



An Initiative of The Researchers

e- Newsletter

I. Gender
 II. Democracy Watch
 III. Governance at Large
 IV. Geo-Political Dynamics

Issue: January, 2007

I. Gender

I Women & Politics

1. **Sonia Most Popular Politician in India**

According to a published opinion poll, Sonia Gandhi, the Italian-born Chief of India's ruling Congress party, is the country's favourite politician. The poll, carried by the Hindustan Times newspaper, also found that most Indians think Prime Minister Manmohan Singh – ushered into office after Gandhi turned down the job in 2004 – is doing a good job.

Former Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of the Hindu nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) fell behind Gandhi, who turned 60 last month, in the popularity stakes, with 18.5 percent of votes against 28.3 percent for the Congress leader. Opinion polls in the past had put Gandhi behind Vajpayee, credited with bringing India out of the nuclear closet in 1998.

The New Delhi-based Centre for the Study of Developing Societies interviewed 15,373 randomly selected people from 19 of India's 29 states for the study, commissioned by the Hindustan Times and CNN-IBN news channel. The poll was published ahead of important state polls next month. It found the Congress party ahead in the northern states of Punjab and Uttarakhand.

2. **Women Representation in US Congress**

The United States Congress has broken a new record. On 4 January, it swore in the largest number of women ever to serve as the lawmakers in the country. In addition a woman will become the first female Speaker of the House of Representatives. Now commentators are wondering whether 2007 could be the year of the woman in politics. The surge in female representation came in the mid-term Congressional election in November. It was a historic victory for the Democrats and also for the women.

There were more than 140 female candidates and an unprecedented number of women elected, bringing the total to 86.

Ms. Nancy Pelosi will be the first leader of the House to be addressed as "Madam Speaker". Pelosi has vowed to restore civility and ethics in government saying: "It takes a woman to clean house" – a reference to the corruption seen as widespread in Congress. She has also promised to work in a more bipartisan, cooperative way, contrasting her approach to the last decade that Congress had been under Republican and male control. It is also possible that more issues of importance to women will get more attention. So, for instance, Ms. Pelosi has said that her in first 100 hours as Speaker she will push for an increase in the minimum wage – a move that will have major repercussions for women who represent the majority of low-paid workers. The trend towards women is evident not only in Washington, across the country, a record 2,433 women ran for state office and the number of female state governors are up to a high of nine.

II Women & HR

1. AGHS Report: Violence against Women Continues

An AGHS Legal Aid Cell' report has revealed that violence against women is increasing rapidly and there is no legislation to address the issue. The report said that women are committing suicide in larger numbers and are being abducted, burned, killed for honour, murdered, raped, falling prey to panchayats (tribal councils) and tortured.

It stated that from **July 2005 to June 2006**, out of about **216 abduction cases** in the Punjab, 90 cases were reported in the city (Lahore) alone. Out of **68 burn cases** 31 were reported in the city, out of **102 honour killings** 16 were reported in the city, out of **136 murders** 36 were reported in the city, out of **272 rapes** 77 were reported in the city, out of **14 suicides** seven were reported in the city and out of **77 cases of domestic violence** 28 were reported in the city.

Shah Taj Qizilbash, the convener of the Joint Action Committee for People's Rights said that there is an urgent need to start an awareness campaign to change people's mindsets. He also suggested introducing legislation to protect women from being exploited. Cases of women trafficking and other violations remain undisclosed. Incidents of women and minor girls being victimised within the family or a home are often tolerated. A number of cases in which women are burned do not seem accidental because, owing to the fear of their husbands or in-laws, most women do not disclose the fact that they have been deliberately burned, he said, adding, "Even the victims' families remain silent, thinking a word against their daughters' in-laws could result in their (their daughters') children being taken away."

2. Stressed Men Beat Wives in Afghan Refugee Camps

The article, 'Intimate partner violence among Afghan women living in refugee camps in Pakistan' by Adnan A. Hyder, Zarin Noor and Emma Tsui of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and Center for Injury Research & Policy, and Drexel University College of Medicine, is in the press with the Social Science and Medicine journal. The Pakistan Daily Times produces an abridged version:

Qualitative interviews were conducted with 20 women of reproductive age and 20 health workers serving these women in an Afghan refugee camp near Peshawar, during the summer of 2004. Stories of violence against Afghan women have been ubiquitous in international news media for almost a decade now. In March 2004, the New York Times ran an article entitled "For More Afghan Women, Immolation Is Escape" prompted by the Afghan Human Rights Commission's discovery of 40 cases of self-immolation over six months in the Herat region. According to one survey by the International Rescue Committee of 200 women in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan, and cited in a report by the Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium, 79% of the women reported having been beaten by their husbands. The report also revealed that participants believed that younger brides were more likely to suffer abuse. In most refugee camps, there is no effective reporting system, and there is still uncertainty about how to respond to such reports from victims. In refugee settings, women often do not know where to turn if they need help and are unfamiliar with the host country's laws regarding domestic violence. Unfortunately for Afghan women refugees, the Pakistani legal procedures regarding domestic violence make it difficult for victims to seek justice.

