

Gender

I - Women & Politics

Drastic Reduction in the Number of Women Voters

In the wake of controversy of millions of missing voters from electoral rolls, representatives of leading Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) detected a wide gender gap regarding the registration of voters.

Addressing a press conference on June 23rd, representatives of Pattan Development Organization, Sungi Development Foundation, SPO, SDPI and Rozan revealed that in the last General Elections of 2002, the gender gap between male and female voters was around 5.7 million, which has now further widened to 14 million. They observed that there has always been a gender gap in voter registration in Pakistan due to discriminatory cultural practices and gender-blind electoral and registration processes.

Dr. Farzana Bari, Samina Khan and others were of the view that the grim picture presented by the current electoral role scenario is contrary to Government's tall claims for women's political empowerment. They said that we strongly condemn the failure of ECP to register female voters due to its gender-blind policies. Despite women rights organizations' repeated demand to employ female enumerators to register female voters, the ECP did not pay heed to this demand which has partially resulted into wide gender gap in voters' registration.

- q They denounced the gender deficit in electoral rolls in all four provinces in general and NWFP and Sindh in particular.
- q They said that criminal negligence in registering female voters will further marginalise women as voters and as representatives. Therefore, they demand the ECP must take immediate actions to bridge the gap between eligible and registered voters in general and gender gap in particular. They proposed that NADRA's Computerized National Identity Card's list which has nearly 60 million people on it should be adopted by ECP as an electoral roll, which will immediately compensate some 8 million missing voters.
- q Moreover, the NGO's representatives said that NADRA and ECP must jointly make arrangements to go door to door and issue identity cards to voters who should then automatically be registered on electoral rolls.
- q They also proposed that elected representatives, union councilors and CSOs should be mobilised to facilitate ECP/NADRA to register as many voters as possible before the announcement of election dates.
- q They said that special focus of these efforts should be on registering women voters, otherwise the gender gap will be too wide and unacceptable. Going to election with the electoral roll which is going to disenfranchise 38% eligible voters will face serious legitimacy challenge later.

The highest percentage of voters are registered in the province of Balochistan (76%) followed by NWFP (65%), Punjab (62%) and Sindh (56%). NWFP is the only province where the registration of male voters has gone up by three percent (145,888) as compared to total number of male voters registered in the last General Election 2002. **It is extremely disturbing that only half of female voters (50%) are registered as voters on the draft rolls while remaining 50% -- nearly 14 million women are missing on the electoral rolls.**

They further informed that the **NWFP** presents the gravest picture where **1,67,663 (59.3%)** women voters are missing on the electoral rolls, followed by **Sindh 3,001,356 (53.5%)**, **Punjab, 7,189,550 (48%)**. Interestingly, they observed that **Balochistan** has the lowest deficit **1,118,077 (24%) of women voters**. Both regional and gender trends shown in the electoral rolls will have serious political implication. They said that the wide gap between eligible voters (88m) and the registered voters (52m) and even a wider gender gap within calls for an urgent national attention.

India Could See First-Ever Female President

India's ruling Congress party on June 14 chose a woman as its candidate in a presidential vote next month, raising the prospect that the country could see its first female head of state. Congress Chief Sonia Gandhi announced that the Governor of the desert state of Rajasthan, Pratibha Patil, had been chosen as its candidate to succeed President Abdul Kalam.

The post of President holds limited authority over day-to-day affairs, but can play a crucial role in Government formation at state and federal levels, making the selection a battleground as it has been this year. The post is chosen by an electoral college of state and federal legislators. They are due to vote July 19 and the counting of votes is scheduled for July 21, Chief Election Commissioner N. Gopalaswami. The electoral college of India's 29 state assemblies and federal parliament elects the President for a five-year term through a secret ballot.

A political expert said that with support from the left and from the new female Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, Patil, who is in her early seventies, has a good shot at becoming India's first woman president. Analyst Mahesh Rangarajan said that together the Congress, the left, and Uttar Pradesh's ruling low-caste Bahujan Samaj Party could put together about 52 percent of the Electoral College vote.

Meanwhile, India's 83-year-old Vice-President Bhairon Singh Shekhawat was preparing to throw his hat into the electoral ring with support from the BJP.

The country has already had a female Prime Minister, with Indira Gandhi, the daughter of India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, ruling India from 1966 to 1977 and from 1980 to 1984, coming to be known as India's "iron lady."?

II - Women & Economics

70pc of Women's Services Unpaid: Seminar on Importance of Skill Development for Women's Empowerment in Pakistan

The seminar on "Importance of Skill Development for Women's Empowerment in Pakistan" was organized by the National Urban Poverty Alleviation Programme (NUPAP) in collaboration with Rawalpindi Arts Council. Speakers said that 70 per cent of the services provided by women are unpaid while majority of the remaining services are underpaid.

NUPAP, a United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) project, is providing necessary training to the women of slums to help them earn a respectable livelihood.

Dr Ataul Mohsin, representing NUPAP, said majority of women are involved in the household work that had largely been unpaid. There should be equal opportunities of development for both genders if the real progress of the nation is needed. He said political empowerment of women is also obligatory in the Third World that has long been a challenge. It is not the duty of only some NGOs to work for the women development but all sectors will have to play their role for better and permanent results.

Shazia Azhar, Head of Skill Development SACH, said four basic approaches are required to help women develop. Education of women, their training, advocacy for their works and the fourth is entrepreneurship for their crafts. She said the UNPOP has been working for capacity building of the women and conducting seminars and workshops to promote their skills and to help them sell their crafts. She said the NUPAP is planning for the counselling of women for self growth and income generating training and provision of micro-credit programmes to sustain their works.

Sadia Khurshid, Coordinator NVM, said there is dire need of micro-credit financing for the uplift of women in the Third World countries. Opportunities must be enhanced for them to usher them in the mainstream of national economy.

Samina Omar Asghar, Director SUNGI, said people in their part of the world used to be involved in handicrafts and their younger generations were not inclined towards acquiring the crafts of their ancestors.

Rs 80m to be Spent on Women in Sindh

A total of Rs 80 million has been allocated for women's development in the Sindh Budget's Annual Development Programme 2007-08. The amount will be used for 12 projects, 10 of which are on-going and two are new.

Also, Rs 23 million will be invested as the capital, while Rs 57 million will be generated through revenue sources. One of the on-going projects (the establishment of complaint centres in Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur and Larkana for women in distress), was expected to be 47 percent complete by the end of 2006-07, and is expected to be "113 percent" complete by the end of 2007-08. The estimated cost of the project is Rs 9.088 million. Also, Rs 1.033 million was allocated to it in 2006-07, and Rs 2.26 million was spent up to June 2006. The expected expenditure up to June 2007 is said to be Rs 3.293 million, while five million rupees have been allocated to the project during the fiscal year 2007-08. The entire amount will be generated through revenue sources.

Two million rupees had been allocated in 2006-07 for a report on **trafficking on women** in Sindh. The total expenditure up to June 2007 was also expected to be two million rupees. The project is expected to be 100 percent complete by the end of the 2006-07 fiscal year. Yet, Rs 0.5 million have been allocated for it in 2007-08, at the end of which the project will again be expected to be 100 percent complete. The establishment of the **workingwomen hostel** in Karachi required Rs 287.3 million, according to estimates. Two million rupees were allocated for the project for the fiscal year 2006-07. The entire amount is expected to be used up by the end of June 2007, after which the project will be one percent complete. Also, Rs 5 million have been allocated for the project during 2007-08, and by the end of this fiscal year, the project will be 93 percent complete using only seven million rupees – Rs 280.3 million less than the initial estimates.

