



**e- Newsletter**

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

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Gender

## Women & Politics

### 1st Muslim Woman Takes Front Seat in UK Parliament

Human rights lawyer Sayeeda Warsi has become the first Muslim woman to take a front-bench post at cabinet level in the British Parliament. The 36-year old mother of one took her seat in the House of Lords as Baroness Warsi. She is also the youngest member of Britain's Upper Parliamentary chamber and the first female Muslim for the opposition Conservative Party. Warsi said community cohesion is about "how we all live together with ease, how we feel comfortable in our communities and ways in which we bind together as a nation". She joins two other Muslim women in the House of Lords, Baroness Uddin, who was given a peerage to represent the ruling Labour Party in 1998 and Baroness Falkner, who was elevated to the upper chamber as a Liberal Democrat in 2004.

There have been no Muslim women so far elected to the 646-member House of Commons, which includes only four Muslim male MPs, who are all from the Labour Party. There are also four Muslim men already in the House of Lords, three Labour and one Conservative. Warsi formally takes up her post after being appointed by Cameron in a cabinet reshuffle in June, when he said he was creating a new post to demonstrate his party's commitment to tackling challenges faced by modern Britain.

### India's First Women-only Political Party Launched

India's new All-Female Political Party said on October 16 that it aims to rid the country of corruption and poverty, and focus on women's issues. The United Women Front has nearly 100 members, and plans to induct thousands more to provide a "clean" alternative to India's traditionally male-dominated parties, which are perceived as being dishonest, its leaders said. Party President Suman Krishan Kant, a women's rights activist and wife of a late Vice-President, told a news conference that, I believe women are more honest, more capable and more hardworking. She further said that the party would raise funds through individual, not corporate, donations. The party will field candidates in local elections in western Gujarat and northern Himachal Pradesh states due to be held this year, and in national elections scheduled for 2009. Party leaders said issues affecting women such as dowries and abortions of female fetuses would get special attention.

### Farzana, Amina Declared MNAs on Reserved Seats

The Election Commission of Pakistan on October 4<sup>th</sup> 2007, through a notification, declared Farzana Malik and Amina Saleem as Member of the National Assembly on reserved seats. Two ruling PML candidates were nominated MNAs from a list of probable candidates, the Party had submitted to the Commission in 2002 for reserved seats, keeping in view all political parties seats won in the General Elections. The two newly filled seats were vacated by Dr. Saira Tariq and Shahzadi Umerzadi, who resigned in protest against President General Musharraf's decision to seek another term from the same assemblies in the military outfit.

## Women & Economics

### **Dr. Shamshad Best Governor in Asia**

State Bank of Pakistan Governor Dr. Shamshad Akhtar has been conferred the prestigious award of "Best Central Bank Governor for Asia 2007" in a recognition of the exceptional contribution, she has made to the overall financial sector and monetary policy management. Emerging Markets Magazine managing Director of an eminent publication presented the award to Dr. Shamshad Akhtar at a ceremony in Washington. The annual award is conferred by the magazine which performed outstandingly in the field in their countries after a rigorous review process by panelist input experts. The citation acknowledged the illustrious performance of the Governor in the field of monetary policy management. Finance Ministers, Governors of the Central Banks from several countries and senior officials of international financial institutions, who are in Washington for the annual World Bank-IMF meetings attended the event.

### **Women Workers Exposed to Health Risks in Herat Factories**

The Safi fur and wool factory, in Herat city, western Afghanistan, has more than 350 female and 300 male workers who earn only 300 Afghani (US\$6) for their 48-hour, six-day week. The factory produces coats, jackets, hats and other garments for the European and North American markets. There are more than 1,500 women working in four such factories in Herat city. The air in the Safi processing plant is full of dust from dirty furs, which workers tear to pieces with their bare hands. Workers have to separate fur from goats' hair and weave sheep's wool without protective gloves or masks.

Afghanistan's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) said it would send a delegation to Herat to assess and report on the situation of female workers in factories there. According to Bashiri, a revised draft labour law has been submitted to the National Assembly for approval, which has "many benefits for female workers", including maternity leave, equal wages for men and women and a light working regime for women during pregnancy. According to Afghanistan's labour law, public and private employers should provide medical insurance to employees who work in hazardous environments. However, there are too many hurdles - including poor law enforcement institutions, lack of awareness about women's rights and conservative traditions - which constrict the law on paper with weak or no practical power. Almost all workers in factories in Herat province have no written contract with their employers, particularly in the private sector. Workers and employers have only verbal agreements, which do not cover medical and hazard insurance. In the past 12 months, seven women workers of the wool and fur factories in Herat have died due to respiratory diseases and chest infections, workers and Mohammad Ibrahim Ghafari, an official at the Safi factory, said. Workers' health problems have been compounded by their inability to afford medical checks and treatment. There is no legal imperative for employers to offer assistance to their workers in need of medical treatment.

### **ILO Project for Women Empowerment**

To provide skill development opportunities to unemployed women in hospitality and tourism, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) here on October 19<sup>th</sup> launched its project titled 'Women Empowerment through Hotel Management Training.' The launching ceremony, organized in collaboration with its implementing partner Hashoo Foundation, was attended by representatives of development and humanitarian organizations and a large number of girls who have already benefited from the project. Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, Secretary Malik Asif Hayat gave away certificates to as many as 56 successful trainees. The project is part of ILO's country programme — 'Women employment concerns and working conditions in Pakistan.' Funded by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the project aims to provide direct assistance to women to secure decent employment and improve the quantity and quality of employment with a view to promote their empowerment. The project, that began in June 2007, will provide free of cost training in hotel management to 318 women till March 2008. Targeting women aged 18 to 35 the programme will ensure free and safe accommodation and transportation to the beneficiaries coming from remote areas.

## Women & HR

### **UNSC Calls for Boosting Women's Role**

The Security Council has urged countries and the UN system to enhance women's participation in decision-making and to take specific steps to protect women and girls from gender-based violence during conflicts. In a presidential statement adopted at the end of a day-long open meeting on October 21<sup>st</sup>, the Council noted the "constant underrepresentation of women in formal peace processes," and called for enhancing their role in matters related to the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. The 15-member body also expressed deep concern that gender-based violence, particularly rape, remain "pervasive, and in some situations have become systematic," despite calls for the protection of

women and girls. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said "there is so much left to do - both for the United Nations and for Member States," to implement the provisions of resolution 1325 - the landmark document adopted by the Council in 2000 which stresses the importance of giving women equal participation and full involvement in peace and security matters and the need to increase their role in decision-making.

## **Workshop on Sensitive Reporting through Gender Lens -- Why are Women Victimized at Home and Outside?**

The German Agency for Technical Co-operation, GTZ in collaboration with Social Welfare, Women's Development Department under its Women's Protection Project (WPP), has arranged a four-day workshop to train students of Mass Communication hailing from the University of the Punjab and other leading colleges of the City. The organizers aim to train Media Sciences students to improve and sensitise their reporting through a gender lens to provide better coverage to women who become victims of violence. The second day of the workshop titled 'Sensitive reporting through gender lens' concluded after an interactive session on Violence Against Women (VAW), with most in attendance agreeing in principle on the notion that violence increased as more women came out in the professional market but the solution lay in 'exposing yourself to situations with some precautions to pre-empt violence because exposure is the best teacher.'

Humaira Hashmi conducted the third and fourth sessions on "Reasons underlying VAW" and "Types of VAW". Her presentation detailed that gender-based violence was prevalent at homes, work and marketplaces. She explained during her interactive session that VAW was a crime rampant in two forms: physical and psychological. The session highlighted the reasons behind domestic violence and the ways to prevent things from getting ugly. Domestic violence includes physical abuse, violence between spouses and 'patriarchal' abuse by husbands, brothers, and sons on the physical level and verbal abuses, maltreatment and intimidation on the psychological. Women had to face sexual harassment at workplaces that included insinuations sexual in nature, obscene comments, undesired physical contact, embarrassing comments, compromising invitations and requests for sexual favours. Another feature highlighted by the speaker was that psychological violence also included discriminatory attitudes like less pay, violation of privacy and Glass Ceiling Effects - women are denied higher posts due to gender stereotypes. A research highlighted that those prone to invite gender violence were women belonging to low socio-economic groups, were usually illiterate, financially dependant, younger and less exposed. Illiterate males from lower socio-economic groups, who are unemployed and financially burdened, are the ones who vent their frustration through violence, particularly against women.

## **Books/Articles/Reports on Gender**

Title	On the Margins: Violence Against Women with Disabilities. Research Report Written for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
Author	Naidu, E., Haffejee, S., Vetten, L. & Hargreaves, S.
Publication Date	April 2005
Publisher	The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
Short Summary	Why are South African women with disabilities more vulnerable to violence than non-disabled women and experience it differently? To what extent do service providers recognise and respond to their needs? This report from a small-scale exploratory research project conducted in 2001 makes visible the nature and forms of violence against women with disabilities, their particular vulnerabilities to violence, and the barriers they confront accessing assistance. It finds that although both disabled and non-disabled women are subject to gender-based violence, women with disabilities have particular economic, social and psychological vulnerabilities to abuse. They are not only more vulnerable, but experience particular forms of abuse which are not yet fully understood and encapsulated in conventional definitions of gender-based violence, linked to their specific type of disability. Because of stigma, and social isolation, women with disabilities may endure violence for longer periods of time and are less able to escape abusive caregivers. Service providers, both government and non-government, do not have an adequate understanding of the experiences and needs of women with disabilities, and often deliver inadequate and inappropriate support. To transform their services providers should conceive of women with disabilities as citizens with rights and entitlements, rather than dependents in need of charity and special care.
Complete Document	<a href="http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papdisab.htm">http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papdisab.htm</a>

## Musharraf's Candidacy Pleas

### SC Seeks Way Out in Case of Martial Law

The Supreme Court (SC) on 22<sup>nd</sup> October asked Justice (Retd) Wajeehuddin Ahmed's lawyer Aitzaz Ahsan to suggest a way out for the court in a situation where General Pervez Musharraf may go for martial law if the court decided against him in the two offices case and acceptance of his nomination papers by the Election Commission (EC). Justice Khalilur Rehman Ramday of the 11-member SC bench said that **"This is an extraordinary situation. Be realistic. What is the way out?"** When Aitzaz asked the court to pronounce its verdict according to the Constitution and aspirations of the people, Justice Javed Iqbal, head of the 11-member bench, asked him if he wanted a decision based on the aspirations of the people or a decision based on constitutional provisions. **"What's the guarantee that whatever decision the court would take will be implemented?"** Aitzaz said the SC had declared that the doctrine of necessity was history, adding that the Constitution opposed the running of an army officer for elections and he would prove it through arguments. Justice Ramday asked Aitzaz if the court could rule out **imposition of Martial Law**. He said that "it will be difficult for me to say that Martial Law is buried because a full court had ruled in 1988 that martial law had been buried forever but this was not the case".

**Two offices till Nov 16:** Aitzaz said that the Constitution allowed Musharraf to hold two offices till November 16, but he couldn't contest elections for the office of President because there was no provision in the 17th Amendment for an army chief to participate in the election. He said that if the court decided against Musharraf, there was a complete process in the Constitution for the transition of power and the Senate chairman should take over as acting president on November 15 and hold the presidential election for the next term. Aitzaz said there was no room for imposition of martial law and the court should uphold the Constitution. He said the nation was in a state of civil war and it's time the court saved the nation by giving a verdict according to the Constitution. Aitzaz said that articles 243, 244 and 245 of the Constitution clearly said that no armyman could take part in politics. He said that the Army Act also barred army officers from participating in politics. He said that General Musharraf is not qualified to contest the Presidential Election the day he had filed his nomination papers, therefore, he could not be declared a lawful candidate for the office. He said that the armed forces must remain under the control of the Federal Government, adding that every member of the armed forces was constitutionally bound to desist from political activities and serve only the Pakistan Army.

**The members of the bench are Justice Abdul Hameed Dogar, Justice Khalilur Rehman Ramday, Justice Muhammad Nawaz Abbasi, Justice Faqir Muhammad Khokhar, Justice Javed Buttar, Justice Tassaddaque Hussain Jillani, Justice Raja Fayyaz Ahmed, Justice Chuadhry Ijaz Ahmed, Justice Syed Jamshed Ali Shah and Justice Ghulam Muhammad Rabbani.**

Justice Khalilur Rehman Ramday of the 11-member Supreme Court (SC) bench hearing the constitutional petitions challenging the acceptance of General Pervez Musharraf's nomination papers by the Election Commission (EC), on October 23<sup>rd</sup> said that the **disqualification clauses given in the Constitution apply to a Presidential candidate at the time of filing of nomination papers**, During the course of arguments by Justice (R) Wajeehuddin Ahmed's lawyer Aitzaz Ahsan, Justice Ramday observed that **Article 41 (2) of the Constitution, which described qualifications for the President, started with the sentence a person shall not be qualified for election as President unless he fulfills the conditions laid down in the Constitution for the office of President**". "Under this article no body shall be President unless qualified for election of President," he said. Elaborating, he said that Article 41 (2) clearly stated that qualification and disqualification would apply on the candidate at the time of filing of the nomination papers and taking oath of the office.

**Justice Chaudhry Ijaz Ahmed said that President General Pervez Musharraf's statement on doffing uniform, submitted before the court, was irrelevant and the court would not consider this document while deciding the case.**

Attorney-General Justice (Retd) Malik Muhammad Qayyum on October 29<sup>th</sup> told the Supreme Court that Justice (Retd) Wajihuddin Ahmed's petition against General Musharraf's candidacy is not maintainable as no enforcement of any fundamental right is involved in it. He was submitting his arguments before a nine-member larger bench of the apex court, headed by Justice Javed Iqbal, hearing the identical petitions, challenging the candidature of General Musharraf for October 6 election for the office of the President. The Attorney-General contended that the jurisdiction of this court to entertain this petition was barred by Article 41(6) of the Constitution as the election of the President could not be questioned before any court. However, he said the petitioner has the remedy through moving high court to hear the case of disqualification for the presidential candidate. At this, Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan, counsel for Justice (Retd) Wajihuddin Ahmed, said as to why the government did not raise this point when he was submitting his arguments for five days. He said he could have better answer to the points raised by the Attorney-General. Justice Javed Iqbal observed that a point could be raised anytime. Justice Ramday observed that it would not be correct to say that the electoral college could not elect President twice during its tenure as it had to elect President in case of his death or resignation. Ramday said: **"If we say that Parliament cannot elect the President twice then there would be chaos and anarchy in the country, President could die or he could resign so what would be the situation then?"**

## Presidential Watch

Herald in its October 2007 Issue, published a feature on the history of Pakistan's Presidential Elections. Facts and figures were provided in the feature. Following are some of them:

### The Long and the Short

Field Marshal Ayub Khan was the longest serving President of the country. He spent 10 years and six months in the saddle. Ayub Khan took over as President on October 27, 1958, and stepped down from office on March 25, 1969. The man who came closest to Ayub Khan's record was General Ziaul Haq, who assumed the office of President on September 16, 1978, and remained in power for another nine years and 11 months. Wasim Sajjad had the shortest tenure possible, after taking oath as President on December 2, 1997. He spent barely a month in office and quit on January 1, 1998. Among Military Presidents, General Yahya Khan's rule was the shortest, lasting two years and nine months.

