: (Laughs) She's imagining. She's imagining. She is also having hallucinations. I think anyone can say anything because they are not on political party basis. So, what kind of victory is she declaring? Every party is declaring victory but we know the ground realities...

Q: And what are they?
A: Certainly... well, I'll... OK let me just say that... in fact, research was carried out by an independent group also: about 65 per cent of the people elected have stood in the elections for the first time. Out of the nazims and the naib nazims, about 55 per cent, 50 to 55 per cent, have stood for the first time and more than 35 to 40 per cent people have never, their families have never participated in elections. So, these people are, generally I would say, to a large extent, to quite an extent neutral. Now they may shift towards some political party or the other, certainly, but I can't say which party... I wouldn't be able to comment on it. So, anyone who is saying this doesn't have the figures at all. I don't know how she's saying this.

Q: But the Jamaat is part of an ideology which has a different agenda for South Asia, of which Taliban is part of.
A: Well, as I said, Pakistan is a moderate country... Moderate, Islamic country and any extremist views in Pakistan, I'm very sure, will not find support from the people of Pakistan.

Q: To come towards Taliban, the Americans created the Taliban movement, didn't they?
A: The Taliban movement?

Q: Yes, if you take its genesis within the Afghan wars, and then later on encouraged it... Later on, of course, you took over that role.
A: (Laughs) No, I'm being very realistic about whatever is happening there. I'm just being realistic about the reality there. I haven't taken on the role of anybody. I really wouldn't be able to comment on whether the Americans launched the Taliban. I think they emerged within the dynamics of Afghanistan, because they were there for years after the Soviet withdrawal... I don't know how many years now, for five or six years... about five years, I think, there was internecine warfare. Afghanistan was divided into groups, into regions, warlords reigning supreme. They were fighting among themselves. So, I think the amount of suffering that Afghanistan, the Afghans went through, that gave rise to this group of Taliban and they saw unity and they got the support from the people of Afghanistan and they swept Afghanistan.

Q: General you would make an excellent lawyer for the Pakistan armed forces.
A: (Laughs) I think: let me tell you who in my whole life, if I failed, I failed once! In my captain-to-major examination in the law paper. (Laughter)

Q: They didn't know your strengths... We know the position that you have taken on the Bamiyan Buddhas and you can understand that it's an emotive issue in my country, as well. But I have heard something and I wonder if you would care to comment on it. Nobody has found a rational reason for why it should have been done. I've heard that there was a personal reason, Mullah Omar actually believed that if he did not destroy the statues; he would not go to jannat as quickly.
A: Well, I would certainly like to say that we condemn (the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas). It should not have been done. I tried my best. With all my sincerity. I was going off to the G-8 summit in Cairo, but before that at the airport I caught people, I told them please not to do these things. And, then when I came back, I immediately sent my interior minister. So,

Q: It couldn't have happened without the weapons that the Pakistani Army supplied.
A: Let me again clarify this thought that a lot of people have. Nothing could be further from the truth. Pakistan has a threat from your country. (Laughs)

Q: I thought it was the other way around.
A: I'm very glad that one-third of the (size of the Indian) Army and one-third of the force is threatening three times the force! I must say I'm very glad, I'm flattered that my Army being small... is threatening the Indian Army.

Q: And six times the border.
A: OK! (Laughs) I take that as a compliment. But when we are talking of Afghanistan, certainly Pakistan is in no position to assist Afghanistan militarily. Now, where do they get their arms, as you have said? Any military man would know that if a country is fighting a war thousands of miles away from its own area, they need to dump. The Soviets dumped arms and ammunition there. In such large quantities that those arms and ammunition are (still there). Which aircraft are the Taliban flying? Are they Pakistani aircraft? Which tanks are they using? You should see it on the television. These are Russian tanks. These are MiGs. They are Russian aircraft, tanks and guns. They are not Pakistani. Now, these, I know, that there were these aircraft, tanks, guns, vehicles in Afghanistan when the Taliban took over. This came into their hands. So, therefore, number one, the dumped ammunition and equipment of Russian origin left by the Soviets, it is still there... it was in such large quantities. Number two, for 10 years the United States supported the war against the

Soviets. Billions of dollars were pumped in. They have Stinger missiles there. Stinger missiles were given... How did the Russians finally get defeated? It was the Stinger missiles which started shooting down their aircraft. So, where are those missiles? Where is all this equipment? Billions of dollars of equipment and ammunition, where is all that? It's in Afghanistan. Now, this is the second area. The third, the Northern Alliance, when the Taliban came on to the scene and they started their victorious march forward, the Northern Alliance was being supported by many countries, including India. It still is. Now, I don't want to name the other countries.

Q: It is easy to name India?
A: Yes, because they are. (Laughs) Because they keep naming us, we keep naming them. It's mutual.

Q: Some countries are supporting them...
A: Some countries are supporting the Northern Alliance. We know who. All the arms and ammunition that have been going there, look at the speed at which the Taliban operated and look at the speed at which they conquered... all that arms and ammunition came to them also. Let me assure you, sir, without any exaggeration, they can sell us arms! They can sell arms and ammunition to Pakistan. In fact, the proliferation of arms in Pakistan is because of Afghanistan, because of the massive arms dumped in Afghanistan. They can go on for years and years without any assistance from us. All the sanctions against them on arms, I can assure you, will have no meaning. We are not providing them any arms and we will never provide them arms because we don't have them. We would like to have our own stockpile. There are sanctions on us and I don't want to disturb my economy, giving my arms and buying from elsewhere. Certainly not! So, this is absolutely wrong. These are aspersions. Anyone who thinks so, and may I say that it's not (only) you, everyone thinks that we are giving them the arms! I can assure you this is not the truth.

Q: There is a personal element in this, as a Muslim. I am a Muslim. One of the things that I learnt about Islam was that Islam removed jehaalat (ignorance). Do you see what is happening in Afghanistan as a return of jehaalat defeating Islam?
A: Yes, I think they are very, very backward. I think their actions... obviously, you being a Muslim, they did not realise that the idols against whom our Prophet moved were within the Khana-e-Kaba. Those idols had to be removed from there and broken and all that. But that didn't mean that all idols all around the world had to be broken. And we don't believe in idolatry. That does not mean that we need to be going around breaking all idols. As long as we are not worshipping idols, if others worship idols we shouldn't be bothered. That's not anti-Islamic at all. We should not be. So, it's a misrepresentation of religion, certainly, as you would agree.

Q: Your Afghan policy over the last 20 years, what has it resulted in? Three of your biggest problems: refugees, drugs, arms... the proliferation. Doesn't anybody sit back to consider that it's time perhaps to take another look at Afghan policy?
A: No, certainly I am very concerned. We are... we are the most concerned party to whatever is happening in Afghanistan because we have a border with Afghanistan. We want peace in Afghanistan, certainly. But when we look at... how to get peace is the question. Is there any way to bring peace in Afghanistan minus Taliban? No, there is no way of getting peace. Taliban are controlling 95 per cent of Afghanistan, they cannot be wished away. You tell me and let anyone tell me that what is the way that that is another group which can come and take the place of Taliban? There is no such group.

Q: You've lost... I mean your relations with Iran have suffered because of Afghanistan. Isn't that a loss for you?
A: No, relations with Iran, let me say, are far better now than they were before. That I'm sure of. I'm talking of my government and with me. My relations, my government's relations with Iran, my relations with President Khatami are far better than they were with the previous government. So, that's... there's no... that's not the issue. There are, they have certain views on Afghanistan, we have these views. But I think our views are more realistic, taking the reality on ground.

Q: How do you react to Prime Minister Vajpayee's pending visit to Iran?
A: Well, it depends on Iran's attitude subsequent to the visit. We certainly have our own relationship with Iran. If that relationship changes with Mr Vajpayee's visit, that would be of concern to us. But I do not think that should change. Therefore, there is no problem. It's a visit by... these (India and Iran) are two independent countries, they want to exchange visits at the leadership level. We have no problem.

Q: Pakistan very naturally has an agenda for a neighbour like Afghanistan. Does Taliban have an agenda for Pakistan?
A: I don't think so. I don't think so at all. Taliban are accused of many

Q: I think the amount of suffering that Afghanistan, the Afghans went through, gave rise to this group of Taliban and they saw unity and they got the support from the people of Afghanistan and they swept Afghanistan.
Q: It couldn't have happened without the weapons that the Pak Army supplied.
A: Nothing could be further from the truth. Pakistan has a threat from your country.
Q: I thought it was the other way around.
A: I'm very glad that one-third of the (size of the Indian) Army and one-third of the force is threatening three times the force! I must say I'm flattered that my Army is threatening the Indian Army



change their attitude from within.

Q: How many generations of Afghanistan must pay the price?
A: Well, I'm very sure that if this attitude... if we bring peace into Afghanistan, by accepting their reality... Because I see there are two options open at the moment to deal with, to bring a solution in Afghanistan. This is a reality, the Taliban are a reality, they can't be wished away. So, my solutions are based on this reality. Number one... Option one, as they call it in the military: option one is impose sanctions on them, do not accept them, put them against the wall, force them to change. This is one. And, then accept them. Number two: Accept them! Accept them as a reality, try to help them in whatever miseries they are facing in Afghanistan, and then force them to change. Which option would one like to adopt? I think the second

option is a better option, because they don't have anything to lose. You impose sanctions, you impose pressure on people, you can gain from pressure when somebody has to lose anything. When somebody has nothing to lose, what kind of pressure can you put on them? This is a realistic approach that I take of Afghanistan. So, I think option two is the only way to solve it.

Q: You're lost... I mean your relations with Iran have suffered because of Afghanistan. Isn't that a loss for you?
A: No, relations with Iran, let me say, are far better now than they were before. That I'm sure of. I'm talking of my government and with me. My relations, my government's relations with Iran, my relations with President Khatami are far better than they were with the previous government. So, that's... there's no... that's not the issue. There are, they have certain views on Afghanistan, we have these views. But I think our views are more realistic, taking the reality on ground.

Q: How do you react to Prime Minister Vajpayee's pending visit to Iran?
A: Well, it depends on Iran's attitude subsequent to the visit. We certainly have our own relationship with Iran. If that relationship changes with Mr Vajpayee's visit, that would be of concern to us. But I do not think that should change. Therefore, there is no problem. It's a visit by... these (India and Iran) are two independent countries, they want to exchange visits at the leadership level. We have no problem.

Q: Pakistan very naturally has an agenda for a neighbour like Afghanistan. Does Taliban have an agenda for Pakistan?
A: I don't think so. I don't think so at all. Taliban are accused of many things, accused of exporting their brand of religion... religious extremism. But I was with the Turkmen President. Taliban have about a 650-700 kms border with Turkmenistan. I asked the President: "Is there a problem on the border? Are they exporting some kind of extremism, religious extremism?" He said, "No, none at all". There is no problem with that. So why are we thinking that they would create problem for Pakistan? No, they won't, I don't think so.

Q: There are a million madrasa students in Pakistan. Is there a Taliban army waiting in them in the next 10-15 years?
A: There are 10,000 madrasas in Pakistan, with maybe one million Talibs. The madrasas, let me tell you, here in Pakistan, and I am giving this with full knowledge, because I am concerned about them and I am trying to evolve a

strategy at the moment which I am going to declare within a week or two maybe, on what to do with them, on their education. Now, there is a plus side of the madrasa and there is a negative side. The plus side of all the madrasas, vast majority, this is the biggest humanitarian activity, welfare activity, that any country in the world can undertake. One million people being fed and clothed and given residence, board and lodge, free board and lodge. One million poor people given free board and lodge. Where in the world is anyone doing it? And the government is not supporting them. Any NGO doing this? No, sir; nobody is doing it. This is the positive side. Now, the negative side: They are being taught, given religious education only. In most of them. But there are a number of them which also teach other subjects. There are madrasas here, in Karachi, Lahore, Multan, which are even teaching computers. There are computers... education on software. But since the majority are giving only religious teaching, we need to now see what to do about them, about this. We need to strengthen their positive side and correct the negative side and that is what we are addressing. And, I am sure we will address this issue. Let me also tell you that there is no military training going on in any madrasa. There maybe very, very few where military training as such is going on. This is another very wrong perception of the madrasas, unfortunately. That's not happening. The keeping of arms in madrasas is totally banned. Even a dagger, a person with a dagger will be suspended and rusticated. Whereas in colleges here, and I'm sure maybe in India also, the situation is much worse. This again is a wrong perception of the madrasa.

Q: You wouldn't like to give me a scoop and tell me what the strategy will be?
A: Chief Executive may be legitimate but it's not legal.
A: (Thinks) Yes!

Q: How will you go about the process of becoming legal?
A: Well, legality has been given to us by the Supreme Court... in the Supreme Court decision... whatever happened on October 12 (when the Army took over) has been validated. In fact, I've been empowered to carry out minimum possible amendments in the Constitution and to administer the governance in the interest of Pakistan, in national interest. So, I've been validated really. So, it's legal.

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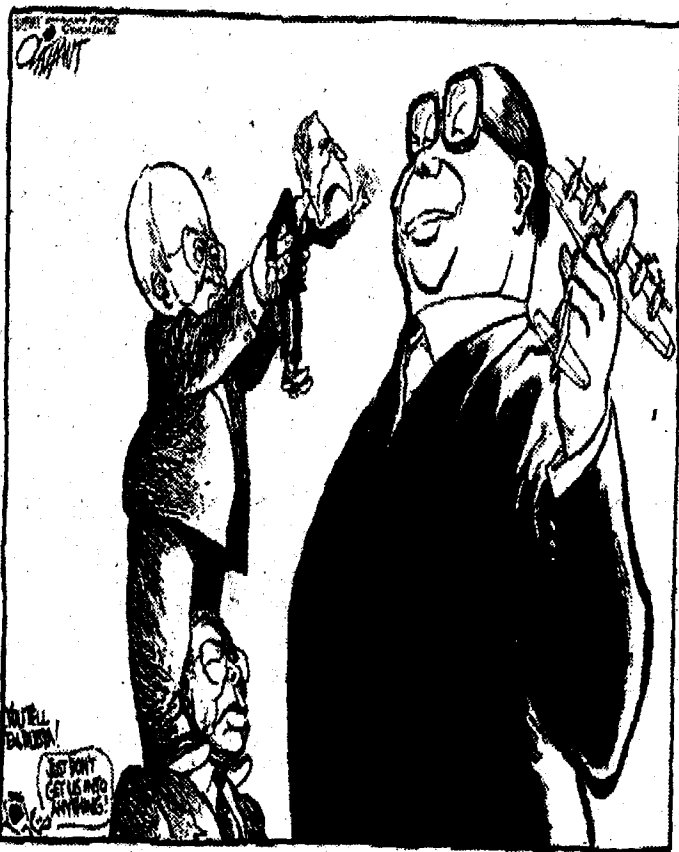
THE ASIAN AGE

8 APRIL 2001

Quixotic order

It is a measure of the general apathy all around that what seems to be a blatant reversal of Fundamental Rights as enshrined by the Indian Constitution is being done so nonchalantly and with ease. And still, no action has been forthcoming. Army authorities based in Jammu have put out a shocking recruitment order, details of which were first given in this newspaper a couple of days ago. This slams the door rather abruptly shut in the face of Muslims and, for some reason, also, "tradesmen," for appointments that are to be made shortly. It goes without saying that an official directive of this sort, which in effect legitimises communal polarisation and which likewise tries to play favourites as to which section of the people should be preferred over the others, should have led to more than just simple disquiet in an already troubled state. It is purely fortuitous that no real harm seems to have been done by this particularly quixotic order yet, and it can only be hoped that the same state of affairs prevail, though there indeed are reports of communal clashes in some other parts of the state. The two sets of disturbances are apparently not related. Be that as it may, at a time when a new point-man has been appointed by New Delhi and murmurs of a fresh new peace offensive through the good offices of Dr Karan Singh has now unfolded, the recruitment order comes as most astoundingly shocking. As reported in these columns, the directive has the cheek to suggest, almost in as many words, that the eventual selection of candidates for a given set of advertised posts is upto the discretion of the recruitment authority in the field; the amazing order does real-time damage to the various realistic and many just futuristic strides being projected in certain circles vis-a-vis a lasting solution in Kashmir. The Army order may be specific, time-bound and in that context, it will not undermine the undeniable secular fabric of one of the most uniquely multi-cultural institutions in the world: the Indian armed forces. But where was the need to come up with a ridiculous proposal like this? An enquiry must be held and those behind the mischief should first be exposed and then made to undergo the kind of treatment which such downright "frivolous" decisions end up doing. The obvious need of the hour is to invest as much sincerity into the peace-drive as possible. Dr Karan Singh would also want a liberal face to his latest exertions. If Delhi takes him seriously enough in his new role, it should try and clear up from the field minor irritants and overzealous officialdom. Mr Singh has begun his new role on the right, polite noises. He is prepared to talk to everybody, he says. So far, so good. But the common people of the erstwhile riyasat he held will expect their former maharaja not to act as a raja of yore, but as a democratic-facilitator more in tune with the reality of the day. He has the vision, the cultural and aesthetic understanding to know how the imperatives have changed over the last sixty-odd years. New sense of commitment seems so high simply because the official response to it is often so lackadaisical and so on. Let him not try and put the call back, but Dr Karan Singh should help rescind this ridiculous and pernicious order which is bound to be made use of (maybe, misuse-of) by pro-jehadi elements who normally wait for such opportunities to come their way.

OTHER VOICES



Cartoon from the New York Times

THE ASIAN AGE

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LOOK AHEAD, NOT AT THE PAST

In the first part of his interview with M.J. AKBAR, GEN. PERVEZ MUSHARRAF while discussing the Lahore Declaration and Kargil, made it very clear that he was willing to talk to India only if India was willing to talk Kashmir: he stressed that there could be no peace between the two neighbours unless the Kashmir dispute was solved. The transcript of the interview stopped yesterday at the point where the proposed Hurriyat visit to Pakistan was under discussion. This second, and concluding, part picks up the thread from there.

PART II

Q: Yes, they are. The Hurriyat leaders go to the Pakistan embassy, they have a dialogue... A: OK! OK! Yes. But the issue now is... we say that any dialogue on Kashmir should involve India, Pakistan and the Kashmiris. You can't resolve... you can't take decisions on Kashmir without involving the Kashmiris. The Indian stance has been confused... May I? I am sorry to be using this word...

Q: It's your interview, General... (Laughter) A: Now, initially, when the Hizbul Mujahideen declared a ceasefire some months back, when was that, last year?

Q: Yes. A: What was the response of the Indians? Their response was: Number one, that this is the major freedom fighting force and we would like to talk to them. So, one, they admitted that Hizbul Mujahideen, which is an indigenous freedom fighting group in Kashmir, is the force. Admission that is indigenous. Number two, they said that Pakistan is out of it. We will not talk to Pakistan. So they scuttled the whole thing. Now, this time over, they are saying they don't want to talk to Kashmiris and there are indications that they want to talk to us. What are we trying to do? There are three parties. Let's be very clear, let's not be very clever on the issue. There are three parties: Pakistan, India and Kashmiris. Now when you try to eliminate the Kashmiris, at least let the APHC people come here (to Pakistan). We have even gone to the extent... OK! We could talk with Indians, even if the Kashmiris are not there, here, let us at least tell them that we are not doing something behind their backs. We (India and Pakistan) will talk and ultimately you (APHC) will be included, that's the way of nicely resolving the Kashmir dispute. So, let's put them at ease that nothing is happening behind their backs. So, let them come here and we'll convince them about it. That is

If you want to remain in history, the past, the past is very bitter. We fought wars. We fought each other. And we'll keep this bitter memory alive if we keep talking of the past. Let's build a better future for the people of this region...

Q: There is certainly a strong view in the Indian government which would tend to agree with you on this. No government is a one-dimensional voice. A: Yes and the more we delay, more the problems. May I say? The window keeps shutting gradually. And we revert to status quo and go back to wherever we were. Unfortunately... if we don't avail of this opportunity.

Q: There is this magic word: Talks, talks, talks. May I ask a very simple, common sense question? What will you talk about, what is your agenda? A: Kashmir. And Kashmir only. Oh, well! Let me correct myself, not Kashmir only, Kashmir and all other issues. But, as I said, Kashmir is the main issue. All other issues are irritants. If India wants to take them up simultaneously, we have no problems. We could take them up simultaneously. But, if India thinks that we should discuss all issues, and not Kashmir, we are not into it. We have to discuss Kashmir and also all other issues. That's what we need to discuss.

Q: And till that happens, there is no hope of any progress on issues like the visa regime or improving trade? A: As I said, we have tried this over all these 50 years. The emergence of this freedom fight is actually a result of the frustrations of whatever had been tried before. Some governments come and they try to address this (problem by saying), "Let's have relations, let's open the borders, let's go into economic relations". Why have they failed? Why have they not resulted in some progress on closer relations between India and Pakistan? Why did this freedom struggle start at all? Because Kashmir is not being addressed. So unless we address the Kashmir issue, all other activity will be futile. And I know that. That is why I am very keen that we must understand everything will remain futile. It has remained futile over the last 50 years, it will continue to remain futile.

Q: Do you see any hope in this year's calendar, with Saarc on the agenda? A: Well, I am glad you've opened this issue. Saarc became a closed issue because of India, again.

Q: It became a closed issue because of

Kargil. A: Well, it should have been a closed issue with Saachen also. There is no end to it. It should have been a closed issue when Indians... what they did in 1971 in East Pakistan. Then it should have been also... Let's not go back into history. I believe that now is the stage that we need to look forward. Look ahead and not (at) the past! If you want to remain in history, the past, the past is very bitter. We fought wars. We fought each other, we have killed each other, that is the past. And we'll keep this bitter memory alive if we keep talking of the past. Let us look to the future. Future can be brighter. And that's what I'm trying to say. That future can certainly be bright for the people of India, for the people of Pakistan, and the people of the region because of the relationship between India and Pakistan. Let's build a better future for the people of this region and the people of our respective countries. And, that is what my aim is and in all sincerity that is what I want to do. So, therefore, let's not talk of the past, let's look at the future. And when we do that, let us realistically decide where is the problem. Now if I'm... I, I get really angry, anybody coming from India. I've met a number of people, lot of people! I've met the Indian ambassador, probably you'll meet him and ask him... We sat for half an hour or 40 minutes or 45 minutes. We talked of reduction of tension, removing it, confidence building or improving relations... After half an hour, or 35-40 minutes I said, "Mr Ambassador, you've worked very hard in avoiding using the word Kashmiri even once in this hour." Now this is my problem. This is what I see. Sincerity! Are we wanting to resolve Kashmir or not? That is a simple question I want to ask the Government of India, Mr Vajpayee and the people of India. I want to ask that. Do we see Kashmir as the main dispute between India and Pakistan? Do we see it as a dispute which needs to be resolved for the sake of the future of both the peoples or not? That is my question. If we think it is (the basic issue). And it is! Nobody can deny this fact. Let us be sincere, let's talk of Kashmir, let's talk if we need to resolve this Kashmir dispute. And be flexible! I will be flexible! We will be flexible! Let India be flexible on whatever they want to do, on Kashmir. That's the issue.