Similarly, one of the new projects (as yet unapproved) is to establish workingwomen hostels in districts in Sindh. The project is estimated to cost Rs 1.2 billion. Five million rupees have been allocated for the project during 2007-08, and at the end of the fiscal year, the project is expected to be 40 percent complete, using only 0.417 percent of the initial estimated amount. The establishment of shelter homes for women in all districts of Sindh is another new project to be initiated during the 2007-08 fiscal year. The project is currently unapproved. It is estimated to cost one billion rupees. Also, Rs 5 million have been allocated for it this year. The budget table, however, does not show how much of the project will be complete within this fiscal year, and the required columns have been left blank.

Other projects which are currently underway include the **establishment of a sales and display resources centre and a day care centre** in Karachi, **a baby/child training cell at the day care centre, a media cell at the directorate for women development**, the implementation of the **Sindh Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP Sindh)**, baby/child training units in the district headquarters in Sindh and all 18 towns in Karachi, and the **establishment of a training institute for women in Nawabshah**. According to the details provided, none of them are expected to be complete by the end of the 2007-08 fiscal year.

III - Women & Laws

CII for Abrogation of Discriminatory Laws against Women

The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) while supporting the Women Protection Bill has recommended to the Government to abrogate all discriminatory laws against women.

While issuing the recommendations, made during the period 2004-06, the CII described Women Protection Bill as an important step towards the restoration of the women's rights in Islam and that no provisions in it is repugnant to the Quran and Sunnah. At the same time, the Council however, said that the amendments may be made to improve it and make it more effective.

The Council said that for the elimination of the customary practices of so called marriage of women with Holy Quran. The Council declared it as a punishable crime and suggested legislation.

About women's rights in inheritance, the Council recommended legislation to ensure transfer of ownership of property inherited by them under the law of inheritance. To save the married life from break-up, the Council recommended revision of Nikah Form by suggesting that in column No. 21, which gives information about the bridegroom, another clause should be added for registration of information whether the bridegroom is a divorcee or widower and if so, how many children he has from his ex/late wife/wives?

Deliberating over the Hudood Ordinance, the Council decided that the laws based on punishments prescribed in Quran, Sunnah and Islamic Law should be incorporated after redrafting them thoroughly in Pakistan Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure. The Council recommended that women should not be kept in jails and the women imprisoned under Hudood Laws should be released on bail.

IV- Books/Reports/Articles on Gender

Title: **Feminisms in Development: Contradictions, Contestations and Challenges**

Edited by Andrea Cornwall, Elizabeth Harrison and Ann Whitehead - 2007

ISBN 1 84277 819 6

272 pages £18.99

Review:

This collection of essays by leading feminist thinkers from North and South constitutes a major new attempt to reposition feminism within development studies. Feminism's emphasis on social transformation makes it fundamental to development studies. Yet the relationship between the two disciplines has frequently been a troubled one. At present, the way in which many development institutions function often undermines feminist intent through bureaucratic structures and unequal power quotients. Moreover, the seeming intractability of inequalities and injustice in developing countries have presented feminists with some enormous challenges. Here, emphasizing the importance of a plurality of approaches, the authors argue for the importance of what 'feminisms' have to say to development. Confronting the enormous challenges for

feminisms in development studies, this book provides real hope for dialogue and exchange between feminisms and development.

I Presidential Elections

n President General Pervez Musharraf on June 6 blasted the ruling coalition, especially the Pakistan Muslim League leadership and the lawmakers for “always leaving him in the lurch” and said the country would be in deep trouble if his set-up got changed.

While addressing the parliamentary party meeting of the ruling coalition at the PM House, he said: "I bluntly say that you always leave me alone in the time of trial and tribulation. Whether it was a change in the Afghan policy, Dr AQ Khan and Bugti issues, the judicial crisis or the May 12 incident, you never came to my support".

Musharraf deplored that out of, what he termed, 1,000 provincial/federal ministers, parliamentary secretaries and chairmen standing committees, he could not see even 10 of them speaking in his defence. The President termed his allies' habit of remaining busy in gossiping while sitting in drawing rooms as a recipe for disaster. "You are not delivering. You have lost the war of nerves. You all are silent upon what the media is doing. If I have to do everything, then what is your purpose?" he asked the treasury MPs.

Mazhar Qureshi said the President should not get annoyed with them for not defending him at a time when PML-Q's Secretary General Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed (who was sitting there) was reluctant to speak in his defence. Qureshi said the PML-Q had around 50 vice presidents and not one of them had spoken in the president's favour. According to insiders attending meeting, the President spoke at length. For the first time, he was visibly shaken. The President also told the treasury lawmakers: "I feel disturbed for the first time".

He expressed his frustration in detail and counted each and every incident that had put him in crisis but did not find his political allies around. According to the sources, Musharraf said since 9/11 his political allies had never come forward to extend him support during trouble. He said Pakistan without him (Musharraf) would be in deep crisis. "You do not know the problems for Pakistan if I am left out," he said and mentioned the key problem the country would be facing then: Talibanisation. "You would see its (Talibanisation) in Lahore and Karachi as well. And that if the present state of affairs is continued, it would be a big disaster," he added. He said there is nothing to feel embarrassed for the treasury MPs. "You should hold rallies, go to the TV talk shows, hold press conferences, make hue and cry and defend the Government," he advised them. About the coming budget, he said it would address three main issues: poverty, unemployment and price hike.

He said the judicial crisis had halted the arrival of foreign investment and mentioned in this regard the Kuwaiti investors who had changed their mind due to the present situation. His 'thought-provoking' speech was followed by questions of treasury MPs. A senator from Multan, Javed Shah, asked Musharraf to give up dual attitude and take a single posture: offensive or defensive. "The government is run either through authority or through dialogue/compromise," Shah said.

A treasury MNA from Lahore, Farooq Amjad Mir, said they had no time to defend him for the reason they had been implicated in problems in their own constituencies by the Chief Minister Punjab. "You should tell me if the CM of a province tries to eliminate me politically by fielding a provincial minister in the next elections, what should I do: either to stay in the constituency or come here to defend him (the President)," Mir said in clear reference to CM Punjab's alleged plan

to give party ticket for next elections to provincial Minister Aleem Khan. The President, however, did not comment on the issue. Mazhar Qureshi chose to criticise Mushahid Hussain Sayed, questioning even if he was not ready to defend Musharraf, then the President should not expect anything from other lawmakers. He said no parliamentary party meeting was called to take the MNAs into confidence and tell them the actual situation.

n **Transparent Polls more Important than Uniform**

The visiting US Deputy Secretary of State John D. Negroponte said on June 16 that Washington is interested in the advancement of democracy and fair and free elections in Pakistan, adding it was for President General Pervez Musharraf to decide the uniform issue. He said that it is up to him (Gen Musharraf) to decide when to take off his uniform but we do want free, fair and transparent elections scheduled for this fall or early next year. Political speculation has been rife in Islamabad as three senior US officials — Mr Negroponte, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher and US Central Command chief Admiral William J. Fallon — are in Pakistan.

n **Re-Election as per Constitution**

President General Pervez Musharraf has said his re-election procedure and other steps would be in line with the constitutional requirements. Talking to Federal Minister Ghous Bakhsh Meher and Parliamentary Secretary for Interior Sanaullah Mastikhel, who called on him at the President's House on June 20, he said general elections would be held on time and all political parties would be allowed to participate in them.

n **Current Assemblies to Re-Elect President**

Amid prevailing political uncertainty in the power corridors of the federal capital, the top power brokers are considering two options for future political course of action, wherein the most agreed upon is the **President Musharraf's re-election from the current assemblies**. High-level sources among the PML leadership said that the other option being considered was the dissolution of assemblies and Presidential re-election by the new legislature. The Government is holding talks with PPP-P and JUI-F to prepare a feasibility report for early General Elections, however, a final decision on it would be made in a later stage.