### Presidential Votes

1965: Field Marshall Ayub Khan won the country's first Presidential Elections held in 1965, amid charges of rigging. His rival Mohtarama Fatima Jinnah posed a serious challenge to Ayub Khan, securing majority votes in some provinces.

1973: Chaudhry Fazl; Illahi of the Pakistan Peoples Party was the first President to be elected after the country adopted its third Constitution.

1988: Gulham Ishaq Khan took over as President days after General Ziaul Haq died in a plane crash in August 1988. Gulham Ishaq won the Presidential Elections held on December 13, 1988.

**1993:** His successor Farooq Laghair was declared elected after a contest with the interim President Wasim Sajjad in November 1993.

**1997:** Rafiq Tarrar, the man who took over from Leghari, polled the highest number of votes in the Presidential Election of December 31, 1997.

**2004:** General Pervez Musharraf succeeded in getting a nod from the Electoral College on January 1, 2004.

### Power Tools: Clipped and Unclipped

**Eighth Amendment:** From 1985 onwards the President has been endowed with a Constitution weapon to bring wayward Prime Ministers and their Governments to heel. In fact, the passing of the Eighth Amendment by the Upper House of Parliament in the same year gave the President the right to dismiss the Government. The amendment also affected 19 clauses and sub-clauses of the Constitution, making the President more powerful than the Prime Minister. General Ziaul Haq was the first President to invoke those powers when he dismissed the Government of Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo in May 1988. The same amendment was invoked at least here more times in the 1990s, first by Gulham Ishaq Khan and then by Farooq Leghari.

**Thirteenth Amendment:** In 1997, the Government of Nawaz Sharif adopted the Thirteenth Amendment in an attempt to curtail the powers of the President. Though the move faced the resignation of Leghari, it sparked off a judicial crisis and political turmoil.

**Seventeenth Amendment:** The National Assembly adopted the Seventeenth Amendment on December 29, 2003, giving General Pervez Musharraf a constitutional license to hold both the office of President and Chief of Army Staff. The move paved the way for his election three days later.

## Electoral Rolls/Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP)

### 28 Million 'Missing' Voters Found

Election Commission of Pakistan has issued a "final list" of voters, putting the electorate at 80 million, an increase of 28 million from the first draft list published in June. The Election Commission published computerized electoral rolls across the country as per Section 16 of the Electoral Rolls Act 1974, reads with Rule 15 of the Electoral Rolls Rules, 1974.

ECP Secretary Kanwar Muhammad Dilshad said that the lists of electoral rolls contained 80,000,000 voters as compare to previous 57,900,000 voters. He informed that the ECP has started work to prepare electoral rolls from July last year. He said that the next General Election in the country would be in the focus of whole world and the political parties should cooperate with the ECP to hold them in free and fair atmosphere. He also requested political parties to emphasize on their manifestoes rather than indulging in blame game. He said the political parties have been provided with draft code of conduct and a final document would be evolved in their presence.

### EC Urged to Put Voters' List on Website

The Pakistan People's Party has asked the Election Commission to put the updated voters' list on its website before printing them for scrutiny by political parties. The demand was made by the PPP's Election Monitoring Cell after a meeting here on October 12. The meeting was presided over by the coordinator of the cell, Senator Sardar Latif Khosa, and attended by MPA Amir Fida Piracha, Palwasha Behram and Sheikh Mansoor. PPP spokesman Farhatullah Babar said the meeting decided that Senator Khosa would raise the issue before the Supreme Court to direct the ECP to place the list on its website before their printing. The ECP is updating the list on the directive of the Supreme Court on the petition of PPP chairperson Benazir Bhutto. The PPP had termed the draft electoral rolls for 2007 parliamentary elections faulty after finding that the names of 20 million eligible voters were missing as compared to the electoral rolls used in the October 2002 polls. The ECP now has claimed that as directed by the Supreme Court, it has been working on updating the electoral rolls. The PPP, however, has demanded that the list be placed on the website so that the political parties could verify the claims made by the ECP. The PPP's Election Monitoring Cell also decided to coordinate with the party organizations of all four provinces to ensure that all candidates conducted door-to-door verification in their respective constituencies.

### ECP Urged to Implement Electoral Reforms

A civil society organization on Monday urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to implement administrative and procedural reforms to ensure free and fair elections in the country. In a statement, the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) said the ECP needed to implement significant administrative and procedural reforms in the light of experiences and lessons learned from the past elections.

Some of the reforms proposed by the CPDI include:

- § One of the most important reforms that the ECP needs to undertake is regarding its monitoring and oversight mechanism for the code of conduct. Past experience tells us that the code of conduct is frequently violated by all political contestants with impunity, while the ECP miserably fails to take any effective action against the violators. The commission needs to give a serious consideration to this problem, and must inform the stakeholders about how it would be handling complaints and ensuring compliance with the code of conduct during the next General Elections.
- § The monitoring and implementation mechanism established for the next elections should be transparent, efficient, credible and effective; and violators must be severely punished without any exception.
- § Serious problems have also been noticed in the past in relation to the electoral rolls. The new computerized electoral rolls are not likely to address these problems, as the new rolls would include many unverified voters from the 2002 rolls which were widely known for including bogus and double entries.
- § It said the new electoral rolls must be made available on the website, so that individual voters as well as political parties and civil society organizations could have access to them. This would improve transparency of electoral rolls and help in identifying the potential problems by the public. Furthermore, many politicians and civil society observers have frequently complained about the late notification of or last minute changes to the polling schemes.

It is suspected that such delays or last-minute changes are often deliberate, and are meant to benefit favourite candidates.

## Code of Conduct for General Elections

### Draft Code of Conduct for General Elections

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on October 24<sup>th</sup> released a draft code of conduct for the General Elections. Addressing a press conference, Secretary ECP Kanwar Dilshad said copies of the draft Code of Conduct have been sent to more than 90 political parties registered with the ECP and they have been advised to suggest amendments by November 3.

Following are some of the provisions under the proposed Code of Conduct:

- § **Ministers** will be barred from combining their **official visits** with election campaign.
- § The parties and their candidates shall not hold **public meetings or rallies** on main streets, roads and chowks to avoid traffic jams and inconvenience to the public. The party or candidate shall inform the local administration of the venue and time of any proposed meeting well in time to enable police to make arrangements for controlling traffic and maintaining law and order.
- § The limit of **election expenses** has been proposed at Rs1.5 million and Rs1 million for National and Provincial Assembly seats, respectively.
- § No person or party will be allowed to affix larger **posters, hoardings, banners or leaflets** than the prescribed size. The commission has prescribed the maximum size of posters as 2ft-x-3ft, hoardings 3ft-x-5ft, banners 3ft x 9ft and leaflets and handbills nine inches-x-six inches. The local authorities and returning officers will be responsible for implementation of the restriction.
- § No **advertisement, notice or announcement** paid for from public funds will carry explicit or implicit reference, name, designation or photograph of any public functionary or holder of a state or public office to project himself as the originator, sponsor, promoter or organizer of any scheme, project, progress, ideology or vision. Issue of advertisement at the cost of public exchequer in the newspapers and other media and misuse of official mass media during for partisan coverage of political news and publicity regarding achievements with a view to furthering the prospects of the party in power will be avoided.
- § Processions shall not be taken out by one party along places at which **meetings are being held by another party**. Posters affixed by one party shall not be removed nor distribution of handbills and leaflets prevented by workers of another party.
- § The first clause of the draft states: “The political parties shall not **propagate any opinion, or act in any manner prejudicial to the ideology of Pakistan**, or the sovereignty, integrity or security of Pakistan, or morality, or the maintenance of public order, or the integrity or independence of the judiciary of Pakistan, or which defames or brings into ridicule the judiciary or the armed forces of Pakistan, as provided under Article 63 of the Constitution.”
- § **Criticism of other political parties**, when made, shall be confined to their policies and programmes, past record and work. Parties and candidates shall refrain from criticism of all aspects of private life, not connected with the public activities of the leaders or workers of other parties. Criticism based on unverified allegations or distortion shall be avoided.
- § All parties and candidates shall avoid scrupulously all activities which are “**corrupt practices**” and offences under the election laws such bribing, intimidation and impersonation of voters, canvassing within 400 yards of a polling station and holding public meetings during the last 48 hours before polling.
- § Political parties and candidates have been asked to restrain their workers from exerting undue pressure against the **print and electronic media**, including newspaper offices and printing presses, or resorting to violence of any kind against the media.
- § The parties and candidates have also been asked to **refrain from making comments or commit any act which may prejudice Pakistan’s foreign relations**. Controversial and harsh remarks about leaders of other countries and their ideologies shall be avoided.

### Code for Elections – Analysis by The News

The Election Commission's proposed code of conduct for the forthcoming General Election has both its good and bad points. To a great extent, it is also a repetition of previous poll codes and would be seen by many as an exercise that the Commission must fulfill as part of a legal and electoral formality.

**Some of the recommendations that deserve praise** include the guideline for political parties not to enter into any kind of cooperative agreement which ends up barring women from participating in the election, either as candidates or as voters. While the point is well taken and indeed worthy, the fact of the matter is that in the last General Election as well as in local bodies elections, such agreements were entered into by various political parties in some of the more conservative and patriarchal parts of the country. Such cooperation was in many cases widely reported in the national media but, disappointingly, no action of any kind was taken against the perpetrators of such illegal acts. One hopes that this time around the Election Commission will be more stringent in its monitoring of such cabals which seek to disenfranchise half of the voting population. The directive to political parties not to incite emotions that could lead to sectarian or parochial tensions is also timely. While there seems to be no real independent mechanism to ensure that political parties do not indulge in this, it would be good if the heads of all parties were themselves to agree to this point and they could do so by impressing upon their activists and supporters that the correct and honourable way to fight an election is by focusing on issues and that criticism that attacks issues and policies is far more preferable than one which attacks individuals. There is then the issue of limits on spending by candidates. The problem is that the commission has so far not done anything on the spending already being done by some likely candidates -- particularly Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervez Elahi -- who are using their current official position and access to state finances to pay for extravagant advertising campaigns to eulogise them and to tell voters how good their time in public office has been for the general public. Failure on the part of the EC to check this misuse of taxpayers' money seriously undermines the government's oft-stated claim that it is committed to providing a level-playing field to all political parties.

Perhaps **the main negative point about the proposed election code** is its suggestion that political rallies be curbed because of security considerations. As the tragic events of October 18 amply show, security should be a major concern, but to use it to curb political rallies suggests a bureaucratic attitude. It also misses the point that the heart of any election campaign is the holding of such events because without them it would be difficult for a party to mobilize and motivate its vote-bank. Since the country's political scene has suffered immensely because of military intervention, political parties must be allowed to mobilize their voters and curbs on them in this regard will be tantamount to giving in to the wishes of anti-democratic forces.

## Interim Set-up

### Caretaker Setup on November 15

Information Minister Muhammad Ali Durrani has said on November 16 that the Caretaker Prime Minister and provincial Chief Ministers will assume charge on November 15, and the incumbent provincial Governors will continue to discharge their constitutional duties till the formation of a new Government. The caretaker set-up will consist of non-political individuals whose main task will be to ensure free and fair elections, He said the caretaker PM and Chief Ministers will be appointed after consultation with opposition parties, adding that the Government has sought their proposals in this regard. Durrani predicted that President General Pervez Musharraf will form the Government again after General Elections with the help of the PML and new coalition partners. Negotiations are underway with political parties under the recently promulgated NRO, he added.

### Possible Names for Caretaker PM

Eminent politician **Hamid Nasir Chatta** and Former State Bank Governor **Dr, Ishrat Hussain** are actively being considered for the slot of Caretaker Prime Minister by the camps of President Pervez Musharraf and PPP. The PPP has strongly recommended the name of Hamid Nasir Chatta for the above said post while PML-Q proposed the name of former SBP Governor Dr. Ishrat Hussain. The PML-Q has also put forward the name of Hafeez Sheikh for caretaker PM, but the close aides of the President are keen to adjust him in Sindh. Both sides have shown soft corner for Hamid Nasir Chatta, but if the Government deemed it fit to have a non-political person, the best choice would be Dr. Ishrat as the PPP has not shown any reservations, so far, against the idea of appointing him as Caretaker PM.

While it was reported on October 22<sup>nd</sup> in The News that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has floated the name of **Makhdoom Amin Fahim**, while the presidency has proposed National Security Council (NSC) Secretary **Tariq Aziz** for the slot of the Caretaker Prime Minister. The PPP team told the government's negotiators that the party could provide alternative names in case some of the ruling coalition partners opposed Fahim's appointment as the Caretaker Premier. However, alternative names were not disclosed by the PPP negotiators. Fahim and former FIA Chief Rehman Malik are representing the PPP and Tariq Aziz is negotiating on behalf of General Musharraf in the fresh round of secret talks between the two sides in Islamabad. "Besides Tariq Aziz, some others people from the government are also negotiating.

However, most of the opposition parties have already rejected the idea of the government to hold PML-Q sponsored APC. But they have hinted that they could reconsider the option to participate in the APC if hosted by ECP. On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, it was reported in Daily Khabrain that it has been negotiated between PPP and Presidency that PPP would not resist if Tariq Aziz would be nominated as the Caretaker PM.

**The government has tasked some ministers with holding talks with PML-N and other political parties to extend the reconciliation process to all parties besides PPP, and reach a general consensus on the caretaker government.**

### **Caretaker Ministers can Contest Elections**

There will be no constitutional ban on Federal and Provincial Caretaker Ministers to contest the forthcoming General Elections. However, the interim Prime Minister and Chief Minister will be ineligible to fight the Parliamentary polls under the Constitution. But the caretaker Premier and the Chief Ministers can be the candidates in the by-polls to be held after the General Elections.

**PML-President Chaudhary Shujaat said on October 24<sup>th</sup> that PPP would not be given a major share in the interim government. He ruled out that the PPP would be given maximum ministries during the interim setup.**

**President Pervez Musharraf is likely to announce the caretaker setup on November 13, the last day of the Shaukat Aziz-led government, to run the affairs just two days before the National Assembly completes its five years term on November 15, According to reliable sources, the top leadership has indicated to dissolve the government on November 13 and it has also been communicated to the Federal Ministries and Government Departments about the likely decision.**

## **National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO)**

### **PPP ‘Engaging Musharraf for Orderly Transition’**

The Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) on October 9<sup>th</sup> defended its engagement with President General Pervez Musharraf, saying that negotiations with him were aimed at an orderly transition to democracy and civilian rule in the country rather than for personal benefits. PPP spokesman Farhatullah Babar said in a statement that the party’s goal was to set the course for a successful transition to democracy and to politically counter extremist forces.