The in-laws seemed to use the topics of dowry and brideprice against the bride during conflicts, especially for women whose marriages did not involve a significant exchange of money or other resources. In some cases where there are insufficient funds to pay dowry (or brideprice), siblings or other family members may be exchanged for marriage with

another family. These “exchange marriages” were frequently mentioned in conjunction with reciprocal violence—that is, when one daughter-in-law is beaten, the daughter-in-law in the other family may also be beaten as a consequence.

Detailed write-up is available on Daily Times dated January 30, 2007

III Women & Laws

1. New Draft of Pro-Women Bill Submitted in National Assembly

Pakistan Muslim League (PML) President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain submitted a new bill to the National Assembly secretariat seeking an end to anti-women practices. The bill includes amendments to an earlier bill Shujaat submitted to the NA secretariat last month. It will be presented in the National Assembly on February 6 as a private member's bill.

The bill seeks to ensure women's right of inheritance, prohibit marriage with the Quran, allow dissolution of a marriage in the absence of the husband during the procedure of lian, make admissions of zina liable to prosecution, prohibit forced marriages, prohibit the traditions of badal-e-sulh and vanni or sawara, and restrict provincial governments from interfering in sentences awarded for zina.

The new bill, drafted after Shujaat's meetings with religious scholars who object to the Women's Protection Act, seeks to remove these scholars' concerns about the act. The bill would add a new chapter (XXA) to the Pakistan Penal Code. Under Section 498A, depriving a woman of her inheritance would be punishable with imprisonment of up to seven years or with a fine or both.

IV Women & Economics

1. Afghan Women Get Chance to Step into Commerce

In a conservative society where men have traditionally run all trade, the stalls are raising lots of eyebrows, some opposition and much approval. The women's department has so far set up three women with stalls that sell handicrafts, clothes and cosmetics. It plans to open another 20 and rent them out to women in the next few weeks.

According to these women, men and women have same rights. Women can also deal with people in the city. As we are also a part of this society and can do what men can do.

Mazar-i-Sharif, like all of Afghanistan, is a conservative place although its residents, mostly hailing from northern ethnic minorities, always rejected the puritanical Taliban. More than five years after the fall of the Taliban, many women still wear the all-enveloping burqa when venturing outside and few interact on a professional basis with men. Those people who **opposed** women's involvement in trade regarded it against Islam and culture.

While those who are **approve** it, argue that even during the time of the Prophet Mohammad, women used to be involved in business ... women can sell stuff to people if they observe Islamic rules.

Maybe 10 percent of people don't agree with women being shop-keepers but the rest, 90 percent, welcomed it.

V Gender Gap in Pakistan among Top 10 Issues of South Asia

According to latest World Bank report, "Bridging the Gender Gap in Pakistan: Opportunities and Challenges" is among the top 10 popular issues in South Asia. The Bank's Country Gender Assessment found overall concern about the security and reputation was restricting to the women's movement outside the home and limiting their access to education, medical-care, opportunities for paid work, voting and other forms of political and community participation.

VI International Feminist Dialogue at World Social Forum (WSF)

The International Feminist Dialogue was held prior to the WSF from 17th to 19th January 2007 under the theme "**Transforming Democracy: Feminist Visions and Strategies**". Over 250 women from different parts of the World attended to deepen the intensive dialogues on feminist perspectives and strategies in addressing fundamentalisms, militarism and neo-liberal globalisation. In organizing the third International Feminist Dialogues, the Coordinating Group (CG) created a vital space for critical minded feminist activists to re-examine, re-imagine and move forward the vital political project of feminist movement building and new forms of democratic processes.

History of Feminist Dialogue

Feminist Dialogues (FD) is a transnational meeting of feminist networks and organizations usually held before the WSF and is one such space for this kind of strategic debate. Organized by seven international feminist networks and organizations, the Feminist Dialogue aim to bring together different feminist perspectives on issues of concern for women's movements, to focus on critical analyses and diverse feminist strategies. They seek to emphasize the multiplicity of strategies that women's movements have employed in their everyday political practice.

In having the meeting before the WSF, they hope to achieve a two-way political exchange: firstly, to effectively intervene in the broader WSF process as feminists organizing for change, and to establish strategic and politically relevant links with other social movements. As a site of resistance, the WSF is one of the most dynamic spaces available to feminist activists and it is important to participate in it while at the same time retaining their autonomy within the FD. It is also hopeful that the idea of the FD can be used to encourage various regional level meetings or to participate in the different forums they are engaged in as part of their ongoing work of linking up with other movements.

VII Books/Articles/Reports on Gender

Gender and Energy for Sustainable Development: A Toolkit and Resource Guide (2004)

Summary: This toolkit and resource guide outlines the linkages between gender and energy in the context of sustainable development. It provides suggestions and resources for addressing energy poverty by integrating gender and energy sensitivity into development programmes, projects, and policies. It also includes multiple case studies and a list of online resources.

Online access: <http://www.undp.org/energy/genenergykit/genderengtoolkit.pdf>

II. Democracy Watch

I Presidential Elections

1. Legal Provisions Regarding the Re-Elections of President Musharraf

Mr. Omar Hassan Sajjad in his write-up "Electing the President" puts forth some constitutional bars on the re-election of Pervez Musharraf. Following are some of the legal provisions as mentioned by Mr. Omer in this regard:

In this connection to whether the President can hold office of Chief of Army Staff, three Articles namely 43, 62 and 63 would be relevant. Article 43 provides that the President cannot hold any office of profit in the service of Pakistan or occupy any other position carrying the right to remuneration for rendering of services. The language of the article makes it clear that its impact would come only after the President has been elected and it is at that time that the bar would begin to apply. It is the opinion of the writer that this bar would prevent the President from holding or occupying another office unless an appropriate amendment is made in the Constitution. Whether this will happen would depend on the complexion of the Parliament at the time when this question arises.

