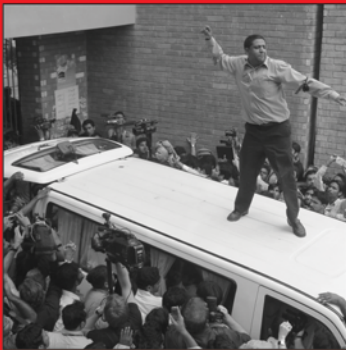


Resist terror - Work for change

2007

Events & Analysis

By Sarah Humayun



Shirkat Gah Publication

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Editor's note

THIS publication chronicles and reviews the events that shaped 2007, and will no doubt continue to shape Pakistani society and the efforts of civil society activists in years to come. It was a year marked by remarkable degrees of violence and change. Some conflicts that had long been raging within Pakistani society came to a head. As Kamila Hyat points out in her article, the occupation of the children's library and the siege of Lal Masjid were only an episode in the dilemma posed by the illegally built and shadily financed madrassas set up in the Zia era. These establishments answered a socio-economic need, particularly for women; they harnessed some of the most reactionary forces in society, and they were used by both governments and terrorists to further their interests. The involvement of leading Pakistani politicians and forces within the 'establishment' in aiding or tolerating them is a subject that merits a study of its own.

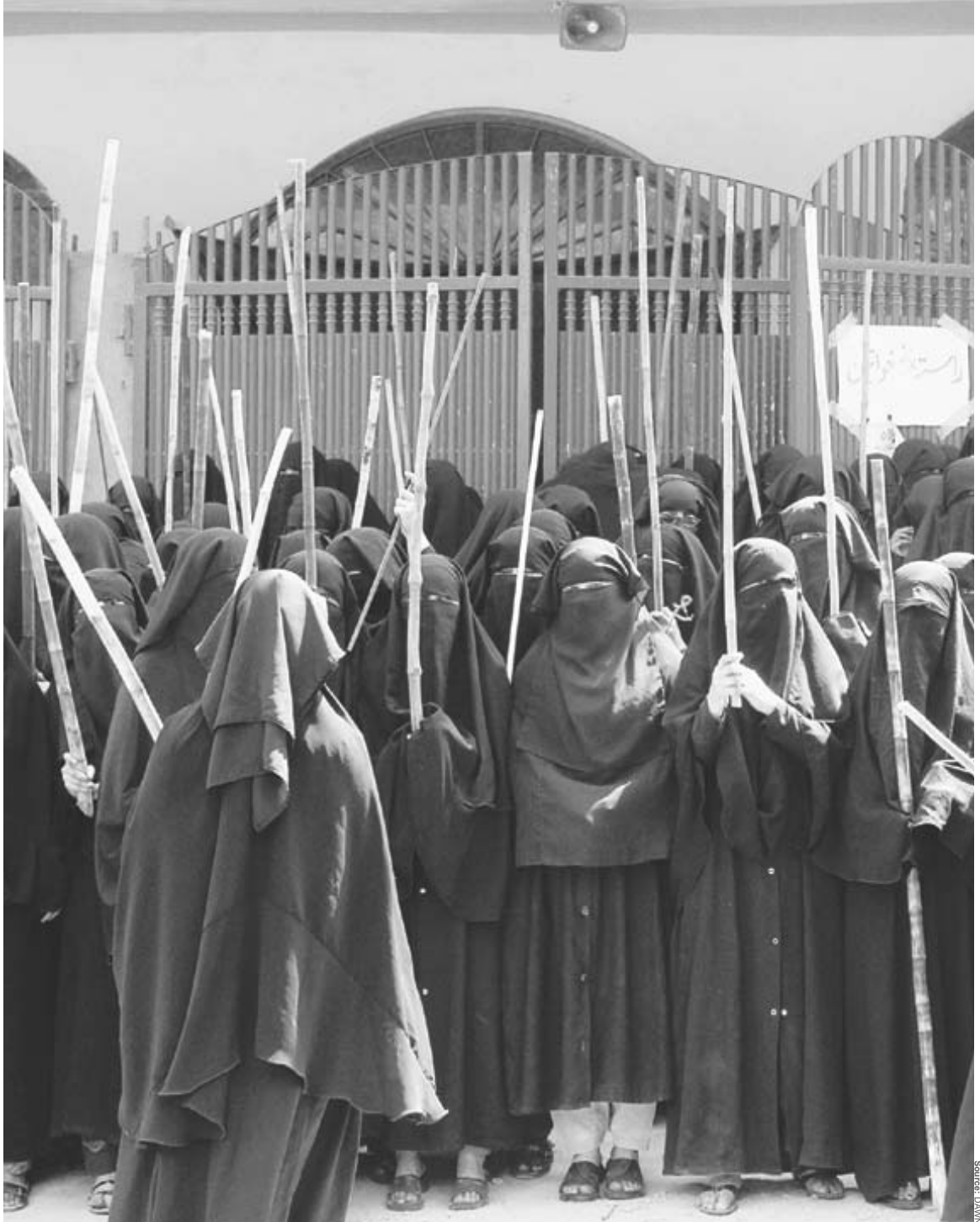
Another issue that surfaced in 2007 - to many people's surprise, as Asad Jamal notes - was that of the independence of the judiciary. The lawyers' movement, as it came to be known, focused the efforts of civil society for democratisation and acted as possibly the greatest catalyst for change in 2007. The chief justice's removal, its context and the events that followed from it are documented here at length.

The media could not fail to be at the heart of the storm. Its role was questioned in almost every major development that it covered, and it became a victim of the general onslaught on freedoms. Also pertinent here was the changed nature of news gathering and transmission after the advent of electronic and digital media. As Muhammad Badr Alam points out, the Musharraf regime, which in some ways facilitated this development, considered this freedom a privilege that it could revoke at will. Significantly, this was an attitude echoed by Asif Ali Zardari - Co-chairperson of the Pakistan People's Party - in an interview with the television channel Geo News on April 28, 2008, when he gave credit to his government for putting Geo back on the airwaves. It remains to be seen whether issues of media freedom will depart from the parameters set by the Musharraf regime. Similarly, as Aasim Sajjad Akhtar asks in his article, will the students' movement that surfaced in tandem with the lawyers' movement be able to move beyond its "moral disaffection" with the regime to a more substantive political agenda? He comments that the events of 2007 show both the students' potential for mobilisation and their lack of well-formulated political ideas, a gap he hopes will be bridged in the future.

Finally, we look at incidents of violence as specifically against women in two key areas: militancy and politics. Shahzada Irfan and Beena Sarwar recount the key cases, and draw attention to how the general lawlessness and appeasement of violent forces prevalent in the country has taken a particularly high toll on women.

Lal Masjid: Occupation and siege

بِسَيِّدَةِ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا



Source: DAWN

Jamia Hafsa: A window into the soul of Pakistan's madrassah underworld

By Kamila Hyat

The violent military action that in July 2007 ended the standoff between the Pakistan government and zealot clerics who ran the Red Mosque (Lal Masjid) in Islamabad has in many ways marked the kind of society we live in today. Suicide bombings, terrorist attacks of various kinds and conflict in northern parts of the country are the manifestations of an intensifying battle between orthodox Islamic extremists and the State. One episode in this battle took place at the Red Mosque.

But, the true lessons from the events at the mosque and the madrassahs attached to it, including the Jamia Hafsa for women, have not been learned. The images of life for the women living at this madrassah emerged as a direct consequence of the global attention focused on the actions of its pupils. The Jamia Hafsa housed 4,000 or so women, who ranged in age from four years to middle age. The extraordinary campaign launched by these students during the early months of 2007 brought an intense interest in the madrassah and the Red Mosque, serving also as a rather disturbing reminder that it was not men alone who promoted extremist thought in society.

The actions of the Jamia Hafsa students included the occupation for weeks, starting in February 2007, of a children's library in Islamabad, in protest against the demolition of a mosque that the

government stated had been built on illegally occupied land. The problem dated back to the mid-1980s, when, under policies pursued by the late military dictator General Ziaul Haq, sizeable tracts of prime land in Islamabad were handed over for the construction of mosques and madrassahs. As the occupation of the library hit headlines, the National Assembly was told the Red Mosque and its buildings too stood on illegally occupied land. However, despite dire warnings, the government chose not to challenge the students and instead offered a compromise on some issues, including the re-building of mosques that had been knocked down.

Emboldened by the failure of police and the authorities to drive back the women who stationed themselves at the library, clad in black 'burqas' and armed with stout sticks, the Jamia Hafsa students began what they termed a 'morality' drive. In March 2007, they raided a private house, which they claimed was a brothel, in the G-6 locality of Islamabad. They abducted at least three women from the premises, including the owner of the house. Later, after police arrested two madrassah teachers, two policemen were taken captive by Jamia Hafsa students, backed by male peers from the Jamia Fareedia. The government's swift caving in to the students' demands to release their teachers, appeared to add fire to the female morality brigades.

While the alleged female prostitutes were freed unharmed after a warning to give up their business, burqa-clad or bearded students cropped up at markets in Islamabad, in some cases forcing video shops to down shutters or warning women not to drive cars. Women who wore 'saris' or other clothing deemed 'improper' were at times berated and car numbers apparently noted down by the students. In June, the students raided a Chinese beauty parlour which they said was acting as a brothel, and abducted five people including three Chinese women. All the victims were released a day later, the Chinese women emerging from the Jamia Hafsa clad in 'burqas'.

The aggressive 'morality drive' came to an end only with the full-fledged assault by government forces on the Red Mosque and the fierce battles that raged there for many hours. At least 100 people died. The controversial mosque, patronised for years by many among the city elite, had openly promoted pro-'jihad' views. In the build-up to the violent raid on it, after its clerical leaders refused to surrender, they were accusations that wanted terrorists were being harboured inside. Since then, the Jamia Hafsa, its buildings demolished during armed action, has remained closed; demands from Maulana Abdul Aziz, the jailed prayer leader of the Red Mosque, and other supporters, that it be reopened, ignored.

The entire saga exposed some of the divisions within Pakistani society, with women activists taking to the streets in Islamabad and other cities to protest the audacious actions of the Jamia Hafsa's daring brigades. But what longer-term messages have been delivered is still unclear.

Female journalists who visited the madrassah before July 2007 offered a rare insight into the lives of the girls and women housed there. The majority were full-time boarders, though about 1,000 attended classes as day scholars. The classes included maths, geography, computer sciences, calligraphy and even flower arrangement, though there was an obvious focus on religious education with exams conducted only on Islamic teachings.

The madrassah, opened in 1992, had grown dramatically in 15 years, with the two-storey structure housing over 4,000. Female guards stood at entrances, women veiled immediately in the presence of outsiders, food was cooked by 60 staff members and bedding and clothing were provided to all the students. Wheat flour and meat, often donated by philanthropists, was delivered regularly. The highly

disciplined life at the madrassah was presided over firmly, but not unkindly, by Umme Hassan, the wife of Red Mosque Imam Maulana Abdul Aziz.