About the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO), Babar said that it was a broad package of reforms for facilitating a transition to democracy. He said that its very preamble acknowledges the abuses that have occurred under the dictatorship by stating that it is expedient to promote national reconciliation, foster mutual trust and confidence amongst holders of public office and remove the vestiges of political vendetta and victimization and to make the electoral process more transparent. He further said that through the NRO the PPP had won, for all politicians, a promise from General Musharraf to doff his military uniform, ensure transparent elections and avoid political victimization.

### **NRO and the Constitution of Pakistan**

Experts say that general amnesty, granted to a certain category of public office holders through the recently-promulgated National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO), is alien to the Constitution of Pakistan. Additionally, the NRO clashes with Article 25 “equality of citizens” of the Constitution, which says that all citizens are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of law; there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone; and nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the protection of women and children. “Equality of citizens” is listed in the fundamental rights of the Constitution. Any law that superior courts find clashing with any of the basic rights so enumerated is always instantly shot down by them. However, if a fundamental right is to be scrapped from the Constitution, an amendment will have to be made through a two-thirds parliamentary majority. But this will be stretching the argument to retain the NRO too far as no government, civil or military, can afford to undo any of the constitutionally-guaranteed fundamental right. Keeping in view of the standing and the position of different political parties in the run-up the next General Elections, hardly any one of them, including the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) is likely to get a two-thirds majority in the Parliament. However, if a government resorts to amend the Constitution to keep intact a certain law, clashing with a fundamental right, with the purpose of benefiting a specific category of people, the legislation would definitely be struck down by the courts as they don’t allow changes in the basic structure of the Constitution.

Not only a large number of lawyers but many ruling coalition leaders firmly believe that the NRO will be struck down by superior courts in the next few days. A number of petitions have already been filed in superior courts praying that the NRO should be declared null and void for being violative of the Constitution.

### **Legality of NRO Challenged in SC**

Insaf Welfare Trust Chairman Dr Aslam Khaki on October 8<sup>th</sup> requested the Supreme Court to declare as unjust the recently promulgated National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) 2007 for being a corrupt deal that violates the fundamental rights of the people. A five-page petition said that the scenario and political environment in which the ordinance has been promulgated clearly speak about the 'political deal' on power sharing and not on national reconciliation. This is the third such petition filed before the apex court as well as the Lahore High Court seeking adjudication against the legality of the ordinance. The petitioners said that the ordinance 'patently and manifestly' violated Article 25 of the Constitution because it provided for withdrawal of cases only against holders of public offices. In his petition, Dr Aslam Khaki pleaded that the ordinance was against the fundamental rights of the people as envisaged in Article 2A (Objective Resolution to form part of the Constitution), 4 (right of individual to be dealt with in accordance with the law) and 25 (equality of citizens) besides Article 31 (Islamic way of life). He pleaded that selective amnesty could never be granted under the law besides the general public, intelligentsia, media and even politicians have raised their concern over the law. The ordinance provides for general amnesty for corrupt politicians and bureaucrats, he contended.

### **SC Verdict to be Respected: Durrani**

Federal Information Minister Muhammad Ali Durrani has said that National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) is a part of law however if it is challenged in the court then we will respect its verdict. While, He said that the Government successfully divided the opposition by promulgating the NRO on the eve of Presidential Elections. Replying to a question, he said following the successful holding of Presidential Elections, the Government will continue to hold dialogues with all the opposition parties. He said that the NRO has become a ground reality and no one could deny it. Responding to another question regarding Nawaz Sharif, Durrani said that we would not violate the agreement that was made between the two countries nor will take any step, which is against the agreement. Durrani further said that according to the ordinance, only those cases that are pending in courts since last fifteen years have been abolished.

### **Speedy justice for MQM under NRO**

Working at an astounding speed, the Review Board for Sindh, set up under the controversial National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO), has already cleared for quashing almost 2,500 cases against the top leadership of the MQM, including its Chief Altaf Hussain. The entire Muttahida leadership, along with more than 2,000 others, will stand exonerated of a multitude of alleged serious crimes, including murder, if the recommendations of the Review Board are implemented. A top official said while the vast majority of cases cleared by the RBS belong to the MQM, there are also a small number of beneficiaries belonging to the Pakistan Peoples Party, the Pakistan Muslim League (N) and the Punjabi Pakhtoon Ittehad (PPI). However, the recommendations of the board, headed by Justice (Retd) Dr Ghous Muhammad, a retired high court judge, await the approval of the Provincial Chief Minister. But most importantly even after his approval, these recommendations can be implemented only after the Supreme Court's final decision on the legality and constitutionality of the NRO. The Chairman of the RBS, Justice (Retd) Dr Ghous Muhammad, when contacted, confirmed to The News that almost 2,000-2,500 criminal cases had been recommended to be dropped while 355 cases had been rejected so far.

Prosecutor General, Sindh, Rana Muhammad Shamim, said that the beneficiaries include Altaf Hussain, Dr Farooq Sattar, Kanwar Khalid Younis, Wasim Akhtar and Dr Imran Farooq. Rana Shamim said that the cases recommended by the RBS related to offences like murder, sniper firing, rioting, dacoity, possession of unlicensed arms, etc. He confirmed that the vast majority of the cases cleared so far involved the MQM leadership or its workers. But the prosecutor general hastened to add that the recommended cases generally pertained to "blind FIRs". Blind FIRs, he clarified, were those in which the accused were named without any evidence. Asked about the type of cases recommended for abolition against the MQM chief, the provincial prosecutor general said that Altaf Hussain was in the category of "absconders".

## **Return of Exiled Leaders**

### **Benazir Returns Home**

Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto ended eight years of self-imposed exile on October 18<sup>th</sup>, being greeted by hundreds of thousands of jubilant supporters as she led a homecoming parade through Karachi. She was accompanied by PPP leaders Makhdoom Amin Fahim, Yusuf Raza Gillani, Naheed Khan, Syed Qaim Ali Shah, Shah Mohammed Qureshi and others. The 54-year-old two-time Former Prime Minister, who flew in from Dubai, said she was fighting for democracy and

to help Pakistan defeat the extremism that gave it the reputation as a hotbed of international terrorism. She said that it is not the real image of Pakistan. The people that you see outside are the real image of Pakistan. These are the decent and hardworking middle-classes and working classes of Pakistan who want to be empowered so they can build a moderate, modern nation. Ms Bhutto said she doubted the Supreme Court Judges would stop either the Presidential Election or the National Reconciliation Ordinance, but acknowledged her talks with Musharraf had a way to go.

**Suicide Attacks on the Rally:** At least 139 people were killed and hundreds injured as suspected suicide bombers targeted Benazir Bhutto on her return. Two explosions went off a minute apart shortly after midnight near Karsaz close to the vehicle Ms Bhutto was travelling in, at the head of a procession of hundreds of thousands of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) supporters who had flooded the streets of Karachi to welcome the return of their leader. Karachi senior police official Azhar Farooqui told that the blasts hit two police vehicles which were escorting the truck carrying Ms Bhutto. The target was the truck.

Blasts were Attack on Democracy: Benazir Bhutto said on October 19<sup>th</sup> that the suicidal blasts during her homecoming parade were 'an attack on democracy, and an attack on the very unity and integrity of Pakistan'. Wearing a black armband to mourn the lives lost in the attacks, Benazir told a press conference at Bilawal House that **three people were responsible for the attack**. Benazir said that her sources had informed her that police commandoes would be used for the next attempt on her life near Bilawal House in Karachi or in Naudero, Larkana. The former premier said that a "brotherly country" had informed her in advance about the attacks, but she didn't identify the country by name. She added that under the conspiracy, the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) would have been blamed for the attack in Karachi. She said that Al Qaeda, Taliban or any other group may make an attempt on her life but she made it clear that the three persons, who she did not name, should be held responsible for any such attack. To a question, Benazir vowed that she would live in Pakistan despite threats to her life. However she'll go abroad for lectures and to see my children.

An investigator said that the police took **three people in for questioning** on October 20<sup>th</sup>. The men were linked to a car from which an attacker threw a grenade in Karachi, seconds before a suicide bomber blew himself up in a crowd of hundreds of thousands of people.

President of PML (Q) **Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain said that PPP itself hatched the conspiracy of the blasts on October 18** in which over 140 innocent people had died and almost 500 sustained injuries. Talking to a private TV channel on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, Shujaat alleged that the explosion were plotted by Asif Ali Zardari while the plot was manipulated by Benazir herself with the help of secondary leadership of the party. This was the reason that Benazir went into the lower part of the truck and no PPP office-holder was killed or critically wounded. He further said that the PPP exploited the situation to earn sympathies across the world.

### **Nawaz made to Delay Return till Nov 7**

The pressure that Musharraf is mounting on Nawaz Sharif through the US to stop him from returning home touched its peak on October 17 when Saad Hariri and Prince Bandar continued convincing the latter till 1:00 am (Saudi time) at the Sharif Palace in Jeddah to change his decision. Nawaz had no option but to again bow to the messages from Riyadh and Washington and gave his word that he would not leave Saudi Arabia till November 7 and asked the representatives of both the capitals that they would not visit him again with the same request after this date.

According to the source, the purpose of Musharraf's request was to stop Nawaz from coming home till the decision of the Supreme Court on his candidature for presidential election. He concluded that Musharraf was very much keen to keep both the mainstream politicians (Nawaz and Benazir) away from the country till the court verdict so that he could face no issue in "doing things" according to his own will in case of an unfavourable verdict. The officer said Musharraf considered massive public gatherings as a threat for his plans. The officer further claimed that any delay in Nawaz's return after November 7 would be his own decision or some political maneuvering. He said if Nawaz didn't return to Pakistan till mid-November, it would mean the Sharifs had done another deal with the Musharraf camp.

### **EU Demanded the Return of All Exiled Leaders Including Nawaz Sharif**

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, European Union (EU), in a resolution, has asked the Pakistani Government to make sure the return of all exiled leaders including Nawaz Sharif before elections.

## Political Parties' News

### **Khar Quit PPP**

Former Governor and Central Leader of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Malik Ghulam Mustafa Khar has quit PPP terming the 'reconciliation' of Benazir Bhutto with the military dictator as the darkest thing in country's political history. He said so far he hadn't finalized the plan to join any other party but the parties including Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) are under consideration. He said that he was disappointed with Benazir's politics. He said that he did his best to keep Benazir on the right path but her unwise decisions had exposed her intentions

### **Babar Quits PPP in Protest over Deal**

Former Interior Minister and close confidante of Benazir Bhutto, Major General (R) Nasirullah Babar, is to quit the PPP as mark of protest against the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) . He has decided not to contest the forthcoming elections from the PPP platform. Instead of shifting loyalties to another party, he has decided to say goodbye to the politics of compromise. He said that I would not contest the next polls from the PPP platform.

### **Shaukat to Spearhead PML Election Campaign**

As the General Elections are drawing nearer and the Federal as well as Provincial Governments are spending the last days of their luster, the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML) has evolved a strategy to contest the upcoming General Elections under Shaukat Aziz portraying him as vanguard of the election campaign. The main concentration of the League would be on Punjab where the outgoing Chief Minister Perviaiz Elahi will be major supporting element in the campaign for Shaukat Aziz.

### **Fazlur Rehman Annoyed with Qazi**

Secretary General of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) and JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazlur Raham said on October 21<sup>st</sup> that he is very much angry with MMA Chief Qazi Hussain Ahmad. He said that I am very much angry with Qazi Hussain Ahmad and the differences have been intensified. Almost all the member parties of MMA are with me and they fully support my stand whereas Qazi Hussain Ahmad has been isolated. Fazl was of the view that the time has proved that the JUI decision of not tendering resignations of its MPs in NWFP was a right decision.

### **Court Declares PP(S)-Patriots Merger as PPP Illegal**

A Division Bench of Sindh High Court on 25<sup>th</sup> October declared illegal the merger of PPP (Sherpao) and PPP Patriots as Pakistan Peoples Party. A constitutional petition of Pakistan Peoples Party's Chairperson Benazir Bhutto was filed by her counsel, Senator Farooq H. Naek in this regard. The petitioner challenged the powers of ECP for allowing such a merger and registering the two groups under the name of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Naek submitted that the PPP was formed by Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and it has great vote bank in the Country. It has always been contesting general elections symbols of "sword or arrow". He further submitted that the merger of the Patriots and PPP-Sherpao in the name of PPP was illegal and was meant to damage the original PPP led by Benazir Bhutto.

## All Parties' Democratic Movement (APDM)

### **Fazl Sees No Future for APDM, Wants MMA Kept Intact**

The JUI (F) Party's Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said on October 8<sup>th</sup> that his Party doesn't see any future for the All Parties Democratic Movement (APDM), but will like the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal to remain intact and play a better political role. He told that his party was part of the APDM in its individual capacity, not as a member of the MMA. Therefore, he said, it would review its relationship with the coalition because of the latter's role in the NWFP Assembly. Answering a question, Maulana Fazl said so far the JUI (F) had been trying to ensure that the MMA had a common stand on all issues. However, in view of the requirements of the new situation this policy would also be revised. The Maulana indicated that his Party would now decide whether to have a separate stand on various issues or go by the MMA's policy. He was critical of the APDM parties for tendering resignation from the NWFP Assembly at a time when a no-confidence motion had been tabled against Chief Minister Akram Durrani, who belongs to the JUI (F). He said the initiative was against the political traditions of the province, and it was not morally justifiable for anyone to leave the allies in difficult situations.

### **JUI-F may Leave APDM for Role in Interim Set-Up**

After receiving a green signal from power corridors, Maulana Fazlur Rehman's JUI may part ways with the APDM and ask the MMA to follow its line if the alliance is to be saved. Fazlur Rehman, who is already grumbling about resignations from

the elected houses, will make last ditch efforts to save the MMA from disintegration provided Qazi Hussain Ahmed agrees to vacate the position of the MMA's presidentship. As the differences between Qazi and Fazl are at the climax, Fazl has not closed the doors for an alliance, through formal or informal arrangements, with Pakistan People's Party that is being considered as favourite as Washington and General Pervez Musharraf are backing it.

The JUI-F is all set to take final decisions in its two-day Majlis-e-Shura meeting starting from October 25 here on the post-resignations scenario that involves Caretaker Governments, future with APDM and the MMA, and how to get maximum number of seats in the coming General Elections. According to sources, Fazlur Rehman will continue to bargain with the government till the last moment by using the APDM and the MMA. "When arrangements are finalized with the Government, he will formally say goodbye to his allies in both the alliances." To a question, the sources in the JUI-F viewed that Fazl was happy over the recent contacts made by the government. "He seems satisfied and the opposition parties will be used as a bargaining chip."