The other bar is contained in Article 62 and 63 which provides qualifications and disqualifications for members of parliament. The same disqualifications and qualifications are also applicable to the President under Article 41. In this context it may be noted that Parliament passed a law known as 'The Act to enable the President of Pakistan to Hold Another Office' (Act No. VII of 2004). By this law the holder of the office of President (General Pervez Musharraf) was permitted to hold the office of Chief of Army Staff which was declared not to disqualify its holder as provided under Paragraph (d) Clause 1 of Article 63 read with Article 41 of the Constitution. This was a law which was specific to the holder of office of the President and is without limit as to time. It would thus appear that the bar contained under Article 63 and 41 would not apply to General Pervez Musharraf. In any case since this restriction can be removed by an Act of Parliament, a similar law could also be passed in future to remove this bar.

From the above analysis, it appears that the only real bar in the way of the President to hold another office is that created by Article 43. It would depend on the Parliament in existence at the relevant time how this matter is dealt with if the President **wishes to retain the office of Chief of Army Staff.**

2. Musharraf President till '09

A constitutional petition was filed in the Supreme Court (SC) on January 18, seeking that the present tenure of the President be determined from January 2004 to January 2009 in the light of his fresh mandate under the 17th amendment. The petitioner has maintained that the President took oath on November 16, 2002, after restoration of the Constitution. Under the 17th constitutional amendment, passed on December 31, 2003, sub-section 8 was inserted in Article 41 of the Constitution, which mentioned that the president was to be elected by a vote of confidence from the electoral college. Consequently, he got fresh mandate from the Senate and assemblies and his tenure started from 1st January 2004 to last till January 2009. The petition was filed under Article 184(3) of the Constitution by Moulvi Iqbal Haider, the Awami Himayat Tehreek Chairman. The Federal Government has been made respondent in the petition through the Law Ministry. The petitioner has criticized a recent decision of the cabinet to hold presidential election this year.

3. Federal Cabinet Approves Presidential Election between 15th September-15th October 2007

Information Minister Senator Muhammad Ali Durrani announced on 17 January that the Presidential Election would be held between September and October this year and Parliament and the Provincial Assemblies would elect the President for a new five-year term.

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Muhammad Ali Durrani said that the determined date for re-election of President had been carefully reviewed in light of constitution and constitutional experts have determined the appropriate date accordingly. He affirmed that current assembly would complete its legal tenure.

II General Elections 2007 (Pre-Election Watch)

1. Electoral Rolls

- **Computerised Electoral Rolls Soon**

Election Commission Secretary Kanwar Muhammad Dilshad said that the Election Commission (EC) of Pakistan has started a project for computerising electoral rolls to remove any doubts and errors from the existing process of preparing lists of eligible voters. He said that the data entry process for computerised electoral rolls had started and that 1,200 data entry operators were working at six workstations across the country on the project. Dilshad said all steps were being taken for preparing "accurate and credible" electoral rolls, which are a pre-requisite for conducting fair, free and transparent elections.

2. Political Parties' News

PML-Q

- **PML-Q and Coalition Partners to Develop Common Platform for Next Polls**

Prime Minister Shaukat has said that PML-Q and its coalition partners will develop a common platform for contesting the next general elections which they hope to win on the basis of past performance. He said that the level of people's participation in celebrating the PML's centennial celebrations across Pakistan and especially the participation of women has proved that PML is the party of masses.

MMA

- **Qazi Hussain Ahmed Again Unanimously Named MMA Head**

Central leader of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal and Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan Maulana Anas Noorani has announced that all MMA components have unanimously once again nominated Qazi Hussain Ahmed as President. The Maulana said the MMA would jointly take part in the forthcoming General Elections, and was optimistic that it would achieve great success. He said the MMA, after coming to power, would repeal the un-Islamic Hudood Ordinance and would not allow any un-Islamic custom in the country.

PPP

- **PPP Issues Voters List for 34 Punjab Districts**

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has issued the voters' list for 34 districts and it can be

obtained from the PPP Election Commission office. Objections to the voters' list can be submitted till February 10 and a final list of voters would be issued on February 20. The nomination papers of candidates will be received from February 22 to 28 and the final list of candidates would be displayed on March 17.

- **PPP Set to Change Ticket Awarding Policy for Polls**

Senior PPP leaders have asked Chairperson Benazir Bhutto to review the policy of awarding tickets to candidates under a recently adopted formula, in which those who had lost by 5,000 votes in the National Assembly and 3,000 in the Provincial Assembly in the 2002 general elections will not be considered for tickets.

A majority of senior leaders are of the view that under the formula, several party leaders would fail to get a ticket and the hunt for suitable candidates for such a large number of constituencies, especially in urban areas, would fail miserably.

- **PPP Gives 36-Point Election Agenda to Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)**

The Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians presented a 36-point election agenda to Chief Election Commissioner Qazi Muhammad Farooq. These 36 points were first raised by the Party during March 2006 (reported: PGF Newsletter, March 06), but have been submitted now to the ECP.