In these images that emerged from behind the madrassah walls, there are some far more relevant than others. Many of the pupils enrolled there came from far-flung northern parts of the country or from Azad Kashmir and belonged to impoverished families, though there was also a smattering of girls from more affluent families. A considerable number from Azad Kashmir and the NWFP had joined after the devastating earthquake of October 2005, with relatives unable to care for orphaned girls or parents reluctant to house them in unsafe tents. It seemed obvious that the infrastructure provided by the madrassah, including meals thrice a day, clothing and secure shelter was a major factor in persuading many people to send girls to the Jamia Hafsa. Its offer of educating them in religion came as an important bonus. Events after the operation of July 2007, in which an unknown number of male and female pupils died, revealed that many of the distraught parents had little idea of the highly radicalised Islamic message built carefully in to the madrassah curriculum and that indeed, after raids by the female students on brothels made the news, some parents had withdrawn their daughters or attempted to do so.

Video footage from inside the Jamia Hafsa, filmed before siege, showed many pupils were unclear about the controversy raging over the madrassah. Some said they simply followed orders issued by teachers or male clerics, who could be heard over loud-speakers present everywhere in the madrassah. The 'morality' campaign that made world headlines appeared to have been led by a small number of committed senior students, with support from staff.

The realities the Jamia Hafsa exposed about society were restricted not only to the matter of 'liberals' versus 'extremists'. Rather, a bright spotlight was directed towards the factors that have led to madrassahs mushrooming in Pakistan.

The Jamia Hafsa, as such, appears to have served primarily to meet a key economic need in society. Families of young women, and in some cases young women themselves, including domestic workers, appear to have turned to it because it offered what was not always available to them in the world outside: Food, shelter, clothing, respectability and learning. The realities the Jamia Hafsa exposed about society were restricted not only to the matter of 'liberals' versus 'extremists'. Rather, a bright spotlight was directed towards the factors that have led to madrassahs mushrooming in Pakistan. These institutions serve to reduce the socio-economic burden on families. The poor condition of public sector schools, which have declined markedly over the last two decades, means that a 'madrassah' is a truly tempting option for many. This of course is all the more true in the case of girls, with the Jamia Hafsa - and other madrassahs like it - offering a convenient, socially acceptable place at which to depose of them, and thus lessen the strain on family finances.

While these socio-economic realities exist, there will always be a risk of another Jamia Hafsa-like episode erupting somewhere in society. The increased entry of extremists into Pakistan's once tolerant religious sphere makes this all the more likely. The legendary 'madrassahs' of the pre-Partition age, which produced scholars well-versed in philosophy, Arabic, Persian and mathematics, have given way to a far narrower institution - where hatred and intolerance and are the message. The Jamia Hafsa was one such institution. For its pupils, 'immoral' women represented a social evil that had to be tackled. The fact that women at brothels were targeted for punishment - and not their male clients - is one example of the kind of world view the madrassah produced. Until the realities that created the

Jamia Hafsa, and the threat that emerged from behind its cloth-veiled gates, are altered there will always be a risk of other girls and young women falling into the hands of zealots running similar institutions. Indeed, Red Mosque clerics and their powerful band of sympathisers continue to seek the resurrection of the Jamia Hafsa. It is perfectly possible that one day, authorities will give in to such demands. After all, the alternatives, which include improved public sector education, a social safety net for the most vulnerable and policies to better the socio-economic plight of impoverished people are much more demanding of commitment and will and therefore much more difficult to put in place.

Mosque demolition: Girl students occupy government library

By Shahzad Malik

ISLAMABAD: Girl students of Jamia Hifsa on Sunday occupied the government's children library, adjacent to the seminary, in protest against the demolition of Amir Hamza Mosque on Murree Road by the CDA.

The CDA had demolished the mosque according to a ruling by the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) that mosques and madrassas constructed on encroached land were illegal and un-Islamic. A CII report said that without written permission from the owner of the land or without a sale-deed, a mosque's construction was not only illegal, but also un-Islamic.

It said that similar was the case with a mosque built on government land in the absence of written permission. However, the politically motivated students broke open the library locks and occupied the building. The girls said they had decided to "raise their voice" after area residents remained "silent" over the issue.

The students told city magistrate Farasat Ali that they would end their protest if the government reconstructs the mosque, withdraws demolition

notices sent to various mosques and promises not to demolish any mosque in future. The protesters called off their protest after Ali told them that their demands would be considered.

Meanwhile, law enforcement agencies rushed to Murree Road when they were informed that the management of Amir Hamza Mosque had started reconstruction of the building. The officials demolished the reconstructed part and deployed policemen at the site. — *DAILY TIMES 26/01/2007*

No headway on library vacation

By Mohammad Imran

ISLAMABAD: A group of ulema held a series of meetings to mediate between government officials and the administration of the Jamia Hafsa madrassa on Sunday night, but there was no progress towards a peaceful end to the three-week occupation of children's library by female students of the seminary.

The top four leaders of Wafaqul Madaris al-Arabia - Maulana Saleemullah Khan, Justice (r) Mufti Taqi Usmani, Maulana Abdur Razzaq Iskandar and Maulana Sher Ali Shah - held several rounds of talks with the administration of Jamia Hafsa and students action committee on Sunday. "They discussed the



Source: DAILY TIMES

present standoff between the government and the administration of Jamia Hafsa," sources privy to the development told Daily Times.

Religious Affairs Minister Ejazul Haq also met with the ulema and told them that the government was willing to issue a notification for the formation of an ulema committee today (Monday), sources said. The committee of ulema would decide which mosques in the capital were built illegally and which were not.

Haq told Daily Times that Qazi Abdul Rashid, Maulana Nazir Farooqi, Maulana Zahoor Ahmed Alvi and Maulana Sharif Hazarvi would be on the committee along with one representative each from the Islamabad Capital Territory administration and the Capital Development Authority.

Sources said that Maulana Abdul Aziz, principal of Jamia Hafsa, during the talks with ulema of the Wafaq, sought their help to bring an Islamic system in the country.

Usmani told reporters after the meeting that there was no development on the issue, but said that construction of Amir Hamza mosque at an alternative site would be decided today (Monday). He said all controversial issues would again be taken up with the government today.

Haq said after the meeting that Islamisation demand of the clerics could not be implemented

forthwith. He set no deadline to vacate the library.

Qari Hanif Jalandhary asked the government to enact a mosques protection act.

700 policewomen called to capital

ISLAMABAD: Over 700 policewomen from Punjab have been summoned to the capital as the district administration prepares contingency plans for an operation to end seminary students' occupation of a children's public library. Female students of Jamia Hafsa occupied the library over three weeks ago to protest at the demolition of Amir Hamza Masjid. Over 2,000 police officials are already in the city and the Rangers would assist them in any action to get the library vacated.

Four platoons of the Punjab Constabulary have also been summoned to the capital. Policewomen trained in martial arts have been given residence in CDA flats in Sector G-6/ and told to remain in the capital till the issue is resolved. Plainclothes police officials have also been lodged in quarters near Jamia Hafsa. shahzad malik

Govt seeks list of all students

ISLAMABAD: The government has asked the administration of Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa for a list of all male and female students living in the madrassa and to hand over eight suspected criminals, Daily Times learnt on Sunday. During talks on Sunday, the administration of the mosque and seminary told the Islamabad administration that no outsider was living in the madrassa, except for some relatives of the students. Meanwhile, sources in the Interior Ministry disclosed that the Capital Development Authority (CDA) was ready to give up and regularise about one acre of land that Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa have illegally occupied since 2004. Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao told Daily Times that the government would

use force as a last option as it tries to get a children's public library here free from Jamia Hafsa students, who took over the library three weeks ago in protest at the demolition of Amir Hamza Masjid. Naveed Siddiqui — *DAILY TIMES 12/02/2007*

Move to impose Talibanisation; three women kidnapped

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD, March 28: Signs of Talibanisation appeared quite evident on Wednesday in the heart of the federal capital when hard-line religious leaders and hundreds of men and women activists from the local madressahs challenged the writ of the government for the second time by trying to force their brand of Islamic justice in Islamabad.

They first took hostage three women from a house near their stronghold of Lal Masjid for allegedly running a brothel and later forcibly detained two security personnel in protest against detention of their four supporters, two of them women teachers of Madressah Hafsa.

The madressah students, mainly women, had been taking rounds of the nearby markets for a few days, threatening video and music shop owners to close down their business. In some way, they had been



Source: DAWN

encouraged by the soft pedalling by the government on their earlier action of occupying a children's library two months back, which still remained in their control.

The three women were apparently kidnapped two days ago, but the situation took the form of a confrontation on Wednesday when the authorities detained four madressah people on the charge of threatening video-shop owners. The madressah students reacted violently, and within no time two police vans were attacked and two security officials taken hostage.

Later, the ulema and local administration reached an agreement under which Qamar Abbas of Islamabad police and Hammad of Punjab police were released with their official vehicles. In return, the two women teachers and two other activists were released by the police.

However, the three kidnapped women were still stated to be in the custody of the students of the madressah and negotiations were under way for their release.

"We will not release the women unless a 'strong' FIR is registered against them so that they can be taken to task for their immoral activities," said Ghazi Abdul Rashid, deputy Imam of the mosque.

The tension that gripped the capital continued from 1pm to 8pm as all roads leading to the Lal Masjid were closed by police and baton-wielding students of Madressah Hafsa and Jamia Fradia, another seminary of the mosque for men, remained on the roads, staged a demonstration and chanted slogans against the government and President Pervez Musharraf. Heavy contingents of police was seen outside Aabpara police station but they did not go close to the mosque. The hard-line ulema of the mosque are reported to be trying to impose 'Talibanisation' in the capital after the government showed its incapability to get vacated the library occupied since Jan 21.

According to a security official, the ulema were trying to expand their operations in the city in the name of Jihad.

Islamabad Deputy Commissioner Chaudhry

Mohammad Ali said the ulema had a facility to use frequencies of FM radio and on Wednesday they blocked four frequencies -- FM 92 to 96 - to launch their propaganda through radio for an hour in the morning.

The students of Madressah Hafsa, who had been occupying the government's library for children for the past two months, had raided the house, picked the owner Shahmim, her daughter Sadaf and daughter-in-law Nadia Batool, and detained them in Lal Masjid.

Abdul Rashid claimed that the 'brothel' had been raided on the complaint of residents of the area, who, he said, feared that the owner, allegedly having links with senior police officials, would take revenge if they lodged any report against her...



The deputy imam of the mosque said he had given 15 days to the administration for releasing five activists and former Inter-Services Intelligence official Khalid Khawaja, who was pursuing the case of people who had 'disappeared'.

Police sources said the activists had removed wireless sets from their vehicles they were monitoring all the moves of the force.

Later, the Islamabad police chief ordered the force not to use wireless sets for conveying any message.

— DAWN 29/03/2007

Kidnapped woman made to repent, freed

By Mobarik A Virk & Shakeel Anjum

ISLAMABAD: Students of the Jamia Hafsa on Thursday afternoon released 'Aunty' Shamim, an alleged brothel owner, after she pledged to refrain from indulging in immoral activities.

Aunty Shamim along with her daughter, daughter-in-law and six-month-old granddaughter was kidnapped from her house by the Talibat on Tuesday evening, and were kept in confinement at the Jamia Hafsa.