## Nominations

### **Hassanabdal: PPPP Chooses New Faces**

Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarian (PPPP) has announced its candidates for NA-59 and PP-17 respectively, subject to approval by the Party's High Command. The Party nominated Sardar Saleem Haider for the National Assembly seat former Tehsil Nazim Fatehjang, Sardar Iftikhar Khan for the Punjab Assembly seat. Sardar Ishtiaq Khan and Sadar Mushtair Khan would be the back-up candidates.

### **NA-51 – Nomination by PML-Q**

Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhary Pervez Elahi has announced that Qasim Javed Ikhlas would be the candidate of PML-Q for the NA-51 Rawalpindi.

### **Nawabzada Mohsin to Contest for NA, PA Seats from Karak**

Former Provincial Minister Nawabzada Mohsin Ali Khan is trying to stage a come-back in politics by deciding to contest election for both the National Assembl (NA-15 Karak) and the NWFP Assembly (PF-41 Karak) from Karak District. Mohsin who is son-in-law of former NWFP Governor and Federal Minister Mohammad Aslam Khattak, did not contest the General Elections in 2002. Mohsin has been drifting from one political party to another in his career. His last party was Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf. He remained President of the Party in the NWFP for sometime before becoming fed up with Imran's style of politics. He did not join any party after that and is hoping to fight the upcoming elections as an independent.

### **ANP Forms Body to Select Candidates for Polls**

Awami National Party (ANP) District Mardan Chapter constituted a committee to recommend the names of the candidates for the seats of national and provincial assemblies in the upcoming General Elections. The District Committee would discuss the names of candidates with their party workers at union council level and present its report to the District Party's organization. The District organizations would later send their recommendations to the Provincial President and Central leadership, who would take the final decision. The meeting asked the interested candidates to send their applications for the national and provincial assemblies seats to the party before October 27<sup>th</sup>. The candidates will have to deposit Rs. 10,000 for the National Assembly and Rs. 5,000 for the Provincial Assembly along with their applications. The candidates on minority seats and reserved seats for women were asked to deposit Rs. 25,000 along their applications.

### **Dr. Muhammad Amjad Likely PML Candidate for NA-49**

PML-Q sources have said that the PML-Q top leaders and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz are considering President PML-Q Islamabad Dr. Muhammad Amjad for the party ticket from NA-49. PML-Q President Chaudhary Shujaat Hussain had already showed his confidence in Dr. Muhammad Amjad. The PML-Q Federal Capital General Council has already approved him as candidate. The sources said that party position in this Constituency is not very good. From the Constituency, Azeem Chaudhary, City President Rizwan Saidq Khan, Cultural Wing President Zafar Bakhtawari and ex-State Minister Dr. Shahzad Waseem have submitted their applications for the Party ticket.

### **Jl Announces Names of Candidates**

The Jamaat-i-Islami has announced the names of its candidates for one National and two Provincial assembly seats of Chitral for the forthcoming General Elections. Addressing a press conference, the amir of the Chitral chapter of the JI, Maulana Ghulam Mohammad, said the District Executive Committee of the party had selected two people for each seat.

He said that former MNA Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali and Niaz Ahmed advocate had been selected for the NA seat. He said that for the Provincial Assembly constituency, PF-89 Chitral-I, Maulana Ghulam Mohammad and Hidayatullah would be the candidates while for PF-90 Chitral-II Maulana Javed Hussain and Zahiruddin (President of the Chitral Press Club) would be candidates of the party.

### **Narowal Politicians Launch Electioneering**

In the politics of Narowal district, three major personalities are so much cautious for the forthcoming general elections. **Ch Anwar Aziz**, a powerful and influential politician, **Ibrarul Haq**, a famous singer and an interesting personality **Mehdi Khan**, 100-year-old politician. They are not contesting election but working hard for their near and dear ones: Chaudhry Anwar Aziz for Daniyal Aziz, Ibrarul Haq for Maj. (Retd) Israrul Haq and Mehdi Khan for Nasir Khan, respectively, for their smooth win.

### **Bhattis Seem Stronger than Tarars in Hafizabad**

Bhatti Brothers in District Hafizabad are struggling to maintain their dominancy in two constituencies. Chaudhry Mehdi Hassan Bhatti and Chaudhry Liaquat Abbas Bhatti, agriculturists by profession, were elected from NA-102 and NA-103 from the platform of PML-Q in previous election. Mehdi Hassan Bhatti secured 50,824 votes whereas his opponents Brig (R) Mohammad Usman Tarar from PML-N 43,218 votes, Ahmed Balal Tarar from PPP 15,097 votes, Tajamal Hafeez from Pakistan Awami Tehrik 1,192 votes and independent candidate Ch Shaukat Ali Bhatti 477 votes. In NA-102, two major Bradaries are dominating Bhatti's and Tarar's. The previous result indicated that Bhatti benefited against Tarar family. In the upcoming elections, Ch Afzal Hussain Tarar, a close relative of Rafique Ahmed Tarar, former president of Pakistan, is considered to be the toughest candidate because he claimed to get 40,000 of the PML-N.

### **Chan, Bosal Likely to Fight Tooth and Nail in Next Polls**

The two old political rivals of Mandi Bahauddin, Chan Family and Bosal Family seemed to be active in the local politics for possible win of their aspiring candidates before the General Election. Haji Muhammad Afzal Chan is leading the Chan Family whereas Nawaz Bosal and Iqbal Bosal are commanding the Bosal Family. In NA-109, Major (R) Zulfiqar Ali Gondal who elected from PPP seat is known to be a favorite candidate due to the support of Chan family. Though Bradriism is dominating in the area, because Gondals' are in majority, but strong Bosals, who have good track recor, could not be ignored. They introduced Nasir Bosal, PML-Q son of former MNA Iqbal Bosal and Nephew of former MNA Muhammad Nawaz Bosal. A very interesting and tough contest will be expected in the Constituency because Bosal family has a support of pre-government elements in the District.

### **DG Khan: PPP's Mansoor may Pose Threat to Farooq Leghari**

Dera Ghazi Khan, the land of Baloch tribes, has multi-dimensional politics. Legharis and Khosas are old political rivals over the years. Former President Sardar Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari would contest election for his sixth consecutive term. Traditionally, Khosa tribes nominate their own candidate against Farooq Leghari, a seasoned politician. But this time polo-lover will face his cousin Sardar Mansoor Ahmed Khan Leghari of PPP in NA-172. Sardar Mansoor Ahmed Khan Leghari, a former Senator, who left the country eight years ago, has come back to contest the election from the PPP platform. His younger brother, Sardar Maqsood Ahmed Khan Leghari, is the district Nazim and he will enjoy his full support. According to PPP workers, former Prime Minister and PPP Chairperson Benazir Bhutto is expected to pay a visit to Dera Ghazi Khan, following the election campaign of her nominee in the month of November against former Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari who is the chief of Leghari tribes in the area and known to be a strong candidate. PPP Punjab President Shah Mehmod Qureshi held a secret meeting with PML-N leader Sardar Zulfiqar Khan Khosa to convince him not to field his candidate in NA-172, also seeking his support for this seat. They are, however, yet to finalise a deal under which the PPP will extend support to two sons of Khosa Saif-ud-Din Khosa and Dost Muhammad Khosa for provincial seats in return for backing Sardar Mansoor Ahmed Khan Leghari against Farooq Leghari. A tough contest is expected in this constituency because Khosas and Legharis are major dominating tribes.

In NA-171, Khawaja Sheraz Mehmood, who was elected in his first term on PML-Q ticket, seems in trouble in the next elections. His cousin Khawaja Ghulam Niazam has announced to contest on MMA ticket, former MPA Khawaja Dawar Subhan as an independent candidate and PPP District President Khawaja Nasir Mehmood on his party ticket. These candidates will divide the votes of Khawajas. Four tribes, Qiasrani, Buzdar, Malghani and Khetran, are very important in this constituency. On the other hand, Sardar Amjad Khan Khosa of PML-N is being considered to be a strong candidate against young Khawaja Sheraz Mehmood. Khawajas are basically custodians of Khawaja Ghulam Mohyuddin and people give them great respect. But in the game of politics Qaisranis are very strong in the region because nobody can achieve the target without their support. Last time Khawaja Sheraz Mehmood was elected against a prominent candidate with the support of Qaisranis. Sardar Amjad Khan Khosa is very confident this time because he has full support of the Qiasrani

tribe. Khawaja Sheraz will have to struggle against his own relatives as well as Khosas to win the election. Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari was elected from NA-173 on the ticket of Millat Party which was, later, merged into PML-Q in 2002 general elections. This constituency is becoming rather mysterious as other parties are yet to finalize their candidates.

## Ban on Rallies

### Ban on Rallies Proposed

The Government has worked out a 10-point security plan for the election campaign, which recommends ban on large rallies and processions whereas the political parties can hold public meetings only after being allowed by the relevant official quarters. The security plan was presented here during a high-level meeting on law and order, which was Chaired by the Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao, Secretary Interior Syed Kamal Shah and other senior officials of law enforcement agencies attended the meeting. The Prime Minister directed the law enforcement agencies to improve the plan and in this regard take all possible steps including consultations with all the political parties.

Following are some of the major points mentioned in the security plan:

- § There would be ban on large rallies and processions altogether.
- § The parties could hold public meetings after getting permission 10 days prior to any such event. For holding public meetings on limited scale, the parties would have to inform and seek permission of District Nazims or DCOs or both, if required.
- § As for public meetings on large scale, the permission of Provincial Governments must also be sought. The parties would be given license for large public meetings that could be cancelled at any time, if needed, by the relevant official quarters.
- § The law enforcement agencies must ensure their presence at the venues of public meetings and without that no such events would be allowed.
- § Screening gates would be installed at the places where such meetings would be held.
- § The venues for public meetings would be identified prior to holding of such events in every city and usage of no other place would be allowed for the purpose.

According to an official statement, Prime Minister Aziz while addressing the meeting directed the police and law enforcement agencies to bring all possible improvements in the security plan for the upcoming General Elections to ensure safety of all political leaders and the people. The Prime Minister emphasized that the security plan should not restrict the political activities carried out within the ambit of law. Security plans for all the major political events should be worked out in consultation with the relevant political parties that should be briefed on all possible aspects of eventualities, the Prime Minister advised. He emphasized that the agreed security plan must be strictly enforced. The Prime Minister asked the Ministry of Interior to finalize the draft of the proposed **Code of Conduct and SOPs** for the forthcoming political events including the security arrangements for general elections, and discussion with all political parties participating in the elections, as well as the Chief Election Commissioner. The Prime Minister directed the provincial police departments to establish special Public Relations Cells to keep a liaison with the Media, which should be functional round the clock during any major events. Media interaction, he said, be made part of the security plans and certain senior officers be designated

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said that a **ban on rallies would not hinder the political process in the country**, as he urged political parties not to hold big rallies and adopt other secure means to contact the people. Talking to reporters at Prime Minister's House, Aziz said that keeping in view the security risks, the political parties could contact the people through the media or by holding meetings instead of organizing big rallies. He said there was a need to change tactics and take necessary measures to overcome the security problems.

**ECP Wants no Part in Banning Rallies:** The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has decided to avoid becoming a direct part of the controversy as to whether public rallies should be banned or not in the forthcoming elections following October 18 Karachi blasts. According to some sources, after deliberations it had been decided not to incorporate in the

Code of Conduct such clauses that impose restrictions on public rallies, however, there may be an action (inclusion of such points) if political parties come up with such proposals. The draft of the code of conduct for coming General Elections, expected in mid of January 2008, will be prepared by the ECP in its meeting scheduled on October 24<sup>th</sup>.

### **‘Ban on rallies after consulting parties’**

Interior Ministry’s spokesman Javed Iqbal Cheema has said that the Government will consult all political parties on the Interior Ministry’s Code of Conduct for General Elections which proposes to ban election rallies. The Interior Ministry has forwarded the Code of Conduct to the Government suggesting a ban on rallies and processions, Cheema told reporters on Wednesday. He said the proposed code did not recommend banning public meetings, but suggested that big public processions on streets should be avoided.

## **All Parties’ Conference (APC)**

### **Government to Call APC**

Assuring the nation of complete information about Karachi blasts soon, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on October 20<sup>th</sup> underlined the need for holding an All Parties Conference (APC) to formulate a new code of conduct for the upcoming General Elections. After groundbreaking ceremony of Environmental Center at PM Secretariat here, he told reporters there was a need for a new code of conduct for the next elections following the attacks on the life of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. The PM added that the new code of conduct will be prepared after consultations with the political parties. For this purpose, the government in collaboration with the Election Commission will organize the APC and all the parties will be invited to it.

### **Opposition may Attend APC Convened by EC**

Almost all the opposition parties have refused to be part of the APC. Some have openly expressed their reservations about the Conference being held under the auspices of the Government. Some of the opposition leaders have accused the Government of being non-serious in holding the APC, adding that the Election Commission (EC) is the appropriate forum to host such Conference as per rules of the game.

### **BB Wants APC under EC**

Former Prime Minister and PPP Chairperson Benazir Bhutto has said that the EC should convene a meeting of all the political parties to chalk out methods and modalities for holding fair, free and transparent elections. She said that it is not the job of Government to take decision about the modalities for the election. This is the responsibility of the Election Commission.

## **Pre-Election Surveys**

### **IRI Survey**

The International Republican Institute (IRI) on October 11 released its fifth survey of Pakistan public opinion. The poll, conducted between August 29 and September 13, 2007, is a comprehensive analysis of attitudes regarding the Pakistani political landscape. Following are some of the findings:

- **An astonishing number of voters say that the country is headed in the wrong direction.** Continuing the trend witnessed in IRI’s June poll, the number of voters saying that the country was headed in the wrong direction rose to 73 percent, while those saying that the country was headed in the right direction decreased to 19 percent.
- **A majority report that their personal economic situation has worsened over the past year.** Over the course of IRI’s polling this past year, economic indicators have been relatively stable, with voters nearly evenly split on whether or not their personal economic situation had improved over the past year. For the first time, the number of those saying that their economic condition had worsened jumped to 56 percent, while the number saying that it improved slipped to 24 percent.
- **Voters are somewhat optimistic about their future, although by diminishing levels.**

When asked about their personal economic situation over the course of the upcoming year, 27 percent responded that it would improve, while 22 percent said that it would get worse. The gap between these two numbers has been narrowing since IRI’s February poll.

- **The Government receives low marks for its performance on key issues.** When asked how the government has performed on the issues most important to them, 22 percent gave the government good marks while 75 percent rated its performance poorly.