Q: I will certainly take this point on flexibility up but before that I want to pin you down. Do you think that Saarc is a medium or an opportunity for the next stage of the dialogue? A: Yes, I think so. I'm sorry I took you back... It (Saarc) was scuttled. OK! Now... but... looking at the future let's not talk of the past. OK! Fine! Let's not talk of what Indians did on Saarc. Yes, I see that if the Saarc summit is resumed and we start interacting, there is certainly a scope that maybe (this is) the place where the dialogue could be initiated. Certainly!

Q: Do you trust Mr Vajpayee? A: I would like to trust him because I think... he is... because to me he looks a person who would like to resolve that dispute. Maybe, I'm not very sure, but he did give a statement which included his views on Kashmir, the only time that he gave a statement, a month or two back...

Q: Are you talking of his year-end thoughts? A: Yes, I think he is a person who maybe wants to resolve the dispute between India and Pakistan. So, I would... I would trust him!

Q: Do you trust his party? A: No! (Laughter)

Q: I read one report where the CIA actually says that Pakistan's nuclear ability is better than India's nuclear ability. A: I would like to imagine so. (Laughs) I am actually very grateful to the CIA report. I don't know the facts.

Q: And how grateful are you to China? A: Well! As much as

Q: The people around him? A: No! I don't have that kind of trust. I think it's the Prime Minister himself who looks... the body language, his statements, seem that he really wants to move ahead. I would like to move ahead. I can, certainly... I think I can certainly.

Q: To reach the middle ground of peace, which I don't know if it's going to come in our lifetimes or not, but to attempt to reach that middle ground of peace, both sides have to walk. How far are you ready to walk, to change from your defined, committed policy lines as defined today? A: On Kashmir? You are also avoiding the word Kashmir.



Q: When you took over power, you were called a liberal. Was that an advantage or a disadvantage? A: It's an advantage. It depends on what angle you are looking at. Pakistan environment is misunderstood... We, 99 per cent of Pakistanis, are moderate... It's only the one per cent which are religious extremists, which is equally applicable to India. And it's this one per cent that holds the 99 per cent hostage

comment on that. I would like to say that there are a number of ways, as long as we, as I said, as long as we decide and we show resolve on being flexible from our stated positions, we can reach a conclusion. So, now to define how far we would like to go, we are talking of what kind of solution is acceptable to us. I wouldn't like to comment on that. Once we start the process of dialogue, we will then keep moving ahead and, as you said, we need to walk, we will keep walking towards each other and reach somewhere in the mid-ground or some place.

Q: Today's position, by Pakistan, is that Kashmir should be a part of Pakistan. Do you conceive of any change in that? A: Well, the UN resolution... The Security Council resolution on plebiscite. Now, that is the Security Council position. As I said, one would like to show flexibility once the process of dialogue starts.

Q: Do you think that this Tehelka episode has weakened Prime Minister Vajpayee and his government? A: It appears so. I think you would be able to answer this question more, it

maybe India is to Russia. Q: Was, not is. A: Maybe is. Maybe we are also was. Q: Maybe? Or in reality? A: In reality, yes we are. Was. (Laughs) Was on both sides or is on both sides. Is on the Indian side certainly. We know that the Russians are providing them (India) assistance even now...

appears so but maybe, I don't know, maybe wishful thinking... Maybe at the moment as the environment is in India, as we read it, there is, I feel, there is a gradual change in the attitudes of the people of India and maybe also... press and media in India towards a better relation between India and Pakistan. So, to that extent, I think with an initiation of dialogue between India and Pakistan... I think Mr Vajpayee has everything to gain. So, maybe the loss that he has suffered through the Tehelka issue gets covered or reconciled or an improvement takes place if the process of dialogue starts.

Q: The last time he started a process of dialogue with you he was under very severe political pressure. Before the Lahore summit. A: With Pakistan you mean? Yes...

Q: BJP had lost the Assembly elections in five states. A: Yes... Well, there was a great pressure also here in Pakistan against what Mr Nawaz Sharif was doing on the bus diplomacy and all that. Well, as I said, the pressure here, I know, was because the issue of Kashmir was not being addressed and I don't want to develop that kind of pressure. I'm a realist. I don't want to get involved in any euphoria or on improving of relations without addressing the Kashmir dispute. Therefore, if we address the Kashmir dispute, as far as I know, there will be no problem here. There was a problem because we were not addressing the Kashmir dispute when Nawaz Sharif and Mr Vajpayee met.

Q: I know you will react, but isn't part of addressing the Kashmir dispute also means addressing this fact: that all the jihadis, then parties and organisations, indulge in, from gathering money to training to preaching violence to picking up and inspiring young people to go into Kashmir and to perpetrate violence (are based here)? Isn't it reasonable to expect you (in Pakistan) to do something to curb this? A: I think one has to be realistic. Wherever, if you see in history, or if you look around the world, wherever there is a freedom struggle going on, wherever... whether it is Ireland, whether it is Sri Lanka, whether it is Kashmir, or any place, or Palestine of course, there is always support from that community, that ethnic group, that nationality, from all over the world. There is financial support, there is moral support, there is political support which comes to them. They look up to it. Their strength lies in that. So, same is the issue in Kashmir. There are Kashmiris on this side, there are Kashmiris all over the world, there are Kashmiris in United States, in the UK. So, therefore, this is a complete dynamic which is in operation. There is a freedom struggle going on since 10 years. All the Kashmiris support this. So, this is the issue that gets involved, we are involved in this issue.

Q: There's a sense of helplessness, isn't it? I mean, what comes first: violence or talks? A: No, it's very clear. I think it's certainly the chicken and that is the Kashmir dispute. And there is no question of any conditions. I'm afraid, as I said, the conditions are on the other side also. I (too) can lay down five conditions.

Q: General, how much has the nuclearisation of both defence establishments, materially altered the Indo-Pak equation in the context of, the horror of, any future war? A: Maybe it has brought about a degree of stability in that both India and Pakistan must realise, and I'm sure they do realise, that with nuclear capability on

Q: Do you trust Mr Vajpayee? A: I would like to trust him because I think... he is... because to me he looks a person who would like to resolve that dispute... His body language, his statements, seem that he really wants to move ahead. I would like to move ahead. I can, certainly...

Q: But he heads an important political force in your country. A: Well, I know the local government elections have taken place now. Although it's on a non-party basis but there are certain... people have their own affiliations. I don't think anybody... there is a minimal, minimal support of the people who have emerged victorious, there's hardly... Not even one per cent of them have religious backing.

both sides we must act much more responsibly and we must not enter into a conflict again. Q: I read one report where the CIA actually says that Pakistan's nuclear ability is better than India's nuclear ability. A: I would like to imagine so. (Laughs) I am actually very grateful to the CIA report. I don't know the facts.

Q: And how grateful are you to China? A: Well! As much as maybe India is to Russia.

Q: Was, not is. A: Maybe is. Maybe we are also was.

Q: Maybe? Or in reality? A: In reality, yes we are. Was. (Laughs) Was on both sides or is on both sides. Is on the Indian side certainly. We know that the Russians are providing them (India) assistance even now, they have said that. It's all in the open.

Q: Well, there is a traditional question attached to this subject, of the CTBT. I think we need to get it over quickly with the traditional answers. Will you sign it if India doesn't sign it?

A: We have our own... I'm not really relating it to India, frankly. We have our own internal dynamics. We are addressing certain issues, we are totally focused on taking Pakistan forward, economically, in governance, political restructuring, poverty alleviation. I am focusing in these areas and I don't want to give a strategy at all. I am not really bothering about what India is doing on CTBT. We have our own problems. We are addressing the CTBT issue in relation to our problems.

Q: Which means, in simple words, that if you think that you need to end sanctions by signing CTBT, you will do so. A: No, it's not such a simple issue. Of course it has internal repercussions. So therefore, I have to consider the internal domestic repercussions. So, it's not really an issue of sanctions vs CTBT signing. It is an issue of domestic repercussions, which is, much more serious than anything else.

Q: Qazi Hussain Ahmed of the Jamaat-e-Islami actually calls you a security risk. That's a strange kind of accusation to make against the chief of your government. A: He's an unbalanced man. I don't even want to respond to him

Q: And the American pressure? A: I don't think there is much pressure. Americans themselves, their government is against the CTBT.

Q: And this administration in particular. A: Yes.

Q: When the first comments were made about you, when you took over power, you were called a liberal. Was that an advantage or a disadvantage? A: I would say it's an advantage. It depends on what angle you are looking at. Pakistan environment is misunderstood... abroad and in the West. We, 99 per cent of Pakistanis, are moderate... moderates. It's only the one per cent which are religious extremists, which is equally applicable to India. In Pakistan, everyone around here, is a moderate. And it's unfortunate that these one per cent extremists hold the 99 per cent hostage. That is the problem, certainly. So, my being a moderate, I wouldn't call myself a liberal, I don't really... I don't know the definition of liberal. I would like to call myself a moderate. (Laughs) Moderate and balanced. In everything that one does, I believe in the word balance. It is very, very important — balance in personality, balance in dealings, balance in attitude and balance in views. So, I presume myself and I try to be... maintain balance in everything.

Q: And yet, on the other hand, Qazi Hussain Ahmed of the Jamaat-e-Islami actually calls you a security risk. That's a strange kind of accusation to make against the chief of your government. A: He's an unbalanced man. That is my comment. I don't even want to respond to him.

Q: Have Jamaat backing? A: Jamaat and other religious backing.

Arrest threat may delay Bhutto return

Islamabad, April 7: The return of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, whose conviction in a corruption case has been set aside and a fresh trial ordered by the Supreme Court, to Pakistan could be delayed due to threats of her arrest in other pending cases.

Prosecutor general of National Accountability Bureau Raja Bashir said Ms Bhutto could be arrested if she returned as still eight cases of corruption and misuse of power were pending against her. He said she could also be arrested on the basis of pending warrants against her.

Though Ms Bhutto's lawyers insist that the arrest warrants relate to her failure to be present in the courts in response to summons, Mr Bashir said under nab provisions, a person could be jailed for three years for failure to appear in the court.

Pakistan Supreme Court on Friday set aside Ms Bhutto and her husband Asif Ali Zardari's conviction in corruption cases and ordered a retrial. Though Ms Bhutto herself said in her reaction from London that she wanted to immediately return to Pakistan, Mr Bashir said. (PTI)



ECSTATIC: Supporters of former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto celebrate following the decision of the Supreme Court in Lahore on Friday. The court ordered a new trial into corruption charges against Ms Bhutto, suspending an earlier conviction and a five-year jail sentence. (AP)

THE ASIAN A...

8 APR 2001

I'm innocent and will return home: Benazir

STEPHEN FARRELL
THE TIMES, LONDON

LONDON, April 7. — Smiling, relaxed and buoyed by congratulations pouring in from supporters worldwide, Mrs Benazir Bhutto yesterday threw down the gauntlet to Islamabad's military regime by announcing that she intends to return to Pakistan and become Prime Minister once again.

Holding court in the elegant Kensington flat where she stays when in London, Mrs Bhutto was speaking after Pakistan's Supreme Court set aside corruption convictions against her and Mr Asif Ali Zardari, her jailed husband, raising hopes for her political comeback and early return home.

A five-member Bench suspended the couple's five-year jail sentences imposed by a

special court in 1999 and ordered a fresh trial. Mrs Bhutto claimed that the court's decision vindicated her and her husband. She demanded his release from custody.

Doubts remain about whether she can resume politics, however, in the face of a possible retrial, widespread disillusionment at the extent of corruption during her rule and the prospect of her arrest on further corruption charges.

General Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's military leader, has often stated that she has no role to play in the country's future. Undaunted, she spent most of yesterday animatedly spelling out scenarios for a return to active political life at the head of her Pakistan People's Party. She clearly feels, with her party's success in recent local elections and her bitter rival, Mr Nawaz Sharif, exiled to Saudi Arabia, that

she is a "player" again and that the ever-shifting Pakistani political scene has lurched in a new direction, this time in her favour.

"Yes, I'm going to go back to Pakistan," she insisted. "I plan to call my colleagues over to consult them on when, but I hope it will be before the end of the year. There will be a legal and political battle, but now the regime is in trouble because the conviction has been set aside and I'm an innocent woman and can contest elections. Of course there will be difficulties, but in life you have to face difficulties. I'm connected to a cause greater than mine and I'm prepared to face them."

Whatever the future holds, little has been left to chance. Aware that the court's decision was imminent, she flew back to London from Dubai, where she spends most of the

year with her family, to be in a better position to field media inquiries. She arrived at 6 a.m. yesterday, just as the gaggle of mobile telephones belonging to her aides and staff began exploding with messages from well-wishers and demands for interviews.

She began meeting all-comers to outline the agenda ahead, a role for which she was groomed through Harvard and Oxford by her late father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was executed by a previous Pakistan military ruler, General Zia.

She insisted that although she could not trust the military to deliver justice if she returned, the regime would be unable to suppress her as the Supreme Court's October 2002 deadline for a return to democracy nears.

To General Musharraf's charge that she and Mr Sharif

represent the discredited face of the old Pakistani elite, she threw back allegations of corruption in the military and insisted that she and her party represented the "popular" will.

Her return, she said, would be closely followed by that of Mr Sharif, whose Pakistan Muslim League would not stand by and leave the field open for her.

Of the likely fate of her husband, who has been in jail since the abrupt end of her second term as leader in 1996, she was guarded. Pointing out that she had been unable to speak to him for months, she insisted that he was innocent of corruption charges and of accusations of involvement in the murder of her brother.

Pakistan's anti-corruption investigators, however, say that she and her husband misused power to salt away more than pounds 1 billion in

Britain, the USA and other countries. Among the assets they are accused of acquiring illegally are the £ 3.5 million Rockwood Estate in Surrey — Mrs Bhutto insists that she does not know whether her husband owns it or not — other properties in Britain and Texas, and 26 bank accounts worldwide. Mrs Bhutto robustly defended her husband but refused to say if he would make a political comeback.

She also remained vague about the extent of their assets, saying she was the "legal occupier" but not the legal owner of the ornate flat in which she was sitting.

"All I'm prepared to say is that whatever I've done, whatever I've, is legal," she said. "This is a day for happiness. I'm happy for myself, I'm happy for my husband and I'm happy for Pakistan," she said.



Mrs Benazir Bhutto

Pak SC orders Benazir's retrial

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, April 6. - The Pakistan Supreme Court today set aside a Lahore High Court order convicting former Prime Minister Mrs Benazir Bhutto and her husband on corruption charges and ordered a fresh trial.



Benazir Bhutto

"The case needs retrial," a seven-judge bench of the Supreme Court, which heard an appeal from Mrs Bhutto and her husband Mr Asif Ali Zardari, said.

Mrs Bhutto and Mr Zardari were first convicted by an anti-corruption court in April 1999. A subsequent judgement by the Lahore High Court confirmed the conviction by the lower court, sentencing them to a five-year prison term and a fine of \$8.3 million.

Mrs Bhutto, who is on a self-imposed exile, appealed to the Supreme Court against the High Court ruling questioning its credibility.

She alleged that the judgement was politically motivated saying officials in the regime of her arch rival and then Prime Minister Mr Nawaz Sharif were closely associated with the trial proceedings.

Mrs Bhutto was thrown out of power in November 1996 on corruption charges by the then President Mr Farooq Leghari.

THE STATESMAN

PML may form interim govt led by Musharraf

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, April 5. — The re-organised Pakistan Muslim League, enjoying majority in the assemblies may form an interim government in the country with General Pervez Musharraf as its President, party sources said here.

In a move to get rid of Mr Nawaz Sharif, PML members held an election through the general council meeting and elected Mian Azhar as the party chief.

Mr Sharif's supporters alleged that the election was organised at the behest of the military government.

Considered as sober and influential, Mr Azhar's candidature was supported by majority of the PML members. "He is an ideal choice for the Prime Minis-

ter's post," they said.

A mediocre politician, Mian Azhar is acceptable to the army and will not pose any problem to them. He has twice met the chief executive in the past.

The military ruler has again decided to start his meetings with the politicians and is expected to meet Mian Azhar soon.

Interestingly, most of the politicians are opposed to the country reverting again to the presidential system.

The fate of the proposal would be decided when the chief exec-



General Pervez Musharraf

utive brings an amendment in the 1973 constitution

Musharraf hints: Gen Musharraf has hinted of becoming the President after the expiry of a deadline given by the Supreme Court for restoration of democracy in the country.

"The government was examining all aspects of my becoming the President in 2002," he told a Karachi-based English periodical.

The Supreme Court has set 12 October 2002 as the deadline for holding elections in the country.

The military ruler said his

presence as the President was essential to provide continuity and safeguard the actions taken by the government.

"A civil rule, with checks and balances will definitely come back so that whatever has been done is not undone," he added.

The chief executive said a well-organised institution dealing with the problems and crisis confronting the nation would be established, in which the army will also play its role.

"The army has always played a conciliatory role in the national crisis and institutions like the national security council should also contribute equally," he said.

The power would be transferred to any party that wins elections, including the PML or the Pakistan People's Party, he added.

THE STATESMAN

7001

Will the whip crack hard enough?

In a major policy shift, the government of General Pervez Musharraf has finally moved to rein in the *jihadi* organizations and radical religious groups who have defied the government writ in pursuit of their goals — the liberation of Kashmir through an armed struggle and enforcement of their brand of Islam in the country.

It has been a difficult decision prompted more by compulsions than by choice. The jihadi organizations have certainly given both substance and bite to the movement in Kashmir. It is now largely accepted that it was the ferocity of this movement for freedom that frustrated India's decision to go for a military solution. India was ultimately forced to look for some kind of a negotiated settlement to the problem which assumed an altogether different dimension after the two arch rivals in south Asia acquired nuclear status in May 1998.

For Pakistan, the political cost of the jihadi activities has been enormous, particularly in terms of loss of image. It earned the country the ignominious distinction of being a supporter of terrorism, something unacceptable to the international community today. Musharraf, in a recent interview with a famous international news magazine, has claimed that 90 per cent Pakistanis are progressive and liberal minded and that his country has been greatly misunderstood. But with gun-toting jihadi activists — commonly known as the *mujahids* — surfacing everywhere, the general's voice was seen to carry little weight.

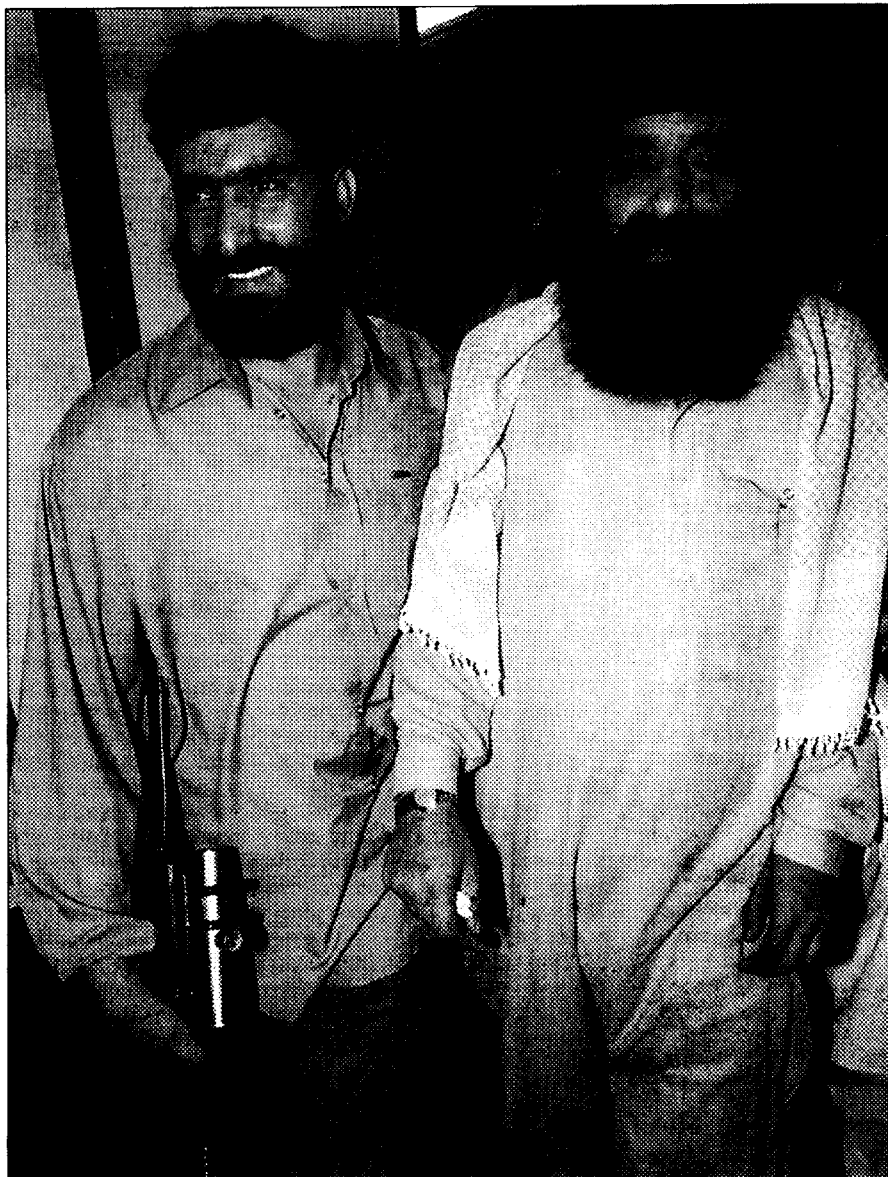
To act or not to act against the jihadis had become a big dilemma for Islamabad. Alarming, in the process, the country was fast running out of options. On the one hand, the International Monetary Fund assistance was Pakistan's only hope to avoid default and bankruptcy. On the other, breaking the stalemate on Kashmir had become equally important to make the illusive new beginning. Both required repairing the country's distorted image. In other words, Musharraf's government had to do some cleansing up operation at home.

This had become necessary for another compelling reason as well. Some of the jihadi and religious organizations had begun to threaten the government and dictate terms to it. The situation had the potential of developing into a civil strife in the coming days.

Initially, the Pakistan government gave the impression that it would not hesitate to crack down on the jihadi organizations. At least this was apparent from the statement of Pakistan's interior minister, Moinuddin Haider. After a high level meeting in Karachi on February 12, 2001, Haider announced that no one will be allowed to display arms, whether he belongs to a jihadi or a religious group, or force people to give donations for the purchase of weapons in the name of jihad. He added that the government was thereby giving clear orders to the police to stop people from displaying arms. The police were to first warn these men, and if they did not listen, to shoot them.