The three women and the girl were released by the management of Jamia Hafsa after Aunty Shamim accepted conditions set by the management. Shamim addressed a press conference inside the Jamia Hafsa, where she announced her repentance over her past activities and promised to live like a pious woman and refrain from indulging in immoral acts.

She also donned a black 'Burqa' like the students, when she spoke to the media. She even appreciated the students for helping her and treating her humanely. "I apologise for what I had done in the past and promise in the name of God that in future, I will live like a pious person," Shamim said.

However, once safely outside the Madrassa, she turned extremely bitter about the treatment meted out to her and the other two ladies of the family. "They repeatedly told us that we are 'Kafirs' and even invited a group of women to stare at us as they told them that we are 'Kafirs' (infidels). Here, we are sure that even President Musharraf cannot provide us protection," Shamim said, while talking to a private TV channel later.

She alleged that the abductors were all male Taliban of Madaris, who barged into her house on Tuesday, breaking not only the outer door but those of the rooms inside her house as the family tried to protect themselves by bolting themselves from inside once these men entered their home.

Shamim alleged that she was dragged by these men who put a rope round her neck and brutally beat up the other two women, one of them getting her finger swollen badly as she received a hit on her hand.

She criticised the Islamabad police for failing in providing them protection. "I have managed to come out after agreeing to tell the reporters what they asked me to say in front of them. Otherwise, there seemed to be no power in the world, including President Musharraf, who would have been able to get us freed from their custody," she said.

She also said that she would be approaching foreign missions in Islamabad, seeking protection from them because "they (the Talibat and the Taliban) have warned us of severe consequences if we said something against them". "They told us that they would bring the whole of the NWFP over to Islamabad if anybody tried to stop them from what they are doing. They also put forth the names of those Kashmiris - Khalid Khawaja and others - for their release, as a condition to set us free. Now, what do we have to do with these Kashmiris? We don't even know who they are talking about," Shamim said.

Meanwhile, the Islamabad police have refused to register a case against her and other female members of her family for involvement in immoral activities, as there is no evidence available against them. The management of Jamia Hafsa is pressing with their demand to register a case against her and the other women on this count.

Earlier, Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi, administrator of the Jamia Hafsa, said that they had nothing personal against the women and they would be released if they promise to refrain from spreading obscenity in future.

Agencies adds: Pro-Taliban clerics have released two policemen they abducted after a confrontation that began when Burqa-clad women raided a suspected brothel. A cleric said on Thursday that two religious teachers, who had been detained by police in Islamabad were released in exchange.

Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao, while responding to a question, said that since female students were involved in the Jamia Hafsa incident on Wednesday,

the police were reluctant to take action. He said the issue of Lal Masjid has been lingering on for the past many days and it looks that these female students needed attention of the government.

Minister of State for Interior Affairs Zafar Iqbal Warraich said that the government was observing utmost patience to deal with the Jamia Hafsa issue as it relates to women. In an interview with the BBC, he said the government wants to resolve the matter with dialogue instead of force. "The people, who say that the writ of the government is not present, will be spearheading processions and rallies if action was taken against them and some mishap occurred," he added...

Following some illegal activities of the students of Jamia Hafsa, the law-enforcement agencies in their reports sent to the President House and the Prime Minister Secretariat have recommended tangible steps to check their activities.

Well placed sources told Online that the law-enforcement agencies in their report said the students of Jamia Hafsa were following the directives of the administration of Lal Masjid and if their activities were not controlled, it would be difficult for the authorities to establish the writ of the government.

The agencies have requested the capital administration and the federal government to take legal action against the female students of Jamia Hafsa, as negative impression of Pakistan was being presented in the media and across the globe. — *THE NEWS 30/03/2007*

Women targeted by moral brigade quit the city

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD, March 30: Ms Shamim Akhtar, the woman abducted and disgraced by the Lal Masjid brigade on the charge of running a brothel, has quit the city for the fear of her life.

Sources in Islamabad administration on Friday

confirmed to Dawn she had left the city along with her young daughter.

"Now that she has left the city, Islamabad police cannot provide her security," said a senior officer of the administration which looks helpless in the face of rising religious militancy in the capital.

Ms Shamim, her daughter, and her daughter-in-law along with her six-month-old baby, were seized from their house in G-6 by the girls of Jamia Hafsa madressah in a raiding party from the Lal Masjid on Tuesday night.

They were freed on Thursday after Ms Shamim confessed to the charge of leading an immoral life. Once home, she said the confession was forced on her with threats of dire consequences if she retracted it...

Ms Shamim was said to be extremely fearful and under severe mental and psychological stress.

Meanwhile, Minister of State for Information Tariq Azeem has said the government was seriously looking into the illegal acts of Jamia Hafsa student
— *DAWN 31/03/2007*

Protests in Islamabad against 'moral police'

By Khawar Ghuman

ISLAMABAD, April 5: Several hundred men and women protested here on Thursday against the religious militancy and ferociousness of the students of Lal Masjid madressahs who have held the capital in awe for 10 weeks.

They gathered at the Aabpara Chowk in response to a call of civil society organisations to protest against Jamia Hafsa girls, and their Lal Masjid male supporters, who have launched a campaign "to stop vices" in the city and pave way for enforcement of Sharia in the country.

"Stop terrorising people in the name of religion," said one placard held by the demonstrators who were

outnumbered by riot police.

Jamia Hafsa girls have been on the march, and in the headlines ever since they seized a public library on January 21 and forced the city authorities to stop demolishing illegally built mosques.

That success encouraged them to launch their "stop vices" campaign. They kidnapped three women alleging that they were running a brothel, and started asking owners of music and CD-DVD shops in the Aabpara Market to close down their business.

One placard at the protest on Thursday declared: "No to religious extremism, Yes to life and music".

Other placards and slogans declared: "No to extremism in the name of religion", "No to mullahism", "No to religious fascism", "Ghunda Gardi Band Karo", "Danda Badmashi Band Karo", and "Mullah Ki Yari Nahi Chalay Gi".

Though the demonstration took place a few hundred metres away from the Lal Masjid, it drew no reaction from the 'moral squads' entrenched in the mosque.

Law-enforcement personnel were there for a couple of hours as the slogan-chanting human rights activists marched along the Aabpara Market.

Towards the end of the protests, however, police intervened when some enthusiastic women activists wanted to march towards Lal Masjid and blocked their way.

Representatives of the civil society and a number of political leaders made short speeches criticising "the self-proclaimed custodians of morality".

They demanded that the government must use force to end Hafsa girls' occupation of the children's library and warned that if it was not done "the menace" would continue to be a threat for peaceful citizens.

When asked how a few hundred activists could confront the 4,000 organised and emotionally charged students of Jamia Hafsa, prominent activist Dr Nayyar

said: "They have to be opposed by someone. We just want to impress upon the government that peaceful citizens of the city are really disturbed over this development where they are not safe even within the four walls of their homes."

"There is no second opinion that the government has to establish its writ," he added. — *DAWN 06/04/2007*

Lal Masjid selects 10 qazis

By Mohammad Imran

ISLAMABAD: The administration of Jamia Hafsa on Thursday selected 10 qazis (judges) to issue decrees on various religious issues.

"We have appointed 10 religious scholars as qazis to issue decrees on different religious issues in accordance with Islamic injunctions," Jamia Hafsa principal Maulana Abdul Aziz told Daily Times.

"After the establishment of the court, no one, be they rich or poor, will be allowed to run brothels or indulge in un-Islamic activities.

"If the madrasa administration gets any information about any person indulging in un-Islamic activities, they will be warned through a letter to mend their ways. And if they refuse to heed our letter, the Shariat court will register a case against them and take appropriate action," said Aziz. — *DAILY TIMES 6/04/2007*

Lal Masjid threatens suicide attacks

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD, April 6: Formally announcing the establishment of a parallel judicial system, the pro-Taliban Lal Masjid administration on Friday vowed to enforce Islamic laws in the federal capital and

threatened to unleash a wave of suicide bombers if the government took any action to counter it.

"Our youth will commit suicide attacks, if the government impedes the enforcement of the Sharia and attacks Lal Masjid and its sister seminaries," Maulana Abdul Aziz, the in-charge of the mosque said in his Friday sermon.

The fresh suicide bombing threat is stated to be the strongest given so far by the hard-line clerics of the Lal Masjid, intensifying fear among Islamabad residents.

President Gen Pervez Musharraf had recently stated that he knew that the Lal Masjid's management wilfully harboured suicide bombers. He said that the suicide bomber who had attacked Islamabad's Marriott Hotel in January 2007, had been seen near the mosque the same day...

Religious activists, some of whom were wearing masks, also staged a demonstration before the Friday prayers. Burqa-clad girl students of Madressah Hafsa kept a vigil atop the seminary's roof. The activists were chanting 'Al Jihad, Al Jihad'.

Armed with sticks, a group of religious activists set on fire thousands of video and audio cassettes and computer compact discs, 'given up' voluntarily by a shopowner who, according to them, had announced to abandon 'this business'.

Maulana Aziz reminded the shopkeepers that they had been given a 30-day deadline to close down their 'evil' businesses and switch over to some other 'decent' venture and said students of the seminary would punish the shopkeepers who did not do so. He asked traders to financially 'support' the owners of video and CDs shops to enable them to switch over to some other business.

Maulana Aziz urged the authorities and the people concerned to stop dealing in video CDs, putting up billboards with women's photographs, selling liquor and running 'brothels' and drug dens in Islamabad.

MARRIAGE PROPOSAL: Maulana Aziz said

that a 'special centre' had been set up in Madressah Hafsa titled 'Taibaat Abidaat Centre' to provide shelter to women who would voluntarily give up their 'immoral activities'.

He said these women would be provided 'security and protection' through 'marriages'. Maulana Aziz announced that he would marry any woman who repented and gave up her immoral life. "I am now 46 years old and am ready to marry a woman who is between 35 to 40 years of age. If she promises to live a life of piety, I promise that I will never refer about her past life," Maulana Aziz announced.

Maulana Aziz said that they would enforce Sharia in areas which had been under their influence. The management of the mosque informed the media that 'Qazi court' would comprise 10 Muftis. However, it declined to disclose their name.

A source told Dawn that no renowned scholar had been made the judge of the 'Qazi court' and it consisted of teachers of the Madressah Faridia, a seminary which was also being run by Lal Masjid.

QAZI COURT: Maulana Ghazi Abdul Rasheed, deputy in-charge of the mosque and a younger brother of Maulana Abdul Aziz, told reporters if Jirga and Panchayat system were not considered parallel judicial systems why was Qazi court being called a parallel system. "We will see whether people will come to the Qazi court or prefer going to courts of the state for seeking justice," he said.

Describing the functions of the 'Qazi court', Maulana Ghazi said it would be mandatory for rival parties to submit an affidavit that they would accept the court's decision. "They will have to obey the court's verdicts," he replied when some reporters asked him what action would the administration of Lal Masjid take against 'disobedient people'.