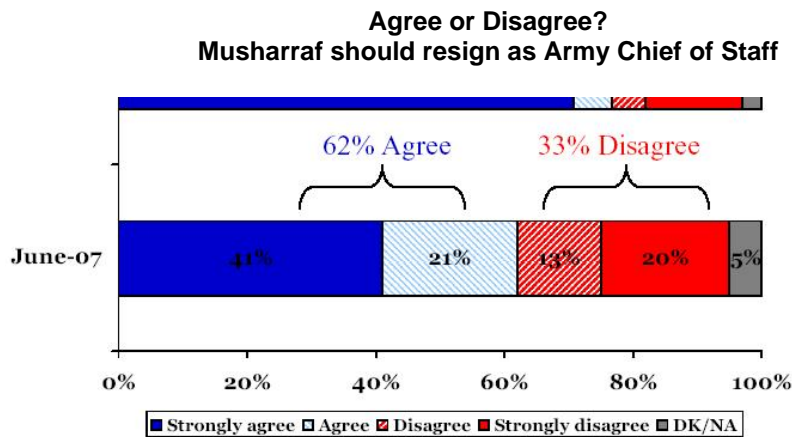
- **An overwhelming majority state that the ruling coalition does not deserve re-election.** Mirroring the right direction / wrong direction question, 19 percent said that they thought that the ruling coalition did a good enough job to deserve re-election while 73 percent said that it did not.

**Issues**

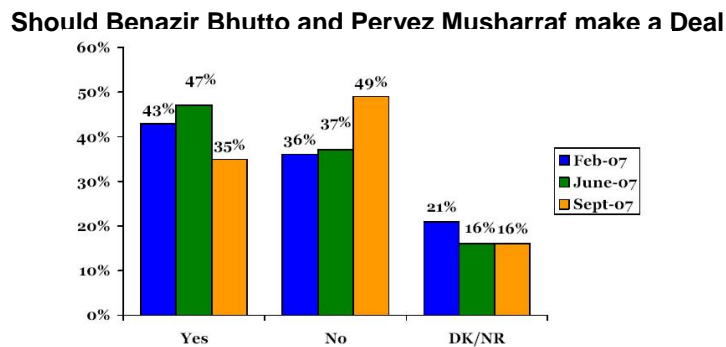
Economic issues remain the top concern of Pakistanis, although September’s poll saw an increase in those citing law and order as their top concern. Voters are also turning against the Army’s role in civilian government and President Pervez Musharraf’s holding of dual offices (the office of President and the office of Army Chief of Staff) to an increasing degree.

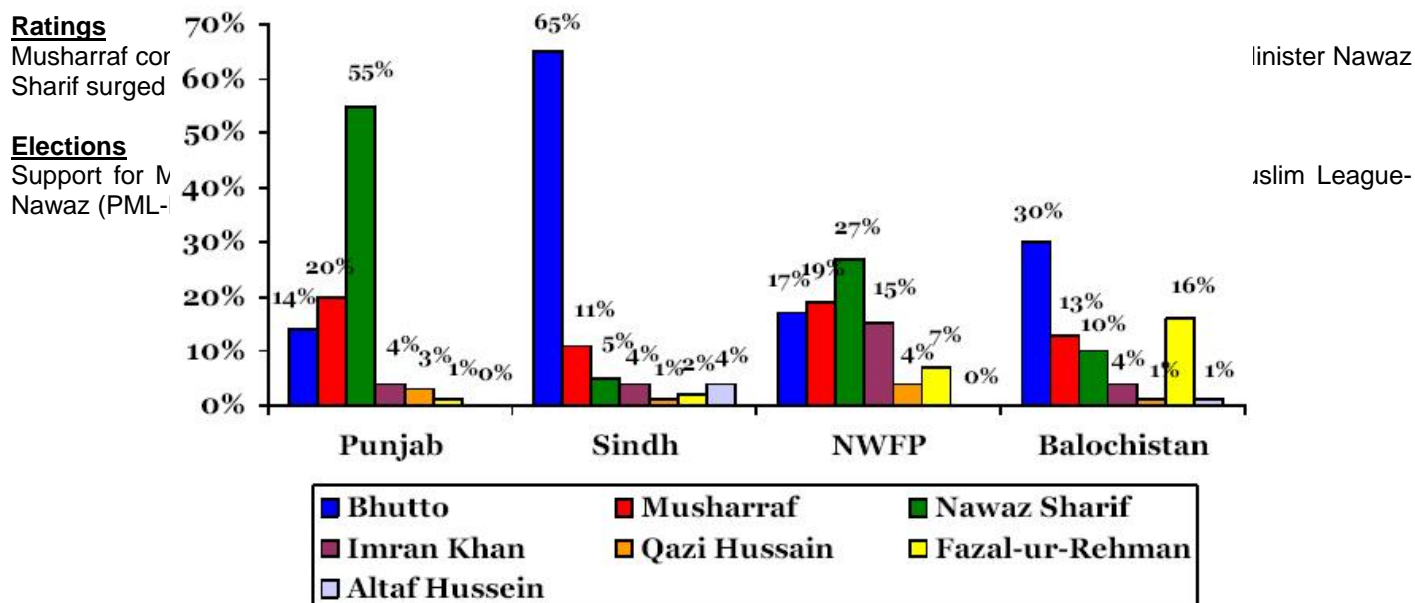
- **Economic issues remain the top concern of Pakistani voters.** When asked an open-ended question as to the top issue that will determine their vote, 37 percent said inflation, 20 percent said unemployment, and 11 percent replied poverty. Also of note was the 10 percent who indicated that law and order was their top concern, a sharp increase since the last poll, and likely due to the worsening security situation in the country.

- **Votes are increasingly turning against Musharraf’s dual roles.** When voters were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement that the Army should *not* play a role in civilian government, 62 percent agreed that it should not while 30 percent disagreed; this represents an increase in opposition since the June poll. When asked if Musharraf should resign as Army Chief of Staff, 76 percent said yes (up from 62 percent in June), and when asked if Musharraf should retain the role in order to promote stability (an argument often used by the government) 76 percent disagreed, indicating that this line of reasoning did not carry any weight with them. Finally, when asked if they would support a constitutional amendment that would allow Musharraf to retain his dual roles past the end of the year, 68 percent were opposed.



- **Voters mixed on a potential Musharraf / Bhutto deal.** Over the course of the past three IRI polls, voter opinion on a potential deal between President Musharraf and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has somewhat see-sawed.





**PML-N moves into first, PPP slips into second, PML-Q drops into third.** Voters' party preference for the upcoming parliamentary elections witnessed some drastic changes between IRI's June and September polls. Mirroring the changes in leader preference and popularity, PML-N moved 17 points into first place with 36 percent, while PPP slipped into second with 28 percent. PML-Q, which previously had remained relatively steady, found its support giving out due to political turmoil, slipping seven points into third place at 16 percent. When voters were asked if they supported the formation of the APDM, 55 percent responded in the affirmative. Likewise, when voters were asked who they would support in a hypothetical election match-up where the choices were a coalition of PPP and PML-Q or APDM, voters were split 40 percent for APDM to 39 percent for PPP/PML-Q.

### AGHS Survey – (Punjab)

AGHS Legal Aid Cell conducted a pre-election survey depicting election trends in the Province of Punjab. Following are some of the questions and the percentage of responses asked during the survey:

Q- How would you rate each of the institutions?

Institutes	Excellent	Good	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	No Response	Don't Know	Total
President	19.0	13.0	22.7	34.3	11.0		100.0
National Assembly	5.6	22.7	36.1	22.1	13.3	.1	100.0
The Government	12.3	16.0	27.6	32.3	11.9		100.0
NGOs	14.9	31.4	21.7	11.0	20.9	.1	100.0
The Army	23.4	20.1	25.3	20.0	11.1		100.0
The Police	4.3	13.9	22.0	48.1	11.6	.1	100.0
The Court	20.6	33.9	18.9	14.7	12.0		100.0
The Media	33.1	32.4	14.9	5.3	14.3		100.0
The Election Commission	6.9	14.9	28.4	20.9	29.0		100.0

Q- Which party do you think will be able to handle the problems facing Pakistan most effectively?

Answer	Percent
PPP	10.9
PML(N)	53.4
PML(Q)	21.7
MMA	1.0
PTI	9.4
ANP	.3
OTHERS	.3
ARD	.4
No One	.1
Jamait Islami	.3
No Response	2.1
Total	100.0

Q- Which one leader do you think will be able to handle the problems facing Pakistan most effectively?

Answers	Percent
Benazir	9.1
Nawaz Sharif	49.9
Musharaff	24.1
Imran Khan	13.9
Qazi Hussain Ahmad	.6
Chief Justice	.7
Makhdon Amin Fahim	.1
No Response	1.6
Total	100.0

Q- Who do you think would be the best Prime Minister?

Probable Prime Ministers	Percent
Benazir	10.4
Nawaz Sharif/Shahbaz	51.9
Musharaff /Shaukat Aziz	19.6
Imran Khan	13.4
Iftikhar Choudri	.1
Pervaiz Elahi	.9
Mehmood Khn Achakzai	.3
Qazi Hussain Ahmad	.4

## World Public Opinion Survey

A poll taken in the weeks before the return to Pakistan of Benazir Bhutto, whose convoy was met with an attack as well as large adulatory crowds, finds that a plurality of Pakistanis (50%) approve of her return, while one in three are opposed.

Views are also mixed about the possibility of Bhutto becoming prime minister. Equal numbers (40%) favor and oppose her becoming prime minister. Twenty percent declined to respond. However, Bhutto does appear to be a bit more popular than the current president Pervez Musharraf. Asked who would be the best person to lead Pakistan, Bhutto wins an anemic plurality with 27 percent favoring her over 21 percent for Musharraf.

The WorldPublicOpinion.org poll of 907 Pakistanis was conducted September 12-28 in urban areas of Pakistan. Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who Musharraf removed from power in 1999 and recently expelled immediately upon his return to Pakistan, has a similar level of support to Musharraf. Twenty-one percent endorse Sharif as the best person to

lead Pakistan. Asked about the possibility of Sharif returning to Pakistan, attitudes are about the same as for Bhutto's return. Fifty-one percent approve of his potential return, 35 percent are opposed and the rest are undecided. Pakistan Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, whose removal by Musharraf prompted large-scale

The poll was carried out for WorldPublicOpinion.org by ACNielsen Pakistan through face-to-face interviews in 19 Pakistani cities. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.3 percent.

## Pre-Election Observations

### Who will be the New Governor of Sindh?

In the light of unrevealed package deal of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairperson Benazir Bhutto with President Pervez Musharraf regime for accommodating the opposition parties in future power-sharing setup in the name of NRO, the Federal Government is likely to bring some political changes and has given in to the demand of changing Governor Sindh Dr Ishratul Ebad, In this regard, the sources told that President Pervez Musharraf is in under pressure from the ruling PML as well from opposition parties to replace the present Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) nominee as the head of the Federation in Sindh Province with some body else, and the establishment forces have proposed some names to Presidency in this regard. The names of General (Retd) Mohammad Yousuf, Former Vice-Chief of Army Staff (VCOAS) who belongs to Mirpurkhas district, Dr Khair Mohammad Junejo, the renowned Agriculturist of Sanghar district and Former Federal Agriculture Minister in General Musharraf's first tenure as a Chief Executive during 1999 to 2002 and Justice (Retd) Abdul Razzaq Thaheem, the sitting Federal Local Government Minister who belongs to Jacobabad District and Chief of PML (F) Pir Pagaro are being considered. Sindh's Governor and MQM's senior leader Dr Ishratul Ibad Khan is 'famous' for exercising an upper hand and 'biased' attitude towards the administrative and political affairs of the province, and also for ignoring the chief minister Dr Arbab Ghulam Rahim as an authority.

The previous attempts on the part of the Federation to dump Sindh Governor Dr Ishratul Ibad had been unsuccessful but the establishment forces are now very serious to replace him. The opposition and other political parties in Sindh Province are also reluctant to contest the next General Elections under the administrative control of Dr Ishratul Ibad Khan and serving bureaucratic setup in province especially in the district administration and police department, which were installed by ruling MQM leadership. If the present Governor is not removed, then the opposition parties including Sindhi nationalist groups would boycott the upcoming General Elections in the Sindh province. According to intelligence agencies reports, governor Sindh Dr Ishratul Ibad Khan is also known as the architect and supervisor of many untoward episodes in the province like illegal operation against MQM (Haqiqi) in 2002-03, high-level rigging by ruling MQM in local bodies elections in 2005, forced removal of Kutchi Abadies of rural Sindhi population, the May 12 Karachi carnage and the unlawful harassment of lawyers by the MQM workers during the May 12 case hearing in the SHC on September 10.

### LGs and the Upcoming Elections

#### PPP Seeks Removal of LGs before Polls

The People's Party Parliamentarians (PPP) on October 9<sup>th</sup> demanded of the Government to suspend Local Government institutions and freeze their funds three months prior to the forthcoming General Elections to ensure fairness and transparency of the process. PPP Election Monitoring Cell Chief Senator Latif Khosa said if the Government wanted to delimit the constituencies then this should be done as early as possible to enable the candidates and the parties to rectify their objections well in time. He said that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) should also notify the election staff and polling stations before time to avoid last minute changes, which were normally made to manipulate the polls.

#### LG Reforms for NAs as President Approves LFO

The President, in a bid to strengthen political system, has approved extension of local bodies system to the Northern Areas to bring reforms by reshaping Legal Framework Order (LFO) so that the elected representatives of the areas are further empowered. It is decided in a high-level meeting presided over by General Pervez Musharraf.

#### Local Government System Protected by Constitution: NRB

A senior official of the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) said that the Local Government system cannot be suspended or scrapped under pressure from any political party as it is protected by the Constitution. Opposition parties, particularly the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), have demanded that the local government system be suspended to ensure

the government does not manipulate the upcoming General Elections. Quoting from the Constitution, the NRB official said Article 140A clearly vests administrative and financial authority in local governments: "Each province shall, by law, establish a Local Government system and devolve political, administrative and financial responsibility and authority to the elected representatives of the Local Governments." He said the Local Government system is also protected up to 2009 in the Sixth Schedule and this cannot be changed without prior approval of the President. He further mentioned that even if the President were to issue an ordinance suspending Local Governments, administrators could not be appointed in place of nazims because a constitutional amendment would be required for that.