The main agenda points include:

- The suspension of local governments for three months
- An end to the role of intelligence agencies in General Elections
- Removing the graduation condition for candidates
- Lifting the restriction on Prime Ministers from contesting the office for a third time
- Appointment of independent election observers
- Installation of transparent ballot boxes
- Formation of an independent Election Commission
- Setting up a neutral Interim Government
- Neutral election tribunals
- An independent judiciary
- Strict punishment for electoral malpractices
- Rigging should be made a criminal offence by a civil court if a military or intelligence official was found involved in it
- All monitoring centres should be disbanded and if these were not then the CEC should be empowered to visit all such centres set up by the military and intelligence agencies
- An end to use of state administration and resources in elections
- Transparent ballot boxes to ensure no pre-filling of these boxes
- Advocating multiple identification system
- District, session and civil judges to be put under the control of Election Commission of Pakistan during elections
- Supporting parallel vote count method, it said: "Parallel vote count by international observers, the National Democratic Institute or any NGO is necessary to ensure that the mandate of the masses was not subverted"

- **PML-N, PTI Workers Join PPP**

More than 66 workers and activists of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) and Pakistan Tehrik Insaaf (PTI) joined PPP on January 19. This was stated by PPP Hyderabad district president MPA Zahid. He said joining of workers of other parties in the PPP is a verdict that the people are hoping better future in the dynamic leadership of Benazir

Bhutto.

ANP

- **ANP Offers Conditional Support to Opposition's Anti-Musharraf Movement**

ANP President Asfandyar Wali Khan has said that his party would support opposition's anti-Musharraf movement only if it was assured proper identity for the Pukhtuns' province.

He said that Pukhtuns will support the anti-Musharraf movement if Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif promised them that their province will get a proper name. Criticising the MMA, the ANP leader said that the MMA leaders should resign from the Balochistan Government before "joining ranks with us to launch an effective movement against the military ruler".

PTI

- **PTI's Intra-Party Polls to be Held in February, March**

PTI General Secretary Muhammad Amin Zaki said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf's (PTI) intra-party polls will be held in February and March throughout the country, and the voter list is likely to be completed by the end of January. Party's election schedule for district office-bearers would be announced by February 15 and for provincial office-bearers in the first week of March, while the schedule for central office-bearers would be announced in the middle of March. Imran Khan would be the consensus candidate for the PTI Chairman's post, while Hamid Khan, Brig (R) Muhammad Shahid Zulfiqar and Admiral (R) Javed Iqbal would contest the elections for the central senior vice President, Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General posts.

PML-N

- **PPP, PML-N agree on APC talks from ARD forum**

Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians and the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) have agreed that consultations for All-Party Conference should begin at the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) forum and in consultation with all opposition parties.

Both the parties also decided to begin immediate consultations with the ARD and all APC invited parties to have their input and finalise the agenda and declaration for the moot. Date for APC would be fixed somewhere in March.

3. Other News

- **Nawaz, Benazir Can Contest Election but Cannot Become PM**

Experts pointed out that there is no legal or constitutional bar on exiled former Prime Ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif to be candidates in the forthcoming General Elections. However, both can't contest for the office of the Prime Minister as the two-time Premiers stand disqualified to fight for the position for the third time. Such a ban was imposed to specifically stop Nawaz and Benazir from fighting for the top slot, by promulgating the **Qualification to Hold Public Offices Order 2002 (Chief Executive's Order No.19 of 2002)**, introduced by General Pervez Musharraf shortly before the October 2002 parliamentary elections.

Experts say that in the normal course such orders can be amended without any difficulty or trouble. But in the instant case, it is impossible to change it easily because the prior presidential assent will be required to effect an amendment. Most importantly, this special order included in the thirty-five laws and orders and issued by Musharraf, figures in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, that can't be "altered, repealed or amended without

the previous sanction of the President.” This means that the ban will stay unless Musharraf, the President of the day, first gives approval to the amendment in the order to be made by the Government to dispense with the restriction.

Benazir faces another restriction, which is that she can't lead her party in the eyes of the law for being “**convicted**” in the opinion of the government. A convict can't be head a political entity. That was the reason behind the registration of the PPP-Parliamentarians with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) before the 2002 polls as the PPP that she headed was not legally considered a political party that can contest the elections after being registered with the ECP.

A large number of corruption references pending disposal against Benazir for quite some time were knocked out one by one by superior courts way back in 1993 in a few months before she had fought the general elections that year and become prime minister as a result.

4. Analysis: Next General Elections and PPP's Position in Provinces

According to political observers, the Pakistan People's Party is poised to improve upon its performance in Sindh and NWFP in the upcoming general elections, but it will find it tough to win more seats in the Punjab.

Punjab: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz has announced that it will boycott elections under General Pervez Musharraf as president. The observers point out that the anti-PPP vote in Punjab was split at the last elections between the PML-N and PML-Quaid. But if the PML-N boycotts the next general elections, the entire anti-PPP vote is likely to go to the Quaid League. PPP Chairperson Benazir Bhutto has said she will try to convince the PML-N to participate in the elections, as it had already contested the 2002 elections under General Musharraf. However, there has been no indication that Nawaz Sharif will withdraw the boycott decision, even if he is pushed to do so by the PPP, his partner in the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy.