The interior minister is however known for his rhetorics and for being ineffectual. He used similar high sounding words while launching the much publicized dewatering drive. Pakistan still remains infested with all sorts of sophisticated weapons. The 15-month performance of the present government has in fact been a disappointment in sorting out these problem areas. One in-

The Pakistan government has decided to rein in the jihadis. But the actual job may prove to be far more difficult, writes **Khalid Akhtar**



Spoilt children of the revolution

stance has been its embarrassing and infamous retreat on the issue of amending the procedure of registration of first information reports in blasphemy cases. This had been initiated with a view to check the misuse of the provision by religious bigots. The incident has prompted speculations on the government's efficacy in limiting the activities of powerful jihadi and religious groups.

However, according to reports, the interior ministry this time has worked out a comprehensive plan which would prevent jihadis and religious parties from displaying arms, collecting funds, wearing fatigues, distributing literature to propagate the idea of jihad or sectarianism and subject these elements to audits. The interior ministry, it is supposed, will soon call the leaders of the groups and parties to sign this code of conduct and give their word to abide by it.

The jihadis have reacted sharply to some of the provisions of this plan, particularly to those relating to jihad and activities concerning it. They have described the regulations as un-Islamic. A sharp divide between the government and the jihadi leaders was the only outcome of a seminar held in Islamabad recently to find a workable solution to the issue.

Syed Salahuddin, chief of the Hizbul Mujahedin, the biggest jihadi group, asked the government to carry on the freedom struggle till the liberation of Kashmir and reiterated his commitment to continue the jihad till Kashmir was freed. Hafiz Saeed of Lashkar-e-Toiba — another major jihadi group whose fighters stormed the Red Fort in Delhi last Republic Day in India — said he believed that the *jihad-e-Kashmir* is the only guarantee for the security of Pakistan.

Some observers have described these

differences between the government and the jihadis as ominous. However, it is generally felt that the Pakistan government does possess the resources and capacity to impose the required discipline on the jihadi groups and religious parties if it remains resolute. However, it is this iron will that has been absent always, until perhaps now.

To begin with, four jihadi groups based in Muzaffarabad have been asked to close their offices. A Pakistani official has described the measure as purely an administrative one, maintaining that there has been no shift in Pakistan's policy and that "jihad or the struggle of the Kashmiris should and will continue". It is difficult to believe in the statements or clarifications put forward by government officials as more often than not these are meant for public consumption only.

From the Eighties, there has been a phenomenal increase in the number of jihadi groups and *madrassas* which have served as nurseries for producing zealots to fight for the Kashmir cause. It is estimated that only 4,350 out of over 40,000 *madrassas* in Pakistan have been registered with the government. It would require both time and herculean efforts to bring all these institutions under government purview. According to a survey done in 1993, 800 religious students from 700 registered *madrassas* in the Punjab were wanted by the police on various counts. This gives an idea of the lack of discipline in these institutions.

There are no two opinions on the fact that over the years, the jihadi parties have attained strength and gained acceptability in important quarters. On the very first Friday after the interior minister's strong warning against collection of jihad funds, several *imams* during the Friday prayers made an appeal for the same and most of the faithfuls readily came out with donations. Flouting the government writ or directive is nothing new with the jihadis.

The religious parties — which do not have much electoral strength, but have a menacing street power — consider the jihadi groups as one among them. This feelings of fraternity makes things more difficult for the government. To roll back the jihadi groups now is an enormous challenge.

While the Pakistan government treads this tricky path it must keep in mind the situation in Bangladesh. There the opposition has paralysed the country by strikes and violence in protest against a high court verdict which put a ban on certain *fatwas* or Islamic edicts which could subject women to torture for violating Islamic laws and prevent them from mixing and working with men. The force of religion in any Islamic society can hardly be underestimated. The situation is particularly worrisome in Pakistan as institutions here have lost their utility.

The jihadi groups and religious parties have already succeeded in keeping the Pakistan government on tenterhooks, at times even paralysing it. They have threatened to create a state within the state and given ultimatums to march for the enforcement of the *sharia*. They have gone on rampage, uprooting cable television wires and warning against the evil of TV, and established their own courts to dispense justice according to Islamic tenets in the tribal belt of the North West Frontier Province. Musharraf should remember that this is only the beginning.

It is generally felt that the Pakistan government does not lack the resources or the capacity to impose the necessary discipline on the jihadis, if it only remains resolute. However, it is the iron will that has always been absent, until perhaps now

'Pakistan facing serious sectarian trouble'

110-19
379

NEW DELHI, APR. 2. With the threat of Talibanisation sweeping Pakistan, the country has been faced with another major challenge — that of rising sectarian violence, which has seen scores of people being killed in different parts of the country in the past few weeks. At least 100 persons, both Shias and Sunnis, have been killed in the growing sectarian violence since February. Compare this with toll figures in local media reports during the past decade. While 22 people were killed in sectarian clashes between 1987 and 1989, 32 fell victim in 1990. This was followed by 47 in 1991, 58 in 1992, 39 in 1993 and 73 in 1994.

"Today the Frankenstein of sectarian violence has reached alarming heights. It is threatening the social fabric in Pakistan, dividing the society on sectarian lines. With youth becoming fodder of this violence for the last 15 years, time has come to take on the challenge because this madness has to be stopped," wrote a columnist in the Pakistani daily *The News International*.

A portal, 'paknews.com', in an article said, "The killing of Shias is not random but it is actually extremely well-planned. The targets are very carefully selected and the attackers are true professionals, who rarely miss. The aim is to eliminate Shias from decision-making level in Pakistan and force them to become second-class citizens in their own country." Reports say that the sectarian violence was prompted against the Shias by Sipah-e-Sahaba and its military wing Lashkar-e-Janghvi, which is based in Afghanistan where it has set up military camps to train poor and uneducated youths to kill Shias in Pakistan, according to paknews.com.

"Instead of uniting the nation, the mullahs have

divided the country into more than 80 sects, fighting one another with lethal weapons. This is Muslim killing Muslim in the name of Islam," wrote another columnist in an article in *Dawn*. "We are doing exactly as the Christian clergy led their followers to do through the dark ages of Europe. The fundamentalists know no compassion, no pity."

Noted Pakistani scribe, Mr. Najam Sethi, warned in an editorial: "Today, at least three Shia-majority cities — Parachinar, Gilgit and Jhan — are in a permanent state of siege while even Karachi, once a sparkling cosmopolitan city, is acutely vulnerable to the sectarian menace."

Coupled with this is the threat of Talibanisation, where fundamentalists have now come out openly in support of the demolition of the Bamiyan Buddhas despite international outrage. Jaish-e-Muhammad, a weekly magazine floated by the outfit of Maulana Masood Azhar who was released by India to end the hijacking of an Indian airlines plane to Kandahar, defended the demolition, saying these had "kept the people away from the love of Allah" and it would act as a warning to "idol-worshipping nations".

But Mr. Sethi expressed fears that Islamabad "could be further isolated as moderate Muslim nations scramble to evade the fallout of Taliban's extremist version of Islam that borders international terrorism". He accused Islamabad of having "turned a blind eye or condoned their other retrogressive actions" and said, "The Taliban blowback in the form of sectarian and Jehadi-inspired violence continues to exact a heavy toll on civil society in Pakistan. Now it is threatening to push us into the eye of an international storm." — PTI

THE HINDU

3 APR 2001

Musharraf to push for more presidential power

Islamabad, April 1

PAKISTAN'S MILITARY ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf has decided to bring in a controversial constitutional amendment empowering the country's president to dismiss an elected Government and dissolve Parliament, reports said here today.

Musharraf gave a broad outline in this regard to two legal experts during a Cabinet meeting, *The Dawn* daily said.

"The amendments are definitely coming but not in near future, may be few months before October 12, 2002," it quoted sources as saying.

October 2002 is the deadline set by the Supreme Court for Musharraf's Government to hold elections.

The restoration of article 58(2)(b) of Pakistan's Constitution is bound to raise a political controversy as the same article was voted out in 1998 during the

regime of deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif as presidents in the past had used it to dismiss elected governments.

The amendment currently being contemplated includes empowering the president with several powers, which would be executed in consultation with the proposed seven-member National Security Council (NSC), consisting of Pakistan's service chiefs and civilian officials.

The proposed amendment would also empower the president to appoint service chiefs, which the newspaper said was being done to restore balance of power. These powers were transferred to the Prime Minister through the 13th amendment during Sharif's prime ministership. The military regime last week denied reports that it plans to change the constitution, which have generated concern that it is seeking to cement its place in power.



An official statement said media reports of the Cabinet debate on the 1973 Constitution, suspended after the 1999 military coup, were premature and speculative.

The speculation over constitutional amendments increased after Musharraf last week made it clear that he had no plans to retire as chief of the army in October this year.

PTI

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

2 APR 2001

Pakistanis are not enthused by local govt. elections

By Jal Taraporevala

MUMBAI: Pakistan's military ruler General Pervez Musharraf has expressed satisfaction with the progress of the ongoing local government elections in the country. However, this



Gen. Musharraf

assertion notwithstanding, the government doesn't have much to cheer about.

Despite the regime's efforts to widen the powers of the local councils and reserve a third of the seats for women, the size of the turnout of voters so far does not suggest much public enthusiasm

for the new constitutional dispensation. Besides, the government has failed in its attempt to keep the traditional political establishment out of the process by organising the polls on a strictly non-party basis. Many parties have sought to circumvent this ban by simply putting up dummy candidates.

More important, the authorities seem to have to take the challenge posed by the multi-party Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy more seriously than they did before. The alliance has been emboldened to step up its criticism of the military leadership as a result of the growing problems on the economic front, the sustained international pressure on the

Musharraf regime, the unresolved issue of law and order and the inability of the government to deliver on its promise to tackle corruption effectively.

The military government can be expected to continue to pursue a two-pronged strategy in its dealings with the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy. First, it will use its control over the levers of power to prevent political parties from holding public rallies and demonstrations. Second, it will seek to play upon the differences between the various parties in the alliance in an attempt to undermine their effectiveness.

The reiteration by General Musharraf of his government's intention to hold parliamentary and

NEWS ANALYSIS

The reiteration by General Musharraf of his government's intention to hold parliamentary and provincial elections by October 2002, as required by the Pakistan supreme court, cannot be taken at face value

provincial elections by October 2002, as required by the Pakistan supreme court, cannot be taken at face value. A great deal will hinge on such factors as the pressure of public opinion, the state of the economy and the degree to which the Alliance for the Restoration of

Democracy is able to hold together.

Besides, there are certain issues which will have to be addressed before any return to democracy can take place— questions which could well prove contentious. These include changes in the powers of the national and provincial assemblies in light of the enhanced functions of the local councils, the basis on which the elections are to be held and the institutional role of the armed forces.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

1 APR 2001

Pak nuclear body carries out full review of security

Islamabad, March 30: The body that controls Pakistan's nuclear weapons discussed national security at its first meeting after a recent overhaul of the country's nuclear establishment.

The National Command Authority, headed by military ruler General Pervez Musharraf, carried out "a comprehensive review of important security matters relevant to Pakistan's nuclear policy," a government statement quoted by the official APP news agency said.

"The regional and international security issues, both in the context of short and long-term objectives, were also addressed," it said, without giving details.

The meeting was the first after the government announced the retirement of the father of Pakistan's nuclear bomb, Mr Abdul Qadeer Khan, and Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission chairman Ashfaq Ahmad Khan at the end of their respective terms.

Both men, who will formally retire on Sunday, will become special advisers of Mr Musharraf. They were also members of the NCA, set up by Mr Musharraf's military government last year to control Pakistan's nuclear weapons.

Mr Qadeer Khan had headed Pakistan's secret Khan Research Laboratories at Kahuta, southeast of Islamabad, which is credited with making the nuclear bomb and works independent of the PAEC.

Pakistan demonstrated its nuclear prowess with its first nuclear tests in May 1998 in response to similar detonations the

same month by arch-rival India.

Both countries have resisted international pressure to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty against further nuclear tests until they are able to evolve a national consensus and have vowed to maintain a credible minimum deterrence.

Pakistan says it seeks deterrence against much bigger India, with which it has fought three wars since the neighbours won independence from Britain in 1947.

"We are always outnumbered...we maintain a minimum deterrence, which we will always maintain," Mr Musharraf said in a speech on Monday.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission chairman and adviser-designate to the Chief Executive, Dr Ishfaq Ahmed, said on Thursday that Pakistan planned to establish another nuclear power plant with 100 per cent indigenous expertise and resources in six to seven years.

He was speaking at the inauguration ceremony of \$600 million 325 megawatt Chashma nuclear power plant here.

"Pakistan should not wait for another 30 years to have another plant. The government is very keen and we hope we will have a third nuclear plant very soon," Dr Ishfaq said.

"We have to see the Chashma power project stabilising power generation, economic turnaround in the country and then we can go for the third plant," the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission chairman said. (Reuters)

THE ASIAN AGE

31 MAR 2001

Pak. testfires

119-14 missiles 28/3

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 27. Pakistan test-fired its indigenous surface-to-air ANZA missile and other air-to-air missiles at the Air Force Sonmiani firing range in Balochistan on Monday. *Pak*

Conducted on the concluding day of the week-long "missile firing camp-2001", it was witnessed among others by the Chief Executive and military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

The shoulder-launched ANZA weighs 9.8 kg. The others fired included the French origin infrared guided air-to-air R-550 missile with a maximum range of six kilometers, the U.S. origin heat-seeking AIM-9 (sidewinder) and the air-to-air AIM9-L.

The AIM9-L can be fired from multiple angles, having the capability of exploding within a distance of nine meters from aircraft.

The air-to-ground weapons test-dropped by the Pakistan Air Force included Snake Eye MK-82, Durandal Runway Penetration and general purpose bombs as well as 68 mm rockets.

'IPR should not affect cost of drugs'

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MARCH 27. India has sought the cooperation of other NAM countries to ensure that the intellectual property right (IPR) regime did not affect in any way the availability of essential drugs at an affordable cost.

The call was made by the Union Health Minister, Dr. C.P.Thakur, at a meeting of NAM Health Ministers which is presently under way in South Africa.

Reiterating India's stand that while protection of IPR was needed to encourage new drug discoveries and inventions, it should not result in drugs becoming too costly, the Minister emphasised the need to introduce safeguards in the TRIPs Agreement in this regard and urged his counterparts in the NAM countries to work jointly towards that end.

Chairing a session on accessibility of essential drugs, Dr. Thakur also called for a joint effort towards setting up of a global facility for HIV/AIDS drugs on the lines of the one that had recently been established for TB drugs and to ensure that the global Framework Convention on Tobacco Control being put together by the WHO had enough support mechanism to take care of the people engaged in the tobacco industry.

Referring to the recent offer of the Indian pharma major, Cipla, to reduce the prices of anti-retroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS, he said several NAM countries were also well placed to produce such essential drugs at a cheap rate.

They need to pool their resources and for this, relevant administrative and legal provisions have to be in place.

THE HINDU

29 MAR 2001

'Shaheen-II missile ready for testing'

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 23. Pakistan may lift its self-imposed embargo on flight testing of its missiles, with a top scientist saying that the Shaheen-II ballistic missile was ready for the tests and it was for the military regime to decide on the dates "sooner or later". 40-192413

"Shaheen-II is available for testing and we are not in a position to take a decision regarding the testing. It is for the Government to decide. I am sure, sooner or later, this decision will be taken by the Government. Whenever they do, we will go for the test," Mr. Samar Mubarakmand, chairman of Pakistan's National Engineering and Scientific Commission, told *The Nation* in an interview. — PTI

THE HINDU

24 MAR 2001

LEASH ORDER ON ACCOUNTABILITY BUREAU

Pak shelves defence deal probe

Islamabad, March 25

PAKISTAN'S MILITARY regime has asked the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to slow down inquiries against top army officials involved in the alleged questionable defence deals worth billion of dollars, a media report said here.

The alleged shady deals include 1 billion dollars for three Agosta 90b submarines, 120 million dollar for old mirages, 500 million dollar for T-80 UD Ukrainian tanks, 70 million dollar for Type-21 British ships, 40 million dollar for military helicopters, a navy deal to purchase mine-sweepers, a PAF deal for the purchase of F-7 aircraft spares and an Army deal to purchase 7.62 mm rifles.

"Those against whom

inquiries have been shelved include three ex-Army chiefs, two Naval chiefs and an Air chief," *The Friday Times*, a weekly, quoting an NAB official said.

Barely a month after Lt Gen Khalid Maqbool took over as the new NAB chief, he wanted a stop to the investigations involving corruption allegations against serving or retired military officials, the newspaper said. Inquiries into at least six defence deals pertaining to purchases of tanks, submarines, naval mine hunters, mirage fighter aircraft, army jeeps were subsequently shelved, the newspaper added.

The National Exchequer has lost up to one billion dollar in the form of alleged kickbacks and commissions obtained in these contracts according to an estimate.

Documents held by NAB also provide extensive clues about corrupt practices in the Army Welfare Trust, Shaheen Foundation, Bharia Foundation and Defence Housing Authority, the newspaper said.

"Interestingly, many of these documents were actually in the possession of the former Ehtesab Bureau headed by Saif-ur-Rehman, the jailed confidant of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif," said the weekly.

A Lt General was posted as Corps Commander of Multan when he was preparing to take action against some of the serving and retired officials in shady defence deals NAB sources said.

"Some powerful officials in the military establishment were unhappy with the way the Corps Commander was trying to high-



Pervez Musharraf

light the shady defence deals. They thought the scandal would tarnish the image of the Armed forces," the newspaper said.

PTI

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 MAR 2001

Musharraf decision to stay disappoints politicians

By B. Muraidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 26. The Pakistan military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf's announcement that he has no intention to retire as Chief of Army Staff has implications within and outside Pakistan.

It is a clear message from Gen. Musharraf, that he has come to stay and every one be prepared to deal with him.

It is as much a message intended for all those who matter within Pakistan and outside particularly the Government of India. Gen. Musharraf's statement has come as a bit of surprise to political observers.

Perhaps it is the end of a dream for Pakistani politicians who have been eagerly waiting for revival of the suspended assemblies at the national and the provincial level and return of the Army to the barracks.

As for India, it can no longer ignore the presence of Gen.

Musharraf. The policy of isolation cannot be expected to continue forever and sooner than later it would have to engage him if the tensions in the region were to subside.

While there was no doubt that Gen. Musharraf was intending to stay on beyond his retirement due in October 2001, no one expected him to announce it now.

Another significant aspect of his marathon press conference on Monday was the manner in which he evaded a direct reply on whether he intended to take over as the President of the country.

The announcement is perhaps an indication that Gen. Musharraf is in total command of the Army and the administration. The Jamaat-e-Islami which has been demanding that Gen. Musharraf should not extend his tenure beyond October 2001 has criticised him for the statement.

Gen. Musharraf's comment that the country would know ev-

erything in due course on whether or not he would take over as President was a clear indication that he is keeping all his options open. There have been speculations galore in the Pakistani media on the possibility of Gen. Musharraf taking over as the President.

Strangely the military establishment chose not to react to these developments. After Gen. Musharraf's announcement that he is there to stay, it really makes little difference whether or not he would like to take over as the President.

What has also not gone unnoticed is Gen. Musharraf's decision to arrive at the venue of the press conference in Karachi in a civilian dress. When a correspondent made it a point to draw his attention, he said that since he is being accused of going everywhere in the uniform, he decided to be different this time.

THE HINDU

27 MAR 2002

Pak. bid to rein in 'jihadi' schools

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 22 Amid growing concern that the religious schools in Pakistan are ending up as 'jihad factories', the military government has decided to streamline the education system in the seminaries.

A Cabinet meeting chaired by the military ruler and Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, here on Wednesday night directed the Ministry of Religious Affairs to evolve a 'comprehensive syllabus' for adoption by the religious schools.

However, the government has decided to leave it to the discretion of the schools whether or not to accept the new syllabi.

The number of educational institutions run by religious institutions vary between 40,000 and 60,000. There is growing concern about the role being played by some of these in promoting sectarianism and the cult of violence in the name of 'jihad'.

Majority of those on the rolls of the militant outfits operating from the Pakistani soil and engaged in fighting against the government in

Kashmir are believed to be the products of some of these schools. These people played a crucial role in the proxy war between the US and the erstwhile Soviet Union in the Afghan war in the eighties.

Besides evolving a new syllabus, the Government has decided to constitute a Federal Madrasah Education Board to bring the educational system of the seminaries on par with the national education.

The basic objective is to prevent the students from getting into the trap of 'extremist elements'. The government has also decided to set up three model religious schools.

"We want to absorb the students of Deen Madaris into the mainstream, giving them access to the job market. We do not want to be intrusive and interfering. This programme will thus be optional and voluntary.

This will help bring one million students of Madaris to the mainstream of our social and economic life which they deserve.

We need to create a harmonious Islamic society that discourages intolerance of other

views", Gen. Musharraf told his Cabinet colleagues.

Attempt to thwart rally

The military government in Pakistan appears determined to thwart the plan of the political parties opposed to it to hold a rally in Lahore. The rally being held under the banner of Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD) is in support of the demand for immediate announcement of a timetable for holding of elections by the military government. The rally coincides with the Foundation Day of Pakistan.

The manner in which the government has rounded up hundreds of political activists of parties engaged in preparations for the rally and detained some of the top leaders in Lahore has surprised observers.

The chief spokesman of the military, Maj. Gen. Rashid Quereshi, HAS justified the 'crackdown' on the plea that the government can not allow 'interruption' in the process of re-building of the economy, maintenance of law and order and national reconstruction.

110 13

23/3

7 5 MAR 2001

Military clampdown on Pak politicians

Lahore, March 22

PAKISTANI POLICE said on Thursday some of the senior politicians detained the previous day had been released, but democracy activists said a military clampdown on political activities was continuing.

Police said of 28 senior politicians from the 16-party Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD), detained after a meeting in Lahore on Wednesday, only 10 remained in custody and the others had been freed overnight. The alliance says at least 1,650 of its political workers have been arrested over the last two days, in what commentators say is the biggest crackdown on Pakistan's political parties since the army seized power in October 1999.

Alliance chief Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, who was one of those temporarily detained in Lahore, capital of Pakistan's populous Punjab province, said three of the group's leaders were expelled from Punjab

province. Police entered without a warrant and arrested all the participants of our meeting and afterwards three of our leaders were expelled from Punjab," he said.

"The information today is (activists) are still being arrested... This is a contravention of human rights... to ban this kind of peaceful political activity does not inspire confidence among the people," Nasrullah Khan added. Police did not say if any of the other political activists detained in Punjab in recent days had been freed. Nasrullah Khan, an 83-year-old veteran democracy activist, and Javed Hashmi, acting leader of Pakistan Muslim League (PML) of exiled ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, were released hours after their detention. He said the ARD was determined to press ahead with plans to hold a major pro-democracy rally on Friday at Mochi Gate in Lahore, the site of political meetings during British colonial rule. The rally is meant to

kick off an anti-Government campaign by the ARD, which includes rivals the PML and the Pakistan Peoples Party of self-exiled former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. She has called the police action "brutal and barbaric" and urged the world community to put pressure on the government to release the detainees.

The military-led Government of Pervez Musharraf banned public rallies ahead of a visit last year by former US President Bill Clinton. The ban remained in place after the visit although the Government says parties can hold in-door meetings.