In this regard, an important meeting took place, on June 21 in Dubai, between Tariq Aziz, a close associate of President Musharraf, and Rehman Malik, former DG FIA, who is a close aide of PPP-P Chairperson Benazir Bhutto. Tariq Aziz, who is in Bangkok, met Malik in Dubai on his way to Bangkok and discussed the matters regarding a possible deal on the issues regarding holding of early General Elections and the President's re-election from fresh assemblies. However, the sources further said, President General Musharraf himself wants his re-election from the current assemblies and has started consultations with the PML leaders and his associates in this regard.

II General Election 2007

Electoral Rolls

q On June 12, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) released draft computerized list of 52,102,428 voters, which include 31,974,290 male and 20,128,138 female voters in the country.

q According to the Daily Times survey, majority of the centres displaying computerized voter-lists were deserted, with each display centre attracting 15 to 25 visitors.

q Preliminary findings from observers of the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) reveal that most Election Commission Display Centers visited in 40 districts were closed despite

firm indications that they would be ready to serve the Pakistani public nationwide. At least 400 Display Centers were reported to be closed all day, and many of the ones that opened were shut down by 2:00PM. Based on its mandate, 750 FAFEN observers monitored approximately 1,500 Display Centers today, observing how accessible they were to Pakistanis during this critical time in preparation for the next General Elections. Reports from the observers pointed to other inadequate preparations in some locations, including unavailability of the Electoral Roll, uninformed, absent or ill-prepared Display Centre Information Officers (DCIOs), and failure to notify appropriate officials that their facilities had been designated as Display Centers.

q Top Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) officials admit that new electoral rolls have approximately 20 million less electorate compared to their tally in the 2002 voters' list. The new rolls have a total of 52.5 million voters while the 2002 lists had 72-million electorate. This lays bare a massive difference of 19.5 million voters. An official told that way back in 2002 the National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA) had enrolled as voters all the persons, who had shown themselves to be of 18 years or above in the 1998 population census forms collected from all the households across the country.

q Provincial Election Commissioner Sindh Chaudhary Qamar Zaman told that in Sindh alone, 4.8 million voters have dropped compared 2002 voter list. He mentioned that the major reason behind such enormous drop out was necessity of Computerised Identity Card (CNIC).

q The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has expressed concern over the names of 20 million voters missing from the new electoral rolls. It called upon Chief Election Commissioner Justice (Retd) Qazi Mohammad Farooq to immediately issue the electronic provisional electoral lists to all political parties to demonstrate his impartiality.

q President of the Tharparkar chapter of the People's Party Parliamentarians (PPP), Mahesh Malani, alleged that 83,272 supporters of his party have been left out of the district's voters' lists. He said in a press release that the total number of voters in the district according to old lists stood at 455,281, which has dropped to 372,009 in the new lists. It indicated the fact that 83,272 PPP supporters have not been listed. He further said that the old lists of Mithi, Diplo, Nagarparkar and Chhachhro talukas put voters' number, respectively, at 124,892, 98,568, 69,403 and 162,418, which had fallen to 97,049, 69,862, 63,573 and 141,535 according to new lists.

q Railways Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad criticised the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), saying 70,000 voters from his two Rawalpindi constituencies were not named in voter lists. He said that the voter lists prepared by the ECP is not reliable enough to help organise fair and free polls. He also pointed towards lack of interest of people in the political process. He urged ministers and parliamentarians to mobilise people for registration of their votes.

q Addressing a press conference on June 23rd, representatives of Pattan Development Organization, Sungi Development Foundation, SPO, SDPI and Rozan revealed that in the last General Elections of 2002, the gender gap between male and female voters was around 5.7 million, which has now further widened to 14 million. They observed that there has always been a gender gap in voter registration in Pakistan due to discriminatory cultural practices and gender-blind electoral and registration processes.

q A monitoring report by the National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP), a Non-Governmental Organisation working for minority rights said that voter lists displayed in various parts of Lahore discriminate against minorities and contain a large number of mistakes. The NCJP observed that Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Parsis were combined in one list whereas Ahmadis were in a separate list. The voter registration form contained a question about religious affiliation and its Form-4 has an affidavit that required declaring that the voter was a Muslim and not an Ahmadi.

q The All-Pakistan Minorities Alliance (APMA) complained that the names of 50 per cent voters belonging to minorities had not been included in the new voters lists in the interior of Sindh.

q The Citizens' Group on Electoral Process (CGEP) has asked the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to provide a complete draft of electoral lists to any Pakistani citizen, political party or institution for scrutiny. The CGEP said the ECP's should encourage public scrutiny of the draft electoral rolls instead of obstructing them. It has also asked the ECP to explain the huge decline in the number of voters in the draft voter list. The statement said there were 71.86 million voters as per the electoral rolls used in the 2002 General Elections and that this number should have increased to around 82 million in 2007, according to a 2.7 percent per year voters growth rate.

q A petition was filed with the Supreme Court on June 19, requesting the court to direct the Election Commission to provide provisional voter lists in electronic format to political parties. The petition filed by Spokesman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and former Senator Farhatullah Babar said it would enable them carry out cross checks and trace the missing thirty million voters that have disappeared from the new lists. The petition also prays for directions to the Election Commission to make simpler the procedure of adding new names to the rolls, extend the display period of voters lists and make multiple identity documents acceptable for registration and casting of votes.

q According to a press release issued on June 29, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has extended the period for enrollment of voters on computerized electoral rolls for the next General Elections till the announcement of polls schedule. The press release said that special arrangements will be made for enrollment of eligible voters having NIC or CNIC and belonging to rain-affected areas.

Political Parties' News

n Power-Sharing Deal between Benazir and Nawaz

Exiled former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said in an interview published on June 18 that she had secured a "verbal" power-sharing agreement with fellow exiled political rival Nawaz Sharif that would see her having the first chance of running the country, a claim rejected by Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

n PPP will not Boycott Elections, says Benazir

Talking to a private TV channel on June 12, PPP Chairperson Benazir Bhutto said that all possible means would be used to stop elections from being rigged. She further said that her party will not boycott elections in case General Pervez Musharraf is re-elected President from the present assemblies, although the PPP is against his re-election. She said uniform and democracy could not go together. She ruled out the imposition of an emergency or martial law in the country, saying that elections would be held this year. She clarified that keeping PPP at distance from the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal was necessary to protect moderation.

n MMA Ready to Quit Balochistan Government if Benazir Bhutto Cooperates: Qazi

Qazi Hussain Ahmed, Chief of MMA and Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) said that Muthidda Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) could discuss the issue of resigning from Balochistan Government at All Parties Conference (APC) provided that PPP chairperson Ms Benazir Bhutto would not support President General Musharraf in any way. He made this offer to Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairperson while addressing media conference after chairing the meeting of JI central executive committee on June 6 at his party headquarters Mansoor.

n **ARD, MMA, PONM United on 4 Points**

Pukhtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party Chairman Mahmood Khan Achakzai said that ARD, MMA and PONM leaders have agreed on four points against present Government and now a joint strategy could be evolved in All Parties Conference (APC).