He said they would launch a campaign to 'persuade' people to bring their disputes and social problems to the 'Qazi court'. — *DAWN 07/04/2007*

SC moved against Lal Masjid clerics

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: A petition was moved in the Supreme Court (SC) on Monday against Lal Masjid imam Maulana Abdul Aziz and Jamia Hafsa principal Abdul Rashid Ghazi for setting up a Qazi Court and forming a private army against the state. The petition moved by Shahid Orakzai, a freelance journalist, has been filed under Article 184(3) of the Constitution as a matter of public importance and urges the court to restrict the activities of Aziz and Ghazi. The petitioner has requested the court to issue immediate orders stopping the government from using force against the madrassas to prevent the loss of life or injury to any person. — *DAILY TIMES 10/04/2007*

Intelligence agencies oppose Lal Masjid crackdown

By Naveed Siddiqui

ISLAMABAD: Ministers and intelligence bosses voiced opposition to a crackdown on students of Jamia Hafsa and Jamia Fareedia and the Lal Masjid administration for political and security reasons, at a meeting on Monday, Daily Times has learnt.

Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao told the meeting, chaired by President Gen Pervez Musharraf at Army House, that the government could not afford the use of force against madrasa students since general elections were near.

The intelligence bosses maintained that a crackdown would create a law and order situation in Islamabad and would strengthen extremists in the country.

Javed Iqbal Cheema, director general of the National Crisis Management Cell, also opposed the

use of force, "because we are already confronting difficult situations in Waziristan and Balochistan," according to the sources.

Sources said that almost all meeting participants - which included Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, Law Minister Wasi Zafar and Information Minister Muhammad Ali Durrani - opposed a crackdown on madrassa students.

Sources said that the president had approved a strategy for a crackdown in case negotiations failed. — *DAILY TIMES 11/04/2007*

Ghazi freed on my intervention: Ejaz

ISLAMABAD: Religious Affairs Minister Ejazul Haq has admitted that he made personal efforts to get Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi, deputy administrator of Lal Masjid, bail in cases of terrorism, Online reports. The minister said on a TV talk show that he had done this after Ghazi made a written promise to him "guaranteeing his good behaviour". However, Ghazi denied this, saying he had never been indicted in a terrorism case.

DT Monitor adds: Haq told Geo TV that Lal Masjid was showing no flexibility in talks with the government, and if these talks failed, an operation would be launched against the mosque. He added the action of Jamia Hafsa students had hurt the image of madrassas. — *DAILY TIMES 11/04/2007*

Shujaat offers to reconstruct mosques

ISLAMABAD: PML President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain made yet another attempt to resolve the Jamia Hafsa stand-off by meeting the Lal Masjid administration late on Tuesday night and assuring them that the government would reconstruct seven mosques demolished by the CDA, sources told Daily Times. The sources said that Shujaat told the clerics

that the CDA had been directed to select new locations for the mosques and estimate the time needed for their reconstruction. The sources said that Shujaat also briefed the Lal Masjid administration about his meetings with President Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on the issue. — *DAILY TIMES 11/04/2007*

Lal Masjid relaunches blocked website

By Azaz Syed

ISLAMABAD: The Lal Masjid administration on Tuesday relaunched its website on an international domain two days after it was blocked by the government. Earlier, the government said it had blocked the website and a radio station of Lal Masjid... Meanwhile, Lal Masjid has released an audio CD titled "Hamara Moaqaf". The CD contains the chief cleric's speeches and demonstrations by girl students of Jamia Hafsa. — *DAILY TIMES 11/04/2007*

Ghazi 'ready for martyrdom' if govt uses force

By Irfan Ghauri and Azaz Syed

ISLAMABAD: Ghazi Abdul Rashid, the deputy administrator of Jamia Hafsa and younger brother of Lal Masjid Imam Maulana Abdul Aziz, has said he is ready to "embrace martyrdom" if the government decides to use force to bring the radical clerics in line.

"We are ready for shahadat (martyrdom). Our shahadat will give impetus to the mission we have launched for the enforcement of Sharia in the country," Ghazi said in an interview with Daily Times on Tuesday. ...

Ghazi claimed that Chaudhry Shujaat seconded the clerics' demands and termed them "justified". He

maintained that many people, including students from across the country, were contacting the Jamia Hafsa to offer their support. He said students of the Federal Urdu University had put up a banner at Lal Masjid voicing their support for the madrassa students...

Ghazi said that they fully supported Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, as an injustice had been done to him. "However, we don't think that he would be an Islamic chief justice even if restored as he would not enforce Islamic laws," he added.

Meanwhile, Senator Hamidullah Jan Afridi of FATA offered to hold a jirga between the government and the radical clerics, but the mullahs declined, saying they were waiting for the government's response to their demands. — *DAILY TIMES 11/04/2007*

Seven mosques to be rebuilt

By Ahmed Hassan

ISLAMABAD, April 11: Although efforts being made to resolve the Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa crisis appeared to be making little progress, reliable sources said that the government's negotiating team led by Pakistan Muslim League president Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain was optimistic about a positive outcome.

Chaudhry Shujaat, who has the government's mandate to resolve the issue through dialogue, held on Tuesday night his second meeting in three days with Maulana Abdul Aziz and Maulana Abdur Rashid Ghazi, the heads of the two institutions, to exchange views with them and find a way out of the crisis.

According to the sources, he promised to the two Maulanas that the seven mosques demolished by the Capital Development Authority as unauthorised structures would be rebuilt.

The PML leader invited representatives of the mosques to his home on Wednesday.

Chaudhry Shujaat did not want to make any public

comment while the negotiations continued.

PML secretary-general Mushahid Hussain, talking to newsmen after holding talks with some clerics and officials of the Islamabad administration separately, described the ongoing negotiations as positive.

He said the PML president was in constant contact with the chiefs of Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa.

He claimed that Chaudhry Shujaat had held successful dialogue with the two cleric brothers on the question of the demolished mosques and had also exchanged views with officials of the interior ministry, the CDA and the Islamabad administration.

The imams and representatives of the mosques, however, complained that most of them were not allowed to meet the PML chief and some of them could only talk to him for a few minutes without going into the real problem.

Maulana Imran, Imam of Hamza Masjid, one of the demolished mosques, said he had met Chaudhry Shujaat for only three minutes during which no substantial talks took place and the PML chief only said: "Everything will be OK."

Maulana Hanif Jallendhri of the Wafaqul Madaris had been asked by Chaudhry Shujaat to assist him in the negotiations, the sources said.

They said Maulana Jallendhri told the representatives of the mosques that the government was ready to reconstruct the Hamza Masjid, on which work was under way, and a mosque in Sector I-8. — *DAWN 12/04/2007*

Civil society rallies against extremism

Staff Report

LAHORE / ISLAMABAD / KARACHI / PESHAWAR: Thousands of Pakistanis staged rallies



Source: DAILY TIMES

in major cities on Thursday to condemn extremism and exploitation in the name of Islam.

Rights activists organised simultaneous protests in Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi and Peshawar to denounce extremist actions by students of the Jamia Hafsa and Jamia Fareedia madrassas, affiliated to Lal Masjid, in the capital.

Several thousand Lahoris marched in blistering heat on The Mall - the first time a large crowd has rallied against religious extremism in the city - in a rally organised by the Women's Action Forum (WAF) in collaboration with other non-governmental organisations.

The protestors - including civil society and human rights activists, minority groups, political workers, lawyers, trade unions, journalists and students - gathered at the Lahore High Court building and began marching towards the Punjab Assembly building at 2:00pm.

"Mullahism murdabad. Lay kay rahen gay azadi," they shouted. One youth wrote "No to Taliban" with spray paint on the road.

Hall Road traders hailed the rally as it passed by, putting up banners reading: "Stop blackmailing and exploiting traders in the name of Islam," and "We condemn mullahs' operation against CD shops."

The City District Government of Lahore had relaxed Section 144 to allow the rally amidst a large police presence. One side of The Mall was

temporarily closed for traffic...

Hundreds staged a peaceful protest in Islamabad against extremists trying to force their version of Islam on others. Most of the protestors were women.

Shirin Mazari, a strategic analyst, led the protestors, who gathered a kilometre away from Constitution Avenue and walked up to the roundabout in front of Parliament House.

"Where's the writ of the state?" asked a big placard at the protest. "No to religious extremism; yes to life and music", and "Free the children's library", said other placards...

Hundreds of Christian women from Qayyumabad, filmmakers, social workers and university students rallied against religious extremism outside Quaid-e-Azam's mazaar in Karachi. "It would be difficult to find a single woman who has not at some point in time faced religious extremism," said Karachi's Naib Nazim Nasreen Jalil, who also took part in the protest. Gang-rape survivor Kainat Soomro was also at the rally.

In Peshawar, hundreds of women's rights campaigners - including some 60 burqa-clad women from the tribal areas - staged a rally near the press club, denouncing threats of suicide bombings by Lal Masjid clerics and baton-wielding madrassa students.

"No religion in the world allows their faithful to use sticks in places of worship," Tribal Women Welfare Association Chairwoman Dr Begum Jan said.

— DAILY TIMES 20/04/2007

Minister backs demand for curbs on burqa play

By Raja Asghar

ISLAMABAD, April 26: The National Assembly on Thursday tasted a Taliban-like move taking a summary cultural toll as the government seemed

making a double retreat -- over a drama featuring the burqa (veil) and in a row with the opposition over the country's judicial crisis.

While its seeming appeasement of religious militants seeking to enforce their brand of a Taliban-style religious code in Islamabad has aroused concern among both its friends and foes, the government told the lower house it had immediately stopped any more shows of the drama produced in Lahore, bowing to demands from burqa-clad members of religious parties who said the production made in Lahore was contrary to Quranic injunctions.

Both protests and cheers across party lines greeted the announcement by Culture Minister Ghazi Ghulam Jamal, who said he had called for video cassettes and CDs of the play 'Burqavaganza' produced by Lahore's Ajoka Theatre and that the Punjab provincial government had been told "not to allow any more shows (of the drama) until we have examined it" to decide if its contents were objectionable on religious or cultural grounds.

The charge, rejected by the drama's producers with a vow to fight it out in a court of law, came up in a call-attention notice from five MMA women members before it emerged that the government would avoid a debate promised for Thursday on its own resolution moved on Wednesday to condemn the opposition for allegedly trying to politicise and divide the judiciary through demonstrations...

NO BURQA FUN: Responding to the MMA call-attention notice, Culture Minister Jamal, elected to the National Assembly from Fata, said burqa was part of 'our culture' and nobody could be allowed to make a fun of it, and even threatened that the government could permanently ban the concerned drama and cancel the licence of its producers.

But Ajoka artistic director and Burqavaganza producer Madeha Gauhar told Dawn by telephone from Lahore that there was nothing un-Islamic in her musical comedy that she said was produced in response to a threat of Talibanisation posed by clerics of Lal Masjid and their madressah followers.

She said her group was supporting President Musharraf's policy of 'enlightened moderation' in Islam but regretted the latest government move against the drama after only five shows, saying she would go to a court of law to challenge if a government notice was received by Ajoka. "It is unacceptable." — *DAWN 27/04/2007*

CD shop-owners fear wrath of Jamia Hafsa

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD, April 26: A 30-day deadline given by the Lal Masjid administration to the owners of CD shops for winding up their business ends on Friday (today) and it is feared that the militants may resort to any action.

"We are feeling insecure and require the government's protection," a shopkeeper in Abpara Market told Dawn.