Musharraf's Press secretary Major General Rashid Qureshi was reported on Thursday as saying the Government would not allow the alliance to hold its March 23 rally. "We can no longer afford to put the process of stability and execution of our policies framed in the best national interest at risk, just to appease political activists who, for want

of nothing better to do, would like to organise processions and rallies," Qureshi was quoted in daily The News as saying.

But ARD, Pakistan's main political alliance, wants Musharraf to hold national elections immediately and transfer rule to a civilian Government. "ARD can rightfully claim that they represent public opinion in the country," Nasrullah Khan said, adding the alliance was demanding free and fair elections this year. Musharraf says he would honour the deadline given to him by the Supreme Court of holding elections by October 2002. He has also started a process of holding local council elections in the country in phases, the second of which was held on Thursday.

The Government says local bodies would be strengthened and given more autonomy as part of a devolution plan but ARD has rejected the local council elections in which political parties cannot participate.

Reuters

Pak military courts to quell sectarian violence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

20/3/03 57/10 22/3
COURT BANS JEHAD FUNDS

ISLAMABAD, March. 21. - Pakistan's military regime is considering a proposal to set up military courts to crackdown on those indulging in sectarian violence.

The regime also plans to give more powers to military intelligence agencies to help them crackdown on extremist religious groups.

The proposal was discussed at a high-level meeting chaired by chief executive General Pervez Musharraf, The News said, quoting sources. Governors of various provinces attended the meeting.

The meeting discussed the possibility of setting up the military courts in view of prevailing political consensus against sectarian violence, the report said.

ISLAMABAD, March. 21. - The Lahore High Court has banned the forcible collection of jihad funds from the people for use in terrorist activities. This was stated by the ministry of interior affairs before the court in reply to a petition filed by Jamaat-e-Islami naib, Amir Liaquat Balouch in Lahore. The ministry informed the court that collection of funds by force and its use in terrorist activities was not allowed under the law. - UNI

"The idea came from a provincial governor, who said military courts could be extremely helpful in restoring law and order with special reference to sectarian problems" the newspaper said, adding that Gen Musharraf partially agreed to the suggestion.

However, the majority view was the government should first try out other methods as per recommendations of a special task force on sectarian harmony.

The task force has come up with a 20-point code of conduct for the religious groups and parties, which has been rejected by most of the militant groups.

The regime has threatened tough action against the extremist religious groups but it clarified that any such crackdown was limited to prevent violence on the domestic front and would not be extended to the Pakistan-based Islamic militant groups which operate

in Kashmir.

Pak village polls: The second phase of village elections began in Pakistan today under strict international scrutiny, adds AFP.

More than 10 million Pakistanis will elect 1,459 local councils in the second phase under General Pervez Musharraf's plan to devolve power, which he says will create genuine democracy.

Commonwealth ministers in London yesterday asked Pakistan to speed up plans for the restoration of democracy or face "stronger measures."

They expressed "concern over the harassment of political parties, including restrictions imposed on democratic activity, processes and institutions and the detention of persons without due process of law."

THE STATESMAN

Pak to protest against Sharif outbursts.

57-10
Pak
27/3
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, March 21. — Pakistan's military regime has decided to lodge a complaint with the Saudi Arabia government to protest against attempts by Mr Nawaz Sharif to violate the unpublicised Pakistan-Saudi pact which enabled him to go on exile.

"The government is preparing to approach the Saudi authorities with a formal complaint that Mr Sharif's sudden burst of anti-government political statements represented a breach of an agreement between the two governments on this subject," Pakistan's English daily *The News* reported, quoting officials here.

The decision to lodge a complaint with the Saudi government has been taken after Mr Sharif and other family members began attacking the Gen Parvez Musharraf-led military government by granting interviews to local press during the last few days.

In these interviews, Mr Sharif has questioned the legal validity of the so-called deal between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, under which he was released.

He also said that he did not accept a 10-year exile as has been mentioned.

The News said that Mr Sharif's interviews were not possible without the tacit permission of the Saudi government as the former Prime Minister had already been warned in the past.

THE STATESMAN

22 MAR 2001

Pak military green signal on CTBT

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, March 20

PAKISTAN IS reportedly all set to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. A meeting of the top military brass reportedly gave General Pervez Musharraf the go-ahead on Monday to negotiate the signing of the CTBT.

If General Musharraf does manage to sign the treaty despite resistance from the jihadis, the South Asian security scene could undergo a dramatic change.

Hitherto, Pakistan has linked its entering the CTBT regime with India signing it first. The authors of Pakistan's nuclear doctrine have repeatedly stressed the necessity of the country's nuclear programme on its relative inferiority in conventional weapons. All theories revolve around the first strike option - a stage by stage approach in which the nuclear threat is increased at each step to deter an Indian attack. But the Pakistani economy's present bankruptcy has reportedly compelled General Musharraf's regime to radically alter the Army's position on signing the

CTBT. When a civilian Government was in power, the Army and Islamic fundamentalists opposed any talk on the subject.

Senior fellow of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses in New Delhi, Bidanda N Chengappa, said pressure from multilateral funding agencies like the IMF could have forced this change of stance. Unlike India and China, who have both offered no first use, the essence of Pakistan's nuclear policy is first use.

An expert on Pakistan, Kalim Bahadur of the JNU, said it appears that Pakistan's military regime is manoeuvring to stop the country's isolation. Last week, foreign minister, Abdul Sattar, reportedly took along a draft nuclear doctrine to Japan to plead for easing of sanctions.

India has adopted a wait and see approach. Foreign ministry officials are sceptical of the reports as there has been no official statement this effect from Islamabad. Pakistan's radical Islamic groups are bound to protest against the "betrayal" as Pakistan prides itself for being the only Islamic country with nuclear capability.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

21 MAR 2001

Pak army gives consent to signing of CTBT ^{Disarm} 11-16

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of Pakistan Army corps commanders has agreed that the country should sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as it has achieved a certain level of nuclear deterrence in a bid to enable the military regime lobby for lifting of economic sanctions, media reports said on Tuesday.

The decision to sign CTBT was taken on Monday, on the opening day of the two-day corps commanders conference at Rawalpindi, *Pakistan Observer* said.

"Except for very negligible dissent, senior commanders are reported to have agreed that Pakistan has achieved a certain level of nuclear deterrence and the country may go ahead with signing of CTBT," the newspaper said. The decision to sign CTBT was taken based on the grim economic situation faced by Pakistan due to pressing repayment schedules of \$38 billion of its foreign debt.

The newspaper said, "Senior commanders are also mindful of the political developments that are taking place in India." Japan has already indicated its willingness to resume annual aid worth \$500 million to Pakistan provided it signed CTBT and restricted its nuclear programme.

"In view of the army's decision to the signing of CTBT, Gen Musharraf would in the coming weeks meet the political and religious leaders to evolve a broad political consensus in this regard," the daily said.

The corps commanders also advised the government to concen-

trate more on putting in place an effective research and development network rather than laying undue emphasis on further nuclear testing, the daily said.

The decision to sign CTBT followed reports that Pakistan has evolved a three-point nuclear doctrine under which it was willing to provide a commitment to maintain a self-imposed nuclear deterrence, steer clear of arms race and a pledge to refrain from exporting nuclear weapons and technology to any other country.

The new doctrine evolved by Islamabad has been conveyed to Japanese leaders during last week's visit of Pakistan foreign minister Abdul Sattar to Tokyo, according to the Urdu daily, *Jung*.

Under the newly evolved doctrine, Pakistan has decided to maintain self-imposed nuclear deterrence for an indefinite period and would not be the first country to conduct nuclear tests, the report said.

Secondly, Pakistan is willing to provide a commitment to refrain from indulging in any arms race with any country, including India, and agreed to keep its nuclear programme at the current level to ensure reliable deterrence, it said.

Finally, Pakistan is willing to give an undertaking not to export its nuclear weapons or technology to any other country nor it would use it for any illegal purposes.

The three-point doctrine would shortly be presented to all donor countries and international financial institutions in order to get the sanctions lifted, the report said. (PTI)

AN ATTEMPT TO BE CIVIL

Karachi: Is General Pervez Musharraf's government planning to transfer power to civilians? One doesn't exit from power just like that. It involves relinquishing control over allocation of resources worth billions of rupees; over appointment of judges, ambassadors, chairmen and directors of public corporations; and over major aspects of public policy ranging from India policy, nuclear policy and Afghanistan policy to economic policy in general.

No government in Pakistan is ready to call it a day, least so the present military government. After all, this government has been vehemently pursuing the agenda of cleansing the Augean stables of public life in Pakistan during the last one year and a half. It put in place an ambitious devolution plan designed to induct grassroots-level democracy in the teeth of opposition from stakeholders. Why should society count days for this government's departure?

The government faces an adverse reaction of the trading community to what it billed as a strategy of economic revival. The flight of capital from the country and lack of capital investment in business is a big source of worry. In terms of foreign policy, the government has all along faced a situation of acute diplomatic isolation which it often chose to deny in public. Strong conglomerations of nations such as European Community and Commonwealth have refused to go soft on the issue of democracy. A military government did not face such a situation before. The Cold War is over, and therefore tolerance for military governments in the Third World is also over.

At home, alienation of smaller provinces from the federation is worrisome. With no electoral means of articulation of interests available to ethnic communities other than the Punjabis — for example, neither the Senate nor national and provincial assemblies are available for the purpose — the Sindhi, Mohajir, Baloch and Pakhtoon nationalists have been loudly talking about the imminent decline of federalism in Pakistan. The ethnic dimension

of civil-military relations is staring military strategists in the face. The government has been unable to stop the economy from going downhill. In its foreign dealings, it is handicapped by the temporary nature of the present dispensation as per the Supreme Court decision of last year. The world financial institutions, ranging from the World Bank and the IMF to London Club and Paris Consortium for aid to Pakistan are stuck with the problem of political uncertainty in Pakistan.

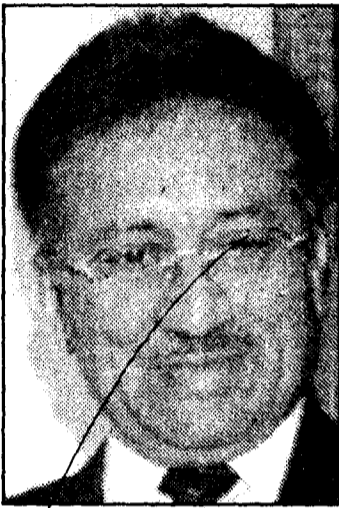
Why is the Musharraf government constrained to act now in the direction of a transition of some sort? The immediate reason is that political forces are getting restive. The ARD is flexing its muscles in order to start agitation from March 23 next. This alliance of parties is still far from mustering the strength needed to mobilise large sections of the population. But the message is clear. Political parties think that action is only the way-out.

The government has thrown some feelers and allowed certain names to be floated in public during the past few weeks. The Zia model is the most popular scenario under discussion today. There are three major components of this scenario. First, parliamentary sovereignty will go. This will mean that an extra-parliamentary office such as President will be given powers to dissolve Parliament whereby the elected government would stand dismissed. There will be a new version of the 8th Amendment in place that will effectively shift power from the Prime Minister to the President.

The second component of this scheme is the President himself. Who should hold this august office? He should be the one who can guarantee security of the armed forces' interests after the formal transfer of power. Zia chose himself for that office. In the public opinion today, General Pervez Musharraf would be elevated to the office of the President in the emerging civilian set-up.

How will it happen? Will this process end in another presidential referendum? Zia felt constrained to get himself elected

19/3
BY MOHAMMAD WASEEM



Is Gen. Musharraf getting ready to transfer power?

through a stage-managed referendum. The farcical nature of the 1984 exercise denied Zia moral legitimacy all along and subjected him to public ridicule. It can be expected that Gen. Musharraf will seek a safer way to occupy presidency if it comes to that.

The third component of this model is somewhat problematic. The option of restoration of elected assemblies has made headlines in the press during the last few months. This provides relative security against the unpredictability of the second option, that is general elections. The issue currently faced by the government is: which option to adopt: the restoration model or the election model?

The restoration model is simpler and safer, but extremely problematic. For example, the restored

INSIDE PAKISTAN

How does a weak civilian government serve the Army's corporate interests? One obvious way to find out is through a choice of policy, in this case foreign, defence and financial

National Assembly would be without the leaders of the two main parties — Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. It will be without those members who have been convicted and debarred from public office. It will lack moral authority as well as legal legitimacy in that it would emerge neither out of a mass movement carrying a revolutionary potential nor out of a court verdict.

Besides, the Senate has already lost half of its members. The military government will be constrained to hold by-elections to fill the vacant seats of the Senate in addition to those of the National Assembly and provincial assemblies, even under the so-called restoration model. In all likelihood, the restored Parliament will continue to be denied legitimacy by the world at large and by the public at home. At the end of this messy process, the very purpose of the initiative may be destroyed.

On the other hand, the election model is a hot favourite among political parties both inside and outside the ARD and the liberal intelligentsia which sees some kind of political stability emerging out of new elections. Political legitimacy for the whole ruling set-up is the big gain out of this model.

How will the military's corporate interests be served under a new civilian dispensation, elected or restored? For example, if the PML and the PPP again bring a two-party model into operation, will the Army again feel constrained to keep a tight lid on transfer of initiative in sensitive areas of public policy? How will it stop the newly emergent political leadership from taking policy measures which are not liked by the Army? Nawaz Sharif's initiative in 1999 as represented by the Lahore Declaration and later the Washington Accord is a case in point.

Under a civilian government, political bosses tend to struggle for autonomy from what they perceive to be the iron grip of the military establishment. How will the new leaders behave in this respect? Political stability through a viable two-party model

is the ideal pursued by leading political elements in the country. Does it help the Army's corporate interests in the short run? This is especially problematic because the Zia model requires a weak Prime Minister with a support base in a weak Parliament.

How does a weak civilian government serve the Army's corporate interests? One obvious way to find out is through a choice of policy, in this case foreign policy, defence policy and financial policy. Under a civilian set-up, the Army will feel constrained to formally negotiate budgetary allocations instead of allocating resources to itself in an unhindered way under military rule. Also at stake are jobs and other sources of patronage for the ex-military personnel as well as for serving military officers.

But a strong civilian government is in the national interest in the long run. It brings stability, predictability, legitimacy, acceptance by the world at large and creditworthiness in the global financial market. Such a government can lead instead of being led by various interest groups. Millions of people from the capital cities of Islamabad, Karachi, Quetta, Peshawar and Lahore to the remotest villages in the four provinces will thus be activated to a throbbing life of issues and policies. This is the federation's gain. The state is best integrated with society through a party-based, strongly-led and politically stable civilian government.

The timing of the initiative for transfer of power is crucial. If it comes after the ARD's planned move to start agitation or after the government's pre-emptive or retaliatory moves against politicians, it will cost the political system by way of letting mistrust and acrimony prevail and deepen. If the government takes a non-initiative in the form of hoisting a dummy Prime Minister over a restored or elected Parliament, it will not sell. It must avoid manipulating an artificial leadership pattern and foisting it on the nation because it has failed umpteen times before.

By arrangement with Dawn

PLATFORM | L.M. Singhvi

Trials and tribulations

HCB
19/3

Benazir Bhutto is no innocent angel. Despite the many accusations piled up against her, however, she deserves a fair trial — something that is not a possibility if she returns to a Pakistan ruled by Pervez Musharraf

BENAZIR BHUTTO'S cry and prayer for justice in *Hindustan Times* (A prayer for justice, February 27) deserves to be heard and heeded in Pakistan and outside Pakistan. Not necessarily because she is an innocent angel. Not because what she says is unquestionably the untainted testimony of truth. Not because she upheld democracy and rule of law when she was in power. Not because she was a respecter of human rights. But because a fair trial is a basic human right.

Bhutto's omissions and commissions cannot justify the denial of a fair trial to her. The world has not forgotten the judicial hanging of her father manipulated and promoted by the usurpers of power. She has demonstrated how that threat looms large over her, how rampant the denial of justice in Pakistan and how overriding dictates of raw military power are perilously entrenched in Pakistan, General Musharraf's rosy promises notwithstanding.

Pakistan and India have had a common and shared tradition of justice systems. The contemporary contrast between the two is painful, though there have been a few occasions when leonine lawyers like Maulana Kasuri and a few bold judges in Pakistan did articulate the ethos of independence of justice against the elected and self-appointed despots. Unfortunately, however, pressures of religious fanaticism, coercion and intimidation through martial law and its many dubious variants, palace intrigues and betrayal after betrayal by elected leaders have made law a laughing stock in Pakistan.

The judiciary in Pakistan is embattled. Its independence has been eclipsed. Times without number Pakistan has thrown its Constitutions into the dustbin. Times without number the hopes and dreams of the people of Pakistan have been aroused to a high pitch by 'knights in shining armour' only to be burnt at the stakes of unbridled ambition and power.

Benazir Bhutto may or may not be eligible for a clean acquittal which she demands, but she deserves a day in the court. All the more so after the shocking revelations by an officer in the intelligence bureau of Pakistan disclosing taped conversations between the judge and the cabinet.

But then the judiciary in Pakistan functions, as Bhutto reminds us, under the sword of sacking, with half the judges sent home by the armed force and others under notice of summary dismissal and the risk of their lives and safety.

In my report as UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence and Impartiality of the Judges and Lawyers. I had devoted a whole chapter to "Typolo-

gies of deviance from the norms". Pakistan's successive military rulers have employed nearly every typology of deviance to browbeat the judiciary. Bhutto's many fears and apprehensions about judicial independence in Pakistan are not a figment of her imagination.

If the CEO of Pakistan is honest about his promises about the eventual restoration of democracy, rule of law and human rights, let him agree to a trial of Benazir Bhutto and her husband by an independent tribunal of judges outside Pakistan as she will obviously not receive a fair trial in Pakistan.

If Benazir Bhutto is tried in Pakistan, she might well be made a victim of that dubious variety of justice, pejoratively dubbed as 'political justice'. Otto Kirchheimer described political justice as "the use of

legal procedures for political ends". Cruder forms of political justice are known to be prevalent in Pakistan.

Benazir Bhutto's triple jeopardy lies in, one, the abuse of legal procedures for political ends; two, the wholesale trial by media; and, three, coercive and intimidating pressures on prosecutors and judges.

The military regimes in Pakistan and elsewhere in the world have a track record of denying fair trial to their political enemies, adversaries and challengers. Bhutto's conviction and a possible sentence of death are very nearly a foregone conclusion — unless, of course, she finds an escape route like Nawaz Sharif. But then she is

already beyond the reach of Pakistan's military regime and Islamabad cannot obtain her extradition because no extradition magistrate in Britain and no home secretary in Britain would agree to entrust her to the tender mercies of General Musharraf.

On the other hand, Bhutto can only claim the guarantee of a fair trial and the right to return to her country and participate in the political life of her country. She cannot claim immunity from public accountability and the penal consequences in a fair trial. If the Pakistani establishment has a case to prosecute against her and if they are in a position to prove the allegations against her, they should be willing to have her tried by an independent court or tribunal in Britain.

By all accounts, Pakistan appears to prefer to keep her out of Pakistan rather than let her challenge Musharraf. If she enters Pakistan, she is sure to be a celebrated victim of an unfair trial.

The author is the first UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers



THE LADY AS A TRAMP: Benazir Bhutto

Pak. to freeze defence budget for four years

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

240 13
14/3

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 18. Faced with a severe resource crunch and a staggering external debt, Pakistan has decided to freeze its defence budget in real terms for the next four years. The military government led by Gen. Pervez Musharraf has accepted this key recommendation made by a high-level committee on Debt Reduction and Management headed by the Finance Minister, Mr. Shaukat Aziz.

Though it is the consequence of the serious economic situation in the country, it is indeed bold on the part of Pakistan to make public its decision to keep the defence budget constant in real terms.

More so, because the decision of the military establishment has come immediately after the Indian Government increased the outlay on defence by nearly 14 per cent in the budget proposals for 2001-2002 unveiled by the Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Singh, on February 28.

The stepped-up Indian defence outlay has been a subject of furious debate in the Pakistani media and the civil society in the last few weeks. There has been a torrent of criticism directed at the Indian Government ever since the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Mr. Inamul Haq, pointed out a day after Mr. Sinha's budget that the defence spending of India in the last two years has gone up by more than 50 per cent.

The top brass of the military is seriously concerned over the development but at the same time is

helpless given the bleak economic scenario in the country. Declaring that it has no intention to join the arms race with India, it has vowed to take 'appropriate steps'.

A meeting of the Corps Commanders, who play a crucial role in the decision-making process of the military government, is scheduled to be held at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi tomorrow.

A cursory glance at the report of the Debt Reduction and Management Committee is enough to understand the logic behind the decision of Pakistan to keep its defence outlay at the constant in real terms.

Thanks to the reckless borrowing and imprudent economic policies of the successive government, Pakistan is neck deep in debt both internal and external. The external debt of the country is estimated at \$37 billion and that is equivalent to nearly 300 per cent of the annual foreign exchange earnings of the country. On account of debt servicing alone Pakistan would have to shell out nearly \$5 billion every year provided it does not resort to fresh borrowings. Besides the trade gap, difference between imports and exports, is \$1 billion. In 2000-2001 the export target is pegged at \$10 billion, while the import bill is a little over \$10 billion. In 1999-2000 Pakistan earned just over \$8.5 billion in foreign exchange.

In other words more than 50 per cent of its foreign exchange earnings would go on servicing the external debts alone.

THE HINDU

19 MAR 2001

Musharraf plans to extend term

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, March 13. - Pakistan's chief executive, General Pervez Musharraf, has proposed to extend his term as the chief of army staff by one year and also effect a shake-up in the serving army top brass in a move reflective of his ambition to stay in power.

It is expected that Gen Musharraf will announce the promotion of two senior Lt generals and appoint them as the chairman, joint chief of staff committee and vice chief of army staff, The News Daily reported today.

Lt Gen Naeem Akhtar and Lt Gen Tahir Ali Quershhi are to step down in the next few weeks, and their retirement would help the chief executive promote two major generals as Lt generals. In this context, Maj Gen Mohammed Akram, director general of the ISI and Maj Gen Ehsan Ul Haq, director general, military intelligence, would be promoted as Lt generals.

Gen Musharraf at present holds charge of the chief executive, the CJCS and the COAS. The CJCS is charged with integrating and coordinating the affairs of the three services.

If seniority is the criteria for the CJCS post, corps commander of Karachi, Lt Gen Mu-

N-PROGRAMME

ISLAMABAD, March 13. - Pakistan's nuclear programme is irreversible and will not be rolled back "under any pressure", the country's military ruler, General Pervez Musharraf, said last night.

Speaking at a meeting of newspaper editors in Lahore, Gen Musharraf said: "I am not a traitor and so there could not be any compromise on the nuclear programme."

Refuting criticism that top nuclear scientists - Mr Abdul Qadeer Khan and Mr Ashfaq Ahmed - were retired under pressure from international financial institutions, Gen Musharraf blamed the media for "overplaying" the issue. - Reuters

ated by his regime and delay transfer of power to elected representatives.