## **PM Allocates Rs 127m for Chaudhary Shahbaz's Constituency**

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has granted Rs 127.848 million for different projects under Kushhal Pakistan Project (KPP-I) in district Jhelum in the constituency of Federal Minister for population Welfare Chaudhry Shahbaz Hussain, Sources said Rs 40 million had also been provided out of development funds under KPP-II. They said that various projects had been completed while some were in progress. The sources added that electricity had been provided to about 100 villages while the work is in progress in 44 villages. The funds to the tune of Rs 60.500 million had been sanctioned for the electrification of 23 villages in the suburbs of Lilla, Tehsil PD Khan. However, the President had recently allocated Rs 15 million for electrification and more funds are expected in near future to electrify the remaining villages. IESCO, Islamabad, had agreed to electrify all the remaining areas of district Jhelum by December 2007. A list of all such villages had been prepared in consultation with tehsil nazims and Nazar Hussain Gondal MPA and the same had been forwarded to the prime minister for release of funds and IESCO. Rs 70 million have been released for provision of natural gas to tehsils Dina and Sohawa. In addition, the existing demand for telephone connections in Jhelum is 4,971 lines. 28 telephone exchanges are presently functioning in the district Jhelum, having a capacity of 61,792 lines out of which 58,624 connections have been issued and 3,168 lines are still available. Talking about the availability of pure drinking water, the sources say that filtration plants will be installed in each union council of the district by the end of this year. The sources say that Bunhan Bridge has been constructed on Jhelum-Pind Dadan Khan Road to shorten the distance between the two points. Supply of CNG has been started at Lilla, Pind Dadan Khan. Small and mini dams will be constructed at different places to overcome the scarcity of water. However, the work is in progress in this regard. The construction of a bridge on the River Jhelum near Victorian Bridge has been approved. Village Kirri, UC Janjeel, is being developed as a model village and funds have been allocated for the purpose, they revealed. Facility of Machine Readable passport has been provided to the Jhelum city. Last but not the least, a campus of the Punjab University, University of Engineering & Technology, Taxila and OPF College are being established in Jhelum.

## **EC wants Police, DMG 'Old Guys' Reshuffled**

Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has directed the provinces to submit a list of all those police and district management groups' officers who are presently exceeding a three year term at any place of posting, Through its provincial head offices, the ECP has demanded lists of all such "old guys" by the end of this month in a bid to seek transfer of all such officers from Government before announcing the schedule for next General Elections. Experts say the Police Group is likely to be most affected if the drive of the ECP to sort out long postings goes well, while Punjab is expected to have most casualties as being home of the most of old guys. They added that some senior police officials of Lahore, Bahawalpur, Multan, Gujranwala, Faisalabad and Rawalpindi may also fall in the same ambit. In backdrop of reports regarding ECP's move for obtaining lists of all "old guys", police sources in Lahore, however, claimed the department has already started consultations for moping up all such officers who are posted at one station for an extraordinary period of time. It has been a long time demand of the political parties as well as the civil society that all such officers who are either rated close to a certain political party or have deep roots at certain stations should be moved out so that their influence may not hamper fairness of elections.

The Chief Election Commissioner Qazi Muhammad Farooq desires to see all such officers posted out of their present offices who have stuck to one station for more than three years before announcement of election schedule. The mere installation of caretaking Governments in the capital as well as provinces before the elections may not help in creating an atmosphere conducive for holding free and fair elections as the "old guys" will still remain in position to doctor the pre-poll affairs and engineer election results. Demands from almost all opposition political parties especially Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) for suspension of local governments to cut down the influence of present ruling parties and groups.

## **Ban Imposed on Carrying Arms**

The Government has imposed ban on carrying weapons with a view to ensure peace during the forthcoming General Elections in the country. Interior Ministry Spokesman Brig (Retd) Javed Iqbal Cheema said on October 17 that in order to ensure peaceful and tranquil environment devoid of any violence, it is imperative to impose this ban. However, he made it clear that security forces personnel in uniform would be exempted from the ban. He said that police and security personnel in civvies will not be allowed to carry weapons. Brig Cheema said that the ban will also apply to licensed weapons. The Government had already imposed ban on display of even licensed weapons in the country but there was no restriction on carrying them.

## **Rs 50m Grant for Sahiwal**

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has announced Rs 50 million grant for various uplift schemes of Sahiwal district besides constructing Qutab Shahana bridge over the River Ravi. He was talking to a 50-member district government delegation, led by District Nazim Rai Hasan Nawaz Khan, which met him on October 24<sup>th</sup>. The Prime Minister also sanctioned funds which have been released for the provision of Sui gas to four villages of Chichawatni tehsil.

## **Rs. 7.42m for Uplift Schemes in Sukkur**

According to an official handout, the Government of Sindh has allocated an amount of Rs. 7.420 million for carrying out 12-ongoing development schemes of Works and Services Sector in Sukkur district under the Annual Development Programme 2007-08. According to details, an amount of Rs. 0.400 million has been earmarked for carrying out remaining civil work of Microwave Dispensary Sukkur and Rs. 0.600 to complete the remaining work of internal electrification of said scheme. A sum of Rs. 1,200 million has been allocated for construction of a barbershop, tailor shop, computer lab and finger print room at SSP Police Headquarters Sukkur, while Rs. 0.610 million has been allocated for construction of a tennis at Barrage Colony Sukkur. Allocations for other schemes include Rs. 1,200 million for completion of the remaining civil work of Swimming Pool at Sukkur, Rs. 0.600 million for construction of civil work of Judicial lock up Pano Akil and Rs. 0.100 million for internal electrification for the same Judicial lock up, Rs. 0.500 million for carrying out remaining civil works of the Cultural Hall at Lab e Mehran Sukkur, Rs. 0.200 million earmarked for remaining civil work of internal electrification of Bus Terminal at Rohr, Rs. 0.150 million for remaining construction work of gents and ladies waiting hall, internal electrification and other works and Rs. 1,000 million for completion of the remaining construction work of external electrification of Bus Terminal Rohri and Rs. 1,400 million have been allocated for completion of the remaining external electrification works of Cattle Colony Sukkur respectively.

## **Nine Parties Enroll 7,500 Youth for Electioneering**

In the scenario of making political gatherings horrific due to terrorism threats, a large number of youth are taking keen interest to participate in the political activities from the platforms of different parties. As a result, youth wings of nine major political parties have recently enrolled more than 3,000 new members and are imparting training to more than 4,500 to enable them to play an active role in the political process. As a result of the political training programme especially focused on youth, around 50 young leaders from nine major political parties of the country have revamped their parties by increasing youth membership. They are also producing regular party publications and establishing party offices with computerized membership databases. This was the result of a yearlong programme on strengthening youth participation in political parties in Pakistan conducted by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, a US-based non-governmental organization.

## **Polls May not be Possible in Some Areas**

The rapidly deteriorating law and order situation in various parts of the country could force countermanding process of election in number of constituencies. In all probabilities, the National and Provincial Assemblies to come into being as the result of the upcoming General Polls would not Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will take a decision about it after studying the situation carefully. Secretary ECP Dilshad Kunwar told on October 12 that the Commission would make all-out efforts for holding the polls in fair and transparent manners but the law and order situation is the responsibility of the Provincial Governments. The ECP will refer the matter if any difficulty comes up in any area. The Provincial Election Commissioners (PEC) will also brief the ECP about the situation in their respective provinces.

**Polls May not be Possible in a Third of NWFP:** The Government apprehends that the upcoming General Elections may not be possible in at least one-third of the total districts of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) because of fears of terrorist attacks. Similarly, polling may be delayed in at least two districts of Balochistan, according to an official. He listed the districts of Hangu, Swat, Bannu, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan, Karak, Malakand, Dir in NWFP and Sui and Kohlu in Balochistan where parliamentary polls may not be possible. This will delay results in 20 National Assembly and 30 to 40 provincial assembly seats. The official said it was well known that different areas of these districts with some of them bordering the troubled tribal territory are often rocked by deadly terrorist attacks. These are mostly directed against the security forces, but civilians have also been falling victim to them. The problem for the security agencies will increase in these districts, the official said, adding that the election campaign would be extremely difficult if not totally impossible. He said that the campaign rallies and processions could become easy targets for terrorists, who have to be discouraged. A region declared sensitive normally gets increased deployment of police and paramilitary forces to maintain law and order and meet any untoward situation. The official said the government may maintain a heavy deployment of army troops during the elections in those NWFP districts where threats of terrorism would be greater. The government is resolved not to put off polling in even a single district, he said.

A total of 13 **National Assembly seats and provincial seats from the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Balochistan will remain vacant if polling for upcoming General Elections is postponed in 10 districts of the two provinces** due to fears of terrorist attacks. In the often terrorist-hit region, district of Hangu, Bannu, Kohat, Karak and Malakand have one National Assembly seat each while Swat, Dera Ismail Khan and Dir (Upper & Lower) two seats each, in Balochistan, Dera Bugti and Kohlu districts have one National Assembly seats each. This region is frequently affected by different kind of mayhem, not always related to the anti-terror war. These two districts have two seats in the provincial assembly. In the NWFP Assembly, districts of Dir (Upper & Lower) and Swat have seven seats each, Bannu four seats, Kohat three seats, Dera Ismail Khan and DIK cum-Tank five seats and Karak, Hangu, Malakand two seats each, The NWFP contributes as many as 43 seats to the Lower House. Of them, 35 seats are directly and 8 indirectly contested. Similarly, Balochistan has total of a quota of 17 seats in the National Assembly—14 directly and 3 indirectly contested. The NWFP provincial assembly comprises 124 seats—99 directly and 25 indirectly contested. The Balochistan Assembly has 65 seats—51 directly and 14 indirectly fought. While the total number of seats of the National Assembly and a Provincial legislature can not be changed, the number of seats of a district may be modified subject to changes in the population of voters, While there are fears that polling in the 10 terrorism-hit districts of the NWFP and Balochistan may be put off, the government is yet to take a final decision on the subject, However, political parties particularly prospective contestants from these areas are likely to oppose postponement of general elections.

### **New EC Members to be Appointed**

Two High Court Judges from Sindh and the North West frontier Province (NWFP) will be included in the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) early November before the announcement of the schedule for the next General Elections. President General Pervez Musharraf has initiated consultations with the relevant authorities to pick two honorable judges of the high courts of Sindh and Peshawar for the purpose. Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was the first leader who pointed out the ECP was incomplete and demanded appointment of new members of the Commission so that it should be complete before the general polls.

### **Condition of BA Degree for Contesting Elections**

#### **BA Condition May be Withdrawn**

According to Daily Times (October 26<sup>th</sup>), the Graduation condition for candidates in the forthcoming General Elections is among the key points recently discussed between the Presidency and the Pakistan People's Party and the condition could be rescinded. The condition barring undergraduates from contesting the election was imposed under the Political Parties Act 2002, when the Legal Framework Order was promulgated. The order ultimately got legitimacy with the approval of the 17th Amendment. PPP Vice-Chairman Makhdoom Amin Fahim and Rehman Malik have been engaged in talks with the Government team and ISI Chief Lt-General Nadeem Taj during the last five days on different issues, including the lifting of the graduation condition. The Graduation condition has perturbed political parties, forcing many political heavyweights to sit outside the Parliament after it was enforced for the 2002 General Elections. However, these heavyweights fielded their kith and kin in the electoral race and as a result youngsters appeared in the houses, bringing about a visible change.

## **Verification of the Candidates' Degrees**

Daily Khabrain reported on October 26<sup>th</sup> that the ECP has said that BA Degree of all the candidates would be verified from the relevant academies.

Advocate Abdul Karim Kundi told the Supreme Court (SC) on October 29<sup>th</sup> that **Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) Chief Maulana Fazalur Rehman is negotiating with the government to abolish the graduation condition for members of Parliament.** Kundi, who is counsel for MNA Mufti Ibrar Sultan, said the JUI chief's negotiations were in the final stages and said he was hopeful that the graduation condition would be removed by the next elections.

## **Aziz Likely to Contest from Kashmore**

Addressing Parliamentarians, Ministers and party workers on October 23<sup>rd</sup> Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has said he will contest the General Elections from Kashmore, if the ruling PML gives its approval. At present, the MNA from the constituency NA-210 is Ghalib Domki, who joined the PML (Q) after winning the election on a PPP ticket. Mr. Aziz announced Rs600 million for construction of the 50km Kashmore-Chowk Mari link road and Rs13.3 billion for roads, power supply and water schemes in the district.

## **Elections Likely by Mid-January**

An important meeting on October 25<sup>th</sup> discussed the interim setup and to hold upcoming General Elections in the mid of January. The meeting followed by dinner hosted by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz at PM House, was attended by President Pervez Musharraf, Information Minister Muhammad Ali Durrani, PML President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, Senator Mushahid Hussain and other MNAs. The meeting discussed in length the upcoming General Elections, Karachi blasts, strategy for the implementation of Code of Conduct. **The schedule of the General Elections also remained the hot issue of the meeting and the 10th January is likely date for upcoming General Elections.**

## **President Orders Intelligence Agencies to Stay Away from Elections**

President General Pervez Musharraf has decided that the intelligence agencies will not be allowed to interfere in the election process in the next General Elections and orders have been issued to all the agencies in this respect. It has also been decided in principle that no former Army General would be appointed as Caretaker Prime Minister and the Caretaker Cabinets at the Federal and Provincial level would not comprise armed forces personnel. They said the President will announce a date for the holding of the next General Elections in the country simultaneously with the appointment of a Caretaker Prime Minister in the second week of November. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will announce the schedule for the polls in the third week of the same month. In all probability, elections for the national and provincial assemblies would be held on the same day, and polling day will fall in the second week of January next year. The decision to keep the agencies away from the polls has been taken as a demonstration of the intent to hold free and transparent elections. The President has asked the intelligence agencies not to establish contact with any candidate or any political leader for any purpose other than stipulated in their charter of professional duties. They have been asked to concentrate on security-related matters and law and order situation. Sources have revealed that President Musharraf decided not to assign any clandestine role to the intelligence agencies as it was a major demand not only of the international community but of most political parties as well.

## **PPP to Resist Emergency**

Pakistan People's Party Chairperson Benazir Bhutto said on October 31<sup>st</sup> that her party would not support imposition of emergency and reversal of the process for transition to democracy. Ms Bhutto also rejected the inquiry commission set up by the provincial government to investigate the Oct 18 terrorist attack on her rally. She was addressing a news conference at the Bilawal House after postponing her visit to Dubai to announce decisions taken by the party's Central Executive Committee and Federal Council. She, however, said she might go abroad before the Nov 9 public meeting in Rawalpindi. She said that if emergency is imposed people will come out and resist it," Ms Bhutto said, while expressing concern over the situation in Balochistan and tribal areas of the NWFP where extremism and terrorism had surged to a dangerous level, "threatening the very foundation of the country."