According to the observers the PPP would not benefit in the Punjab from a reduction in the vote for the Muttahida Majli-e-Amal (which got about 6 percent of the total votes cast in Punjab in 2002), because voters switching from the MMA would likely boost the pro-Musharraf vote. The PPP's anti-Kalabagh Dam stance will also go against it in the polls in Punjab.

Sindh: The PPP's chances are more promising in Sindh owing to two major factors. **First**, the ruling PML-Q is beset with infighting. Imtiaz Sheikh, who was said to be the driving force behind efforts that led to the merger of the National Alliance with the PML-Q, has quit the party to join the PML-Functional of Pir Pagaro. This was down to his bust up with Chief Minister Ghulam Arbab Rahim, who also contested on a National Alliance/Sindh Democratic Alliance ticket in 2002. Though Dr. Rahim has been trying to improve his party's profile in rural Sindh, one cannot rule out the possibility of more dents in PML-Q solidarity in the coming weeks and months. The possible absence of a seat-adjustment with coalition partners the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, which is now on a better footing than 2002 because it also heads the Hyderabad and Karachi district governments, would further erode its prospects.

Second, The PPP's anti-Kalabagh and anti-Thal Canal stance will be popular in Sindh. The party has headed most movements Sindh nationalists have launched to protest against the two structures over the last four years. Any possible setback to the MMA in urban Sindh could also be to its benefit, however minimal, on seats that had been traditionally won by its candidates since the 1970s.

NWFP: In the NWFP, a reduction in the MMA vote would boost the PPP provided it is able work out a game plan strictly in accordance with the requirements of this province, where the anti-US vote immensely favoured the religious alliance in 2002. But others such as the Awami National Party will also look to capitalise on any MMA slip-up.

Balochistan: Meanwhile in Balochistan, the observers feel both the MMA and PML-Q, who form the ruling coalition in the province, could suffer from the pro-Bugti or anti-Musharraf vote. The major beneficiaries are likely to be the nationalist parties, particularly the one led by the incarcerated son of Sardar Mengal. The PPP is unlikely to improve its support base in this province for it continues to be stigmatised by the army operation launched by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the 1970s.

III. Governance at Large

I Research Report on Death Penalty by HRCP and FIDH

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) and Paris-based International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) jointly prepared the research report, and released it on January 26. According to report:

- Pakistan ranks among countries in the world that issue death sentences the most
- Currently, over 7,400 prisoners are on death row in different jails. ‘Slow March to the Gallows’, based on a study on capital punishment in Pakistan
- An average of 47 executions a year took place in Pakistan between 1975 and 2002, but this figure was 66 in 2005 and 54 in the first six months of 2006
- Thirty people were executed between June and July 2006
- The application of death penalty in Pakistan is not in accordance with international standards
- Defects in the law itself, in the administration of justice and in police, the chronic corruption in society and the cultural prejudice affecting women and minorities are linked with the rise in capital punishment in Pakistan
- Our criminal justice system is flawed and police are corrupt. In these conditions, a fair trial is unfeasible and the award of death punishment will be equal to intentional murder on the part of the state
- At every step, from arrest to trial to execution, there are no safeguards against miscarriage of justice, and there is a frighteningly high possibility that innocent people are being executed
- The report rejected death penalty as deterrence against crimes and demanded its gradual repeal from the statute
- The report urged the president to systematically commute the death sentence to relatively mild sentences. It also asked the government to ratify international protocols with the aim to abolish the death penalty

Christine Hubbard, a researcher at FIDH, said that death penalty has failed to work as deterrence for crime in the discriminatory, unjust and criminal justice system in Pakistan. A comparison shows that **the crime rate is much lower in states where the death penalty does not exist.**

HRCP Director I A Rehman said that a death penalty is only handed out for murder and mutiny at the time of Partition, but now **27 offences carried the death sentence.** In our country, either coercive measures are adopted or money is used to persuade the aggrieved party to pardon a murderer.

Rights organizations have demanded that executions of convicts be immediately suspended, saying innocent people are being sent to the gallows in Pakistan – which is among nations with a high death conviction rate – because of a “flawed and discriminatory criminal justice system.

II Human Rights Abuse Cases in 5 Years

Federal Law and Human Rights Minister Syed Wasi Zafar placed statistics regarding human rights violations before Senate Secretariat. Following table shows Human Rights abuse cases in different provinces within the time period of 2002 to September 2006 as indicated by Federal Law and Human Rights Minister:

Province	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 (Jan to Sep)	Total
Sindh	218	243	229	291	274	1,255
Punjab	138	197	177	225	251	988
NWFP	37	67	40	65	53	262
Balochistan	8	2	25	68	51	154
Islamabad	6	15	2	30	10	63
Total	407	524	473	679	639	2,722

III Ordinances Galore in 2006

President General Pervez Musharraf promulgated 32 ordinances in the last parliamentary year of the National Assembly (NA), which enacted only four ordinances, including the Women Protection Act.

Overall, the President has promulgated ordinances two times more than the number of legislative bills introduced in the National Assembly so far. By the end of the fourth parliamentary year on November 14, 2006, a total of **134 ordinances** were introduced, 58 of them have been laid in the National Assembly. That only **76 legislative bills** were laid in the NA shows that the government mainly relied on issuing ordinances instead of adopting proper parliamentary legislative process. The assembly passed 35 bills, three were withdrawn while 19 were pending with the NA when its 37th session concluded on November 14.

The ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and its allies were quick to rush the WPB through the parliament in less than two months but the fate of the 19 bills, which have been in the pipeline, is to gather dust.

The bills lying pending in the National Assembly include: The Pakistan Council for Science and Technology Bill, 2005; Defence Housing Authority Islamabad Bill, 2005; National Development Finance Corporation (Repeal) Bill, 2005; The Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2005; Alternative Energy Development Board Bill, 2005; Tibbe-e-Unani, Ayurvedic, Homeopathic, Herbal and Non-Allopathic Medicine Bill, 2005; Industrial Development Bank of Pakistan (Reorganization and Conversion) Bill, 2005; Public Complaints (Removal of Grievances) Bill, 2005; Post Office (Amendment) Bill, 2005; Pakistan Tobacco Board (Amendment) Bill, 2005; Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Bill, 2005; Federal Public Service Commission Bill, 2005; Labour Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2005; Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan Bill, 2005; Law Reform Bill, 2005; Pakistan Electronic Regulatory Authority Bill, 2006; National Database and Registration Authority Bill (Amendment), 2005; National Highways Safety (Amendment) Bill, 2005 and The Companies (Appointment of Legal Advisory) (Amendment) Bill, 2005. The NA has passed over 42 bills and ordinances during its 37 sessions, over 32 of them became acts of the parliament.

The National Assembly members (MNAs) submitted 982 adjournment motions during the last parliamentary year, 80 of them were taken up; 552 calling attention notices were submitted but only 46 were replied.

IV International Conference on Gender Mainstreaming in Planning & Development

A three-day International Conference on Gender Mainstreaming in Planning & Development was held in Islamabad from January 17-19. The conference was attended by participants from Turkey, Iran, India, Indonesia, Yemen, Jordan, Lebanon, Armenia, USA, and from four provinces of Pakistan as well as the AJK and Northern Areas.

The conference compiled a set of recommendations. Following are some suggestions with context to Poverty Reduction, Disaggregated Databases and Institutional Mechanisms:

POVERTY REDUCTION

- Redefine Concept of Poverty Line
- Region Specific Strategies, having effect on gender equality
- Policy and Legislations on ownership rights to women for property, social security nets and rights to social security
- Protection to women in distress for shelter and support with day care centers in order to ensure education, nutrition for the children and in order to reduce her social burden
- Ensure Gendered access to Environment and CPR
- Improve access to Micro Finance for women
- Improve relevant income generation activities in rural areas; through innovative agriculture/non-farming and other sources of livelihood.
- Involvement of local community particularly and women participation in decision making at all levels
- Encourage Public/Private partnership for self sustainability
- Re-examine the impact of global forces and institutions and donors on poverty creation and structures

DISAGGREGATED DATABASES

- All information and surveys should gather sex disaggregated data
- Surveys to ensure quantity and quality data
- Identify instruments and mechanisms in data collection addressing gender disaggregated data
- Gender experts should be a part of major statistical agencies
- Data should be disaggregated by gender at least at union council level.
- Engender NPA indicators
- Accessibility of data to users and public
- Improve gender sensitivity in socio-economical indicators.
- Special surveys to fill gender gaps
- Compilation and gender statistics based on annual / biannual basis
- Training and capacity building on gender statistics

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

- Gender Sensitized tools and instruments in planning processes
- Strengthening the capacity of National Machinery including public and private (human, financial, technical and coordination between them to address gender equality
- Increase coordination among public and private sectors organizations, CSO's and Donors
- Gender Sensitized training in public and private sector Institutions including CSOs

- Capacity building of organizations and of key stakeholders on gender issues and concerns (formal and informal)
- Gender responsive budgeting and provision of financial resources for mainstreaming processes

V NWFP, Balochistan to produce own textbooks

The NWFP and Balochistan would introduce their own textbooks, particularly Islamiyat, Urdu and Pakistan Studies, containing Qur'aanic verses, chapter of Hadiths, lessons on the life of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and his companions.

In the backdrop of the inter-provincial education ministerial meeting, separate meetings were held with the federal minister and minister of state for education and they were apprised of the reservations. Fazle Ali said the meeting also discussed equivalence of lower courses of religious institutions with matriculation and intermediate certificates and declared that learning of English, Urdu and general mathematics would be necessary for the purpose.

VI Human Rights Watch Launched World Report 2007 on Guantanamo Anniversary

Human Rights Watch released its World Report 2007 on Guantanamo Anniversary (11 January).

The report identifies many human rights challenges in need of urgent attention. Iraq has degenerated into sectarian and political blood-letting, with civilians the principal victims. Ruthlessly repressive governments in **North Korea, Burma, and Turkmenistan** deprive their people of fundamental rights and dignity. Dictatorships persist in **Saudi Arabia and Syria**. **China** is moving backwards. **Russia** and **Egypt** are cracking down on non-governmental organizations. **Iran** and **Ethiopia** are silencing dissident voices. Robert Mugabe would rather drive **Zimbabwe** to ruin than tolerate political opposition. Civil war is reigniting in **Sri Lanka** and intensifying in **Afghanistan** and **Somalia**, while conflict continues in **Colombia**. **Israel** launched indiscriminate attacks in **Lebanon** and littered southern Lebanon with cluster bombs during its war with Hezbollah. For its part, Hezbollah attacked Israeli cities without distinguishing between military and civilian objectives. No situation is more pressing than the bloody crisis in **Darfur**, with more than 200,000 dead, approximately 2 million displaced, and around 4 million dependent on international food relief. The conflict is now destabilizing **Chad** and the Central African Republic.