Moreover, with the new appointments, the chief executive has to look out for new generals for important postings, the paper said.

zaffar Usmani, an outstanding general with an enviable record, would be the automatic choice. After him, chief of general staff, Lt Gen Mohammed Yousaf, an armoured corps commander, is the next contender.

Experts say that in the final months of his term, the chief executive wants more time to strengthen the reforms process initiated

14 MAR 2001

Pak nuclear programme is irreversible: Musharraf

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf has said the country's nuclear programme is irreversible and will not be rolled back "under any pressure".



Gen. Musharraf

"I am not a traitor and so there could not be any compromise on the nuclear programme," Mr Musharraf told a meeting of newspaper editors in Lahore on Monday night. Refuting criticism that top nuclear scientists — Abdul Qadeer Khan and Ashfaq Ahmed — were retired under pressure from international financial institutions, Mr Musharraf blamed the media for "overplaying" the issue.

"The contribution of these eminent scientists has duly been recognised and they have been given full honours and also the status of ministers. The country will continue to benefit from their expertise," he said. Mr Khan is currently chairman of Khan Research Laboratories, which spearheaded Pakistan's ambitious nuclear weaponisation programme. Mr Ahmed headed the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission.

The two scientists were on Monday appointed as special advisors to Mr Musharraf and given cabinet minister ranks.

Their retirement has been condemned by Pakistan Muslim League (PML), Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Islamic fundamentalist militant organisation Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT).

Meanwhile, Mr Khan has not yet decided on whether or not to accept his new job, *The News* reported, quoting his family sources. The daily said Mr Khan's retirement would mean his complete detachment from Pakistan's nuclear programme. "Removal of Qadeer Khan and Ahmad, especially at a time when India went ahead with its missile programme, creates suspicions in the minds of people," chief of the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, said.

"Qadeer's removal is an indication of winding up the nuclear programme," acting PML president Javed Hashmi said, adding "he is a national asset". He said the decision was an indication of the government's intention to sign the CTBT. His view was echoed by deputy chief of hardline Jamaat-e-Islami, Liaqat Baloch. (PTI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

14 MAR 2001

Pak tells jihadis to collect funds discreetly

Islamabad, March 16

IN A major climbdown from its campaign to crack down on fundraising by Islamic fundamentalist militant groups, the Pakistan Government has reached a tacit understanding with militant outfits permitting them to discreetly collect funds and recruit volunteers to fight Indian forces in Kashmir, media reports here said.

"After prolonged negotiations with the Government agencies, mainstream religious organisations, involved in armed struggle against Indian forces in Kashmir have agreed to discreetly pursue their drive to collect donations and recruit volunteers," the news said today.

"In return, the Government has decided not to pursue, too aggressively, its pledge to force the closure of all such activity,"

it said. "The latest development has effectively reversed the dramatic announcement made by Interior Minister Moinuddin Haider, promising elimination of all such activities on February 13 last", it said.

Police and other law enforcing agencies have been told not to raid or use force against any jihadi outfits following a series of closed door meeting with the leaders of the groups, the report said.

The decision to permit the jihadi groups was taken after an "influential group" within the Government prevailed on military ruler General Pervez Musharraf that a "rash official action" might provoke an armed reaction from jihadi groups and may push Pakistan to an internal strife.

The report follows an official announcement yesterday that a

new law has been framed to ban any religious organisation found involved in sectarian violence.

But an official clarification that followed made it amply clear that the proposed ban would be confined only to extremist organisations involved in sectarian violence between the majority Sunni and minority Shia sects in Pakistan.

"Though sections of the regime made fine distinction, between the sectarian Sunni and Shia outfits that indulged in violence in Pakistan, it is the jihad organisations fighting in Kashmir that have registered phenomenal growth in small and big towns in Pakistan," the news said.

Police records in Karachi show that in the last one year alone, Jaish-e-Mohammad, formed by Maulana Masood Azhar, Pakistani militant

released from an Indian jail following hijacking of the Indian airlines plane, has opened 135 contact points since last year to collect funds and recruit militants to fight Indian forces in Kashmir.

Following this unpublicised agreement between the Government and the militant outfits, the jihadi groups have been permitted to collect funds during the recently concluded Eid festival, the report said.

Under the new agreement, the jihadi organisations would not be collecting funds by making direct appeals, unlike in the past. But would be allowed to maintain contact points, including in mosques to enlist volunteers.

As witnessed in the recent past, no jihadi organisation would approach schools or colleges to seek volunteers for jihad, the news report said. **PTI**

17 MAR 2001

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Democracy won't return to Pak before Oct 2002

REUTERS

GOVT NOD TO ULTRA FUNDRAISING

51-11 3
KARACHI, March 16. - General Pervez Musharraf has ruled out a swift end to military rule, but pledged to stick to a Supreme Court demand for a return to democracy by October 2002, media reports said today.

Gen Musharraf, speaking to a group of intellectuals and senior officials in Karachi yesterday, ruled out any interim set-up for governing the country and said such rumours should be stopped, media reported.

"I keep reading about (an interim set-up) but there is nothing of the sort," he was quoted as saying. "We aren't going to do anything in between and the Supreme Court decision will be adhered to."

The meeting was closed to foreign media.

The Supreme Court last May gave Gen Musharraf three years from the date of the coup to complete his promised political, economic and administrative reforms and hand over to an elected civilian government.

Gen Musharraf said the eventual transfer of power would be led by national in-

ISLAMABAD, March 16. - In a major climbdown from its campaign to crackdown on fund-raising activities of Islamic militant groups, the government has reached a tacit understanding with militant outfits, permitting them to discreetly collect funds and recruit volunteers to fight Indian forces in Kashmir, media said.

Police and other law-enforcing agencies have been told not to raid or use force against any jihadi outfits.

The decision was taken after an "influential group" within the government prevailed on Gen Musharraf that a "rash official action" might provoke an armed reaction from jihadi groups and may push Pakistan to an internal strife of the scale being witnessed in Algiers, Egypt and Tunis. - PTI

terest. "We will initiate steps for continuity, balance of power and ensure that national interest reigns supreme," he was quoted as saying.

"We are further analysing ideas. We will bring in checks and balances which will ensure economic activity in Pakistan," he said, adding that it would be sometime before a clear plan was announced.

He slammed previous governments, saying politicians had tilted towards self-interest instead of working to better the economy. He said the constitution may be amended so that any system put in

place by his military regime could not be changed by subsequent governments.

"We have to ensure constitutional ways to solve problems," he said, adding that by devolving power to the regional areas, Pakistan could change its political culture to offer people a greater say in their affairs.

In December, he began phased elections for local councils from the village to district level in what he called his "devolution of power" plan. These polls are due to conclude by mid-2001 but political parties are not allowed to take part in voting.

THE STATESMAN

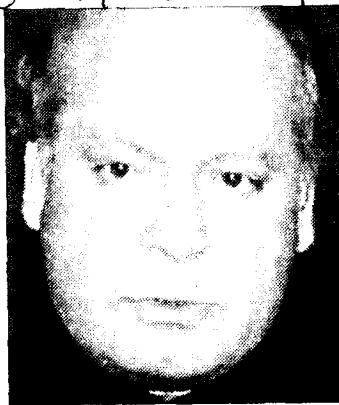
MAR 17 2002

Sharif's return dream dashed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, March 10. — The Pakistan government has ruled out the possibility of an early return of deposed Premier Nawaz Sharif and his family members from exile in Saudi Arabia, an official spokesman said today.

The Pakistan media quoted the official as saying that press reports stating that Mr Sharif or his brother, Mr Shahbaz Sharif, could return home in the coming months were wrong and baseless. Moreover, the Saudi authorities have given a categorical assurance that they would not permit any violation of



Mr Nawaz Sharif

the agreed terms of exile, he added.

He said the speculative stories about the possibility of

their arrival were part of a media campaign aimed at harming the Pakistan-Saudi relations as well as serving someone's political interests. **Journalists indicted:** A Pakistani judicial tribunal, which probed the publication of a blasphemous letter by a Peshawar-based newspaper, has blamed four journalists for the act.

The one-man Justice Qaim Jan Khan tribunal said the letter written by a Jew from Israel was published in *The Frontier Post* due to the "sheer negligence" of the sub-editor, and "general negligence" of the composer, news-editor and the managing editor.

THE STATESMAN

11 MAR 2001

Pak. gears up for second phase of local polls

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 4. Amidst speculations that the Pakistan military government is toying with the idea of revival of Assemblies to install a civilian set-up, the Election Commission of Pakistan is gearing up for the second phase of the election to the local bodies that has evoked even lesser interest than the first phase.

Scheduled to be held on March 21, the second phase is to cover 20 districts across the country.

The Musharraf Government has launched a vigorous campaign to market the election to the local bodies as a 'revolution' in good governance, but there are no takers for the hard sell.

By all accounts the first phase of election in 18 districts in December last year was a 'non-starter' due to various reasons.

The turn out in the much pub-

licised election was put around 45 per cent and the minorities in various districts boycotted the election in protest against the system of separate electorate.

The constant refrain of the military government in the run up to the first phase of election was that it would usher in genuine democracy and the people of Pakistan for the first time would have an opportunity to elect candidates who would be their 'servants'.

That was the logic offered for banning the political parties from putting up their candidates. But it did not work that way.

The unanimous view of the Pakistan press was that overwhelming number of persons who got elected in the first phase were proxy candidates of the mainstream political parties.

THE HINDU

- 5 MAR 2001

W

Buffeted by jihadis and a crumbling economy, Musharraf is desperate to talk Kashmir with India

The sitting-standing man

BY PREM SHANKAR JHA

HT 8
2/3

ATAL BIHARI Vajpayee's decision to extend the ceasefire by three months instead of one, simultaneously allowing the security forces to counter terrorism in the Valley, signals a shift in the government's goal. From trying to get Pakistan to the negotiating table as soon as possible, the direction has shifted to first talking to the leaders of the Hurriyat, and possibly other groups in the Valley. The reason for this is to chalk out a strategy of returning normalcy to Kashmir.

The decision has been born of perplexity and disappointment. For General Musharraf did not move even his little finger in response to the Prime Minister's January 2 appeal from Kumarakom to give "sufficient proof of its preparedness to create a conducive atmosphere for a meaningful dialogue". Why does Musharraf sound so sincere when he urges talks with India, but do nothing at all to make them possible? Which is the real Musharraf?

The most probable explanation is that Musharraf is both sincere in his desire to push the peace process forward, and is nearly powerless to do so. What is more, his capacity to do so may hinge on his success in bringing India to the conference table first, without making any apparent concessions to Indian demands.

Musharraf's domestic challenges are products of Pakistan's struggle to annex Kashmir, grossly inflamed by the Afghan war. The moving force behind the Taliban in 1993 was the Asian Transport Mafia (ATM) — mainly Pathan truckers who plied a brisk narcotic-cum-smuggling trade between Pakistan and central Asia. When the fall of the Shah closed the drug route out of Iran, the ATM began to send its supplies through Pakistan (and India). Thus in the Eighties, the drug trade became the mainstay of the ATM and an immense clandestine source of wealth.

By degrees, therefore, it has also become one — though not the only — source of finance for the *jihadis*. When Pakistan officially began to back the Taliban with materials, logistics and men in Afghanistan, and the ISI began to use Afghans and other *mujahideen* in Kashmir, links were forged between this rogue class and the highest levels of the Pakistani State and military.

The drug trade, though lucrative, is insecure. So the ATM's bread and butter line remained the smuggling of electronic and other goods into Pakistan. This racket has grown so huge that according to a World Bank study, Pakistan loses Rs 140 billion in customs revenues every year. This is 4 per cent of its GDP. By a common consensus, this loss is considered the main single reason for Pakistan's bankruptcy.

Musharraf found himself facing two challenges: halting the march towards



WILL THE REAL GENERAL PLEASE STAND UP?

Islamic extremism and restoring some balance to the economy. The first required bringing the drug-cum-*jehadi* mafia under control. The second required him to restore the domestic and external financial solvency of the State. All this had to be done within a time frame.

In 1999-2000, Pakistan had to pay about \$6 billion as debt servicing, in addition to meeting its current needs for oil and other imports. But its foreign exchange reserves were barely \$1 billion. Thus, it could not survive without rescheduling the servicing of its foreign debt. The US and other donor countries virtually made the provision of an economic lifeline conditional upon a time-bound return to democracy. The Commonwealth Heads of Government fixed October 2001; the Pakistan Supreme Court added a year and made it October 2002.

Pakistan succeeded in fending off international economic and political pressures to a remarkable degree. Between October 1999 and June this year, it rescheduled \$6.6 billion of debt and organised another \$4.5 billion of multi-lateral assistance. It also broke some of its links with the Taliban, and closed a number of terrorist training camps on the Afghan border. Its diplomats were able to persuade the rest of the world that Musharraf's initiatives had to be supported, because if Musharraf failed Pakistan might become another Afghanistan.

But the domestic challenges remained. The obvious starting point was to increase the revenues of the State. In

2000, Pakistan was in dire straits. Its national debt virtually equalled its GDP; domestic debt servicing consumed over 70 per cent of revenue; civil servant salaries and establishment costs consumed all and more of the remainder. As a result, the whole of Pakistan's military spending — 27 per cent of expenditure and 36 per cent of revenues — was being financed by borrowing from the public. Needless to say, there was nothing left for education and health. The resulting vacuum in education was filled by the *madrasas*.

Within weeks of coming to power, Musharraf announced the imposition of a 15 per cent general sales tax on all trade transactions — a first step towards the VAT. More importantly, he gave the *Bara* (smuggler market) traders till April 30, 2000, to declare their stocks and pay duty on them. That was where he was stopped cold by the solid corpus of the emerging *jehadi* State.

On April 26, 2000, the *Bara* traders closed down trade and forced Musharraf to back down. The same thing happened with the sales tax. It was supposed to have been included in the 2000-2001 Budget, but Musharraf put off its imposition till August 14. It remains unimposed.

Musharraf also announced laws to curb the display of arms in public and control fund-raising by Pakistan's private armies. These were ignored with contempt. The same charade is being repeated this year. Musharraf has again given the *Bara* traders time till April 30 to

declare stocks. They first responded with an offer of self-assessment and a token tax of 5 per cent. When this was refused, they went on strike in the beginning of last month. He has also reaffirmed his restrictions on the *jehadi* private armies, but has done nothing to enforce them.

Worst of all, by putting the *jehadi* embryonic State on notice, he has given it time to organise itself. As soon as the traders heard of the GST, they rushed to the Jamaat-i-Islami for support. It is not accidental that the Amir and Qazi of the Jamaat are speaking openly against Musharraf. What Pakistan is witnessing is the very same consolidation of *Bazaariya* and fundamentalist forces that brought down the Shah of Iran in 1978.

Musharraf's time is running out. October 2002 is a year closer. Its revenues this year are falling 5 to 7 per cent short of the target. As a result, the debt servicing charge is rising to 74-75 per cent. Pakistan is under relentless pressure from the IMF to generate a primary revenue surplus (surplus before deducting debt-servicing costs) and to do so consistently for the next 15 years. But even his government publicly concedes that it cannot do this without cutting military expenditure.

That is where the India connection comes in. Musharraf desperately needs to de-escalate the confrontation in Kashmir, but in a manner that does not lay him open to the charge of selling out. The fundamentalists are using 'martyrdom' in Kashmir as their political fuel. As a result de-escalation in Kashmir is a dire threat to them.

The only strategy open to Musharraf is to get India to the conference table without making any concessions. He must claim this as a diplomatic victory and warn his people that *jehadi* activities are undermining future gains. He will add more feathers to his cap if India and Pakistan make progress in nuclear confidence-building on the margins of 'discussing' Kashmir. These might just give him the added support from the army to tackle the traders and *jihadis* and repair Pakistan's finances.

In view of what will happen if the military regime is replaced by a *jehadi* one, New Delhi should accept Musharraf's 'invitation'. But it should harbour no illusions about what Musharraf's attitude to Kashmir will be if he consolidates his position. The more financial balance and political power he acquires the less he will need to sound reasonable on Kashmir.

In the end, it is the Kashmiris who have to reject Pakistan, the *jihadis* and their appeals to religion. Today, they are very close to doing so. That is where Vajpayee should focus his attention.

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Pak. climbdown on curbing religious outfits

Part 1

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 26. In a climb-down from its stance of an imminent crackdown on the extremist religious and militant outfits, the military Government in Pakistan has said it only wanted to curb a public display of weapons and regulate the collection of funds for "Jehad" (holy war).

The Interior Minister, Lt. Gen. (ret'd) Moinuddin Haider, who is engaged in a tug-of-war with the extremist religious and militant outfits for his statements against them, adopted a more conciliatory tone at a news conference in Karachi today.

He claimed that after marathon discussions with representatives of the religious and militant outfits, a broad understanding had been reached. Accordingly, these organisations had agreed to stop the public display of weapons and talks were on to regulate the collection of funds for 'Jehad'. "All have accepted it. They have said they will not display weapons in public", the Minister said.

Lt. Gen. (ret'd) Haider, who is considered close to Gen. Pervez Musharraf, made these claims amid reports that his Ministry has prepared a draft "code of conduct" for these outfits.

A report in the Urdu daily, *Jang*, said the Government had decided to implement a 20-point code of conduct to regularise Jehadi activities. All the Jehadi outfits would be asked to sign the docu-

ment prepared by the Interior Ministry.

As per the draft code, the Jehadi outfits would be barred from any open display of arms or setting up camps to collect funds in streets and outside mosques. Also, they would have to subject themselves to regular audit. The code of conduct would bind the Jehadi outfits not to print or publish provocative material that promotes the "gun culture". They would also not be allowed to use military uniforms or indulge in graffiti.

The Jehadi outfits would close down their offices in cities and would not be allowed to hold public meetings, rallies or other such activities, which "tarnishes" Pakistan's image at the international level.

The paper said the draft code had been prepared by the crisis management cell working under the supervision of Brig. Javed Cheema. Leaders of all the Jehadi outfits would be summoned to the Interior Ministry to sign the code so that it could be implemented properly.

Action would be taken against violations. The Government was also analysing measures to regularise the accounts of Jehadi outfits. The difficult task ahead for the military Government is evident from yet another murder in sectarian violence in Lahore today. A doctor was killed when a motorcycle rider fired at him from his automatic weapon.

THE HINDU

27 FEB 2001

Pakistan's former Prime Minister exposes the corruption that plagues its judicial system

A prayer for justice

BY BENAZIR BHUTTO

HF 8
27/2

FOUR YEARS ago when the Pakistan Peoples Party government was overthrown, accusations of corruption were made against it. These accusations appeared in the press for two years before a single court case was filed before the judiciary in Pakistan against its leaders.

In retrospect, it appears that the two years of a media campaign took its toll on otherwise respectable and well-meaning citizens. These persons, who believe in justice, drew wrong conclusions about the corruption charges.

Without knowing it, they were brainwashed by the media campaign. Even when stories of torture and perjury were printed in the press, there was a tendency to ignore them. It was felt that if 'billions of dollars' had been 'stolen' from the country, it mattered little if the law was played around with, so long as the money was found and restored to the country.

This resulted in a grave miscarriage of justice and the sentencing of a Prime Minister and her spouse. When a human rights agency called the investigation "politically driven", it was ignored. The investigator boasted of torturing witnesses to a British newspaper. The victims, rather than he, suffered. Special retrospective laws were made and the principles of justice thrown to the winds. Even defence witnesses were denied to the defence. Advertisements were taken out in the press proclaiming the defendants guilty before the verdict.

Yet those who could have spoken out chose to remain silent. They had been silenced by the intensity of the leaked stories and leaked documents, numbed by 'foreign courts' legitimising, seemingly, what was declared by the regime as the gospel truth about its opponents. In fact, there are no trials in any foreign courts. In Switzerland, there is an investigation triggered by Islamabad's wrong charges. In Britain, there is a request by Islamabad to take statements from British residents. Yet, such is the propaganda that many people in good faith believed that 'judicial trials' were taking place in foreign countries.

One of the leading principles of law is that a person should be tried in a free and fair atmosphere. Many trials are overturned when the public atmosphere is prejudiced and vitiated. Unfortunately, the false propaganda by the regime destroyed chances of a fair trial for me.

When I announced my plans to return to Pakistan as part of a democracy movement, the regime decided to pressure me further. I heard that they planned to have my so-called conviction upheld by the Supreme Court. Even though the Pakistani Supreme Court contains many honest and respected judges, it was a matter of concern that a fair hearing could be denied.



SPEAKING OUT: Benazir Bhutto outside Pakistan's Central Prison, Karachi, 1997

The Pakistani judiciary operates in an all pervasive climate of coercion and intimidation. It functions under the sword of sacking, with half the judges sent home soon after the military seized power.

Given the propaganda and the hostility it created, it seemed that the military regime would have its way. But god works in mysterious ways. A miracle happened that moves me deeply when I think of it.

An officer in the intelligence bureau of Pakistan risked his career to answer the voice of conscience. Shocked when tapping conversations between the judge and the Cabinet, he decided to write to the President of Pakistan about it.

The *Sunday Times* came in possession of the tapes and ran an investigative story. That story was printed and I received a copy exactly as I met the Pakistani press in Washington. I was able to give them the copies.

It was three weeks to General Musharraf getting his way in using 'the army' to block my return to power through the court process. Perhaps Musharraf too was affected by the stories he had heard.

The story broke in Pakistan and it shook the corridors of power. It shook the conscience of the intellectuals who were quick to rightly call for the judges to step down and for an investigation to take place.

The investigative story by the *Sunday Times* contained explosive material. It exposed taped conversations which left little doubt that the trial judge was black-

mailed into giving the guilty verdict. That even his wife believed the regime wanted her husband to do an 'injustice'.

Shockingly, the law minister of the country was found taking over the conduct of the trial. The cabinet minister for accountability was dictating the judgment and haggling over the sentence. The Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court was urging the trial judge to obstruct justice, otherwise "arrest warrants would be issued".

This sordid story is the story of how justice died for a person who had been prime minister of the country. Yet, this was far from the first criminalisation of justice. That unhappy story began with the conviction of Prime Minister Suhrawardy, again for corruption, in the Fifties. It culminated in the hanging of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on the charge of murdering a man who is still alive.

Yet, because propaganda can be so lethal, some persons still find it hard to accept the evidence before their eyes that the Prime Minister was the victim and the judge corrupt.

The dawning of the truth is a vindication. Yet the suffering endured is hardly undone. But this is the age of accountability and transparency. The mental agony could be worth it if from that flowed a cleansing of a flawed process.

The exposure of corruption within the judiciary gives an opportunity to the Pakistani judiciary to redeem itself by taking action against the corrupt judges concerned. It is also an opportunity for the

country to rebuild its institutions into those fit for a country in the 21st century.

The former minister of interior and the former Chief Justice of Pakistan confessed that those in the previous regime had ordered wire taps. As Prime Minister, I believed I was wire-tapped in my office and personal quarters.