"We do not know that what will happen to us after the end of the deadline."

The shopkeeper said a large group comprising 40-50 baton-wielding people, some of them with covered faces, had visited the market asking sellers of CDs, audio and video cassettes to switch over to some other business.

He said he was in the business of selling cassettes for 30 years and had no expertise to start some other business. "They can only preach if they think an un-Islamic act is being done and cannot impose their ideals by force."

Another CD seller said a group of baton-wielding men had said they were ready to discuss the provision of money to shopkeepers to enable them to switch over to an alternative trade.

Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi, the deputy head of Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa, indicated the deadline

could be extended by two or three days.

In reply to a question about the fear of the owners of CD shops that the students of Jamia Hafsa would take action against them, Maulana Ghazi said: "First we will see whether the government is serious in enforcement of sharia or not. A future line of action will be chalked out later."

He said the `message has been conveyed to the CD shop owners and some of them have already said goodbye to their business'... — *DAWN 27/04/2007*

‘Sharia guidelines’ issued

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD, May 11: The Lal Masjid administration on Friday issued preliminary "guidelines for enforcement of Sharia in all spheres of life", including legislation, human rights, education, health, employment, taxation and banking.

It distributed books containing 50 'guidelines' among the people gathered in the mosque for Friday prayers. Following are some of the 'guidelines':

The clerics of Lal Masjid demanded general amnesty for all exiled political leaders who, they said, were victimised politically and were forced to leave the country. "A code should be formulated in the light of Sharia to announce general amnesty for them," the 'guideline' said.

CUT IN TAXES: The ulema demanded reforms in the taxation system under which all 'unjustified' taxes were withdrawn.

They said enforcement of Sharia was needed to protect all women from sexual harassment and to eliminate gender discrimination.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE: They asked the government to declare Urdu as the country's official language. "Most of the people in remote areas of the

country do not understand English and they depend on others to make sense of the government documents."

BANKING: The hard-line ulema demanded of the government to abolish interest-based banking system in the country, replacing it with an Islamic one.

It was the responsibility of the government to provide shelter to every citizen of the country, they said. Therefore plots measuring 10 marlas to 1 kanal should be provided to the poor and low-paid workers. Construction material be provided to them on subsidised rates.

MEDIA: They called for the formulation of a 'code of conduct' to deal with obscenity in the print and electronic media.

Government officials: They said government officials should undergo special training so that they fully understand their 'Islamic duties'. — *DAWN 12/05/2007*

Lal Masjid chief wants end to co-education

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Lal Masjid prayer leader Maulana Abdul Aziz Ghazi demanded on Friday that the government end coeducation in educational institutions across Pakistan.

In his Friday sermon, Ghazi called for an end to dance and music shows on TV channels, saying that such programmes were spreading obscenity in society and causing the divorce rate to increase everyday. He warned that his followers would start picking up intelligence agency officials in Islamabad if the agencies did not stop picking up "innocent citizens".

The cleric said that some elements had declared him a terrorist when he had raised his voice for the enforcement of sharia in the country. "No one has the courage to say anything to the real terrorists of the world," he said in an apparent reference to the US.

He praised the Jamia Hafsa and Jamia Faridiya students for "their struggle to stop evils in society," saying that madrassas throughout the country could play a vital role in this regard. "Many people have come to us for registration as suicide bombers," Ghazi claimed. "We have stopped them from doing so," he added.

He called upon the government to enforce sharia in the country, vowing that he would not withdraw his demands. — *DAILY TIMES 19/05/2007*

Lal Masjid seizes four cops

By Shakeel Anjum

ISLAMABAD: Local Taliban of Lal Masjid this time kidnapped four police officials of two police stations - Bahara Kahu and Sihala - and confined them at the seminary on Friday evening, demanding the release of 15 people, including Khalid Khwaja detained by some investigation agencies.

The first round of negotiations between the local administration and the Lal Masjid administration had failed and the local Taliban have refused to free the detained cops, sources participating in the negotiations told The News.

The Taliban had earlier kidnapped two police officials belonging to the Islamabad and Punjab police - Kaamal Abbas (Islamabad) and Hamad Raza (Punjab) - and made them hostage with their police vehicles on March 28.

Consequently, the police and civil armed forces had been put on alert for an operation and a heavy contingent of police and Frontier Constabulary had gathered at the Aabpara Police Station for the purpose...

The Lal Masjid administration has blocked all the surrounding roads by putting barriers on them after the failure of negotiations late Friday night. Sources told this scribe that the mosque administration allegedly passed an order to shoot the uniformed cops if found around. — *THE NEWS 19/05/2007*

Release two out of four policemen as four local Taliban bailed out

From Shakeel Anjum

ISLAMABAD: The Lal Masjid administration freed two out of four cops kidnapped Friday evening as an Anti-Terrorist Court bailed out four local Taliban here Saturday.

The government did not oppose release of the accused on bail as demanded by the Lal Masjid administration.

The release cops are constable Mohammad Irshad and Constable Yasir Hussain, both posted at Sihala police station.

Earlier, the Lal Masjid administration agreed to release two of the abducted cops voluntarily Saturday evening but at the eleventh hour withdrew the decision. It was learnt that the two cops were escorted to the main gate of the seminary to release them but were taken back to confinement by the Lal Masjid administration.

Meanwhile, Tariq Abbasi Judge, Anti-terrorist court Rawalpindi, accepted the bail applications of four accused - Khalid Khawaja Zainullah son of Sher Zaman, Mehrab Hussain son of Rehmat Hussain and Muhammad Idrees son of Muhammad Gul - booked under 7 ATA (Anti-Terrorist Act). The government did not oppose the bail application moved for their release, evidently as 'proposed' by the Lal Masjid administration.

After the acceptance of the bail application of the four which was the major demand of the Lal Masjid administration, a meeting between the local administration and Lal Masjid clerics started the afternoon.

The City Magistrate, Farasat Ali, ASP (City Circle) Kamran Adil, DSP (Bahara Kahu) Gulfam Nasir and

SHO (Aabpara) Rashid Niazi represented the district administration and police in negotiations with the representative of the Lal Masjid. Khateeb Lal Masjid Maulana Abdul Aziz and Abdur Rashid Ghazi didn't participate in the negotiations. After three hour long negotiations, the Lal Masjid administration refused to release all the four cops unless the rest of 11 local Taliban of the seminary, allegedly picked up by the secret agencies and police, are released. But the district police representatives rejected the offer demanding that all the four kidnapped cops should be freed because they have already fulfilled their main demand of not opposing the bail application of the Bahara Kahu accused.

However, later they accepted the offer of release of only two cops. The Lal Masjid administration claimed that Khalid Khawaja, Mehraab Hussain, Muzayanullah, Muhammad Idrees and Arif Mehmood were arrested by the capital police while Abdul Baseer, Aamar, Iftikhar ahmad, Anwaar-ul-Haq and Israr-ul-Haq were lifted by the secret agencies. — *THE NEWS 20/05/2007*

Faridia students keep 3 cops hostage for 3 hours; 40 students detained

From Shakeel Anjum

ISLAMABAD: Heightened tension over the standoff between seminary students and the capital administration continued on Monday when another religious school - Jamia Faridia - briefly held hostage three police personnel. A top cop of the area - Satation House Officer of Kohsar Police Station - was, however, lucky to manage his escape.

Jamia Faridia is a branch of the Lal Masjid, which is at the centre of a row with the administration over the forcible occupation of Children Library by the female students of Jamia Hafsa, another subsidiary of the mosque, and still holding two out of our police cops hostage on the pretext of arrest of their students by the police and other law enforcing agencies.

Today four cops led by SHO Kohsar Police State Haq Nawaz and including sub-inspector Muhammad Islam, ASI Muhammad Sharif and Constable Afrasiab were on patrol in E-7 at about 5.00 pm when a baton carrying group of local Taliban intercepted and kidnapped them after thrashing them badly. The SHO, however managed to flee. Subsequently, thousands of religious students gathered on the main road leading to the Jamia Faridia and expressed anger against the government for detaining seminary students.

After deployment of police contingents and Punjab Constabulary in the area, SDPO/ASP Kamran Adil held negotiations with the leadership of Jamia Farida and secured the release of held police officers after three hours. — *THE NEWS 22/5/2007*

Jamia Hafsa violence may be used to disrupt CJP's address: SCBA

Staff Report

LAHORE: The government may give a violent turn to the Jamia Hafsa issue to frustrate the address of the chief justice of Pakistan, Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, to the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) in Islamabad on May 26, SCBA vice president Sahibzada Anwar Hamid and secretary Zulifiqar Ali Bokhari told a press conference on Tuesday.

They said that the Jamia Hafsa issue had been created by the government. They said that the government could create unrest in Islamabad on May 26 on the pretext of resolving the Jamia Hafsa issue. They said that lawyers were struggling for the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law in Pakistan. "Thousands of lawyers and political workers have taken part in protests against the suspension of the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP), Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry. "No violence has been reported during any protest," they added. — *DAILY TIMES 23/05/2007*

Lal Masjid operation: Ajmal warns of consequences

By Our Correspondent

Lahore: May 22: The amir of his own faction of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Maulana Mohammad Ajmal Qadri, on Tuesday warned the government against initiating any operation against the Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa in Islamabad saying such an action would entail serious repercussions.

At a news conference, Maulana Qadri alleged the Lal Masjid issue was created by certain intelligence agencies, and those advising President Muhsarraf to launch an operation against the seminary were misguiding him. "I warn that an offensive against the inmates of the mosque and the seminary will lead to bloodshed"... — *DAWN 23/05/2007*

Hafsa students' attempt to occupy PIMS hostel foiled

By Shahzad Malik

ISLAMABAD: The administration of the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) has suspended five Christian officials including Staff Nursing College Principal Stella Nazir and instructor Fazeela Piara after Muslim nursing students alleged that Christian students had desecrated verses of the holy Quran inscribed on a water cooler in the college.

The PIMS administration has closed the nurses' hostel for 15 days and deployed security guards and policemen to prevent any untoward incident. The Margalla police station has registered a case against unidentified persons under Section 295B of the Blasphemy Act on the complaint of PIMS Deputy Executive Director Dr Amjad.

Dr Amjad told Daily Times that a cross was marked on translations of the holy Quran and Hadith

written on a water cooler in the college. He said the hostel boarders had been sent to their homes on summer vacation. The PIMS administration has formed a three-member committee under the supervision of Prof Anwarul Haq to investigate the matter and submit a report within 48 hours.

Meanwhile, the district administration foiled an attempt by Jamia Hafsa students to occupy the nurses' hostel after Muslim students of the PIMS nursing college told them about the alleged desecration of Quranic verses.

The Jamia Hafsa administration sent 30 female and 10 male students to PIMS for action against the alleged desecrators and to occupy the nurses' hostel. The district administration and a heavy police contingent rushed to PIMS and cordoned off the hostel.

Sources told Daily Times that baton-wielding students of Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa had a heated argument with the police, but were not allowed entry into the hostel.

Minister of State For Minorities Mushtaq Victor and former federal minister J Salik reached PIMS and negotiated with the Jamia Hafsa students. They said there were 40 percent Christian nurses in PIMS and they had never hurt the religious sentiments of other communities.