## **PTI to Join Hands with PML-N to Contest Polls**

Pakistan Tehreek-e- Insaf has decided in principle to join hands with PML-N to contest coming elections. Along with Awami National Party, some other nationalist parties will be welcomed to join the purposed alliance. PTI will soon decide whether it will be election alliance or seat to seat adjustment formula. This was announced by PTI Punjab President Ahsan Rashid while expressing his views in a meeting held at Aiwan-e-Waqt here on October 31<sup>st</sup>. PTI Senior Vice President Mian Mehmood Ul Rashid, general secretary Amid Zaki and Secretary Information Sheikh Najeeb also attended the meeting. He said that reason behind the move to form election alliance with PML-N is its uncompromising stance with the establishment and commitment to restore real democracy in the country. He said neither PTI nor PML-N has any lust for power.

## **Election Observers**

### **EU Expresses Concern over Sending Poll Observers**

French Ambassador to Pakistan Regis de Belenet on October 20<sup>th</sup> conveyed serious concerns of the EU countries about the mounting threat of violent attacks on foreign observers in his meeting with Benazir Bhutto at Bilawal House, Karachi. During the meeting, Benazir was assisted by PPP Spokesman Farhatullah Babar, Chief of PPP diplomatic enclave foreign liaison committee Senator Enver Baig and party Senator Javed Leghari. The French Ambassador was accompanied by his Karachi Counsel General. The concerns are said to have been conveyed directly to Ms Bhutto simply because she had been asking the EU countries to send their observers to monitor the process of election in the country. The purpose of these foreign observers would be to ensure international presence here to develop pressure on the government agencies not to rig the polls. The EU and other international teams having stakes in the democratic process of Pakistan had also visited the country during the 2002 General Elections. Before coming to Pakistan, Benazir in her visits to London had been strongly advocating the urgent need of the presence of foreign observers in Pakistan to monitor the next General Elections. But, now the violent attack on Benazir has alarmed European countries, which have informed the visiting observers that their lives would be at stake in Pakistan.

### **NDI Calls for Fair Polls and Effective Monitoring**

The former US Senate majority leader and head of the visiting four-member Pre-Election Assessment Mission, Tom Daschle, has urged the Pakistan government to urgently initiate steps for the General Elections to contain political violence and produce an accurate voters list. He was addressing a press conference organized by the National Democratic Institute (NDI). Other members of the delegation besides NDI officials were also present. Tom said his delegation met with the government and electoral officials, political leaders, members of civil society, media representatives and international organizations. Without such steps, he said, crucial parliamentary elections due in January 2008 risked being perceived as compromised and unrepresentative, and could lead to deeper civil unrest and military involvement in politics. Following are some of the observations made by Tom Daschle:

- § If the integrity of the elections was seriously compromised and not seen as representatives of the will of the people, the nation could face increased civil conflict and the military could become further entrenched in the nation's political life.
- § Violent incidents like October 18, 2007 suicide attack on Benazir Bhutto in Karachi and political and religiously inspired violence could increase as the national and provincial assembly elections approach.
- § Escalating violence and intimidation in Pakistan were creating an atmosphere of fear and threatened to curtail the ability of parties and candidates to freely engage in political activity, adding widespread concerns among opposition political parties and civic groups that the ECP lacked transparency and independence.
- § Four major problems identified by an earlier NDI Pre-Election Assessment Mission in May remained unresolved, including the inaccurate voters' lists, lack of transparency during the vote-count, long-standing vacancies on the ECP, and the lack of regular meetings with political parties.
- § Pakistan's media frequently carried reports critical of the government, however the delegation noted reports of disturbing trends in government attempts to limit journalists' activities and a failure to enforce journalists' rights. He called for ensuring women's right to vote.

While current electoral rolls now contain many names, election experts have advised the delegation that they are no more accurate, with approximately 10 million entries that could not be verified. He said that the delegation received credible reports of attempts by intelligence and security organizations to manipulate the electoral process, including efforts to influence local polling officials and convince individuals not to seek their party nomination or switch parties. The members of the delegation also expressed deep concern about the persistent instability and lack of security in FATA and Southern

NWFP and received credible reports of threats by religious extremists against leaders of secular and moderate religious party leaders. The members of the delegation made 21 recommendations to the government, the ECP and political parties as to the upcoming elections. The key recommendations include:

- § The **ECP** should develop a formal process of regular consultations with political parties and civil society on election procedures and policies,
- § The **government** should terminate the involvement of intelligence agencies in the electoral process, create a legal framework for all security agencies requiring that they be politically neutral and not interfere in the political process, take all steps to prevent election-related violence and promptly investigate and prosecute all attempts to disrupt the election process, cooperate with judicial inquiries into the killing and abduction of journalists and political party workers.
- § Similarly, **political parties** should adhere to a Code of Conduct and refrain from employing violence during electoral period. The government and police should use their full authority to enforce the right of women to vote and the right of the media to cover the elections in all areas of the country.

### **FAFEN Urges ECP to give Maximum Access to Voters**

The Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) on October 26<sup>th</sup> urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to take immediate measures to ensure the maximum access of eligible voters to check that their names were included in the new Electoral Rolls, which include the 2007 voters' list displayed for public scrutiny in June-July 2007 along with supplemental names from the 2002 voters' lists added during September-October 2007. Following are the points put forth by FAFEN:

- § FAFEN believed that the ECP's recent announcement that it would display these electoral rolls only at the district level would significantly restrict the ability of people living outside district headquarters to verify their names on the voters' list.
- § FAFEN recommended that copies of the voters' lists should be placed at Tehsil and union council office to ensure greater accessibility of people.
- § FAFEN also urged the ECP to keep the supplemental names of 2002 separate from 2007 electoral rolls, which contained very few errors of names, addresses and national identity card number. The remarkable accuracy of 2007 electoral rolls was proven by
- § FAFEN's statistically valid audit of 2007 draft electoral roll between 13 and July 18, 2007.
- § FAFEN also believe that there was needed for an ECP-hosted meeting for collective consolation on the new "Draft Code of Conduct for the political parties and Contesting Candidates for General Election 2007" distributed on October 24, 2007.

## Comparison of Economic Performance during the Rule of Two Generals

Herald, in its October 2007 issue, published a very interesting article (The Generals' Economic Tutelage) which compares the economic growth during the time period of two Generals (Ziaul Haq and Pervez Musharraf). It says that when we compare the regimes of General Pervez Musharraf's eight years in office with the first eight years of General Ziaul Haq in power from the perspective of economics, there is a relatively straightforward answer to this question. While the economy expanded significantly – more under Zia's than in the years of Musharraf's rule – there are some important differences in the way the economy was managed and the way it performed. The writer puts forth that a look at the rates of economic growth in Pakistan over the last 60 years reveals an interesting trend. He analyses that Pakistan's economy does much better when the military is in charge of politics than is the case when the politicians run the country.

The writer has provided few reasons behind this trend. One of the important reasons for this is the comfort that potential investors draw from the promise of continuation of economic policies. As the military in Pakistan has provided a degree of certainty to the investors by governing for relatively long periods of time – 11 years under Ayub Khan, from 1958-1969, 11 years again under Zia, from 1977 to 1988 and now for at least eight years under Musharraf. Civilian governance, on the other hand, produced enormous turbulence. Another crucial reason for the better performance of the economy during the military period is the easy accessibility to foreign capital flows. While the military held the reins of power, it so happened that Washington needed Pakistan's support in pursuing the strategic interests. In the 1960s, the Americans needed Pakistan's cooperation to build a line of defence against the possible expansion of communist influence in Asia. In the 1980s, it looked upto Pakistan for help in Washington's 'War against Terrorism'. Islamabad was handsomely rewarded least 10 billion dollars from Washington.

Following tables provide the comparison of economic performance during the eras of two military rulers:

<b>Table 1: Pakistan's Economic Performance during the First Eight Years of the Rule of General Zia-ul-Haq (1977-1985)</b>									
	<b>1977-78</b>	<b>1978-79</b>	<b>1979-80</b>	<b>1980-81</b>	<b>1981-82</b>	<b>1982-83</b>	<b>1983-84</b>	<b>1984-85</b>	<b>1977-85 (Growth)</b>
Population (in million)	90	91	93	95	97	99	101	103	1.9%
GDP (in billions of \$)	26.5	28.8	30.5	32.4	34.9	37.6	39.1	42.5	
GDP Growth (%)		8.7%	5.9%	6.2%	7.7%	7.7%	4.0%	8.7%	7.0%
GDP Per Capita (\$)	294	316	328	341	360	380	387	413	
GDP Per Capita Growth Rate (%)		7.5%	3.8%	4.0%	5.6%	5.8%	1.8%	6.7%	5.0%

**Table 2: Pakistan's Economic Performance during the Musharraf Period  
(1999-2007)**

	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	99-07 (Growth)
Population (in million)	137	139	143	145	149	151	154	157	2.0%
GDP (in billions of \$)	91.1	94.7	96.6	101.1	108.7	118.5	126.6	135.5	
GDP Growth (%)		4.0%	2.0%	4.7%	7.5%	9.0%	6.8%	7.0%	5.8%
GDP Per Capita (\$)	692	709	703	714	728	772	825	863	
GDP Per Capita Growth Rate (%)		2.5%	0.8%	1.6%	2.0%	6.0%	6.9%	4.6%	3.2%

The tables provide the rates of growth in the economy during the periods 1977-1985 – the first eight years of Zia's rule – and 1999-2007 period. Three things are worth noting. One, as already indicated, the average annual rate of growth in the 1977-1985 period was higher than in the 1999-2007 period, seven percent a year in the first year as against 5.8 percent per annum in the second. Two, while the economy recovered quickly once Zia took the reins of power, it languished for a while under Musharraf. That happened because the economic managers of the latter adopted the International Monetary Fund (IMF) model of stabilization: squeezing the economy by adopting highly restrictive fiscal and monetary policies. It was only once the IMF programme was over that economic expansion began. Three, the economy has been much volatile once economic expansion began under Musharraf than was the case under Zia. This may imply – as Islamabad claims – the economy has been placed on a sustainable growth trajectory.

## Governance Issues in FATA/FANA

### Political Reforms for Northern Areas

President General Pervez Musharraf announced a political reforms package for the Northern Areas on 23<sup>rd</sup> October. Following are some of the reform announced:

- § The Northern Areas Legislative Council would be upgraded to the Northern Areas Legislative Assembly. The new assembly could elect its own head and could prepare and sanction its own budget.
- § All administrative and financial powers of the Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas Ministry would be transferred to the Northern Areas.
- § The regional judicial system will, however, remain a part of the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas.
- § An Accountant General Office would be set up to audit the accounts of the region.
- § A new district, consisting of Hunza and Nagir subdivisions, would be created. Two subdivisions in the Baltistan region were also announced.
- § All NAB cases pertaining to the Northern Areas would be transferred to Gilgit.
- § There would be the remission of agricultural loans of less than Rs 50,000 from which at least 12,000 people could benefit. Remission on the profit on SME loans was also announced.
- § Boundary Commission would be established to resolve boundary disputes between the Northern Areas and NWFP.

- § There would be an increase in the regional developmental budget from Rs 6.5 billion to Rs 7.6 billion.
- § 1,000 posts would be created in the Northern Areas administration and the direct transfer of the budget from the federal Finance Ministry.
- § An Additional Chief Secretary for the Northern Areas would be delegated to head the Northern Areas working development party.
- § Any successive government can annul the new system because it is incorporated in the regional Legal Framework Order, which is not covered under the 1973 Constitution.

### **Northern Areas to have LG System**

President Pervez Musharraf has approved Legal Framework Order (LFO) on devolution of power at grass root level and introduction of Local Government system in Northern Areas. The President accorded approval to LFO while presiding over a high-level meeting held in Rawalpindi on 20th October. Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas, Maj (R) Tahir Iqbal, Deputy Chief Executive Northern Areas, Mir Ghazanfar Ali and high-ranking officials also attended the meeting. The meeting reviewed a host of development projects for Northern Areas, matters related to LFO, Hydro Power projects and other schemes. Addressing the meeting, President Musharraf said Northern Areas would be brought at par with other parts of the country in terms of development and quality of life of the people of these areas will be improved.

### **Government to Establish 7,000 Literacy Centers in FATA**

As many as 654 literacy centers, having an enrolment of 14,535 adult students, had been established in four tribal agencies during the last six months, which will be increased to 1,000 with an enrolment to 22,600 students by December next. This was stated at a meeting chaired by NWFP Governor Lt-General (Retd) Ali Muhammad Jan Orakzai at the Governor's House on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The activities of the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) were reviewed at a meeting attended by Secretary to Governor Azmat Hanif and Director Education FATA Fazal Mannan. The Governor was informed that following the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Directorate of Education and NCHD in March, 2007, significant progress had been made to improve literacy and contribute towards Universal Primary Education (UPE) in four agencies i.e., Khyber, Mohmand, Orakzai and Kurram. Director Education FATA Fazal Manan said that by the year 2010, it was planned to establish 7,000 literacy centers in FATA with the enrolment of 35,000 students. Under the project, training of teachers and agency education officers for Universal Primary Education was also conducted during July 2007 in different agencies. Similarly, Base Line survey of households to ascertain the number of out of schoolchildren was also conducted in the four agencies. Progress of NCHD activities were regularly being monitored at the agency and the Directorate of Education level.

The Governor expressed satisfaction over the visible progress with regard to establishment of adults' literacy centers in the four agencies and hoped that the targets for the coming years would also be achieved if the work continued with the same speed. He also expressed satisfaction over the establishment of 78 feeder schools, against the target of 110 such schools till December. Orakzai reviews sports activities in FATA: FATA has been, for the first time, brought to the national mainstream in the sports sector as all the FATA level sports associations had been affiliated to the respective associations at national level. Two multi-purpose sport complexes; one each at Sadda, Kurram Agency and Ghiljo, Orakzai Agency, would be constructed during the current financial year, besides improving the existing cricket stadiums at Jamrud, Bajaur and Kurram by providing equipment like rollers, grass cutters, pitch clay etc by the Pakistan Cricket Board.

## Report on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

A report on UN's Millennium Goals, jointly produced by the Asian Development Bank, the UN Development Programme and UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP, was released on October 8<sup>th</sup>. It predicted that an ambitious programme to reduce poverty and provide adequate social services for all citizens by 2015 is unlikely to be met in full by any developing country in the Asia-Pacific region. While progress has been made on combating poverty, it has been coupled with a troubling increase in economic inequality. It said that however, the number of people living in extreme poverty in the region is likely to be cut in half by 2015.