Even as I write, my husband is being wire-tapped and video-taped in the room where he is held in solitary confinement, with windows blackened. This invasion of privacy must stop. Intelligence agencies are part of all countries where they are regulated by law. That is what's needed in Pakistan.

Islam speaks against the politics of slander. Yet, even as Islam's second largest country continues with innuendos, gossip and slander which fail to meet judicial tests of veracity, the West moves on.

During my recent visit there, I found leaders talk of 'positive criticism' and 'non-personal attack pledges'. I was surprised to find the Republican government wooing the Democratic opposition to create conducive conditions to foster human goodwill.

American President Bush invited Democratic Senator Kennedy to the White House to watch a film. The friendship act is to demonstrate that politicians can have differences but ought to respect each other. When human beings are denied of respect to serve a political agenda, it's the society that suffers even more than the individual.

Since I left office, my country has sunk into fiscal bankruptcy. The long shadow of the military hangs over its future. Unless derailed democracy is put back onto track, the future holds more political instability. That instability impoverishes the country even as it forces its youth to commit suicide.

Sadly, there are too many too poor to afford to live. Unless the judges in the hallowed halls of the Supreme Court are allowed to function freely, justice will lie torn and tattered.

I'm told that the military would prefer my case to go for remand back to trial. Back to more suffering and more special courts and more judges blackmailed by state institutions.

I want none of that and seek an honourable acquittal. My appeal will argue that is judicially due to me.

As I make my plea for an honourable acquittal to put an end to a travesty of justice that took place, I feel with me the soul of my father. I feel with me the souls of those who died because justice refused to live.

For their sakes, as well as mine, I pray justice triumphs.

Benazir Bhutto wrote this article exclusively for Hindustan Times

Pak stresses mutual nuclear deterrence

By arrangement with Dawn

Karachi, Feb. 24: Pakistan on Friday emphasised that the cause of peace, security and progress in the conflict-ridden South Asian region could be best served if mutual deterrence was preserved at the lowest possible level and the core issue of Kashmir was addressed. This was spelt by the foreign office director general, responsible for disarmament issues at the inaugural session of the three-day workshop on confidence building measures in South Asia.

The workshop has been organised by the international relations department of the University of Karachi.

Pakistan remains ready to discuss in fairly specific terms its requirements for a minimum credible nuclear deterrence, if India was prepared to do so, the foreign office official said in his written presentation. Pakistan was also prepared for reciprocal agreements with India for nuclear and missile restraints. These could include: One, not to deploy ballistic missile sites; two, not to operationally weapons nuclear capable missile systems; three, formalise the understanding to provide prior and adequate notification of flight-tests of missiles; and four, to declare a moratorium on the development, acquisition or deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems, since

these can establish a minimum credible deterrence." Nuclear restraint agreements between India and Pakistan could be accompanied by political and technical confidence building measures, he said.

South Asia could become a region of peace and progress through a commitment on the part of both India and Pakistan to resolve the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir through peaceful negotiations in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Pakistan on its part had made persistent efforts to defuse tension over Kashmir and to launch the process for a just and peaceful resolution of the dispute, he said.

Top militant Sunni leader held after Shia killings

Lahore, Feb. 24: The police arrested the leader of one of Pakistan's most militant Sunni Muslim groups, following a spate of killings of Shia Muslims, the group's spokesman said on Saturday.

Azim Tariq, leader of Sipah-e-Sahaba or guardians of the friends of the Prophet was arrested from his home in eastern Punjab province, said Mr Zahid Qasim, a member of the group's ruling council. Tariq's group is considered one of the most violent and well-armed religious groups operating in Pakistan. "We haven't been told why but we believe he has been detained because of the recent killings," he said. In the last one week five Shia Muslims have been killed in separate incidents in eastern Punjab province and in the southern port city of Karachi. The authorities say that the relatives of some of the victims have accused Tariq of ordering the killings. (AP)

Pak. Minister mollifies jihadi outfits

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 23. In an effort to assuage the 'hurt' feelings of the religious and militant outfits in Pakistan, the Interior Minister, Lt. Gen. (retd) Moinuddin Haider, said today that the Government considered Kashmir an 'unfinished agenda' and would not backtrack on the issue.

The Minister's observations came at the end of a day-long interface with leaders of the leading religious and militant outfits in Pakistan, organised by the well-known Urdu daily, *Jang*. The dialogue between the Minister and the clerics took place amid a raging controversy over his recent remarks on the resolve of the military Government to put an end to fund-raising in the name of 'jihad' (holy war) and the public display of weapons.

It was a packed house with the top brass of some of the leading religious and militant outfits present. These included the chiefs of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Syed Salahuddin, the Lashkar, Prof. Hafiz Muhammad Sayeed, and the Al Badr, Bakht Zameen.

The leaders, who have been engaged in a war of words with the Minister in the last few days, ventilated their anger against the Government for giving in to the dictates of the West. They asserted their determination to carry on with 'jihad', a bounden duty.

The Minister was rather defensive and gave an elaborate explanation on the real intent of his statements. He argued that his ire was directed essentially at the outfits spreading sectarianism.

"We respect jihadi outfits and we never called for giving up jihad in Kashmir. We do say that what is going on in Kashmir is indigenous jihad and not terrorism," the Minister said.

The leaders of various jihadi outfits conveyed their readiness to cooperate with the Government on issues relating to Pakistan's security but at the same time wanted it to realise that it was on account of their strikes and activities in Kashmir that India had been forced to cease fire.

The Lashkar chief said 'jihad is Qurani verdict.' The U.S. that had declared the Afghan war as a holy war was opposing jihad because it had no interest in Kashmir. The mujahideen had no political motives but were fighting jihad for 'suppressed Kashmiris.'

The Lashkar did not believe in an open display of arms and the allegation that the mujahideen were responsible for promoting gun culture, was baseless. Thousands of rounds were fired in Lahore during the Basant Festival and no Lashkar activist was involved. The Government itself was promoting gun culture by allowing the screening of Punjabi films.

The Harkat-ul-Mujahideen chief organiser, Maulana Fazlur Rehman Khalil, said had the Government talked to the outfits before issuing statements, the situation would have been different. If it had the names of those who had been collecting extortion money in the name of jihad, it should disclose their names rather than make unnecessary allegations.

The Hizb chief said those who considered jihad a threat to internal security were unaware of ground realities. "We do get military aid from Pakistan but instead of admitting it, apologetic attitude is being adopted in this regard, which gives a negative impact."

Military pressure on India should be intensified as the mujahideen had already rejected the ceasefire. The ceasefire might be a step towards the resolution of the Kashmir issue but it was not a cure. The Al Badr chief, Bakht Zameen, regretting the Minister's statement, said if the General had any complaints against the jihadis, he should have shared his concern with them. The Minister's statement had conveyed a wrong message.

Pak. sees plot to kill Bhat

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 23. Pakistan today alleged that involvement of Indian authorities and agencies could not be ruled out in the 'plot' to eliminate the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leader, Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat.

The charge was levelled in a press statement released by the Pakistan Foreign Office even as senior functionaries of the military government continued to denounce the extension of the ceasefire in Kashmir as a 'gimmick'.

The Foreign Office statement condemned what it termed as a plot to eliminate Prof. Bhat who was saved by the timely detection of a grenade planted in his car near Sopore. It said circumstances surrounding the incident strongly

point to the involvement of Indian authorities and quoted Prof. Bhat as saying that he suspected the hand of the Farooq Abdullah Government.

"The attempt on the life of Prof. Bhat is clearly part of Indian machinations to weaken the freedom struggle by eliminating its leaders and to spread terror among the people of Occupied Kashmir. India's claim that the incident was caused by problems among the leaders of the freedom movement is a futile attempt to cover up its own responsibility," the statement said.

In another development, the Director General, Inter-Services Public Relations, Major Gen. Rashid Qureshi, has said that the ceasefire extension was meant only to hoodwink the world people.

THE HINDU

24 FEB 2001

Stand-off over, Jihadis come to terms with Pak

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, FEB 23

THE stand-off between the Pakistan government and the Jihadi groups over public display of arms and forced collection of funds is virtually over with the armed religious groups pledging to abide by all "laws of the land and work under 'rules and regulations'.

This decision was taken at a meeting of representatives of Jihadi groups with Pakistan Interior Minister Moin-u-Din Haider and other top Pakistan government officials, according to the daily "News" today.

Jihadi leaders assured the Minister that their aim was not to create law and order or problems in Pakistan, but to "concentrate on their war against India".

The meeting, organised by the Jung group, was attended by supreme commander of Hizbul Mujahideen Syed Salahuddin, Maulana Fazlur Rehman Khalili of Harkatul Ansar, Hafiz Saeed of

Lashkar Toiba and other groups. Sardar Abdul Qayoom Khan and Ajmal Khattak and Maulana Abdul Gafoor were also present.

The Minister made it clear that the government would not allow forced collections of donations on the pretext of Jihad. The Jihadi groups assured the Minister they respected the law and had no intentions to violate it.



Pervez Musharraf said that it was a wrong impression.

"Go to Baloochistan and Sindh and you will find out they had nothing to do with Kashmir."

He also criticised the government for orienting its foreign policy on the Kashmir issue.

Dr Mubarak said that Kashmiri people felt that their genuine indigenous struggle has been harmed by Pakistan's interference. Mehdi Hassan endorsed the view of Dr Mubarak.

INDIAN EXPRESS

24 FEB 2001

Pak subs to have N-missiles

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, Feb. 22 - Pakistan Navy has planned to equip its submarines with nuclear missiles as part of its efforts to gain qualitative edge over India, Pakistan's deputy chief of Naval Staff, (operations), Rear Admiral M Afzal Tahir, said.

Pakistan's Navy had been considerably strengthened with the induction of indigenously built Agosta 90-B submarines, he said. Rear Admiral Tahir was speaking to reporters at the end of Pakistan Navy's annual Arabian sea exercises yesterday.

He said when it came to achieving nuclear balance, Pakistan was placed at a distinct disadvantage.

India's "aggressive" draft of nuclear doctrine, which assures no first use but keeps options of a pre-emptive strike open, is ambiguous and worries Pakistan, he said.

Indian naval projects like ATV and installation of cruise missiles on naval platforms were being developed with considerable success. This would give India an extended reach of not only a second nuclear strike but also the capability for conventional cruise missile attacks, he said.

Pakistan now faces threat from Indian submarines, which, he said, were capable to strike on shore targets with medium range missiles.

THE STATESMAN

23 FEB 2001

Pak SC upholds Musharraf coup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, Feb. 20. — Pakistan's Supreme Court has upheld the October 1999 coup

by Gen Pervez Musharraf and said his removal during his absence by Mr Nawaz Sharif was an attempt to create dissension among the armed forces which amounted to a criminal conspiracy.

Dismissing petitions seeking review of

its may 2000 judgment, an 11-member Bench yesterday, however, observed that prolonged involvement of the army in civil and political affairs of the country would affect its professionalism and politicise the armed forces.

The Bench, headed by Chief Justice Mr Irshad Hasan Khan, dismissed the petitions after the government's counsel told the court that he had been instructed by the government

to reaffirm the assurances given by Gen Musharraf that he would hold elections in the country before October 2002.

Upholding the Supreme Court's 12 May 2000 judgment validating military takeover, the Bench said the constitution provided no solution to the situation which arose on 12 October 1999, wherein the army had no option but to intervene to save the country from fur-



Gen Pervez Musharraf

ther chaos, collapse of law and order, economic stability, justice, good governance and safeguard the integrity and sovereignty of the country.

The court reaffirmed that the legitimacy accorded to the present government was conditional, inter-linked and intertwined with the holding of elections for national and provincial assemblies and the Senate with the given time frame of October 2002.

THE STATESMAN

21 FEB 2001

10-12 Pakistan Muslim League splits

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 19: As anticipated, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) led by the former Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, split down the line today with the rebels electing the Speaker of the suspended Punjab Assembly, Mr. Chandhary Pervez Elahi, as the party chief to head the Punjab province.

The split is a culmination of a prolonged battle within the PML ever since the ouster of Mr. Sharif as the Prime Minister by the military in October 1999. Of course, the process acquired a new momentum after Mr. Sharif went on an exile along with his entire clan to Saudi Arabia in December this year after striking a deal with the Musharraf government.

The loyalists of Mr. Sharif have denounced the break-up as "illegal and unconstitutional" and accused the military government of engineering the split to weaken the growing political resistance to the regime.

The decision of the rebels in the PML to

strike in Punjab, considered to be the fortress of the Sharifs, is significant and is seen as an attempt to strike at the root of his support base. Indications are the PML units in the remaining three provinces would break up in the next few days.

The dissidents in the PML tried initially to split at the national level. But when they failed in their endeavour even after the departure of Mr. Sharif to Saudi Arabia, they have now decided to target each province.

There is no surprise in today's developments as last ditch effort made by the PML Chairman, Mr. Raja Zafarul Haq, for a patch up on Sunday failed. There was simply no meeting point between the rebels and the loyalists.

The charge made by loyalists of Mr. Sharif that the government is behind the break-up is not without substance. The differences between the two groups began within weeks after the military coup.

While the rebels opposed the campaign

against the military led by the wife of the former Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, the loyalists accused the dissidents of acting at the behest of the Army.

Once Mr. Sharif was convicted in the plane hijack case, the rebels stepped up their campaign for his replacement with a 'cleaner face' and there was no meeting point between the two groups after that.

The next few weeks in Pakistan promise to be politically interesting. The rebel group is hoping that Gen. Musharraf would either revive the suspended national and provincial assemblies or provide them a berth in the government to give a civilian facade to his regime.

Speculations on this front continue unabated in the Pakistani press despite categorical assertion made by Gen. Musharraf a few weeks ago that he has no intention of handing over the reins of power to a civilian set-up before the deadline of October 2002 laid down by the Supreme Court.

The unravelling of India?

By C. Raja Mohan

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 11. Is India falling apart? While the Indian political class revels in the million mutinies going on in the country, many among the intelligentsia here see the unravelling of India.

A long-standing friend here counted more than 20 ongoing conflicts within India, and wondered how any state could hope to survive the depth and intensity of such turmoil across a vast populous land.

In many ways, the expectation or wishful thinking about a disintegrating India is a mirror image of the perceptions in New Delhi about a "failing state in Pakistan". With very little interaction between their civil societies, and a declining intellectual capacity in both sides to assess political developments across the border, there is a big danger that false perceptions in both countries might take root and drive policy.

There is a view in New Delhi that by turning its back on Islamabad, we could let Pakistan stew in its own juice. Equally strong is the view in Pakistan that it could pull India down by exploiting the many political faultlines in its neighbour, which is seen as being somewhat oversized and inconvenient.

Some in Pakistan also believe that the recent Indian peace initiative in Kashmir might be driven by political fatigue and the bleeding of security forces there.

To be sure, there are saner voices on each side which believe policies based on an early collapse of the other side are not rooted in reality and end up costing both nations dearly. Many in Pakistan see the inherent strengths of Indian democracy, and the fact that New Delhi is racing ahead on the economic and technological fronts. They also acknowledge the

impossibility of wresting Kashmir from India by use of force and proxy wars. Some of them also acknowledge the impossibility of maintaining the much-vaunted political parity with India in the future.

These voices hope for some kind of a peace with honour. If New Delhi wants to sustain the current fledgling peace process with Islamabad, it must find a way to strengthen the voices of sanity and reason there. Policies aimed at avoiding all political contact with Pakistan and denying a substantive interaction between the two societies ends up boosting those in Islamabad calling for a permanent confrontation with India.

The issue at stake is not just the question of a dialogue between the two governments and the appropriate conditions for it. It is more

ISLAMABAD DIARY-III

about self-confidence in India to allow a broader interaction between the two societies. What New Delhi needs is a strategy for engagement with Pakistan at multiple levels. And quite a bit of that can be done through unilateral measures on the part of New Delhi. This would involve, among others, allowing political leaders, religious figures and intelligentsia from Pakistan to visit India, travel across the land and find for themselves where its neighbour is headed.

Thanks to the deep distrust and the lack of enough interaction, extremist voices from one side get magnified on the other. Just as the sentiments of 'jehadi' groups get big play in the Indian media, crazy voices in India get huge political attention here. There are ver-

few who do not ask visitors from India about the statement of the Shiv Sena leader, Mr. Bal Thackeray, about "disenfranchising" Muslims. Or the proclamation of the RSS chief, Mr. K. Sudarshan, that it was a bomb that brought down the Babri Masjid.

Travelling within the subcontinental neighbourhood is always a productive exercise. Conversations with academics, journalists and political figures here serves to hold up a mirror that brings into sharp view all the warts on India's face. It reveals how deep the suspicion of India is among her neighbours, and the kind of weight they attach to marginal trends in Indian politics.

Self-righteousness on India's part is unlikely to end unbelievable misperceptions about it and the misreading of New Delhi's intentions in Pakistan. Only a sustained and multiple engagement of the neighbours can turn the situation around. Does India have the patience, self-control and smartness in policy-making to cope with the challenge?

There is spring in the air in Islamabad. But if you want to celebrate the end of a long and cold winter, the place you should be in is Lahore. Marking 'basant' is a great tradition in Punjab that has survived the Partition.

Lahoris turn their city into a fabulous carnival, and not even the religious fundamentalists can stop them from enjoying 'basant'. In recent years, extremist mullahs have questioned the celebrations of the secular spring festival in Lahore. But with little effect on Lahoris.

Gen. Pervez Musharraf himself is said to be a great enthusiast for celebrating it. Last year, he is believed to have travelled to Lahore to be among friends during the festival.

THE HINDU

12 FEB 2001

Pak. lawyers plan stir to restore statute

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 11. The military government in Pakistan is confronted with challenge to its authority from unexpected quarters — the lawyers' community.

The advocates have decided to observe a strike on February 27 in support of their demand for restoration of the 1973 Constitution, and an open and transparent inquiry into charges that the Nawaz Sharif Government had 'fixed' the former Prime Minister and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader, Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, in a corruption case by 'manipulating' a few judges.

The strike threat has come at a juncture when the judiciary is mired in a controversy over the alleged fixing of case against Mrs. Benazir Bhutto. The controversy erupted when the London-based paper *Sunday Times* published the reported taped conversations between the judges who were trying Mrs. Bhutto and important functionaries in the Nawaz Sharif Government.

The lawyers named in the *Sunday Times* report have alleged that the tapes are fake. The scandal has surfaced at a time when Mrs. Bhutto has made known her determination to end her exile and return to Pakistan. Incidentally, the appeal filed by Mrs. Bhutto against the court conviction in the corruption case is to come up for hearing in the Supreme Court on February 26.

It is not clear as to what has prompted the lawyers to adopt a pro-active step, particularly when the mainstream political parties are maintaining a relatively low profile after the exile of Mr. Nawaz Sharif to Saudi Arabia.

The Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD), launched with much fanfare days before Mr. Sharif entered into a deal with the military government, has just

about recovered from the rude shock on account of the dramatic exit of Mr. Sharif from the domestic political scene.

The ARD suffered a further setback when the MQM — the other important political party in the alliance — walked out in protest against the refusal of the leaders to endorse its demand for adoption of the 1940 Lahore Resolution that envisaged maximum autonomy to provinces. The MQM also wanted the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to apologise for the excess committed by its Government against its workers during its regime.

In the changed context the ARD decided to move on and at a meeting in Peshwar on Friday decided to launch a movement against the military Government on March 23.

The Alliance is organising a rally in Lahore on March 23 in defiance of the ban imposed by the military Government on holding of rallies and demonstrations. The decision is seen more as a signal to Mrs. Bhutto to go ahead with her plans to return to Pakistan and take the Musharraf Government head on.

Mrs. Bhutto, who has been weighing the pros and cons of her return to Pakistan, is believed to have directed her party workers to prepare the ground for her grand return. In an obvious effort to test the waters, in the last few days the PPP has been organising small protest demonstrations in different parts of the country.

And now comes the news about the decision of lawyers to observe a strike on March 23. Besides the demand for restoration of the 1973 Constitution, they have also raised the tapes scandal giving an impression that they agree with the contention of Mrs. Bhutto that she is a victim of 'political vendetta'.

ONE HINDU

12 FEB 2001

Masood Azhar warns Pakistan of a civil war

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, FEB 15

95-11672

PAKISTAN-based militant organisation Jaish-e-Mohammad's chief, Maulana Masood Azhar, has warned of a confrontation between the military government and jihadi groups if the latest order against the public collection of funds for jihad (holy war) was implemented. He has described the threat that violators would be shot dead as "terrorism". Azhar was one of the militants freed at Kandahar by the Indian Government in the hijacking drama.

"There was civil war in Algeria and Egypt when their governments tried to put restrictions on jihad. In Pakistan too some foreign powers want a confrontation between the military government and jihadi groups," he said in an interview with Urdu BBC last night.

Maulana Azhar described interior minister Moinuddin Haider's order against the public collection of funds for jihad as "un-Islamic" and said the holy Quran has mentioned jihad a number of times. He made it clear that the government's ban on the collection of funds for jihad would not be obeyed.

Azhar said Haider's threat that those who display arms in public would be shot dead was sheer terrorism. He, however, had no objection to the restriction on public display of arms.

Lt Gen Haider had told reporters in Karachi on Monday that collection of money for jihad would not be allowed in Pakistan. He had said there was pressure on Pakistan from foreign countries to rein in the jihadi groups. Even after his statement drew a hostile reaction from militant groups operating from Pakistan, he reiterated his determination to implement the order the next day in Islamabad.

Lt Gen Haider had announced these restrictions soon after his return from Kabul where he reportedly discussed with the Taliban administration the nagging problem of rabid sectarian elements taking shelter in Afghanistan after acts of terrorism in his country.

But so far Haider has not been able to implement any of his orders affecting the jihadi groups.

INDIAN EXPRESS

16 FEB 2001

Who will fill the political vacuum?

14/2
By C. Raja Mohan HD-13

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 13. The conventional wisdom that military rule drives political discourse underground does not hold in Pakistan today. More than a year after Gen. Pervez Musharraf proclaimed himself the Chief Executive, there is a vibrant public debate about the future of Pakistan.

Political life under Gen. Musharraf, which has been described as "military rule without martial law", has seen very few restrictions against the press. The liberals in the English press and the radicals in the Urdu papers denounce the failings of the military rule every day.

The talking heads, a thriving tribe here, agree on one basic feature of current politics in Pakistan — there is a political vacuum that will soon need to be filled.

There has been a "predictable curve" in every bout of military rule in Pakistan, a knowledgeable observer of the scene here says. The initial welcome against the misrule of the civilians followed by a grudging tolerance as the initial expectations are belied and the final search for an alternative.

In the case of Gen. Musharraf, the political cycle has moved quicker, thanks to the changed international environment and the nature of domestic politics. There is a general agreement that the military will find it difficult to hang on to power, beyond the deadline of three years set by the Supreme Court.

With the half-way mark approaching soon, jockeying among the political forces has begun to shape the outcomes after October 2002, when the military rule is expected to come to an end. The mainstream parties, the conservative Jamat-e-Islami, and the radical Islamic parties are all hoping to fill the political vacuum.