US abuses against detainees in the "war on terror" remain a major concern. In September, President George W Bush even defended torture - referring to it euphemistically as "an alternative set of [interrogation] procedures" - and secret CIA prisons. In October, the US Congress, acting at the behest of the Bush administration, denied Guantanamo detainees the possibility of challenging their detention in court via the hallowed right of habeas corpus. Human Rights Watch called on the United States to close the Guantanamo camp, noting that it is long past time to either bring to trial or set free the detainees who remain there.

Human Rights Watch noted some positive developments coming out of the global South, including African leaders' support for the human rights trials of former Liberian President Charles Taylor and former Chadian President Hissène Habré, and Latin American support for the International Criminal Court. But it also urged

southern democracies to do more to support human rights, such as by breaking with abusive regional leaders to play a more constructive role at the UN Human Rights Council.

Human Rights Watch's World Report 2007 contains survey information on human rights developments during 2006 in **more than 75 countries**. In addition to the introductory essay on the European Union, the volume contains essays on freedom of expression since 9/11, the plight of migrant domestic workers, and a human rights agenda for incoming UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Report can be downloaded through following link:

<http://www.hrw.org/wr2k7/wr2007master.pdf>

IV. Geo-Political Dynamics

I South Asia

1. **Pakistan, India to Sign Pact for Easier Visas on February 21**

Pakistan and India are expected to **sign agreements to ease the visa regime** and for the speedy return of inadvertent border crossers during Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri's visit to India which starts on February 20.

Kasuri will represent Pakistan at a meeting of the Pakistan-India Joint Commission on February 21-22 in New Delhi. The meeting will review the **progress of the joint commission in promoting cooperation in information technology, health and food, science and technology and education.**

2. **APHC Delegation's Visit to Pakistan**

A three member APHC delegation visited Pakistan during the month. During their visit, they met host of leaders of political parties and discussed with them possible solution of Kashmir.

President General Pervez Musharraf during his meeting with APHC delegates stated:

- § Pakistan would not accept any solution to the Kashmir dispute against the wishes of Kashmiri people
- § Nobody could stop the peace process aimed at resolving Kashmir and other disputes with India, according to officials privy to the talks
- § Kashmiri leadership on both sides of the Line of Control would be taken into confidence before any decision on the vital issue, an official said requesting anonymity

APHC leaders gave following comments on their visit:

- § President Musharraf had presented positive suggestions to resolve the Kashmir issue and could provide a beginning that was needed at this decisive stage. The proposals would hopefully serve to achieve an interim solution to the issue through peaceful dialogue
- § The President has taken us into confidence on the progress made to resolve the Kashmir dispute and the discussion was also focused on his proposals
- § Consensus is emerging among political parties of Pakistan and political leadership of Kashmir on both sides of the Line of Control
- § Establishment of working groups between Kashmiri leadership across the border has been a major achievement of the visit

3. **US Legislation Seeks Ban on Assistance to Pakistan**

A new legislation, already endorsed by the House of Representatives, calls for stopping US military assistance to Pakistan if Islamabad fails to halt the resurgence of Taliban inside its territory. The first piece of legislation by the new Congress since it was sworn in earlier this month also urges the Bush administration to help resolve the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan.

The proposed legislation urges the US President to certify that Islamabad is making all efforts to prevent Taliban from operating in areas under its sovereign control, including in the cities of Quetta and Chaman before releasing any funds or approving licenses for enhancing its military capability. The new provisions form part of the Implementation of 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act, 2007, aimed at revamping the US national security and foreign policy apparatus to address challenges post-9/11.

Three countries have been singled out in the proposed legislation: Pakistan, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia.

The bill identifies the **critical issues** that need immediate action as:

- § Curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology
- § Combating poverty and corruption
- § Building effective government institutions
- § Promoting democracy and the rule of law, particularly at the national level
- § Addressing continued presence of Taliban and other violent extremists throughout the country
- § Maintaining the authority of the Government of Pakistan in all parts of its national territory
- § Securing borders of Pakistan to prevent movement of militants and terrorists into other countries and territories
- § Effectively dealing with Islamic terrorism

The Act also lays out **policy guidelines** for the US government, which is not binding on the administration of the day but does give a sense of Congress. These include:

- § To work with Pakistan to combat international terrorism, especially in the frontier provinces, and to end the use of Pakistan as a safe haven for forces associated with the Taliban
- § To establish a long-term strategic partnership with Pakistan to address these issues
- § To dramatically increase funding for programmes of the United States Agency for International Development and the Department of State that assist Pakistan in addressing such issues, if Islamabad demonstrates a commitment to building a moderate, democratic state, including significant steps towards free and fair parliamentary elections in 2007
- § To work with the international community to secure additional financial and political support to effectively implement the policies set forth in this subsection and help to resolve the dispute between the government of Pakistan and the government of India over the disputed territory of Kashmir

4. Bangladesh Polls Suspended for Three Months

The high court of Bangladesh on Monday ordered the country's Election Commission to suspend all elections for three months. The court asked the Election Commission to explain within three weeks as to why the existing electoral roll should not be declared illegal as it had been prepared without complying with the Representation of People Order, 1972, and directives issued by the Supreme Court. The High Court also asked the commission to explain why any elections without transparent ballot box and voter identity card should not be declared illegal. A High Court bench passed the orders after hearing a writ petition filed by Kazi Mamunur Rashid, a voter of Dhaka. The petitioner submitted that the Election Commission had failed to prepare the electoral roll in accordance with the guideline detailed in the law and the Supreme Court order.