The four points are: a

- an interim government headed by any judge who did not took oath under PCO,
- constitution should be made as it was before October 12, 1999,
- free and independent election commission and
- holding elections in the country.

n **References against Imran Sent to CEC**

National Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Amir Hussain on June 20 sent two disqualification references against MNA Imran Khan to the chief election commissioner (CEC) for further action. The MQM and Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Sher Afgan Niazi filed these references against the Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf chairman. The speaker was bound to forward the reference within 30 days, while he did so in eight. The CEC is to summon both parties to testify and complete proceeding on the references within 30 days. He must announce his decision in 90 days. Protesting the decision, opposition parties walked out of the house and boycotted June 20th afternoon proceedings. While walking out, they shouted, "Katil, Katil MQM Katil".

n **Reference Filed against Peime Minister: Steel Mills Sale, Stock Market Crash**

The opposition in the National Assembly on June 21 hit back strongly at the Government with a disqualification charge-sheet, or reference, against Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, which overshadowed final stages of the last budget session of the present lower house. While the Prime Minister seemed shying away from an immediate personal response to the opposition move that accused him of wrongdoing in a 2005 stock market crash and the scrapped sale of the Pakistan Steel Mills last year, a section of the ruling party came out with words and gestures against tit-for-tat references, which are likely to add to the worries of a beleaguered government in an already tense political atmosphere. The reference, signed by 31 members from all major opposition parties, was handed to Speaker Chaudhry Amir Hussain at his chamber by seven of them while the house was discussing and voting on Government's demands for grants for its ministries as part of the budget for fiscal 2007-08 for the second day running. The Speaker received the disqualification reference against the Prime Minister and sent it to the National Assembly secretariat for further necessary action.

n **Rift Between two Major MMA Components Re-Emerges**

Tension between the two major components of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) has once again mounted as an expelled Jamaat-e-Islami MPA and former Provincial Minister, Raja Faisal Zaman has been welcomed into the fold of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F).

MMA provincial General Secretary MNA Shabbir Ahmad Khan, who is associated with the Jamaat, remarked that this is not only in violation of the decisions taken by the MMA leadership but also has damaged political and religious goodwill of the JUI-F. The senior Jamaat leader said this act would encourage MMA components to lure MPAs of other parties and would result in confrontation between the two. Raja Faisal Zaman, a sports minister in the NWFP cabinet till last year, had been sacked by the Jamaat for his alleged involvement in horse-trading in the Senate polls. Another MPA belonging to Jamaat-e-Islami, Malik Hayat was also sacked from the party on similar charges.

Other News

Code of Conduct for Upcoming Polls

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has decided to contact the parliamentary leaders of various opposition parties in an effort to work out a code of conduct for making the coming General Elections free, fair and acceptable to everyone. The Prime Minister said at a news conference at his Parliament House chamber on June 19 that he would establish personal contacts by telephone with opposition leaders and send them letters after the budget was passed on June 23.

Analysis

Looking Towards the Polls

Kamila Hyat in her article "Looking towards the Polls" analyses that people have lost complete interest in Elections which is visible by looking at new electoral rolls. She maintains in her article that Government's claim for 'fair and free elections' seems a distant dream. In this regard, she opines that pro-government nazims, and of course the familiar tools of transfers and misuse of official machinery, will play their part ahead of any poll.

The possibility of a snap election is now much the talk in many quarters. There are also indications that Washington, which dictates much of what happens in a great many other capitals, may also favour such a scenario. But the question that now needs to be asked is what poll, which leaders will always claim is fair and free, and the opposition almost certainly the contrary, will achieve.

The attitude of the people towards such a process is quite clear. In distinct contrast to events in 1988, when the excitement of polls after an interval of eleven years was visible everywhere, no one seems especially interested. Offices where new polling lists are reported to have been displayed remain virtually deserted, and in localities across the city, people maintain they have no real interest in going to check for their names on the lists.

Ominously, a significant number say they have no intention of voting, and a number say they are not even aware that lists have been displayed. While this is anecdotal evidence, the indications are that these sentiments are fairly widespread, at least within the Punjab. Unusually, reports even from smaller towns and villages speak of a degree of indifference -- although not as marked as that seen in Lahore.

Official attitudes towards polls have meanwhile also been made clear in the finding that between 16,000 to 20,000 voters have been left off the rolls. The fact that possession of a computerised National Identity Card (NIC) was made a necessary provision for inclusion as a voter in fact means thousands of people have deliberately been excluded from the scheduled balloting process. Significantly, the largest numbers of such voters are the poor, many located in relatively remote areas -- and as such their omission from the status of voter amounts to a further act of discrimination against them.

Why citizens should be punished for the inefficiency of a system that has either deliberately, or through ineptness, failed to deliver new identity cards to them is a question that those making decisions must answer.

And of course, apart from these persons, many others remain disenfranchised as they have never possessed an identity card in the first place. The largest among their ranks are women -- whose number on every voting roll prepared in the country has remained many times fewer than

that of men. The victims of such practices also include the most disempowered members of society, such as the homeless or nomadic people who cannot provide a fixed address. This, under existing rules, debars them from being provided with an identity card.

While members of the government continue to maintain that polls will be 'fair and free', this of course, many know, is only a distant dream. The fact is that already, major changes in constituency alignments -- most notably in the Larkana district of Sindh -- and an insidious process of "buying over" members of the opposition at various levels, has in fact meant the playing field has already been distinctly tilted to one side.

The evidence of how the local government system has been misused to strengthen central control is well documented. The pattern is most clear-cut in the Punjab. In 2001, 14 of the 34 nazims elected in the province won with the backing of the PPP. Nine others were supported by the PML-N, and one each by the JI and the PML-Junejo. Nine nazims were linked with pro-government groups. Before their term ended in 2005, 33 of the 34 nazims in the Punjab were in the PML-Q fold. A mixture of coercion, bribery and consistent pressure was used to bring them in, and the pattern continued ahead of the 2005 polls, with others being "bought" over. In several cases, high profile media events were staged to announce the change in loyalties of nazims, councillors or members of assemblies. The process has also been visible in other provinces, but on a markedly smaller scale.

As can be expected, pro-government nazims, and of course the familiar tools of transfers and misuse of official machinery, will play their part ahead of any poll. In addition, since 1993, the whispered suggestions of electronic tampering with ballots, of inflated vote numbers in hand-picked constituencies and of 'ghost' polling stations have added further doubts to the process. After all, the discrepancies seen in 1997, when polling for national and provincial assembly seats were held on the same day have never been adequately explained. It remains a mystery why, in a pattern seen almost countrywide, so many more voted for the central assembly seats compared to ballots cast at the provincial level, despite the fact that each voter turning up at a polling station was handed two sheets of paper to stamp and drop in the box.

Perhaps more grave even than the fact that the polling process itself is shrouded by deep shadows, is the fact that people have increasingly lost faith in it. This does not augur well for a mechanism that is central to the very notion of democracy. While to some extent a general sense of disillusionment with key political players is a reason for people showing so little interest in the polls, just like the hired audiences seen at rallies, many citizens today also have less and less confidence that the balloting itself will be biased. The conviction that results will be designed to favour rulers or fit in with their agenda which means people are in more and more cases deeply disenchanted with the entire process.

This is of course a deeply dangerous situation to be in for any country. It can change only if means are found to ensure the election process is truly transparent, and fair. In the first place, this would mean an autonomous election commission as well as the ushering in of rules to ensure that no citizen is disenfranchised. Till that happens, doubts will remain in place and the promise of democracy made so often to the people of Pakistan will continue to be perceived as both hollow and meaningless.