"The first stone has been cast against the military rule", the affable spokesman of the Pakistan People's Party, Mr. Farhatullah Babar told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Babar was referring to the recent decision by the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy, a group of opposition parties, including the two major parties, the PPP and the rival Pakistan Muslim League, to defy the military regime's ban on political rallies.

The PPP has already organised some rallies, and more are to be held between now and March 23 when the big gathering is planned.

The crowds were not large, the courage to protest against the regime has been picked up.

A Government spokesman condemned the ARD decision but did not explicitly reject it. Meanwhile the Lawyers Association of Pakistan, which has always been a powerful political force, is planning strikes in favour of the restoration of democracy.

The military regime's strategy will be aimed at dividing the political parties, and given the rivalry amongst them it is not too difficult for the military to exploit the cleavages.

The big hope within the PPP is that the promised return of the former Prime Minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, will galvanise the movement to restore civilian rule. There is no question, however, that Ms. Bhutto's credibility has been damaged considerably over the years.

But the PPP hopes that the disenchantment with military rule changes the context. It believes that the different approaches the military has adopted towards Mr. Nawaz Sharif, who has been exiled despite conviction, and Ms. Bhutto, who is threatened with incarceration despite her pending appeal against con-

ISLAMABAD DIARY — V

viction in the higher courts, will help people understand Benazir's demand for a fair trial.

Mr. Babar says Ms. Bhutto has decided to come back, but wants her return to be "part of a movement for the restoration of democracy and not an isolated event". As the PPP attempts to prepare the ground for her return and the opposition moves onto the streets, politics in Pakistan may be headed for interesting times.

"Yes, there is a sense that the moment is at hand", a scholar here associated with the Jamat-e-Islami (JI) told *The Hindu*, when we asked him if the party was ready to fill the political vacuum in Pakistan.

"You cannot ignore the JI in Pakistan", Mr. Khalid Rahman, the articulate executive director of the Institute for Policy Studies declared. Neither the liberal Pakistani view that the Jamat has no room in a future political set up nor the expectation that the party is ready to take over are accurate, according to Mr. Rahman.

He pointed out that the JI had participated in some earlier civilian coalition Govern-

ments, and is a more "mature political force now", Mr. Rahman said in response to a question whether the JI can ever become a party of governance.

But he conceded there was a strong view in the party about the "need to invent an image of a winning party". "If the Taliban can run a Government in Afghanistan, the JI is far better equipped to rule Pakistan."

Commenting on the visit of the JI chief, Qazi Hussain Ahmad to the U.S. a few months ago, Mr. Rahman said the trip "reinforced the party's image as a more moderate face of Islam in Pakistan". He added Mr. Ahmad had also travelled to China.

Meanwhile the radical Islamic forces have an agenda of their own. Many of them believe crusading for Islam abroad must be accompanied by forcing the pace of Islamic revolution at home. They are stepping up the pressure on Gen. Musharraf to introduce more stringent Islamic laws in the country.

Make no mistake, the *jihadis* are no longer on the fringe of Pakistani political life. Gen. Musharraf has said that only about five to ten percent of the population are extremist as if that is a small number in a country of nearly 140 million.

A Pakistani English monthly, *Newsline*, in its latest issue has reported that more and more recruits to the radical Lashkar-e-Taiba are coming from universities, colleges and unemployed urban youth. They are more motivated than the recruits from the traditional *madrasas* who are said to make up only ten per cent of the volunteers, the journal says. Stories abound of desperate middle-class parents, who are unable to persuade their sons to return home from the revolution.

On the sprawling Quaid-e-Azam university campus here, cool looking boys and girls hang out in groups. There are wall posters of the Student Council inviting the members to join the Valentine's Day party tomorrow. Store keepers downtown tell us about the huge demand for Valentine's Day cards.

The struggle in Pakistan may not only be about filling the political vacuum in Islamabad. It is also about capturing the minds of the younger generation torn between the call of the *Jihad* and the allure of Westernisation.

(Concluded)

THE HINDU

14 FEB 2001

Pak not to switch to federal system

Islamabad, Feb. 12 (PTI): The Pakistan government denied that General Pervez Musharraf planned to take over as executive President and added that it had no intention to replace the parliamentary system of governance.

"The parliamentary system will not be replaced by the presidential form of government — it will remain intact," the official news agency APP quoted a government spokesman as saying last night. The spokesman added that the regime had no plans to promote a new political party.

"That is a far-fetched idea that one favourite party can be brought to the fore — it is simply not plausible," he said referring to the speculation that the regime would support a party being formed with dissidents from deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML). The spokesman said the regime's view was that those politicians who had plundered the national wealth should not be al-

lowed to return to power. The clarification followed intense speculation here that Musharraf was planning to extend his rule by changing the Constitution from parliamentary democracy to a presidential form of government.

The first challenge to Musharraf's rule came two days ago when lawyers decided to boycott the courts on February 27 to demand an end to army rule and restoration of democracy.

A earthquake of mild intensity jolted parts of northern Pakistan today but there was no immediate report of any damage, the Pakistan meteorological department said. The tremor occurred at 3.21 pm (10.21 am GMT) and measured 4.7 on the Richter Scale.

THE TELEGRAPH

13 FEB 2001

Pakistan's India policy loses its credit with Wall Street

Pramit Pal Chaudhuri

Pakistan's economy is looking up again. But Islamabad and Wall Street differ on how high Islamabad can see. Pakistan's Central Banker Ishrat Husain, in the capital last week, said the military regime's reforms in governance "will be the foundation for the revival of our economy." In contrast, a report by credit rating agency Standard & Poor's argues Islamabad's foreign policy will do the most harm to its finances.

There is agreement that Pakistan's economy is no longer in free fall. Mr Husain has modest goals. Follow the IMF's dos and don'ts and in a year "get a track record that will position us for IMF concessional loans that will be automatically extended for three

years." Pakistan will be able to end its present enslavement to drop-by-drop borrowing and get long-term funding from bodies like the Asian Development Bank. "We're on track," he says.

S&P's Ratings direct report on Pakistan admits things are looking up. The government is mopping up money at home and foreign exchange remittances are steady. GDP growth is projected to be 4.5 per cent. Exports will surge 14.2 per cent. A bumper wheat harvest will keep inflation at 3.6 per cent. IMF figures are even rosier. Mr Husain sees a 1.3 per cent revenue increase thanks to an "unprecedented survey of taxpayers."

Tellingly, S&P gives both India and Pakistan a B+ local currency rating. Says the firm's London-

based Pakistan analyst, Ashok Bhatia, "The two countries are more or less in the same basket."

Investment firm Jardine Fleming has given the same "neutral" investor weighting to both countries. Dutch bank ABN-AMRO is also bullish.

Mr Husain sees Pakistan climb-

Cost of Proxy War

ing the ladder of financial credibility thanks to the military regime's emphasis on governance. He ticks off how Islamabad has cleaned up its act in contracts and cronism.

"This is our single most important achievement of the past year," he says. He believes it will reverse Pakistan's "very poor" international-

al image. "Governance is at a much higher plateau today." However, S&P sees Pakistan's main financial liability as politics. It warns that "US South Asia policy has shifted to [the] containment of Pakistan itself." Major "irritants" with creditors have been Islamabad's "support for the Taliban regime, its safe harbour for terrorist organisations, and its perpetration of violence acts within Indian territory." S&P foreign currency rating for Pakistan is B-

Bhatia says the West recognises "it can influence Islamabad only so long as it extends it some money." Plenty of strings are attached. Says the S&P report, "IMF-World Bank support was made contingent upon a de-escalation of Pakistan-backed violence in Indian Kashmir."

Indian analysts say this reflects the fact that when IMF tranches are due, Washington's leverage over Pakistan is highest. One measure: see if Mr Musharraf waves the olive branch as vigorously after the second part of the IMF stand-by loan comes through this month.

Bhatia calls Husain's claims the "standard official line." S&P believes "geopolitical developments" will determine whether Pakistan will ever graduate form standby to long-term loans.

Mr Husain cautiously says, "As economic managers we are sensitive to foreign policy concerns." One Wall Street analyst is blunter. "The balance in Pakistan is between Islamic hawkishness and fiscal needs." Islamabad talks peace when it is short of money and vice versa.

Indian analysts say this reflects the fact that when IMF tranches are due, Washington's leverage over Pakistan is highest. One measure: see if Mr Musharraf waves the olive branch as vigorously after the second part of the IMF stand-by loan comes through this month.

Taliban wants to engage India

1892
By C. Raja Mohan 419-13

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 12. With less than a handful of Taliban Embassies around the world, there was no question of not visiting the most important of these in a leafy enclave of the Pakistani capital. There are tough but casual-looking men in pathan suits hanging around to safeguard the mission.

We are ushered in politely after informing the sentry about the appointment with the Taliban Ambassador, Mr. Abdul Salam Zaeef, who had readily agreed to meet the two reporters from *The Hindu*, despite the very short notice. It is a large house but furnished austere.

We wait for Mr. Zaeef in a small conference room. Some of the maps on the wall are a bit outdated as they refer to the nation as the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Mr. Zaeef represents the new Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan that has been recognised only by three countries — Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Afghanistan, impoverished by a brutal civil war for more than two decades, is now under international sanctions imposed by the United Nations for supporting international terrorism. But there is a mood of defiance here. Mr. Zaeef, the unassuming Ambassador of the Taliban, has sharp piercing eyes. At the end of a 40-minute conversation, his message to India is at once conciliatory and hard. "Afghans can only be bought by friendship and not enmity," he warned. "We can be very good friends or very strong enemies," Mr. Zaeef suggested.

Speaking through an interpreter, he made explicit the strong Taliban desire to engage India. Proposing "normal relations" with In-

dia and "non-interference" in each other's international affairs, Mr. Zaeef said "this is the basic right of one neighbour over the other."

Living in the same region, the envoy said, India and Afghanistan must have "diplomatic relations and commercial ties." Indian delegations, Mr. Zaeef said, were welcome in Afghanistan "to find the realities for themselves."

"Never in history we have done anything wrong against India," Mr. Zaeef went on; but he argued, "it is ironic to know that India is helping our opponents and running a propaganda campaign against us." Now the hard part of the message comes through.

"Any support to the forces of opposition in

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the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan," the envoy said, "amounts to interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and prolongs the war... We do not meddle in the affairs of other countries, and we want the others to follow the same principle.

Questioned on the Taliban's backing to terrorist groups in Kashmir, he denied there was any such support. While dismissing what he called "international propaganda against the Taliban," He argued that before this Government took charge, there were terrorist camps in Afghanistan. But they had been shut down now, he insisted.

Mr. Zaeef went on to explain the Taliban position on Kashmir. "We do not want atrocities to be committed against Kashmiri people." But would he condemn all violence, including by the terrorist groups? "We con-

demn any acts of violence by any party. We want to see the Kashmir issue resolved through peaceful dialogue."

On the concerns about the Taliban's export of its extreme ideology, Mr. Zaeef said there were two elements to the issue. "If someone wants to follow the example of the Taliban, we cannot stop them, but we do not want to export our ideology to any other nation."

Throughout the interaction, the Afghan envoy sought to dispel the notion that the Taliban was acting as Pakistan's proxy. "It is clear from our history that we are an independent people. We only follow the injunctions of Allah, our creator. We don't accept bondage to any other nation," he declared.

As an example of Afghan independence, he pointed to the recent refusal of Kabul to accept demands from Islamabad to hand over terrorists wanted in Pakistan. "If there is any one who committed crime in Afghanistan, and there is evidence against him, we will try him in Afghanistan or extradite him."

Arguing that there must be evidence against the individual accused of crime, Mr. Zaeef suggested that the rules were the same — whether it was the United States' desire to get hold of Osama bin Laden or Pakistan's request. Media reports here suggest that the Pakistan Interior Minister, Mr. Moinuddin Haider had to come back empty-handed after a meeting with Afghan authorities last week.

Mr. Zaeef emphasised that Afghanistan had good relations with Pakistan. But the relationship, he said, "is never an obstacle to have good relations with anyone else." He suggested that the bad relations between India and Pakistan "will not have an impact on Indo-Afghan ties."

THE HINDU

13 FEB 2001

Ten minutes from Pakistan!

By C. Raja Mohan

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 10. "Half the size of Arlington Cemetery and twice as dead". That is an American description of the capital city of Pakistan. A small sleepy town, with some impressive big buildings on empty boulevards, Islamabad could easily bring you to tears from sheer boredom.

The perception that Islamabad has so little to offer is widely shared in Pakistan. For citizens hailing from the bustling Karachi or historic Lahore, Islamabad is a ghost town of bureaucrats and diplomats. Its wide and tree-lined avenues and unpolluted atmosphere make it so different from the older cities. No wonder that many here believe Islamabad is just ten minutes from Pakistan. Barely miles outside the capital is Rawalpindi, an old and chaotic town that reminds one of any other North Indian city.

Even the few brochures on Islamabad you manage to pick up are very defensive about the local and foreign condescension that is heaped on this town. They insist that it will take years to build a capital city. "After all, Rome was not built in a day". Life in Islamabad is hardly three decades old.

But the derisive and traditional descriptions of Islamabad may be increasingly outdated. Like many other capital cities built out of nowhere, Islamabad is beginning to acquire a life and character of its own. As growing numbers of the middle class opt to stay here and call it their home, there is a new pride and consciousness of the city and its environs.

There is no way of discounting the quiet pleasures of living in a secure, federal territory. Shopping in the few market places can be unhurried and enjoyable. Restaurants offering different types of cuisine, including Western and oriental, are reasonably priced.

Located in the eastern slopes of crescent-shaped Margalla hills, Islamabad has a few things to offer if you make the effort. On the

Western slopes of Margalla are the ancient ruins of Taxila that were discovered in the early years of the 20th century. The spectacular mountains of Murree are just a few hours of drive away, when you want to escape the oppressive heat in the summer.

There is the man-made Rawal lake and Dam near by that draws people outdoors. The hills around the city are being landscaped and developed. A national park is shaping up on Shakarparian hills. But much like India, there is no real awareness here of the commercial potential of tourism. And you would wonder what some other countries would have done

ISLAMABAD DIARY-II

with the few assets nature has endowed this city with. If you are an Indian and determined enough to travel around Islamabad, you better get separate visas for Rawalpindi and the Murree hills.

People from Lahore, which is the heart and soul of Pakistan, do not even bother to hide their contempt for Islamabad. They gripe about the absence of a cultural scene or intellectual vigour in their capital. Remember, much the same things used to be said about New Delhi a few decades ago. Centralisation and federal subsidies have a way of gathering artists and intellectuals.

Culture might take a while coming to Islamabad, but intellectual life is beginning to be sighted here. The Qaid-e-Azam university has grown into a major institution. Think-tanks have begun to proliferate and there is enough and more to occupy policy wonks, particularly on international and security affairs.

Institutes focusing on social sector and which hope to lobby the government have also been set up. A few Western foundations work hard to liven up the place. Some religious par-

ties, too, have set up their own think-tanks that focus on national, political and international developments.

A couple of excellent bookstores here bring you latest academic work and fiction from all over the world. Books from India are abundant. Work on Afghanistan and Central Asia appears to be very popular, thanks to the new political romance of the Pak intelligentsia with that part of the world.

Persistent Afghans are at every market place trying to sell their stone wares and metal trinkets. As life becomes unbearable in Afghanistan, migrants are all over looking for any way of earning small sums of money.

But it is not just poor Afghans you get to see in this town. At a motel on the outskirts of Islamabad, we stumbled into an Afghan middle class wedding. What a scene it was!

The bride was in flowing milky white robes; and the groom was dressed in a black suit. A tall layered cake completed the Western style wedding. We were told these were the more well-to-do Afghans who had migrated from Kabul when the Russian troops left Afghanistan and the Islamists began their ruinous internecine fight for the city.

The wedding party showed flashes of the love for good life in Kabul two decades ago. Barring a few older people, most of the 300-odd guests were in Western dresses — men in suits and women in dresses. Some older women cover their heads; but there was no woman in a veil.

A male singer was belting out songs in Persian late into the night. An attractive lady encourages boys and girls, men and women to come to the floor — they do and dance with abandon. Finally, a man in a pathan suit joins in. If you were looking for the Taliban and their radical associates in Pakistan, this was not the place to find them!

THE HINDU

11 FEB 2001

Joys and sorrows of Track-II

By C. Raja Mohan

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 9. So near, yet so far. Pakistan is geographically close but remote and inaccessible to most Indians. That is particularly true for Indian journalists, not usually welcome across the border. Travelling to Pakistan is always an attractive proposition, given the great difficulty of getting a visa.

The best way of reaching Pakistan these days is to join the growing traffic of Track-II diplomacy between the two rival nations in the subcontinent. Over the last decade, there has been increasing interaction between retired diplomats and soldiers, academics, journalists and political activists of the two countries who discuss everything from war and peace to social issues.

It is cheaper to fly from New Delhi to Islamabad than going by air to Mumbai or other metros in India. But it is neither easy nor comfortable. Over the last five decades, India and Pakistan have, with great determination, decided to make things difficult for themselves.

There is no direct flight between the two capitals. A journey that should take barely an hour now takes nearly a quarter of a day, as one takes a hopping flight through Lahore. The tight security, unavoidable given the state of relations between the two countries, makes the flight that much more irritating.

A frequent flyer to Pakistan on Track-II engagement is fully prepared to brave many difficulties to get to the other side. But not for an hour-long wait on the Palam tarmac. This time it was not the cussedness of either the Indian or Pakistani officials.

A European gentleman enraged the passengers and crew of the Pakistan International flight by deciding to deplane after having boarded the aircraft. He was apologetic but had no reason to offer for the sudden fear of flying. Thanks to the Dutchman's loss of nerve, all the passengers had to deplane and the aircraft had to be searched for any unwanted object. All the luggage had to be pulled out of the hold and re-identified, before the

flight could take off. Would we get across in one piece? There was not much time to bite one's nails. In barely forty minutes we landed intact at Lahore.

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All systems in Pakistan are geared for the rich and the powerful. They work efficiently when you are a VIP or have the bearing of one. One was less worried about an undiscovered bomb on the flight than clearing immigration and customs, picking up luggage, and getting a new boarding card for the connecting domestic flight that was all set to depart for Islamabad.

ISLAMABAD DIARY — I

mabad. A nightmare if one went through the normal channels.

Imagine missing the flight and getting stuck in Lahore without a visa for the great city. India and Pakistan generally give only city-specific visas — part of the hoary subcontinental tradition of making things miserable for their citizens. Having travelled on the route for many years, we knew the trick was in entering the VIP lounge and having all the things above done for us by the protocol department. That precisely was what we did by announcing ourselves as an Indian delegation. Ties and jackets always make it easier.

With so few Indians travelling to Pakistan these days, delegations from Delhi are a curiosity and treated with warmth and respect by the Pakistani officialdom. Once you are in charge of the Pakistani protocol, you are treated to extraordinary efficiency and courtesy, rarely seen on the Indian side at least by ordinary mortals like us. All formalities were completed in a matter of minutes and boarding cards rushed to us as we walked towards the plane.

It is a great pleasure to hang out in the Lahore VIP lounge as you wait for the flight to

Islamabad. There is a good chance of running into someone familiar or interesting from the thin upper crust of Pakistan. And we did.

An old and aristocratic looking couple walked up to us to find out if we were the Indian delegation. They were looking for the leader, who could not make it for the trip.

The conversation with the gentleman, Mr. Masood Hasan, was indeed rewarding. Like many scions of the pre-Partition Indian elite he had gone to the Doon School, passing out in 1940. Nostalgia for the good old days is natural for that generation which lived in a very different subcontinent.

But Mr. Hasan was putting nostalgia to good work. He has recently set up the Chand Bagh School near Lahore, modelled entirely after his alma mater. Chand Bagh itself is the name of the rich horticultural estate in which the prestigious Doon School was set up. The fully residential school is barely two years old and Mr. Hasan hopes to have it running at full capacity in a few more years.

On the half-an-hour flight to Islamabad, a young executive sitting in the next seat figures out quickly I am part of the Indian delegation. "Are you on Track-II diplomacy," he wants to know, in a barely concealed skeptical tone. "What do you guys get done any way," he wanted to know.

At a loss of words to answer such a direct question on Track-II, I confess that Indo-Pak Track-II these days might be a bit behind Track I. Interesting ideas, I tell him, might be floating through back-channels between the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the Chief Executive of Pakistan, Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

How else could one explain the recent momentum for a dialogue between the two nations? Can Track-II go beyond defending the stated positions of the respective Governments and look for a way of pushing the fledgling peace process that appears to be caught p in some political difficulty?

THE HINDU

10 FEB 2001

Step down, Jamaat chief tells Musharraf

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ND-1A
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ISLAMABAD, FEB. 9. The Jamaat-e-Islami chief, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, has urged the military ruler and the Pakistan Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, to demonstrate "moral courage" and step down as Army Chief when his tenure ends in later part of this year.

Qazi Hussain Ahmad has been quoted as saying in an Urdu daily that Gen. Musharraf should appoint a senior General of merit in his place; such a step would strengthen discipline in the Army.

The remarks made by the chief of the largest religious organisation in Pakistan is yet another indication of the pressure on Gen. Musharraf from right-wing parties despite his efforts to keep them in good humour. Gen. Musharraf was perceived to be a liberal when he took over in October 1999 but his image took a beating within months when he reversed his decision to amend the procedure for registration of cases under the blasphemy law.

The Qazi has been engaged in war of words with Gen. Musharraf in the last few months. This has surprised observers as the Jamaat has always been close to the military establishment. There has been a noticeable change in the attitude of the Jamaat towards the military government ever since the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen announced the short-lived unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir. The Jamaat suspected the hand of Gen. Musharraf behind the cease-fire.

The Hizb was considered the militant wing of the Jamaat and the Qazi was livid over the ceasefire. The Qazi, who was on a tour to the U.S., cut short his visit and not only denounced the ceasefire but severed the links of his organisation with the Hizb.

THE HINDU

19 FEB 2001

IN HER most candid interview since 1988, Benazir Bhutto, twice elected prime minister of Pakistan, reveals the extent to which successive civilian governments have been held hostage, and destabilised, by the 'security apparatus' of the military. Bhutto explains the helplessness of the civilian governments in the face of intelligence-inspired disinformation on the one hand, and ideologically motivated illegal activities of 'rogue elements' of the army on the other. She argues that the security apparatus of the country is out of control and that no government can hope to function smoothly unless these elements are brought under a formalised command structure that prevents them from taking on the role of a state within a state. "Blaming politicians alone for tarnishing democracy is actually less than half the story", she argues. Here, she explains why.

You have presided twice over a controlled democracy. What have you learnt from the experience?