Addressing a press conference at Lal Masjid, Jamia Hafsa students said they visited PIMS on the complaint of Muslim nursing students Amna Nuzhat and Nasreen. They said the PIMS administration misbehaved with them when they tried to see the complainants. — *DAILY TIMES 02/06/2007*

Lal Masjid brigade disrupts wedding party in capital

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD, June 3: In another daring attempt to challenge the writ of the government in the centre

of the capital, some stick-wielding students of Lal Masjid on Sunday threatened a wedding party with dire consequences for fireworks display at the government-run Abpara Community Centre located a few yards away from the mosque.

The threat caused panic not only in the wedding ceremony but also in surrounding areas and the busy Abpara market.

"Yes, these were our students who went to the community centre to ask its management to stop fireworks," Lal Masjid deputy in-charge Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi said.

He said the mosque administration had time and again asked the management of the community centre not to allow fireworks in the centre during wedding ceremonies and other functions because it disturbed students of Lal Masjid during their study and sleep. "But despite repeated requests, the centre's management paid no heed to it and today our students went to the centre and asked the management to stop such practice," Maulana Ghazi said.

According to eyewitnesses, some two dozen students, some of them covering their faces, had barged in the community centre at night and threatened its management with dire consequences. The participants of the wedding function got scared and stopped fireworks. — *DAWN 04/06/2007*

Hafsa students seek action

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Thousands of burqa-clad students of Jamia Hafsa on Sunday staged a demonstration in front of Lal Masjid demanding that the government punish Christian students of the College of Nursing, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, for alleged desecration of the holy Quran. Addressing the protesters, Hamna Abdullah, the head of the students

action committee of Jamia Hafsa, said that the government was not following the teachings of Islam and was promoting "obscurity" in the name of "enlightened moderation".

She accused the government of breaking its promise of reconstructing seven mosques in the capital that were demolished because they were built illegally on state land. Ansa Bint-e-Abdullah said that they were ready to give their lives for the enforcement of Sharia in Pakistan. She said that instead of following the teachings of Islam, the government was following the instructions of the US.

— *DAILY TIMES 04/06/2007*



Source: DAILY TIMES

Clerics hired to lead Jinnah Hospital nurses on 'right path'

By Afnan Khan

LAHORE: The Jinnah Hospital administration and School of Nursing has decided to make their nurses attend Islamic classes that will keep them 'pure and clean' and help develop in them a sense of 'love and care' for patients, Daily Times has learnt.

An administrator said a cleric had been hired and

Rs 300 would be deducted from the salaries of the nurses to pay him. He said the cleric would teach the nurses about spirituality and the Quran and that classes would start next week.

He said the School of Nursing occasionally hosted clerics to lecture the nurses, but now the hospital had decided to carry out the programme more often and rigorously.

He said the hospital administration believed that the nurses would work better and be more efficient. "They also believe that knowledge of the Quran will make the nurses 'moral'," he added. He said European hospitals organised similar lectures to educate their nurses on the religious significance of their job.

A senior nurse criticised the administration for asking the girls to pay for the lectures. She said that although the administration was not in a position to issue a written order binding the nurses to pay, a verbal request by the head of the institution was enough to press them (the nurses).

She said learning about Islamic or other religious values was positive, but that the administration was supposed to pay for the value added facility if they were so much interested in introducing it. She also said telling nurses to pay for the lectures was unethical. Rehana, acting principal of the School of Nursing, said the administration was not forcing the nurses to pay for the lectures.

She said the administration occasionally organised such events to 'please God' and to teach nurses about religious values.

The School of Nursing organised similar events during Ramazan, she said, but did not say when the lectures would be held. "Nurses won't be forced to attend the lectures," she added.

The nurses of Mayo Hospital had complained about their hospital administration asking them to buy scarves from them to 'eliminate obscenity and an un-Islamic culture' from the hospital.

— *DAILY TIMES* 06/06/2007

Lal Masjid issues fatwa against magazine

ISLAMABAD: Lal Masjid mullah Maulana Abdul Aziz has issued a death fatwa against staff at a magazine for publishing a fashion-shoot advertisement entitled Adam and Eve.

The fatwa has been issued against the chief editor, publisher and other staffers of an English language magazine called Octane.

"In the magazine's June edition blasphemy was committed against Hazrat (Prophet) Adam and Eve... Those responsible for the magazine are liable to death," Aziz said in a statement.

The offending photographs were titled Adam and Eve - Apple the Bone of Contention, and showed two models in designer-wear holding an apple.

Octane's editor, Zubair Kasuri, said it was just a commercial advertisement and contained nothing blasphemous, and had been published before by other magazines.

"But even then if it creates any misunderstanding or conveys any wrong perception, we are ready to apologise."

The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration, meanwhile, has confiscated the controversial edition of the magazine and all shopkeepers have been prohibited from selling it.

The pictures are likely to "disseminate obscenity in society," said a press note on Saturday. The ICT administration is also urging the Punjab government to ban the issuance and publication of the magazine and cancel its declaration, the release added. "A clear message was conveyed to the publishers to refrain from indulging in any activity hurting the sentiments of any segment of society," it said.

The ICT administration has registered an FIR on the publication of obscene material.

— *DAILY TIMES* 17/06/2007

Nilofar serves legal notice on Lal Masjid

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Former Tourism Minister Senator Nilofar Bakhtiar served a legal notice on the Lal Masjid 'shariat court' on Wednesday for issuing a fatwa asking her to apologise for hugging a male paragliding instructor in France. The notice served through Dr Aslam Khaki said the fatwa damaged Bakhtiar's reputation, family honour and political career.



The notice asks Mufti Yunus, who issued the decree, to apologise for un-Islamic and unlawful conduct that hurt the dignity of an honourable Muslim lady. The notice, seen by Daily Times, warned that failure to apologise would result in civil and legal proceedings. Bakhtiar visited France in March where, aside from attending a fundraiser, she went paragliding. Upon completing a successful jump, her instructor Mario congratulated her with a hug. — *DAILY TIMES 21/06/2007*

Lal Masjid brigade abducts nine Chinese

By Shakeel Anjum

ISLAMABAD: The male and female students of Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa abducted 12 persons, including nine foreigners, in an operation on Friday midnight.

Those abducted are nine Chinese, five of them women, and three Pakistanis. Riding in three vehicles,

the religious students raided a Massage Centre at House No 17, Street 4, Sector F-8/3. They overpowered three Pakistani guards posted at the centre after injuring them.

Later, they entered the building and ordered the Chinese men and women present there to accompany them. On refusal, the students thrashed them and forcibly took them to the Jamia Hafsa compound.

The religious students accused the abducted people of rendering un-Islamic and unlawful services. When contacted, ASP city Kamran Adil confirmed that 12 persons, including nine Chinese, were kidnapped by the Lal Masjid brigade. He said the Rescue 15 earlier received the information about the kidnapping of five persons.

However, later it was confirmed that the abducted people were 12.

A high-level meeting to deal with the situation was in progress till the filing of this report at 1.30 a.m. It is the first time that Lal Masjid has held foreigners hostage. Sources told The News that there is a strong possibility of an Army operation against the Lal Masjid brigade this time as the victims include nationals of a friendly neighbour of Pakistan.

— *THE NEWS 23/06/2006*

Lal Masjid frees Chinese nationals

By Qaiser Zulfiqar

ISLAMABAD - Fearing a crackdown in the wake of kidnapping six foreigners and three Pakistanis, Ghazi brothers of Lal Masjid decided to release the hostages on Saturday.

Earlier, the capital police also registered an FIR against the Lal Masjid administration against the abduction of Chinese nationals. These six Chinese women and three Pakistani men were abducted by the

students of Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa on Friday night. However, most importantly the students of Beacon House also participated in the raid on Chinese Massage Centre. It is pertinent to mention here that the students of Jamia Hafsa took this action when extra force of Punjab Constabulary, which earlier brought in Islamabad to conduct operation against Lal Masjid returned after a successful protest against the authorities for maltreatment.

Addressing a press conference after the release of abducted people, the cleric of Jamia Hafsa Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi strongly warned of dire consequences if Americans were ever found involved in nefarious activities.

Ghazi said that foreigners, including those of special friendly countries should stick to local laws and concept of Islam during their stay in Pakistan, since a Pakistani national is hardly secure, even if innocent, while living in these foreign countries. He blamed the faulty foreign policy of Pakistan, which paid no attention to the discriminations and immediate deportations of the Pakistani nationals by foreign governments.

He said that these local foreigners roam freely, indulging in all kind of nefarious activities as if Pakistan was their colony. He said that the centre was acting as a brothel, where for money all kinds of debauchery was permitted, citing reliable and frequenting sources, who acted as willing informers, since they were familiar with the shameful acts going on the place. He said his repeated pleas to the owners of the raided massage parlors were duly ignored and were scoffed at by them. The release of the abducted Chinese citizens came about after long negotiations held between the Lal Masjid administration and DC Islamabad Muhammad Ali Chaudhry, SSP, Capt (Retd) Zafar Iqbal and AC Firasat Ali.

Maulana Abdul Ghazi claimed that this effort was not of the students of Jamia Hafsa alone, but even the fashionable and elite of the town, including spoilt students of Beacon House from elite families also participated by informing and guiding about the centre.

He also invited the Chinese ambassador and his

wife to Jamia Mosque for a friendly dialogue and shedding their misconceptions about Jamia Hafsa.

Ghazi during the news conference refuted the notion that this was a staged drama to divert the public action from CJ's Multan and Lahore visit.

— *THE NATION* 24/06/2007

Inside Jamia Hafsa

By Iman Hasan

ISLAMABAD: Jamia Hafsa, run by wife of Maulana Abdul Aziz (Imam of Lal Masjid), has been existing right in the centre of the capital since 1999 but was never that controversial until the veiled female students, while challenging writ of the government, usurped the adjoining children's library on January 21, 2007; as a protest against demolition of few of the mosques by the government.

Jamia Hafsa is affiliated with Lal Masjid, whose Imam, Maulana Abdul Aziz was appointed by the government when his father Maulana Abdullah was assassinated on October 17, 1998.

The students of Jamia Hafsa; who are largely from NWFP, Kashmir and Murree follow their Ameer, Maulana Abdul Aziz and revere his every statement.

"It's our duty to follow our Ameer if it's according to Shariah," said one of the students.

These female students, while following their Ameer are keen to enforce Shariah in the country. While taking the law in their hands and through mosque's parallel justice system, there have been kidnappings of not only women allegedly running a brothel house but also of policemen.

Whenever a minor action of detaining any of the students was taken by the government, it has been retaliated by kidnapping of more police officials.

Followers of Maulana Abdul Aziz, including

4500 female students of Jamia Hafsa, feel obligated to obliterate the 'unislamic acts detrimental to society.'

Out of 4500 students, 3500 reside in the madrassa, and all of them, considering it jihad, are ready to fight against the allegedly unIslamic system run by the military regime.

"Customarily jihad is declared against non-believers but we proclaim it against the flawed system of the government," said one of the students while airing her concept of jihad.