Governance at Large

I - Salient Features of the Budget (2007-08)

Federal Budget

Following are the salient features of the federal budget for the year 2007-08 announced by State Minister for Finance Omar Ayub Khan in the National Assembly here on June 9:

- q Total outlay of the budget 2007-08 is **Rs 1,599 billion**, 21.7% higher than the size of budget estimates for the year 2006-07.
- q The **resource availability** during 2007-08 has been estimated at Rs 1,394 billion against Rs 1,100 billion in the budget estimates of 2006-07.
- q **Net revenue receipts** for 2007-08 have been estimated at Rs 902 billion indicating an increase of 28% over the budget estimates of 2006-07.
- q **The capital receipts (net)** for 2007-08 have been estimated at Rs 59 billion as compared to budget estimates of Rs 16 billion in 2006-07.
- q **The external receipts** in 2007-08 are estimated at Rs 259 billion. This shows an increase of 8% over the budget estimates for 2006-07.
- q **The overall expenditure** during 2007-08 has been estimated at Rs 1,599 billion of which the current expenditure is Rs 1,056 billion and development expenditure Rs 543 billion.
- q **Current expenditure** shows an increase of 2.2 per cent over the revised estimates of 2006-07, while development expenditure will increase by 37.7% in 2007-08 over the revised estimates of 2006-07.
- q **The share of current expenditure** in total budgetary outlay for the year 2007-08 is 66% as compared to 72.4% in revised estimates for 2006-07.
- q An amount of Rs 35 billion has been allocated for Earthquake **Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority** in the PSDP 2007-08.
- q The government has announced Rs520 billion for the **Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP)** in the 2007-08 budget that is an overall increase of 24 per cent over the last year's allocation and a 30 per cent jump in the provincial development programmes' amount. The interesting part is that 86 per cent of the PSDP allocation will be consumed by ongoing development projects, leaving only 14 per cent for new high-priority projects. This means that the government has either been allocating very little amount or the allocated funds lapsed due to non-execution of the projects. The **water and power sector** receives the maximum amount of Rs84 billion compared to last year's Rs70 billion. The water sector also gets Rs73 billion outside the PSDP amount. Power sector allocations have been reduced from current year's Rs26 billion to Rs20 billion while the water sector allocation increases from Rs44 billion to Rs63 billion. Others who will share the PSDP amount include the **petroleum and natural resources division** (Rs72.81 billion), **communications** (Rs6.001 billion), **ports and shipping** (Rs17.39 billion),

interior division (Rs15.00 billion), industries and production (Rs1.42 billion), and defence division (Rs19.10 billion). **Communication**, which is allocated Rs30.69 billion in the current budget, will get Rs5.61 billion next year; **railways**, whose share is Rs10.40 billion in the current fiscal, will get Rs11.54 billion in the next budget; **planning division**, whose share in the current budget is Rs33.84 billion, will receive Rs14.43 billion. **Agriculture sector** is allocated Rs15.80 billion compared to last year's Rs11.27 billion, **industries and production division** will receive Rs94.98 billion compared to Rs51.34 billion of the current year. **Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas** have been allocated Rs13.72 billion against Rs10.45 billion of the current fiscal. No funds have been set aside in the PSDP for the **Kalabagh dam**.

q The **Defence Budget** for the next financial year has been increased to Rs275 billion from Rs250.2 billion of the current year.

q The government has earmarked a capital outlay of Rs12.6 billion for **atomic energy development** in the 2007-08 federal budget which is a 29.8 per cent increase over the allocation of Rs9.7 billion in the outgoing year.

q Provinces will be getting Rs 87.7 billion more from the federal revenue receipts under the **NFC Award**, with their share increasing to Rs 466 billion against last year's Rs 378 billion original budget estimates. Revised estimate in 2006-07, however, was Rs 391 billion. In 2007-08, **Punjab** will receive Rs 236.23 billion to Rs 188.895 (revised) last year, **Sindh** Rs 144 billion against last year's Rs 129 billion, **NWFP** Rs 55.93 billion against Rs 44.8 billion and **Balochistan** Rs 29.63 billion as compared to Rs 28.00 billion in 2006-07. According to the budget document, Balochistan would be getting Rs 3.534 billion and Sindh Rs 9.241 additional to their estimated share, while Punjab would be getting Rs 281 million and NFWP Rs 166 million less than the estimated allocation in the year 2006-7.

Provincial Budget

Punjab:

q Rs 3,56.171 billion provincial budget was presented by Punjab Government for 2007-08 with a revenue surplus of Rs 112.684 billion an enhance allocation to the Annual Development Programme to the tune of Rs 150 billion.

q The Punjab government has allocated Rs150 billion to the Annual Development Programme (ADP) for the next fiscal year (2007-08), which is a 50 percent increase from the current fiscal year (2006-07).

q The ADP includes Rs 93 billion for Core Provincial Development programmes, while the rest has been allocated to special programmes including special infrastructure, development of katchi abadis and developing districts and Tehsil/Town Municipal Administrations.

q been allocated Rs 410 million.

q Rs 4.9 billion has been allocated to it, out of which Rs 3.8 billion has been allocated to the Punjab Education Foundation.

q Within industrial sector, the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) has been allocated the largest sum. Since TEVTA is an important establishment in terms of imparting technical, industrial and vocational skill, Rs 1.9 billion has been allocated for it, which is 17.3 percent higher than the current fiscal year.

q The allocations for economic affairs have been increased by Rs 5.4 billion to Rs 23.18 billion.

Sindh:

q Rs 236 billion budget was present in Sindh Assembly.

q The outlay of the Sindh budget for FY-08 is higher by Rs 43 billion or 22.27 per cent than Rs 193 billion-revised budget for FY 2006-07.

q 15 per cent increase in the salaries of the government employees.

q In the new budget the Provincial Government has increased the rate of excise duty for hotels from existing rate of 60-70 to the proposed rate of 80 per cent and also imposed Rs 6,000 and Rs 8,000 motor vehicle tax on commercial vehicles up to 16,000 kgs and above this capacity, but below 29,999 kgs of weight. In last fiscal year, the provincial government had already levied Rs 8,000/- motor vehicle tax on 29,999 kgs commercial vehicles like trucks/trailers.

q An amount of Rs42.754 billion was budgeted as allocable for district governments on the basis of provisional PFC Award. But Rs 45.479 billion are being transferred to local governments, which include salary, non-salary and development components.

q In 2007-08 ADP, the highest priority has been assigned to the communication sector as the government sees it as a major vehicle for development. Rs7, 660 million or 19 percent of the provincial ADP and 70 percent above the current allocation of Rs4, 500 million have been apportioned for development of road network. Besides, Rs3, 050 million ABP assistance for Sindh Road Sector Development Project (SRDP) will also be available.

q Sindh Government has allocated Rs 8.6 billion for health sector during fiscal year 2007-08.

NWFP:

q Rs 114.5076 billion deficit budget for the fiscal year 2007-08 was presented in NWFP Provincial Assembly.

q The budget envisages a total deficit of Rs 5.4897 billion as the expected total income is Rs 109.0179 billion whereas the total expenditure amounts to Rs 114.507 billion. The NWFP government, however, is banking on the World Bank, which it said pledged in June to provide a Rs 7.8 billion grant to make up for the deficit. The NWFP is also expecting net hydel profits from the federal government in the next financial year.

q Budget had been divided into three categories – welfare budget, administrative budget and development budget. The **welfare budget** for the next fiscal year stood at Rs 40.2 billion (46 percent of the total budget), **development budget** Rs 39.5 billion (39 percent of the total budget), and **administrative budget** Rs 14.8 billion (15 percent of the total budget).

q Rs 21.9 billion for the Annual Development Programme (ADP), Rs 1.2 billion for district ADPs and Rs 8.3 billion for special programmes.

q 1,996 and 917 new jobs had been created in the health and police departments respectively.

q The annual financial assistance for madrassas had been increased from Rs 10 million to Rs 20 million.