There is a tendency in Pakistan, due to military dictatorships and one-man rule, to think that one person can make all the difference. But in a democratic system, it is not just one person that makes a difference. A democratic ruler, such as myself, functions within the confines of the constitution. We need a civic consensus on what a constitution should be and what constitutes freedom and plurality. I had to work on the mandate I was given and that is why I say that we did not achieve much. I had to work with the 8th amendment and a president who could sack the prime minister. In other words, some elements in the intelligence agencies used their power when they felt I was becoming too powerful. They never allowed us enough time to elect members of the senate which would have made my party - and the democratic forces - stronger. The real solution lies not with

The security apparatus has run amok: Benazir

any individual. I can only give a clarion call. Then it depends on the masses whether they rally around that call to say that they want a constitution based on the supremacy of the will of the people and that the prime minister and parliament must determine national security and not the military.

You are accused by many of having compromised the 11-year old political struggle by agreeing to cohabit with an establishment that is innately hostile to democratic governance. Thereby, you allowed yourself to be used by the enemies of what you stood for. How can one be sure that you will not allow that to happen again?

That is only partially true. I had two terms and two records. In my first term, I did dictate the security agenda and I was overthrown because of that. But the liberal forces that should have stood by me failed to do so. And therefore, in my second term, I went in for a historic compromise. I accept my part of the responsibility but others must own up to theirs'. Secondly, I have never been a believer in armed struggle. There are two ways to reform - either through constitutionalism or through revolution. If I am elected, I am duty bound to function within the ambit of the constitution. Consequently I am unable to give up guarantees I am asked for. Those guarantees can only be provided by the voter by giving the PPP enough of a majority to change the constitution. If you vote me in with enough of a

majority to change the constitution, then yes, I can do things differently. But if you vote me in with a moth-eaten majority, then I have to live within the limitations of the mandate.

Are you calling, in effect for a new constitution?

I am calling for the removal of the Zia-dictated distortions in the 1973 constitution. The 73 constitution was a federal, democratic, unanimous and Islamic constitution and I stand by it. Under it, the concurrent list should have been abolished in 1983 (in areas such as education, health, population, information - these belong in the domain of the provinces). This has not happened. Under the 73 constitution, only the parliament can decide which laws are repugnant to Islam. But under this distorted constitution, the Shariat bench decides such issues. This creates fiscal crises such as the one on the riba. Thus, you see, there is a world of a difference between what the 73 constitution was and what it has become. Crucially, the 73 constitution did not give the president the power to act as the mouthpiece of the military. The actions of an unelected dictator were indemnified in the constitution, including laws in the name of religion such as the blasphemy law which has less to do with blasphemy and more to do with the persecution of minorities. What I am saying, in essence, is that we need to revisit the Quaid's dream which constitutionally manifested itself in the 1973 constitution.

Will you validate General Musharraf's amendments to the constitution?

It depends on what the amendments are. My party is opposed to validating Musharraf's

amendments but if Musharraf announces the repeal of the separate electorate (imposed by Zia), I would validate it. Your question is general, if there is a reformist agenda, in keeping with the liberal aspirations, yes, I would validate it.



But if an amendment creates National Security Council through which the military can get rid of political governments that fail to toe the line. I would oppose it. When I use the term 'military', I do not mean the armed forces as such. I think the security apparatus has run amok. I

think a different kind of NSC is needed to bring the security apparatus under the rule of law - not under the rule of a prime minister but under the rule of law. Let me give you an example. When I became prime minister, they came to me and said they wanted to increase the intelligence corps but I rejected the proposal. But when I was overthrown in 1990, the same proposal was approved by Mr Mustafa Jatoi. And now we have seven different intelligence agencies playing politics right down to the tehsil level.

Can you provide further examples of how the military establishment and the intelligence agencies operated to destabilise democracy during your first tenure?

I have two witnesses who tell me that they attended two similar meetings arranged by a then-serving corps commander during my first term. In these meetings, the corps commander, Nawaz Sharif and Osama Bin Laden were present. Osama Bin Laden was told that a woman in this position was against Islam so he should give them money to overthrow me and then Nawaz said that he would bring Islam to Pakistan. Does the public think these things need to be investigated independently or not? No one had heard of Osama Bin Laden then. I had not either. He is famous now. In those days, he was unknown but he was sitting there and interfering in my government.

As a popularly elected leader, why did you not see fit to share this information with the people of Pakistan while you were in power?

I believe I won four elections. Twice the governments were destabilised. And twice,

partisan administrations conducted elections and ensured the defeat of the PPP. The DG ISI, Hameed Gul, admitted to influencing the 1988 elections. The DG ISI, Asad Durrani, admitted to influencing the 1990 elections. In the 1997 elections, 150 computers were bought from a man - I know him to rig the election. I wrote a letter to the president saying that the election will be rigged. The computers were installed in Model Town. The returning officers (the presiding officers) were given lists with 50 to 100 names missing on each. After the elections, the election commission computers were hacked into and the additional votes in those polling stations were added to the tally.

I made mistakes and I am prepared to admit them but so must others. Others also owe it; they owe it to their armed forces, to the people of Pakistan and to the Muslim world. We call the last decade the decade of dirty democracy. I see it as one when we pretended democracy but principally conspired against a democratically elected leader and her government.

Secondly, my agenda was not to fight with the military and the security apparatus. My agenda was to change the destiny of the people of Pakistan. And I am proud of my efforts in that respect.

Will the generals be required to testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission you are proposing?

We need a figure like Mandela or Bishop Tutu, someone with great moral authority to preside over it. Then, we need the victims to start coming first. Not the serving generals but the victim must be called first. Once we start with the tortured and the coerced, we will get a paper trail back to those responsible.

• She spoke to Syed Ali Dayan Hasan of *The Herald Annual*.

Musharraf's promise

EVERY TIME Pakistan has witnessed an army takeover, the common people have sighed with relief. But each time a military ruler was obliged to hand power back to a civilian formation, the public mood was also one of happiness — at least till the civilians made a mess of things yet again. It might therefore be rather premature to speculate on the shape of things in Pakistan by the time General Pervez Musharraf is called upon to meet the October 2002 deadline set by the Supreme Court to restore democracy. At the moment, the Chief Executive Officer has given a solemn undertaking to the apex court that he would hold elections across the country by that date. It used to be said that General Zia-ul-Haq's hair would stand on end every time someone mentioned elections in his presence. The story might be apocryphal, but it says something about an army man's dislike for a popular contest. It may be recalled that General Zia exceeded his original three months' time limit to hold elections by well over a decade. *HI-10 912*

Theoretically, the best time for a military ruler to go in for a popular vote is soon after the takeover. For that is when he appears hugely popular with the public. For a few weeks, or may be some months, the roads are regularly swept and public servants do their job. But it doesn't take long for things to return to their original mode. While the people become disenchanted, the military rulers develop new habits and ambitions that make the corrupt politicians of the past look like novices in the art of misdemeanour. In the present case, much will depend on how General Musharraf is able to deal with the two main civilian contenders for the top job.

His recent 'deal' with Nawaz Sharif has come in for a lot of flak as it has been widely perceived as a cynical arrangement with an arch rival to ensure that the CEO could sleep better. Since the General could not hang Mr Sharif, he had him exiled. The cases against Benazir Bhutto are likely to keep her tied down in the foreseeable future, although the revelation that Sharif had influenced the court would help her marginally. But the General's main worry will be how much of the initial goodwill enjoyed by him will remain by the time the 20-month deadline is over. For no military man likes to relinquish power unless he can ensure the security of his own future.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 9 FEB 2001

Pak paper closed down for blasphemy

Mubashir Zaidi
Islamabad, January 30

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THE AUTHORITIES in Peshawar ordered immediate closure of an English daily *The Frontier Post* and arrested five of their employees last evening saying that the newspaper carried a controversial letter in its issue of January 27 containing blasphemous remarks about Prophet Mohammed.

The Frontier Post had carried a letter, received via e-mail, apparently written by a Jew named Ben Dzac titled 'Why Muslims hate Jews' in letters to the Editor portion. A city magistrate raided *The*

Frontier Post office and arrested five journalists saying that the contents of the letter were derogatory and sacrilegious and hurt the feelings of Muslims.

Home and Tribal Affairs Secretary Mazhar Ali Shah said the newspaper had carried a sacrilegious piece, and the district administration would deal with the matter. He said that the police had arrested the five employees under Section 295-C of the Blasphemy Act, which carries a punishment of life imprisonment or death penalty.

Those arrested are: Aftab Ahmed (News Editor); Imtiaz Hussain (Chief Reporter); Qazi Sarwar

(Senior sub-editor); Munawar Mohsin (in charge of the opinion page) and Wajihullah (page maker). The publication of the letter sparked widespread protests in the city and religious activists burnt tyres and blocked main Jamrood Road leading to Peshawar.

However the newspaper's management in a statement said that the administration and the members of *The Frontier Post* offer unqualified apology on the publication of highly blasphemous material masquerading as a letter to the editor, and identifies with the injured feelings of the nation over the issue.

"All we can say at this point is that the matter is the outcome of a conspiracy. The conspiracy, we aver, was not against *The Frontier Post* alone, but also against the people and the government of Pakistan, and the whole Ummah," it adds. "We are looking into the matter on organisational level, and persons apparently involved in the dastardly act have been suspended pending inquiry. We have also lodged a complaint with the police, nominating the persons we suspect, it said. Additionally, we have called on the authorities to conduct a judicial probe into the affair to bring out the truth," the statement said.

31 JAN 2001

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Pakistan readies 3000-KM Ghauri III to counter Agni

Lanka putting pressure on Britain to ban LTTE

Mubashir Zaidi
Islamabad, January 21

PAKISTAN HAS prepared a 3000 km long range Ghauri III missile and the scientists are awaiting a green signal from the military government to test fire the missile to give a tit for tat response to India's Agni II, a local Urdu daily 'Ausaf' reported today. The latest series of the Ghauri missile is capable of targeting all the major cities of India and Pakistan has already tested the engine of Ghauri III in September last year.

The paper, quoting reliable official sources, said that since India has once again started an 'unnecessary arms race' in the region by test firing Agni II on Wednesday, to let India know that Pakistan can respond in a big way, the scientists have informed the government that Ghauri III is ready for test firing.

The paper said that currently the policy makers are locked in serious discussions on whether to test fire the new Ghauri missile or exercise restraint.

Another report in Urdu daily Jassarat said that

Pakistan has also completed preparation for testing its medium range Shaheen II and short range Haider I and is in a position to conduct tests at 24 hours notice.

Meanwhile, leading Pakistani newspapers have also called upon the Pakistani government to conduct tests of its missiles to give a tit for tat response to New Delhi. "Wednesday's Agni test, however, seems to be out of step with the recent moves toward a South Asian thaw, for it 'poses a direct threat to Pakistan's security,' as a Foreign Office spokesman put the matter.

Indeed, Islamabad may now be prompted to carry out a series of tests of its own missiles to check their efficacy. More important, yet another demonstration of its military prowess by India may add to a sense of insecurity among its small neighbours.

The test will also have a negative impact on the post-Deng leadership in China, which has been making serious efforts to improve its relations with India," the newspaper 'Dawn' wrote in yesterday's editorial.

PK Balachandran
Colombo, January 21

WHILE BRITAIN is busy having the necessary consultations and investigations before taking a decision on banning the LTTE under the new Anti-Terrorism Act 2000, the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE are straining every nerve to influence that decision.

The popular notion here is that the UK will take a decision one way or the other in February. Going a step further, a London based Tamil source quoted a Foreign Office insider as saying that the government planned to release the list of banned organisations on February 18 and that the LTTE could well be in the list. Non-LTTE Tamil party leaders who lobbied with the British High Commissioner against the ban, said that the British

seemed keen on banning the LTTE. "The US and even Europe seems to be in favour of the ban, and UK generally follows the US in world affairs," a Tamil leader said.

It was to thwart any such decision that the LTTE had organised sit-ins, hartals and demonstrations in Jaffna, Batticaloa and several places abroad. Ostensibly, these were to demand peace and the Tamils' right to self determination, but they were actually meant to live down the terrorist image and project instead an image of a popular liberation organisation fighting for peace and justice.

Stating the Lankan government's case in an interview to the state owned 'Sunday Observer' today, the Foreign Minister, Mr Lakshman Kadirgamar, said that he would be "astounded" if the UK did not ban the LTTE.

THE TIMES OF INDIA
THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

The Hindustan Times

Pakistan's dilemma

THERE IS apparently some concern in Pakistan about its declining image. It is not only that the country is 'internationally reviled' for its military dictatorship, as *The Economist* has noted, the perception that it is really no more than a pale version of the Taliban is also more prevalent than before. If anything has strengthened this impression, it is the increasingly assertive role of the Islamic fundamentalists who now make no bones about waging a *jihad* in Kashmir, Chechnya and elsewhere from their bases in the Pakistan-Afghanistan region. As long as Pakistan pretended that it was offering only 'moral and diplomatic' support to the Kashmiri militants, it could escape to some extent the opprobrium of encouraging terrorism. But the pretence has been wearing thin ever since the various fancifully named *jehadi* organisations have been advertising their presence in Pakistan. Clearly, no country can give the impression that its territory is being used by militants for subverting a neighbour.

It is possibly to eradicate this perception that Interior Minister Moinuddin Haider recently told a meeting of 18 religious parties to stop funding the *jihad* in Kashmir and improve their image by respecting the law and refraining from displaying weapons in a 'brazen' manner. According to him, funds should be raised for humanitarian purposes and not for militancy. This is not the first time that someone in a position of authority has tried to grapple with the dilemma which Pakistan faces in relation to the Kashmir insurgency. Being well aware that its overt and covert support for the militant depredations in the Valley is weakening its diplomatic position, it probably wants to make its interventions in Kashmir a fully undercover operation. But, at the same time, not all the *jehadis* seem to be under Islamabad's control. That, in turn, further undermines Pakistan's position in the eyes of the world.

Earlier, too, in the aftermath of the Kargil misadventure, several Pakistanis in high positions had spoken of the need to check infiltrators from crossing the border and even take a closer look at the kind of subjects that are taught in the *madrasas*. Such attempts, feeble as they are, suggest that there are elements in the Pakistani establishment who want to check the country's growing Talibanisation in order to reclaim its position in polite society. The urge is probably all the greater because the more Pakistan is identified with Islamic terrorism, the more there is an improvement in India's position. But, at the moment, people like the Interior Minister seem to be fighting a losing battle against the monster of terrorism which Pakistan has reared.

Musharraf, Pakistan army and militant Islam

THE OFFICE of the army chief has been undermined by the groundswell of Islamist passion within the army's other ranks (ORs). This has enabled the right-wing Muslim League to bring him repeatedly under pressure. The army does not like 'secular' PPP but has a soft corner for an 'Islamist' PML, created by the ISI in 1990. Nawaz Sharif strengthened his Islamic credentials through planned legislations and keeping on the right side of the ulema. He was able to bring secular army chiefs under pressure through his 'contacts' with other officers, including the generals. He was able to practically lay siege to COAS Asif Nawaz, who died on the job. He isolated Jehangir Karamat and forced him to retire. He tried to do the same with Musharraf and would have succeeded had he not plotted the ham-handed hijack in October 1999.

It is difficult to identify the faces that represent the Islamist domination of the army. But it is easy to see their 'spokesmen' outside the army. A number of select retired army generals and ulema express the opinion of ORs by being unusually defiant in their statements. Generals Hamid Gul and Javed Nasir are the typical examples of the out-of-job Islamist generals who wield a clout despite the fact that they are retired. Both pro-

nounce themselves on foreign policy, particularly Kashmir, Afghanistan and the US, as these themes relate directly to the internal situation in Pakistan. While Nasir represents the Deobandi segment of militant Islam, Hamid Gul sits atop the general Islamist 'consensus' of the jihadi militants. The methodology used by these 'outside' representatives of the



Islamist ORs is to keep up the pressure on the top brass by exaggerating some of the defiant aspects of Pakistan's foreign policy and then taxing the government with being 'soft' on them. The accent on Islam and India actually brings the government and the top brass under pressure. Both care little for how low-IQ they sound to the educated person in Pakistan. It is the army rank and file they address to who actually believe that by isolating itself internationally Pakistan will become stable. Both look for occasions to bring the GHQ under pressure. For Hamid Gul, the latest occasion was the pardon and release of Nawaz Sharif.

Musharraf survives the first round: In a show of solidarity the corps commanders seem to have stood by him.

Also, the Islamist ORs were perhaps not in a position to back up the call given at a conference convened by Maulana Akram Awan. They probably relied on the 'habit' of the corps commanders to anticipate and capitulate to the mood of the Islamists. Most policy retreats over the past twelve months were thanks to this 'habit', which strengthened the belief that, given a push, the top brass will decide to get rid of Musharraf. This did not happen. The corps commanders instead realised that the slippery slope of kowtowing to the Islamist lobby was taking them to the terminal phase in which sackings and promotions in the GHQ could be decided by the militant ulema.

• Excerpts from Khaled Ahmed's analysis in *The Friday Times*

Who will bell the cat?

I AM a resident of Rabwah, the headquarters of the Ahmadi/Qadiani community, whose 95 per cent residents are Ahmadis. Since 1984, they are not allowed to hold their annual meetings, whereas anti-Ahmadi elements, the religio-political leaders, come from other towns with their madressah pupils, hold their meetings

and take out processions in Rabwah. They threaten to teach a lesson to the Qadianis and to pursue them through the world. In the last week of December 1999, during their annual meeting, political maulanas made violent speeches against the Ahmadis, with grave threats of waging jihad against them everywhere in the world. The BBC Urdu Service, reported the next day that in Khulna, Bangladesh, a bomb blast in an Ahmadi mosque had killed six members of the community. In November 2000, five Ahmadis were killed in their "place of worship" in Sialkot district. In Takht Hazara Town of Sargodha district, a mullah-led procession attacked Darul Zikr and killed five praying Ahmadis. Their bodies were thrown in the street. All this is being done in the name of Islam and God.

Whether they are in majority or minority, whether they are in Pakistan or in Bangladesh, the mullahs will continue to follow them. The terrorist network of religious organizations against the peaceful, law-abiding constitutionally created minority, will continue, until their ring leaders are arrested. "But who will bell the cat?" The responsibility to answer this question lies with the rulers of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

• Ahmad Zeeshan Sheikh in Letter to the Editor, Dawn

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SCRATCHING THE WOUND

A report on Pakistan's damnation

THE straight reason for the publication of the Hamoodur Rahman report on the causes of Pakistan's military debacle in what was then known as East Pakistan in 1971 could be that the report was already available — at least to the Indian media, ever since it was put on a website — and there was no point in being coy any longer. Maybe General Musharraf thought that the Army needed to make a break with its past and signal its readiness to be a part of a new moral and political dispensation in which it would no longer function as a secretive and corrupt ruling elite, would, in other words, live by the standards of openness and accountability that Western donors to the IMF would expect of a responsible request for funds. This is one possible reading of the gesture, even though, on the other hand, Musharraf has expressly forbidden the accountability bureau to investigate serving army officers against whom allegations of corruption have surfaced. Nevertheless, the defeat in the East left a very visible scar on Pakistan's problematic psyche, bred its own self-exculpatory mythology and spawned a quasi-belligerent strategy in Kashmir which, despite its successes, is tearing Pakistan apart, on the one hand, and driving it into a radical Islamic vortex, on the other. Some straightening of the record was in order and Musharraf may have thought this was as good a time as any, especially since the principal political actors are not around to inject partisan venom into the discussion that follows and the public may appreciate a token of goodwill and sincerity. Musharraf and the Army may believe that they risk nothing by its publication. After all, this is not the British Pakistani army led by Sandhurst alumni drawn from the feudal class fond of their wine and their women; this is Zia's army, with middle-class Punjabi officers, bloodied in Afghanistan, many of whom take their Koran very seriously. Musharraf might have been sending this message, both to the people and to money-bags abroad.

What is not a conjecture, however, is the fact that 1971 — like our own 1975-77 — was a crisis of the Pakistani state, a crisis it has never fully been able to surmount because the underlying cause, the way Pakistani nationhood was conceived, is yet to be addressed. It is the repeated breakdown of this conception under civilian rule that brings the Army onto the political stage and with it an apparatus of political repression that gradually concentrates all power in its hands so that corruption and decadence are inevitable. Even Zia's puritanical gaze could not prevent the siphoning off of funds and the opium smuggling during the Afghan war days. The conclusion a reader of the Hamoodur Rahman report would arrive at is that the Pakistani Army of 1971 was venal, corrupt, debauched, indisciplined, brutal and, in sum, unfit to rule and that no civilian administration in Pakistan has ever touched such depths. Musharraf will be hoping that Yahya and his cronies of 1971 will be seen as aberrations and that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto will come across as a villain — thereby, hopefully, neutralising the political impact of his daughter's imminent return — which he, indeed, was. But this is not, ultimately, about Musharraf and Bhutto at all. This is about Pakistan's collective failure as a nation — about the inadequacy of the Islamic bond.

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PRECARIOUSLY POISED

The rules of confrontation in Pakistan

WHETHER Benazir Bhutto will return to Pakistan depends on whether she can return to Pakistan. An appeal against a five year sentence is pending with the Supreme Court, but there is reasonable suspicion whether courts in Pakistan are immune to political pressures emanating from the regime. The military is, in principle, all powerful and is in a position to arrange matters to its satisfaction even if the courts were to act independently. This is proved by the way in which the Sharif pardon was worked out, apparently in exchange for Saudi largesse. The military's own attitude, in turn, will depend on how much of a threat they think Bhutto is likely to pose upon her return. Initial reports say that with Sharif and his party more or less discredited, Bhutto would be in a position to monopolise the opposition platform and perhaps mount an organised challenge to the regime. This remains to be tested. The PML is in disarray, there are several factions; some leaders, such as Ejaz-ul-Haq are said to be negotiating with Musharraf for an eventual place in a civilian setup to be put in place, while the PML speaker of the dissolved National Assembly is being sounded for the prime minister's post. A rump of the PML may go with the PPP in a combined opposition campaign, but the idea of placing themselves under the leadership of Bhutto will be anathema to many in the party. Also, Sharif is being seen as a quitter, even within his own party and, therefore, unless a credible anti-Musharraf leadership emerges, Bhutto will be in a position to claim that she and her party represent democratic opposition to the regime and position themselves favourably for any future restoration of democracy. On the other hand, with significant elements within the PML — a party traditionally close to the army and the Islamic right — continuing to collaborate with the regime, a monolithic liberal democratic alliance around Bhutto's undoubtedly charismatic leadership may not materialise.

The Army, curiously, has not used one tool against the political class so far — repression. The facade of a normal civil society is preserved, the courts function, the press criticises, often virulently, politicians meet and address gatherings, all of which only suggests that the regime is under no serious threat. The tool is not needed because accountability has been such a success against Sharif. Everything would depend on how far Bhutto and her husband are vulnerable to the process. They were very vulnerable the last time we saw them. Musharraf is said to be making discreet enquiries about her properties in London. But if accountability does not meet with the same success against Bhutto as it did against Sharif, and if the former does manage to whip up a storm on arrival, then the military might begin thinking of other options and Musharraf might have to make way for a more radical leadership not unwilling to hold hands with the Islamists. Pakistan is, as ever, precariously poised.

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