The deadlock led to declaration of a state of emergency in the country on January 11 and the Election Commission on Jan 21 issued a notification canceling the election scheduled for January 22. President Iajuddin Ahmed stepped aside as the chief adviser to the interim government on January 11 and it was reconstituted to prepare a 'level playing field' before holding the polls.

II Middle East

1. 'Peace Valley' to be Set-Up in Middle East

Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians have agreed to create a 500-kilometre-long “**Valley of Peace**” common economic zone.

Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres said that he believes the time has come, that while the politics should be done in a couple – between the Palestinians and Israelis – the economy in the region should be done by a troika, the Jordanians, the Palestinians and Israelis. The three countries have agreed to take the whole length of the frontier between Jordan, Israel and the Palestinians (West Bank), 500 kilometres long, and convert it into an ongoing economic zone. Dubbing the zone a “Valley of Peace”, a huge market could develop in the Arab world over the next decade, and appealed for investment.

Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority – which all divert waters from Jordan River for irrigation purposes – launched a two-year feasibility study in December to try and save the rapidly vanishing Dead Sea.

3. Global

1. Are Americans Prepared to Elect an African-American or a Woman as President?

After a 217-year march of major presidential nominees who were, without exception, white and male, the 2008 campaign may offer voters a novel choice.

Some political analysts say they think the country may accept a woman as president. But they are less sure about an African-American, even one as popular as Barack Obama. But as Barack Obama, the senator from Illinois whose father is from Kenya, spends this weekend exploring a presidential bid in New Hampshire, and Hillary Rodham Clinton, the first woman to represent New York in the Senate, calls potential supporters in Iowa, the question remains: are Americans prepared to elect an African-American or a woman as president?

2. Dictators: Hanged, Hounded and Exiled

There have been number of dictators who ruled for a long period of time and in the end met with different fates. Some died in office, still clinging to the reins of power, some were deposed and executed, while others spent the rest of their lives in exile or as fugitives from justice. Following list shows the fates of some former dictators since the end of World War II in 1945.

Died in Office

Adolf Hitler: Committed suicide in his Berlin bunker on April 30, 1945, shortly after Soviet Red Army forces entered the capital of his Third Reich.

Joseph Stalin: Master of the Kremlin for more than 30 years, the Soviet Union's leader died of a stroke on March 5, 1953 after an all-night dinner.

Antonio de Oliveira Salazar: Portugal's dictator for 36 years suffered a major stroke in 1968 and died on July 27, 1970.

Francisco Franco: The Spanish head of state known as “Generalissimo Franco” died on November 20, 1975, from heart problems at the age of 83.

Mao Zedong: The founder of the People's Republic of China and then its leader for 27 years, Mao died in Beijing on September 9, 1976, aged 82.

Kim il-Sung: The "eternal president" of North Korea ruled from 1946 until his death from a stroke in July 1994, and was succeeded by his son Kim Jong-il.

Died in Exile

Idi Amin: Uganda's dictator from 1971 to 1979 died on August 16, 2003 in Saudi Arabia, where he lived in exile without facing justice for his crimes.

Mobutu Sese Seko: The former president of Zaire died of cancer on September 7, 1997 just months after going into exile in Rabat in Morocco.

Alfredo Stroessner: Paraguay's military dictator from 1954 until his ouster in a 1989 coup died at the age of 93 on August 16, 2006, in Brasilia.

Pol Pot: The genocidal Khmer Rouge regime chief from 1975 to 1979 died of old age on April 16, 1998 in the Cambodian jungle, an exile in his own country.

Executed

Benito Mussolini: "Il Duce" from 1922 to 1943, he was shot by Italian partisans on April 28, 1945 while fleeing for Switzerland with his mistress.

Nicolae Ceausescu: Romanian leader for 24 years, he was executed with his wife Elena on December 25, 1989 after a summary trial days after his overthrow.

Saddam Hussein: Iraq's former leader, deposed by a 2003 US-led military invasion, hanged on December 30 for killing 148 Shiite villagers.

Facing Justice

Augusto Pinochet: Chile's former dictator died on December 10, 2006 of a heart attack at the age of 91, still to face justice after his 17-year rule.

Slobodan Milosevic: The ex-Yugoslav president died in The Hague on March 11, 2006 while on trial for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Mengistu Haile Mariam: On January 11, 2007 Ethiopia will pass verdict in absentia on the former dictator living in exile in Zimbabwe since 1991.

Charles Taylor: Liberia's former president, charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity, is due to go on trial at The Hague in 2007.

Jorge Rafael Videla: Argentina lifted the former dictator's immunity in September after his 1990 amnesty from a life sentence for kidnap and torture.

Manuel Noriega: The former Panamanian leader is serving 40 years in Florida for drug trafficking after the United States invaded Panama in 1989.