Balochistan:

q The new budget envisages a total outlay of Rs 63.081 billion against the total receipts of Rs 53.248 billion with a resource gap of Rs 10.278 billion.

q The development expenditure is estimated at Rs 134.736 billion that also include Rs 3.332 billion for foreign assisted projects. Balochistan government will spend Rs 41.494 billion on current expenditure against a total revenue receipt of Rs 43.82 billion including income estimated from provincial resources at Rs 2.966 billion. Rs 40.86 billion are expected from the federal divisible pool.

q Rs13.47 billion have been allocated to Annual Development Programme (ADP).

q For Law & Order Rs4.52 billion have been allocated.

II - Chief Justice of Pakistan

During the month of June Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry visited Abbotabad, Faisalabad and Multan to address Bar Associations. At all the places the CJP was welcomed enthusiastically by huge crowd.

Three affidavits were filed by Government officials against Chief Justice of Pakistan. Aitzaz Ahsan claimed that the Government officials' affidavits had several factual mistakes, which showed that the affidavits are "fictitious" and "bogus". He said that the affidavit showed the date of March 8 when no reference had been filed, the CJP had not been declared ineffective and neither the SJC was hearing any case. He said that former Punjab IG and the current Sindh IG had also made errors in their affidavits, which showed that the entire episode was mala fide.

Armed men attacked the house of Advocate Amir Rana, nephew of Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry on June 17. This was done allegedly after he was warned by someone from intelligence agency named as Brig Zulfiqar

The Supreme Court (SC) on June 11, started regular hearing of the petition of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry after 19 days of arguments on its maintainability. The bench did not pass a formal judgment on the maintainability of the petition, but it announced that it will hear the case and that a consolidated judgment on the objections raised by the Government would come after the hearing.

During the petitions of CJP some interesting arguments were made from both counsel of Government as well as counsel of CJP. Justice Ramday also commented on few things:

- Justice Khalilur Rehman Ramday, head of a 13-member full court of the Supreme Court (SC) hearing a petition by the CJP said on June 12, that the case was not only related to the CJP, but put all judges on trial. He said that it is a very sensitive case and each one of us (judges) has been put on trial with regard to adjudication of this case.

- Aitzaz Ahsan, the lead counsel for Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, told the 13-member full court of the Supreme Court (SC) on June 6, that the executive action of sending a judge on forced leave provides enough ground for dissolving the assemblies and dismantling a Government.

- The Counsel for the President, Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, on June 6 submitted before a 13-member full court of the Supreme Court that the Supreme Judicial Council should hold camera proceedings (open trial) against Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, particularly in case when the accused judge desired so. The bench, however, asked Pirzada to intervene into the matter to resolve the situation as a senior counsel, instead of giving arguments.

III - PEMRA Ordinance – Curbs on Media

q The Government empowered the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) on June 4, to take stern punitive actions against any broadcast media for violation of its rules.

q Lawyers, journalists, international human rights and media organisations and opposition leaders slammed the curbs imposed on the electronic media by President Gen Pervez Musharraf and staged protest rallies in different parts of the country to register their protest. They supported the journalist community and vowed to continue the struggle for media freedom and condemned the promulgation of the PEMRA amendment ordinance.

q The Human Rights Watch said that the Pakistan Government should immediately rescind the Presidential decree imposing restrictions on the country's broadcast media. Brad Adams, Asia Director at the Human Rights Watch said that the Pakistani media is only doing its job by reporting on the Government's troubles. He further said that Musharraf's decree is a disgraceful assault on media freedom imposed by a leader who came to power by a coup instead of the ballot box.

q The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Ordinance 2007 was challenged in the Supreme Court (SC) on June 5. Barrister Zafarullah Khan filed a petition with the SC under Article 184(3) of the Constitution contending that in the backdrop of the judicial crisis, the amendments introduced by the President were aimed at gagging the media and depriving the people of their fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression enshrined in Article 19. The petitioner maintains that the new amendments violate articles 4, 8, 9, 18, 19, 23, 24 and 175 of the Constitution.

q A constitutional petition was filed in the Sindh High Court (SHC) as well on June 5, questioning the promulgation of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Ordinance, 2007, by President Pervez Musharraf, prior to the commencement of the National Assembly session. The petitioner, Syed Muhammad Iqbal Kazmi, making the Federal Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, PEMRA and the Sindh Information Department respondents, submitted that the amended PEMRA ordinance is aimed at gagging the media. A division bench of Sindh High Court on June 27 observed that anybody who filed a petition against the Government or its allies or of public importance was put behind bars, while issuing notice to respondents for July 9 in a petition challenging the recent amendments to the PEMRA Ordinance. The observation was made when the court took up a petition by local journalist Syed Iqbal Kazmi and was informed that he had been arrested.

q On June 6, the Government suspended any proceedings under the PEMRA Amendment Ordinance against the electronic media till a six-member committee reviews the recent changes in the ordinance and submits its report to the prime minister. According to a statement issued late on June 6, the committee will submit its report to the Prime Minister within the shortest possible time and till such time the proceedings under the PEMRA Amendment Ordinance, 2007 will not be initiated against electronic media. A meeting of the TV channels and newspapers' owners was held with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in Islamabad on the matter concerning the recently promulgated PEMRA Amendment Ordinance.

IV - Lal Masjid – Issues during the Month of June

Male and female students of Jamia Faridia, Jamia Hafsa and Beaconhouse School System, in a joint operation, kidnapped the Chinese women and Pakistani men shortly after midnight 22nd June from a Chinese Massage Centre, alleging they were running a brothel. However, the hostages said they were running a massage centre and beauty parlour.

The Lal Masjid administration released them after 17-hour detention, following talks with senior police and administration officials. The Capital Police, however, registered a case against Mulauna Abdul Aziz Ghazi and others under sections 365, 354, 452, 148, 149 and 109 of the Pakistan Penal Code and 7 anti-Terrorism Act.

On June 27, the Government deployed heavy contingent of rangers to take part in a planned crack down on religio-extremist tenants of the occupied land.

V - International Child Labour Day

The International Labour Day was observed throughout the country on 12 June along with other parts of the globe. This year the World Day against Child Labour focused on the Elimination of Child Labour in Agriculture. Worldwide agriculture is the sector where the largest percentage of working children is found – nearly 70 percent. Following are some facts in this regard:

Over 132 million girls and boys aged 5 to 15 years old often work from sun up to sun down on farms and plantations, planting and harvesting crops, spraying pesticides, and tending livestock.

- q Some 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 work either full time or part time.
- q Almost half, some 120 million work full time every day all year round.
- q Some 61 percent of them live in Asia; 32 percent in Africa and 7 percent in Latin America.
- q Of the 250 million children concerned, some 50-60 million are between 5 and 11 years and work by definition in hazardous circumstances, considering their age and vulnerability.
- q Child labour is also common in developed countries. For example, in the United States, more than 230,000 children work in agriculture and 13,000 in sweetshops.