The minimum age required for admission in Jamia Hafsa is 3 to 4 years. These students are charged a very minimal amount of only Rs 150 each as registration fee by the administration. Even the boarding students are given comfortable living within available means free of charge. All the monetary expenses are met by the madrassa, depending on the donations given by people as claimed by head of the madrassa (wife of Abdul Aziz).

"They (students) are my daughters, so we try to make them comfortable by giving them all possible facilities," said the headmistress.

At Jamia Hafsa meal is served three times a day. But these days due to lack of funds, breakfast is not being offered.

"We have lost our major donors due to continuing dissension with the government and rising conflict," the principal revealed.

According to her, people have stopped supporting them monetarily due to fear of being targeted by the government for financing a madrassa whose followers have vociferously been against the policies of General Musharraf.

The headmistress told The Nation that the monthly electricity bill is around Rs150,000 and the gas bill also equals that amount. The madrassa which is constructed on the illegal land has an easy access to all facilities, such as gas, electricity and telephone. Each room is equipped with the facility of electricity

and water taps are also in excess. There are also number of toilets on each floor.

Several gas stoves are also placed on different floors, thus the students don't necessarily have to rely on food offered by the madrassa since they are facilitated to cook anytime they want to. There is also a small cafeteria offering junk food where students spend leisure time. Few women from outside the madrassa also bring cooked food to sell. Thus the students have different options. There is also a grocery store.

The illegally constructed Jamia Hafsa was extended speedily in 2002 on the land owned by the Ministry of Education. It's a four storey building, including a basement, consisting of 75 spacious rooms and two vast verandas with a range of taps in one of the verandas for ablution purposes. Loud speakers are also erected in these verandas so that the Juma sermon delivered by Maulana Abdul Aziz in Lal Masjid is audible to students as well. The verandas and corridors are crowded with students during his Juma speeches and heard with great deference.

Amazingly the map of this tall, expansive building was never sent to Capital Development Authority for approval as required by the rules and procedures. According to CDA rules, heavy fine is imposed if anyone violates the approved construction plan

According to Malik Murtaza, Deputy Director Building Control Cell, CDA, "Under CDA laws, this building should be demolished since the land was never allotted to them."

He further said that fine is imposed on the legal owners of the land, if there is deviation from approved construction plan.

He said CDA can get this building vacated only if government supports them. Calling the two brothers (Abdul Aziz and Abdul Rashid Ghazi) a "mafia," he said that CDA had tried to do its job, but failed.

Acting Chairman CDA Kamran Qureshi told The Nation that over 120 notices have been sent to the

two brothers "and also to Islamabad administration, but no action was taken by the Deputy Commissioner."

Due to the rising conflict, the government has de-registered Jamia Hafsa, depriving the students from the officially recognized degree, earlier issued by Wafaqul Madaris. But the Jamia Hafsa administration, run by the Ghazi family has elevated the madrasa to the university level and issues its own degree now.

Other than the religious books, mathematics and English is also part of the syllabus. Only basic lessons of mathematics and English are imparted, restricted only to alphabet and recognitions of few words. Whereas mathematics books can only help students learn basic calculations.

The boarding students are constrained to the activities within madrasa. They are not allowed to go out of the madrasa unnecessarily. Other than a family member, a teacher can accompany them to rare outside excursions. They spend most of their time studying and are not even exposed to any electronic or print media, except for Urdu and English newspapers.

"We should not indulge in worldly activities unnecessarily. We are sent in this world to lead a life as prescribed in the Quran," the student said.

Earlier the students of Jamia Hafsa alongwith their male counterparts from Jamia Faridia (another madrasa administered by Lal Masjid) were targeting Pakistanis indulged in allegedly unIslamic acts "detrimental to society" but now they feel obligated to punish the non-Muslims as well.

The recent abduction of 5 Chinese women and a man (running a massage and acupuncture clinic) has also been condemned by the Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly and MMA Secretary General, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, at the floor of the house on the last day of NA session. While criticizing the government for not taking any action against the Lal Masjid brigade, he said, that China was the only country left in the region that Pakistan shared friendly rela. — *THE NATION 25/06/2007*

Over 100 Chinese women flee to Lahore

By Sher Baz Khan

ISLAMABAD, June 27: More than a hundred Chinese women working in a dozen massage parlours in Islamabad and Rawalpindi have moved to Lahore, a reasonably safer abode, following threats to their lives after the abduction of nine Chinese citizens by the Lal Masjid brigade...

Chinese parlours were closed immediately as the news of the kidnapping of the Chinese citizens spread like wild fire around the world. And, now the capital may be safe for anything but the massage business.

Sources told Dawn that a number of Russian and Turkish women who were providing home massage services in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad have also moved to other cities. Some of them are present here but not receiving their cell phones. They said a number of Chinese women working in massage parlours had also fled to China.

The Chinese massage parlours providing facilities of acupuncture, osteopathy, hot stone massage and body-to-body massage, Chinese herbal medicines, remedial massage etc., have mushroomed in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad over the last two years.

However, their number had drastically increased over the last one year after their clients multiplied.

Once a luxury of the elite was now also enjoyed by the middle and upper middle class, especially the employed youth and middle-aged businessmen.

"We have been incorporated by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and our businesses are legal. We pay taxes to the government of Pakistan. But, our lives and honours are in extreme danger," a Chinese, Ms Liza, told Dawn on phone from Lahore. — *DAWN 28/06/2007*

12 dead as Lal Masjid students provoke gunfight

By Zulfiqar Ghuman, Irfan Ghauri and Azaz Syed

ISLAMABAD: Twelve people were killed and around 150 injured in a daylong shootout between madrassa students and Rangers near Lal Masjid on Tuesday.

The administration confirmed that one journalist, a Rangers soldier, a businessman, madrassa students and bystanders were among the dead. Unconfirmed reports suggested that the death toll had mounted to 16.

The shootout began at around 11am after students of Jamia Hafsa and Jamia Fareedia, madrassas affiliated with Lal Masjid, marched towards the nearby Environment Ministry building and a security picket outside it. The students snatched weapons from police and took four officials hostage, according to police.

Rangers fired teargas to repel them, and students

stationed inside the mosque responded by opening fire, witnesses said.

The students set fire to the ministry and Estate Office buildings in front of their madrassas. The buildings were almost completely gutted as fire fighters could not reach the spot due to heavy firing from both sides.

The Rangers had taken up positions in these two buildings and the nearby F G Girls High School after evacuating government staff from them on Monday.

The pitched battles continued all day. Students carrying batons mixed up with the general public who had gathered there to witness the battle and threw stones at security personnel.

Students armed with AK-47s and wearing gas masks took up positions behind sandbags on the roof of the mosque and bunkers inside the mosque courtyard, chanting "Jihad, jihad!". Armed madrassa students continued to roam around in front of the mosque and nearby roads after dark.

As gunfire rang out, loudspeaker announcements from the mosque urged "fedayeen" (suicide attackers) to prepare themselves. "Jihad against the government has started. Arrest these rangers and police officials wherever they are seen," said other announcements.

SSP Captain Zafar Iqbal told Daily Times that the "Lal Masjid administration initiated the action and now we are into it". He said there were reports of 11 unconfirmed deaths and 16 arrests so far.

At least 148 people were reported injured, some with bullet wounds but most due to teargas inhalation.

The roads leading to Lal Masjid were closed and Appra and Melody markets remained closed throughout the day.

MMA MNA Maulana Shah Abdul Aziz



Source: DAILY TIMES

visited Lal Masjid and made an abortive attempt to broker a ceasefire.

A five-member committee including Maulana Zahoor Alvi, Maulana Nazir Farooqi, Maulana Saeedur Rehman, Senator Telha Mehmood and Qazi Rasheed started negotiations with the Lal Masjid clerics to resolve the crisis on Tuesday night.

Among the confirmed dead were journalist Javed Khan, Rangers soldier Mubarak Hussain, student Muhammad Rafi, Muhammad Ijaz, a labourer, Umraiz Ahmed, a businessman, Ghulam Hussain, and an unidentified Uzbek national.

Reuters adds: Three journalists, including two westerners, were conducting interviews in the Jamia Hafsa madrassa for girls in the mosque's compound when the shooting started, and were believed to be still inside.

The government said it wanted talks. "Despite unprovoked firing by the students of Lal Masjid, the government still wants to settle the issue through dialogue," State Interior Minister Zafar Warraich told PTV.

There are some 5,000 students at the madrassas affiliated to the Lal Masjid, most of them from poorer parts of NWFP. — *DAILY TIMES 04/07/2007*

Agencies to grill Lal Masjid Students

By Umar Cheema

ISLAMABAD: Lal Masjid students who surrendered to the authorities on Wednesday, would be grilled by intelligence agencies before they are handed over to the police authorities for sending them to their hometowns, it is learnt.

Majority of the unarmed students have been shifted to Adiala jail for a 'debriefing' session, official

sources told The News. Superintendent jail, Shahid Beg, also confirmed receiving the Lal Masjid students in bulk but said that only the male students have been handed over to them.

As the government's decision of sending them to jail without implicating them in criminal offences may create legal problems for it, Beg said they had not been put behind bars but kept in the school located in jail premises.

Security officials privy to the development said they would be grilled in the manner the Guantanamo Bay returnees were done so as to furnish their profile reports and keep record of Taliban-minded elements in the society.

A team of psychiatrists would also examine them. In the light of this examination, the government is likely to map out a plan for their rehabilitation so as to bring them into the mainstream, the officials said.

It has been learnt that the intelligence officials would interrogate them in order to know about the inside activities of Lal Masjid and the kind of militancy taught there as well as the future plan of the clerics. Besides they would be asked about the frequent visitors of the Masjid's top clerics and the training camps, if there were any.

This exercise is being carried out amid a strong impression that Masjid's administration has close links with the Taliban spreading their ideology in NWFP and tribal areas. These students would be kept under watch by their relevant police stations in future so as to keep a vigil on their activities and the links with their 'alma mater', it has been further learnt.

Responding to a question, jail superintendent said Lal Masjid students were being well taken care of and not treated as prisoners.

He said they had been served good food and 15 member medical team had been deputed for carrying out their medical examination. — *THE NEWS 05/07/2007*

1,200 surrender at Lal Masjid

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Five gunship helicopters hovered over Lal Masjid on Wednesday as sporadic firing between militant students and security forces continued for a second day.



Source: DAILY TIMES

Several hundred students surrendered to the government as security forces surrounded the mosque complex and announced amnesty for those who laid down their arms.

However, many remained holed up inside, though the chief cleric of the mosque, Abdul Aziz Ghazi, was arrested trying to escape in a burqa.

The government confirmed the deaths of 16 people and injuries to 98 from the clashes, but unofficial reports put the death toll at 20 and 200 injured, some of them critically.

Interior Ministry spokesman Brig (r) Javed Iqbal Cheema said 1,100-1,200 students had surrendered by 10:30pm on Wednesday night, but several were still inside the mosque along with deputy chief cleric Abdul Rashid Ghazi.

A delegation of ulema entered the complex at around 10:15pm to negotiate with the mosque administration to release more students.

Earlier, a gunbattle erupted between the students and security forces after two big blasts at around 5:00pm. Security forces fired teargas shells and moved armoured personnel carriers around Lal Masjid. However, an imminent operation was put on hold as small groups of students continued to pour out the mosque all day.