Following are some of the findings of the report:

- § The region -- home to 60 percent of the world's population -- had more than 1 billion people living on less than \$1 day in 1990, but that number has now dropped to 641 million.
- § China has made the biggest headway, with one in three Chinese living in poverty in 1990, compared to one in 10 today. But other countries were lagging behind, among them the Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- § Increases in economic inequality may loosen social cohesion and lead to social or political instability, undermining the achievements of the goals that are met. 'The Millennium Development Goals: Progress in Asia and the Pacific 2007.'
- § The Asia-Pacific region is on track to reduce extreme poverty, attain universal education and achieve gender parity.
- § The biggest failures to-date have been in reducing child mortality, improving nutrition and maternal health, and providing safe drinking water and sanitation facilities.
- § The Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs, are targets adopted by world leaders in September 2000 to promote development and healthcare in the world's poorest countries.
- § In many countries, the poorest 20 percent of the population have seen their share of national income drop steeply and economic inequality has risen in 14 of the 20 countries in the region, the report said. Nepal and China experienced the largest increase in income gaps.
- § The overall aim should be to reduce poverty while improving the delivery of basic services through expanding physical and social infrastructure. But some countries, particularly the region's least-developed countries, do not

## SBP Annual Report 2006-07: Review of the Economy

State Bank released its 'Annual Report 2006-07: Review of the Economy' on October 29<sup>th</sup>. Following are some of the facts mentioned in the report:

- § A further deceleration in import growth, together with a small improvement in export growth, and a robust rise in remittances underpins the improvement in the current account deficit for the current fiscal year to 4.8 percent from 5.3 percent in 2006-07.
- § Given Pakistan's rising industry and infrastructure requirements, increasing oil prices, and food imports in eventuality of shortages of strategic products, the country's imports are likely to remain strong. Thus, it is essential that the growth in exports be accelerated.
- § Propelled by impressive growth in services and agriculture sectors, Pakistan's real GDP growth rate stood at seven percent in 2006-07, despite a low growth of 6.8 percent in the industrial sector, the report said. Agriculture witnessed strong growth of five percent in fiscal year 2006-07. The recovery from low agriculture growth during the previous fiscal year is principally driven by a remarkable growth of 7.6 percent in the major crops sub-sector. The yields obtained on almost all major crops were either at or near 10-year highs.

§ The sustained strong growth by the services sector for the last six years has contributed to a structural shift in the economy, and the share of the services sector in GDP rose to a new high of 53.3 percent during fiscal year 2006-07.

§ Inflationary pressures remained strong throughout the outgoing fiscal year as food inflation remained in double digits for most months, mainly due to domestic supply shortages of some important crops.

§ Pakistan's total debt and liabilities rose by 10 percent in fiscal year 2006-07 to Rs 5.024 trillion, standing at 56.7 percent of GDP. The rise was fuelled by increases in both Domestic debt grew 11.9 percent to reach Rs 2.597 trillion, whereas external debt and liabilities grew 8 percent to reach \$40.1 billion. Of the rise in external debt and liabilities, 62.5 percent was contributed by floating interest rate loans. The rising share of short-term and floating rate debt in the country's total debt and liabilities indicates a relatively greater vulnerability of debt servicing cost to adverse future interest rate movements.

### ICG Report on Balochistan

According a report of the International Crisis Group (ICG) released on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, the ongoing 'insurgency' in Balochistan will only subside when free, fair and transparent elections establish a legitimate government to replace the 'current military dictatorship', **The forgotten conflict in Balochistan**" examines the tension across the strategically important and resource-rich province, where violence continues between the government and the Baloch demanding political and economic autonomy. According to the report, the conflict in Balochistan is rooted in "Islamabad's unwillingness to cede political and economic autonomy to the resource-rich but most neglected and underdeveloped of the country's four provinces." Instead of redressing political and economic grievances of the Baloch people, it regrets, the military is determined to impose state control through force. "The killing of Baloch leader Nawab Akbar Bugti in August 2006 was followed by the incarceration of another Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal, who has been held on terrorism-related charges without due process since December. Law-enforcement agencies have detained thousands of Baloch nationalists or those believed to be sympathetic to the cause; many have simply disappeared. The ICG also expresses concern over non-implementation of the recommendations on Balochistan's political and economic autonomy finalised by a parliamentary committee in November 2005.

### World Press Freedom Index -- Pakistan among Seven Toughest Asian States for Journalists

A new survey says many journalists plying their craft in Asian countries, including Pakistan, must cope with war, coups and repressive regimes to report the news, making the region one of the toughest for reporters to work in. Out of 169 countries in the World Press Freedom Index, seven Asian nations - **Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Laos, Vietnam, China, Myanmar and North Korea** - were in the bottom 20. Altogether, 20 Asian countries were in the bottom half of the poll compiled by the Paris-based campaigning group, Reporters Without Borders, and eight in the top half. Military coups in **Thailand** and **Fiji** led to a worsening of press freedoms, it added, while in Pakistan dozens of journalists were beaten and arrested during a crisis set off by General Pervez Musharraf's dismissal of Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry.

Newspapers print only under strict censorship, private broadcasting is not allowed and most websites carrying news about the country are blocked. At least 13 journalists and writers are believed to be in jail, Reporters Without Borders said, while a **Japanese** video journalist was shot dead while he covered the crackdown. **Myanmar** ranked 164th out of the 169 countries in the survey - one ranking below China. Reporters Without Borders said it regretted China's low standing. It said that with less than a year to go to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the reforms and the releases of imprisoned journalists so often promised by the authorities seem to be a vain hope.

The press freedom body said that of at least 64 people currently imprisoned worldwide because of what they posted on the Internet, a total of 50 were in **China**. Li Datong, a former Editor of Bingdian, a weekly supplement to the China Youth Daily, said there was no press freedom there. Another eight detained cyber-dissidents were in **Vietnam**, Reporters Without Borders said, adding that **Malaysia** and **Thailand** were also noted for cracking down on Internet journalism, arresting bloggers and shutting down or blocking news websites. At least seven media workers have been killed during the past year in **Sri Lanka's** besieged northern Jaffna peninsula while others have been kidnapped or threatened, said the Free Media Movement, a Sri Lankan press watchdog. Despite the bleak picture of journalism in Asia, some countries have turned their practices around. In **Nepal**, an end to the civil war and return to democratic rule has revived basic freedoms, Reporters Without Borders said, while the **Cambodia** government had decriminalized press offences.

Top 20 Countries in terms of Press Freedom		Last 20 Countries in terms of Press Freedom	
Rank	Country	Rank	Country
1	Iceland	150	Ethiopia
-	Norway	151	Belarus
3	Estonia	152	Pakistan
-	Slovakia	153	Equatorial Guinea
5	Belgium	154	Syria
-	Finland	155	Libya
-	Sweden	156	Sri Lanka
8	Denmark	157	Iraq
-	Ireland	158	Palestinian Territories
-	Portugal	159	Somalia
11	Switzerland	160	Uzbekistan
12	Latvia	161	Laos
-	Netherlands	162	Vietnam
14	Czech Republic	163	China
15	New Zealand	164	Burma
16	Austria	165	Cuba
17	Hungary	166	Iran
18	Canada	167	Turkmenistan
19	Trinidad and Tobago	168	North Korea
20	Germany	169	Eritrea

# Geo-Political Dynamics

## South Asia

### Indian Nuclear Deal in Trouble

The Indian government has told the United States it is having trouble pushing through a landmark nuclear deal, indicating that pressure from the left allies has forced it to take the decision. Welcoming the change in the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government's approach toward the deal, the left bloc described it as a "positive development." On October 16, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh talked to President George W. Bush from Abuja, Nigeria on telephone and told him about the problems being faced in pushing the deal through. The prime minister, according to a statement from his office, "explained to President Bush that certain difficulties have arisen with respect to the operationalization of the India-US civil nuclear cooperation agreement." The difficulty being faced by India in going ahead with the deal was conveyed by Manmohan directly to Bush within a few days of his having acknowledged this at a media gathering in the capital. Manmohan had been pushing for the conclusion of the deal as his key foreign policy achievement.

A Foreign Ministry official said that in New Delhi, Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee met the US ambassador to India, David Mulford, to explain the problems. The deal, finalized in August after two years of complex negotiations, had been championed as the start of a new era of ties between the United States and one of Asia's fastest growing economies. Meanwhile, the United States said that it hoped India would stick to the accord. Tom Casey, a State Department spokesman said that we do hope though that India will decide to move forward with this agreement and we like to see it completed in 2008. He further said that we would continue talks with India to push ahead with the agreement, under which Washington would provide New Delhi with nuclear fuel and technology.

### India Sets Up Panel for Land Reforms

India is setting up a panel to resolve disputes over distribution and acquisition of land after violent protests by farmers who fear losing their land to build factories or mines. Land has been at the centre of fierce stand-offs between farmers and government agencies trying to acquire farms for industry, a problem that some analysts say threatens India's attractiveness as an investment destination. A Government statement said that the new panel will create policies, guide states and monitor the progress of land distribution and quick disposal of compensation disputes. The decision came hours after about 25,000 protesters walked for a month to reach New Delhi on October 28<sup>th</sup> demanding better land rights, but were stopped short of the parliament building by police. The protesters, who began their march in the city of Gwalior, reached the capital on Sunday after walking more than 300 km (185 miles). Among the protesters were farmers and small landowners who fear losing their land to big-ticket projects and Indians demanding the government give them land so they can eke out a living, etc. The new panel, whose recommendations will be non-binding, will include government officials and independent experts on land reforms. Several big projects, including a \$12 billion steel plant by South Korea's Posco, face delays because of stand-offs with poor farmers unwilling to give up their land.

### Bangladesh Army Chief Says Election at the Earliest

Bangladesh's Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed, now visiting the United States, has reaffirmed that the country's Interim Government is keen to hold elections "at the earliest" and restore democracy "at any cost". Speaking at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass, Moeen pledged to "re-establish democracy and root out corruption", Dhaka newspapers said on Wednesday. At Harvard, Hasina's son Sajib Wazed Joy asked Moeen why his mother was being held in prison in Dhaka. "I would be the happiest person if she (Hasina) was not found guilty," Moeen said replying to Joy, Bangladesh's private television "Channel-i" reported. The Harvard-educated Joy and his sister Saima Wazed Putul live in the United States, and have vowed to lead an overseas campaign for the freedom of their mother. "This government is here to reinstate democracy. But everyone has to remember that corruption devours democracy. So, this war against corruption will continue until the corruption levels are brought down to a tolerable limit," Bangladesh media quoted Moeen as saying at meeting of Bangladeshis in Boston.

## East Asia

### Thailand to lift Martial Law in 11 Provinces

Thailand's coup leader on October 12 that martial law would be lifted in 11 more provinces but reinstated in three others in the northeast, a stronghold of the government he overthrew. Martial law will be in force in a total of 27 of Thailand's 76 provinces as the country prepares for elections and a return to democracy in December. Restrictions imposed after the military overthrew premier Thaksin Shinawatra last year were lifted in 41 provinces including Bangkok in January.

The decision to lift martial law was made by top security body the National Security Council (NSC). It is subject to cabinet approval on Tuesday, when it will take effect immediately, said Sonthi, who chairs the NSC. Martial law will remain in the poor northern and northeastern provinces, where Thaksin's rural policies won him many votes, and in Thailand's Muslim-majority south, where a separatist insurgency is raging. It has been reinstated in Mukdahan, Nong Khai and Nakhon Phanom -- three provinces in the northeast which border Laos. Thailand has previously expressed concern about ethnic minority Hmong illegally crossing the border from Laos to try to work or seek refuge in Thailand. Political parties and pro-democracy groups have urged the junta to lift martial law, warning that losers in the elections could cite the military restrictions to challenge the outcome of the vote. The junta has promised to hold elections on December 23 this year.

## Central Asia

### Constitutional Referendum in Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan voted on October 21<sup>st</sup> in a constitutional referendum designed to ease tensions in the Central Asian state but criticized by the opposition as a step towards authoritarianism. Home to a US and a Russian military base, the Muslim State has been unstable since 2005 when protests ousted veteran leader Askar Akayev and brought President Kurmanbek Bakiyev to power. The proposed changes give Bakiyev additional leeway in picking officials and dissolving Parliament, and pave the way for his political party to gain a power base in the chamber. Bakiyev said after casting his ballot in the capital Bishkek said that people are the real power. After all the debate people will draw a line under it ... and express their point of view. At loggerheads with a parliament that was elected in a disputed poll under Akayev's rule, Bakiyev is expected to call an early parliamentary election if the referendum is passed. The opposition, once the main driving force behind anti-Bakiyev protests but now weak and divided over political reform, criticized the proposed changes as authoritarian. An opposition politician Emil Aliyev said that I voted against it because the draft constitution contains contradictions and strengthens the authoritarian rule of one person.

The changes also raise the number of deputies and change the election process from a single-constituency system to a proportional all-party list, which should help the newly formed pro-presidential Ak Zhol party gain footing in the chamber. Bakiyev is regarded as a liberal among his more hard-line Central Asian neighbours. Kyrgyzstan has a relatively free press, strong opposition and an active civic society. On Sunday, Bakiyev vowed to focus more on urgent issues such as poverty and inflation.

### Kyrgyz Government Resigns

Kyrgyzstan's Government resigned on October 24<sup>th</sup> in line with requirements set by a new Constitution adopted at a nationwide referendum. The West has long criticized Kazakhstan for keeping media on a tight leash. State news outlets rarely mention President Nursultan Nazarbayev in a negative light, and Internet journalism has boomed as the main venue for political debate.

### Caspian States' Support Iran

Russian President Vladimir Putin backing Iran's nuclear programme for peaceful ends has said that Russia and other Caspian states would not allow their territory to be used by a third country to commit military action against the Islamic Republic. Putin said this during his visit to Iran in a press conference on October 16 on the sidelines of a summit meeting attended by the leaders of the Caspian Sea states in Tehran. This was the first ever visit by a Kremlin chief since World War II. He backed Iran's right to nuclear energy saying it is important. Putin's visit to the country is seen as a major significance at a time of tensions between Iran and the West over Iran's atomic drive.

During his meeting with the four Caspian Sea leaders, namely presidents of Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan Putin said, It is important that we talk about the impossibility of using our territory for other countries to carry out aggression or military action against other Caspian Littoral states. Later in the declaration, the Caspian states

supported Iran's right to nuclear energy. The declaration backed the right of Non-proliferation Treaty members to research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful ends, without discrimination, within the framework of this treaty and the mechanism of the UN nuclear watchdog.

The legal status of the Caspian believed to contain the world's third-largest energy reserves has been in limbo since the 1991 Soviet collapse, leading to sealed oil deposits. Iran, which shared the Caspian's resources equally with the Soviet Union, insists that each coastal nation receive an equal portion of the seabed. Russia Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan want the division based on the length of each nation's shoreline, which would give Iran a smaller share. Turkmenistan is also vying for the Caspian's resource. Putin's visit took place despite warnings and amid hopes that round of personal diplomacy could help offer a solution to an international standoff on Iran's nuclear program. The Russian leader's trip was thrown into doubt when the Kremlin said that he had been informed by Russian special services that suicide attackers might try to kill him in Tehran, but he shrugged off the warning. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad Ali Hosseini called the reports disinformation spread by adversaries who hoped to spoil good relations between Russia and Iran.