VI - Four Year Performance of the National Assembly

According to a report titled “Four Year Performance of the National Assembly of Pakistan 2002-06” launched on 28 June, 88 Government bills are pending before the assembly that has so far passed only 42 government bills and one private member bill in the last four years. The focus of the Assembly remained on fulfilling the requirement of the constitution under which the Assembly is required to be in session for a minimum of 130 working days in a calendar year.

The data shows that the government introduced or laid some 139 bills and ordinances in the House while the NA Secretariat received a total of 200 private members bills. Out of 200 private members bills, only 27 were allowed to be introduced while only one bill was passed by the house. The highest number of 18 bills was passed by the assembly during the third parliamentary year, followed by 17 bills during the second parliamentary year. The NA passed only two bills, including the Finance Bill, during the first parliamentary year while in the fourth year it passed just five bills.

Following are the bills passed by the NA in four years:

No	Bills (Title)	Passed on	No	Bills (Title)	Passed on
01	The Removal from Services (Special Powers) Amendment Act 2003	April 21, 2007	22	The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Act 2004	March 11, 2005
02	The Finance Act 2003	June 14, 2003	23	The Export Development Fund (Amendment) Act 2004	March 17, 2005
03	The Constitution (Seventeenth Amendment) Act 2003	December 29, 2003	24	The Decorations (Amendment) Act 2004	April 13, 2005
04	The National Security Council Act 2004	April 7, 2004	25	The Federal Employee Benevolent Fund and Group Insurance (Amendment) Act 2004	April 13, 2005
05	The Finance Act 2004	June 24, 2004	26	The Pakistan Navy (Amendment) Act 2004	April 14, 2005
06	The Political Parties (Amendment) Act 2004	July 19, 2004	27	The Illegal Dispossession Act 2003	April 14, 2005
07	The Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Act 2003	July 29, 2004	28	The Federal Service Commission (Second Amendment) Act 2004	April 21, 2005
08	The Non-Performing Assets and Rehabilitation of Industrial Undertakings (Legal Proceedings) (Amendment) Act 2003	August 13, 2004	29	The Members of Parliament (Salaries and Allowances) (Amendment) Act 2005	April 21, 2005
09	The Code of Civil Procedure August 19, 2004 Act 2003	August 13, 2004	30	The Foreign Private Investment (Promotion, Protection) (Amendment) Act 2005	May 5, 2005
10	The Defamation (Amendment) Act 2004	August 19, 2004	31	The Safeguard Measures (Amendment) Act 2005	May 5, 2005
11	The Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act 2004	August 20, 2004	32	The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Act 2005	May 16, 2005
12	The Export Control on Goods, Technologies, Material and Equipment Related to Nuclear and Biological Weapons and their Delivery System Act 2004	September 14, 2004	33	The Press, Newspapers, News Agencies and Books Registration (Amendment) Act 2005	My 18, 2005
13	The Federal Public Commission (Amendment) Act 2004	September 23, 2004	34	The Finance Act 2005	June 17, 2005
14	The President to Hold Another Office Act 2004	October 14, 2004	35	The Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils (Amendment) Act 2005	September 9, 2005
15	The Gawadar Port Authority (Amendment) Act 2004	October 14, 2004	36	The Pakistan Council of Research Water Resources Act 2005	September 22, 2005
16	The Injured Persons (Medical Aid) Act 2004	October 15, 2004	37	The National Institute of Oceanography Act 2005	September 22, 2005
17	The Contempt of Court Act 2004	October 18, 2004	38	The Pakistan Telecommunication (Registration) (Amendment) Act 2005	December 14, 2005
18	The Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act 2004	October 18, 2004	39	The Hydrocarbon Development Institute of Pakistan Act 2005	December 14, 2005
19	The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2004	October 26, 2004	40	The Finance Act 2006	June 21, 2006
20	The Corporate and Industrial Restructuring Corporation (Amendment) Act 2004	March 3, 2005	41	The Federal Public Service Commission (Amendment) Act 2005	August 24, 2006
21	The Fiscal Responsibility and Debt Limitation Act 2003	March 3, 2005	42	The Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act 2006	November 11, 2006

VII - Pakistan Ranked 12th among 'Failed States'

Pakistan has been ranked the 12th most unstable country in the world – worse even than **North Korea at 13th** – in the 2007 Failed State Index issued on June 18 by Foreign Policy magazine and the Fund for Peace. For the second year in a row, **Sudan tops the index**, largely because of the humanitarian catastrophe in Darfur. **Iraq now ranks as the second most unstable country and Afghanistan the eighth**. The other seven countries in the top 10 are all in Africa. They include Somalia, Zimbabwe, the Ivory Coast and Congo. The index of 177 countries gives each country points out of 10 for 12 “social indicators of instability”, with higher scores indicating greater instability. Pakistan’s highest scores were for ‘security apparatus’ (9.5), ‘factionalised elites’ (9.5) and ‘group grievance’ (9.0). Its best score was for the economy (5.8). Iraq fell from fourth place last year to second. In a parallel series of reports, the Fund for Peace, a research and advocacy group, suggests a policy of managed partition for Iraq. The experiences of Iraq, as well as Afghanistan, show that billions of dollars in aid may be futile unless accompanied by a functioning government.

Geo-Political Dynamics

I - South Asia

Khan Network out of Business, Says US State Department

The US State Department, rejecting a claim by some American lawmakers that the network is still active said that the Khan network of nuclear proliferators is out of business. The department's remarks followed a congressional hearing where several lawmakers demanded direct US access to Dr A. Q. Khan now living under house arrest in Islamabad. Some lawmakers, especially those associated with the Indian caucus on Capitol Hill, also used the opportunity to attack Pakistan.

But at the State Department, spokesman Sean McCormack insisted that "the network as we knew it is out of business" and credited Pakistani authorities for doing so. Commenting on a report by London's International Institute for Strategic Studies which claims that the Khan network is still running, Mr McCormack said while he could not say whether "any copycats or other elements" associated with the group were attempting to continue these illicit activities, the network itself no longer existed.

No Timeframe for Kashmir Solution

After addressing the concluding session of a two-day conference of Parliamentarians from South Asian countries, titled 'Towards South Asian unity', organised by the South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA), Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee has said that India cannot set a timeframe for a resolution of the dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir, but discussions under the composite dialogue process between the two countries are ongoing and showing encouraging signs. He said that we have held three rounds of discussions, the results of which were encouraging. The Minister rejected the proposed demilitarisation of Kashmir. He further said that India wants to speed up the peace process, and demanded a liberalised visa regime for students, journalists and professionals.

The Minister said that a South Asian University should be constructed in New Delhi and India was discussing this proposal with regional countries including Pakistan. He said the inter-connectivity of South Asia would be improved by upgrading trade, transport and telecommunication links.

India and Pakistan Reach Agreement on Transport Charges: Iran Seeks Changes in IPI Gas Pact

Iran on June 28 sought last-minute changes in the agreement on the pricing of natural gas to be supplied to India and Pakistan through a 7.4 billion dollar pipeline, as New Delhi and Islamabad reached an agreement on transportation charges. India and Pakistan had agreed on the price formula proposed by Iran according to which gas would be priced at 4.93 dollars per million British thermal unit. The two countries, however, had wanted the Iranian formula to remain the basis for pricing of natural gas for the entire 25-year duration of the supply contract, reports PTI.

India and Pakistan reached an agreement on the principle of computing the transportation charges payable to Islamabad for sending the gas through the 1,050-km section of the pipeline in Pakistan. But the issue of transit fee, payable to Islamabad for allowing passage of the pipeline to India, was not resolved as the officials decided that the issue be left to the political leadership to discuss. While the transportation tariff was purely an economic issue related to the cost involved in transmission of gas, transit fee was more of a political goodwill issue and the charges, many

times waived, depend on agreement between the nations. The transit fee issue would be decided when oil ministers of India and Pakistan meet just before the tri-nation ministerial conference in the second half of July.

The proposed pipeline will initially carry 60 million cubic metres of gas, split equally between Pakistan and India. The delivery point will be at the Iran-Pakistan border. Pakistan was previously seeking a transportation tariff of 0.70-0.75 dollars per mBtu while New Delhi was willing to pay no more than 0.55 per mBtu (220 million dollars annually). India decided to go with the Pakistani number. On transit fee, Islamabad is seeking 0.493 dollars per mBtu and New Delhi has offered 0.20 dollars per mBtu.

Project to Stop Poll Cheats in Bangladesh

Bangladesh's army-backed authorities moved on June 10 to overhaul the country's voting system, photographing thousands of would-be voters in a bid to stamp out cheating. A General Election scheduled for January was postponed due to political violence amid accusations of vote-rigging and corruption by the two main parties. A state of emergency was subsequently imposed by the interim authority and all political activity banned. A re-run of the poll is expected by the end of 2008.

The pilot project to overhaul the registration process involves taking photographs and obtaining fingerprints of eligible voters. The information could also be used for identification cards. Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda said that the project would run for three weeks and will cover some 45,000 eligible voters in the Sreepur district, 70 km north of Dhaka. Huda said if the project was successful the model would be used to create a national voters' list. The most recent list made in 2006, which was to be used in the postponed Jan 22 election, was found to be grossly flawed. The Washington-based National Democratic Institute for International Affairs said the list contained more than 12 million fake entries. The army has set up 30 camps in Sreepur to assist election commission officials with the project.

Bangladesh's Former Prime Ministers

Bangladesh Bans Hasina from Going Abroad

A court in Bangladesh has barred former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from leaving the country, police said on June 14, just two months after she was briefly banned from returning home. The court ordered the Dhaka Airport's immigration authority not to allow Hasina, who has been charged with extortion, to leave for the United States via London on the night of June 14.

Khaleda Sued for Violating Business Law

Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and 12 others have been charged for violating laws governing trading and manufacturing companies in the country. A court has asked all of the accused, including Khaleda's detained elder son Tareque Raman, to appear before it on July 16. They were directors of the Daily Dinkal Limited, publisher of the Dainik Dinkal newspaper, a mouthpiece of Khaleda's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). The Dinkal Limited is an unlisted private limited company, court officials said on Wednesday. Six of the charged people including Tareque, Khaleda's heir apparent, and two of her former ministers have been in jail for months after being detained in an anti-corruption drive by the country's army-backed interim government. The Joint Stock Company, a state-managed watchdog and regulator of private and public limited firms, filed a case for dodging their legal obligations at a court on Tuesday.

Political Situation in Nepal

Monarchy in Nepal

A survey showed on June 8 that nearly six out of 10 Nepalese want the monarchy to be abolished in the Himalayan nation, but the same number are unclear about the relevance of upcoming elections. The opinion poll, carried out in April by the South Asia Democracy Group, showed that

59 percent of respondents said they wanted embattled King Gyanendra to go. The survey also found a majority of people are upbeat over the impoverished country's peace process, with 67 percent believing Nepal's Maoists would stick to a pledge to abide by democratic norms and not return to war. "During the first survey (in 2004), the idea of a republic was favoured by only 15 percent of respondents," the South Asia Democracy Group noted in a summary of the new poll. The study, however, also revealed that 59 percent of people did not understand what upcoming elections scheduled for later this year were all about. Voters will be asked to choose the members of a body to rewrite the constitution and decide the fate of the 238-year-old monarchy.

Nepal Elections

Nepal's Prime Minister will soon announce an election date and has promised he will not let the polls be postponed again. Parliament Speaker Subash Nemwang said he met with the Prime Minister, who assured him that the elections for the Constituent Assembly would be held in November as planned - and that he would not let the date be changed again. The eight parties in Nepal's ruling coalition had initially scheduled the elections for June 20, but postponed them after election officials sought more time for technical preparations and for the Government to pass new election laws.

II - East Asia

Philippine Elections Tainted despite Citizens' Watch

The Philippines held elections for its bicameral legislature as well as local government officials last May 14 under the watch of the mass media, Philippine civil society groups, and foreign monitoring teams. But the elections seem to have been tainted by allegations of disenfranchisement, ballot-box snatching, fraud and violence.

An indication of the relative independence of the mass media, whose coverage of the campaign and the elections has provided the citizenry information on the candidates and developments on both election-day and after, **the incidents of violence, fraud and disenfranchisement** have been widely reported by the country's newspapers and broadcast networks. But as if to underline the uneasy relationship between the media and the government, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) has ordered the media to halt the 'quick counts' the TV networks were doing. Private quick counts have been a feature of Philippine elections since the 1950s, when a citizens' groups called the National Movement for Free Elections first did its own count as an antidote to fraud. The official count in the Philippines then and now is so slow the votes are tallied by hand as part of a complicated process that starts at the polling precincts and ends in the House of Representatives-- the official results are expected only weeks after election-day.

Efforts at computerization have so far foundered on allegations of corruption and overpricing, with the result that the tally is still conducted by hand by public school teachers. Analysts say the citizen counts have become especially crucial in the 2007 elections, primarily because the results could decide whether Mrs. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, about whose legitimacy some 70 percent of Filipinos have doubts, can be impeached later this year. Mrs. Arroyo has survived two impeachment attempts one in 2005 and another last year, both on charges of violating the Constitution, corruption and human rights violations-- by the opposition primarily because of her control over the House of Representatives where an impeachment complaint must be submitted. (The Upper House, or Senate, would serve as the impeachment court once it receives the complaint from the House.) Her keeping control of the House after these elections would assure that a third attempt to impeach her would fail.

The Comelec order, together with a host of other decisions it has made, has been cited by opposition and other critics as unconstitutional, since it would violate the Constitutional protection the press enjoys, and as an indication as well of administration determination to cheat, as the long official count drags on. They have reason to worry. The official Comelec count for the Senate

elections as of May 17, or three days after election-day, was laboriously plodding into the thousands. The TV networks' counts were already past the millions. The difference provides the window of opportunity for election operators to manipulate the count as the weeks drag on, and to subvert the people's will.

III - Middle East

EU Resumed Aid to Palestine

The European Union (EU) on June 11 resumed aid to the Palestinian finance ministry for the first time since the West launched an economic boycott of the Government over a year ago. Meanwhile, Palestinian factions reached a new Egyptian-mediated truce deal to halt the recent gun battles that have resulted in six dead and dozens injured.

The European Union, one of the biggest Palestinian donors, suspended direct aid to their Government after Islamist movement Hamas blacklisted by the West as a terrorist organisation took office in March 2006. The European Commission has now decided to renew direct assistance to the ministry after Hamas formed a national unity government in March. The assistance begins with a 4 million euro project to help ensure that Palestinian taxpayers' money is spent efficiently and that expenditures are accounted for. "Finance Minister Dr Salam Fayyad and European Commission representative John Kjaer signed a memorandum of understanding which relaunched European Union assistance to the ministry of finance.

Under the project launched, the money would be paid in installments until June 2009 and training would be provided in both the Ramallah and Gaza City offices of the finance ministry by accountancy firm Ernst and Young. Fayyad said in a statement, "this support for the ministry...will help me ensure that we work in accordance with the best international standards, and that the government can give every Palestinian taxpayer the assurance that their money is being legally and honestly spent".