Information Minister Muhammad Ali Durrani said that the ultimatum given to the students to surrender was being extended to minimise the loss of life in an operation.

A shoot-on-sight curfew was imposed in the early hours of Wednesday. Paramilitary troops shot dead two men as they took a morning walk near FG Girls School, G 6/1-4, sources told Daily Times. They said that Abdul Ghafoor Qureshi, a section officer, and his friend were unaware that a curfew had been imposed. AFP reported that paramilitary troops shot dead an apparently mentally ill man as he wandered close to the mosque area.

Adiala Jail Superintendent Shahid Saleem Baig told Daily Times that 128 of the surrendering students had been sent to jail, but their detention was temporary and they would be released after background checks.

Meanwhile, security forces continued their build up for the possible operation. The three-layered plan for the operation puts the army on the front line, Rangers at the second line and Islamabad police and Punjab Constabulary at the third line. Troops from the Rawalpindi-based 111 Brigade and Mangla were also called in.

Chief cleric held, asked to order surrender

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Lal Masjid chief cleric Maulana Abdul Aziz was arrested on Wednesday night as he tried escape from the mosque complex in a burqa, officials said. His wife Ume Hassan, principal of Jamia Hafsa, was also arrested, Interior Ministry spokesman

Brig (r) Javed Iqbal Cheema told reporters. He said the cleric had not surrendered, but was trying to escape. The maulana was arrested at the nearby FG Girls High School, where policewomen were screening girl madrassa students who had surrendered. Upon discovery that one of these was the mosque's leader, security forces immediately frisked him away. ARY television later reported that Religious Affairs Minister Ejazul Haq had met with Aziz and asked him to tell the Lal Masjid students to surrender. Haq met Aziz at a secret location where the latter is being detained and asked him to record a statement for television appealing to his students to surrender. The channel claimed Aziz's deputy Abdul Rasheed Ghazi had also agreed to surrender after the arrest of his brother and talks with Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidry.

Murder, arson cases against mullahs

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Police on Wednesday registered multiple cases of murder, attempted murder, arson, ransacking and disruption of government business against Lal Masjid chief cleric Maulana Abdul Aziz and his deputy and brother Abdul Rashid Ghazi.

The FIR was registered under Sections 302 and 324 of the PPC and ATA 6/7 at Aabpara police station, on the grounds that the clerics were responsible for Tuesday's clashes between militant students and security forces in which at least 16 people were killed. This was the seventh FIR registered against the brothers in the last six months, during which they have repeatedly defied the government's writ in the capital with anti-vice vigilante actions.

They had previously been booked for kidnapping an alleged brothel owner, kidnapping police officials, and kidnapping several Chinese nationals they accused of prostitution.

Four of the previous cases were also registered at

Aabpara police station and one each at Margalla and Kohsar police stations.

The government has announced amnesty for all Lal Masjid students who surrender, except those wanted in other cases and the two cleric brothers.

— *DAILY TIMES* 05/07/2007

Students happy to leave Lal Masjid

By Ahmad Noorani

ISLAMABAD: Many male and female students of Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa were happy to get rid of the 'Taliban' label after being released from the mosque's premises.

Many students released from the custody of Lal Masjid commented that they were leaving the Lal Masjid either at their own will or the desire of their parents, but were relieved to escape this horrible situation.

Irsa, a seven-year-old female child from Fateh Jang, was leaving Lal Masjid with her mother. When asked whether she was happy to go home or wanted to live in Jamia Hafsa, Irsa said: "I want to go home and I am happy to leave the madrassa." When asked in which class was she studying in the seminary, she kept quiet and was unable to speak. When her mother was asked did she think it sensible to admit a seven-year-old female child in a madrassa like Jamia Hafsa, she said that she admitted her daughter in the madrassa on the recommendation of some relative but would never let her go back there.

Maria from Haripur said that she had left Jamia Hafsa earlier when the tension increased, but she joined again just to complete her studies. She said that she is happy as she is going home and leaving its tense environment.

Aysha Niaz, whose cousin Muhammad Saeed came to Lal Masjid to take her home, said: "I want to

complete my studies but now it is not possible. I am sad to not be able to complete my studies, however I am glad to leave this place.

Another girl, Bano, was also happy on leaving Jamia Hafsa but defended the madrassa's activities to overcome social evils. When this correspondent asked her how she justified the kidnapping of Chinese girls from F-8/3, she said that they were running a brothel and it was the responsibility of every citizen to try to eradicate such evils from society. When asked why she or the madrassa's administration had not informed the government about this brothel instead of taking action directly, clearly challenging writ of the government, she replied that government officials already knew about these brothels and there was no need to inform them on this issue.

A girl from Murree, who didn't tell her name, said that she was leaving to never come back.

Fouzia Shamroz from Attock was very happy to leave her militant school and said that now she will complete her studies in Jamia Muhammadia Hassan Abdal in a peaceful environment.

Iftikhar, father of a female student from Haripur, said that he had taken her daughter back home several times but had to bring her back to Jamia Hafsa on normalisation of the situation. However, he said that he and her daughter are happy that they are going back home safely and now they will never come back. Um-e-Hamna, a female teacher of Jamia Hafsa, who was leaving for her home with her mother, was very emotional on leaving the premises. She said that she is leaving just because of her mother, who insisted that she do so. Um-e-Hamna said that she could carry out a suicide attack in future. When this correspondent asked her, "we all are Muslims and Pakistanis, why would you inflict a suicide attack on our own people?" she replied: "From yesterday (Tuesday) we are no more one and same, you are all against us."

Many of the male students were not speaking to the media. The few who spoke said that they are happy to escape from this critical situation. However, they said, "we side with our administration on this crisis and oppose the present government for not

implementing Shariah in the country. They said that they would come back to Lal Masjid if the situation normalised.

APP adds: Qari Liaquat Ali, who arrived from Battagram for her daughter Raheela, said he had earlier tried to take her back but the administration was adamant and refused.

He termed government action 'right and prompt' and said government deserves credit as it exercised a lot of restraint.

Najma Bibi, mother of a 17-year-old daughter from Khana Pul, said that her daughter has been studying in the seminary for the last two years.

She sent her daughter for getting education only and never imagined that such a tense situation would emerge.

Mohammad Ajab from Murree, who was waiting for her daughter, said, "we are against extremist policies of the Lal Masjid administration".

He said Jihad is the greatest degree of Islamic teachings and only well-learned religious scholars can define it.

17-year old Raheela Bibi from Swat said the female students were forced to stay inside and were used as shields.

"I have come here for religious education but the brand of Islam propagated by the administration was horrendous," she added. — *THE NEWS 05/07/2007*

Veiled women leave Jamia Hafsa, dazed and confused

By Qudssia Akhlaque

ISLAMABAD, July 4: Mingled emotions of relief and fear were expressed by scores of veiled Jamia Hafsa students on Wednesday afternoon as they walked out of

the fortified seminary unscathed 24 hours after the bloody gun battle began at the Lal Masjid.

Young girls and women clad in black burqas marched away slowly and solemnly in small groups as the sun and clouds played hide and seek, and Rangers looked on.

The students seemed to be in a daze after what they had gone through and were reticent when approached at first. Their anxious parents, siblings and relatives who had come to pick them were more communicative.

They said they were extremely thankful to God to have been able to retrieve their dear ones alive.

Notably no anger, resentment or remorse was conveyed but only a great sense of relief.

However, just a little distance away stood two elderly women in a ground wailing away because their nieces were not allowed to leave the seminary.

One of them said they had come from Rawalpindi to fetch their nieces but did not succeed.

"We met them and they came almost till the gate but then they were stopped," she complained.

"Their grandfather is almost lying unconscious in the house since yesterday because he has been so worried about the girls," cried out the panic-stricken woman.

Other people present in the vicinity also reported cases of some girls not being allowed to leave Jamia Hafsa. The general fear was that they were being used as human shields by the militant elements inside the seminary.

The students who agreed to talk to Dawn reported that they had not received the amount of Rs5,000 announced by President Gen Pervez Musharraf for each person who would leave the seminary. "We were given no money. They just took our names and addresses," was the standard response.

However, by 5pm eyewitnesses confirmed that a female assistant commissioner was distributing Rs5,000 to some of the departing women students.

Most of these young women belonged to Peshawar, Attock, Mardan, Murree and Rawalpindi and had been at Jamia Hafsa from six months to over two years.

They maintained there was no resistance from inside on their leaving.

A couple of young girls in their mid and late teens were petrified to say anything other than that they were up the whole night praying because they could not sleep due to the random firing.

Gulnaz and her sister Azra from a village near Murree said they were happy to be out. Their mother was equally glad and relieved.

According to Gulnaz there are still several thousands girls left at Jamia Hafsa. "I am telling you that there are 7,000 to 8,000 women and girls present inside Jamia Hasfa," she said in a worried tone.

She estimated the number of girls under the age of 10 years to be at least a hundred. Nobody had come to get them so far.

Another 19-year-old student from Peshawar, Naila, tended to agree with this figure. Both of them said these children were frightened and "Madam", wife of the Lal Masjid Maulana, was taking care of them.

Apparently quite a few of these children are orphans and had been deposited at the seminary by their relatives.

Some students and their family members, perhaps too shaken by the violent face-off, were keen to get out of Islamabad as fast as they could but had no clue about the directions.

There was no public transport in sight due to the curfew in the area. The only vehicles one could see were Rangers' trucks. So they walked all the way in the

sweltering heat, taking short breaks in between.

Some students denied the fact that the Lal Masjid students were armed with sophisticated weapons and had been firing at the security forces from the rooftops. "I did not see anyone doing that," said 18-year-old Naila a resident of Murree.

She complained that the government had failed to check "immoral activities" and observed: "The government must take action against this."

As the Jamia Hafsa students steadily moved towards their next destination with all their belongings wrapped up in little bundles, they were unsure of what the future holds for them. However, some of them were quite clear on one thing: if given another opportunity they would not return to Jamia Hafsa. The sentiment was shared by their parents and relatives.

"Nahi, tauba tauba (Never)," was the categorical response of the mother of a 15-year-old girl who was enrolled at the seminary just six months back. The young girl was bewildered but managed to smile.

However, the women leaving the premises in the evening were far more militant. They came in droves complaining against their parents who had brought them out. Some were even screaming, shouting and crying. But as it transpired that was the time when Maulana Abdul Aziz came out to be arrested in a burqa. — *DAWN 05/07/2007*

Parents criticise Lal Masjid admin

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Parents and close relatives of the students of Jamia Hafsa and Jamia Faridia on Wednesday criticised Lal Masjid chief cleric Maulana Abdul Aziz and his deputy Abdur Rashid Ghazi for endangering the lives of their children in the name of jihad.

Talking to Daily Times, the concerned parents said they would never allow their children to return to the madrassas run by Lal Masjid and opposed the two clerics' declaration of jihad.

A large number of parents and relatives were seen waiting at Aabpara bus station on Wednesday to take their children back to their hometowns. They were asked to contact Aabpara police station to facilitate contact with their children.

Students started coming out of the madrassa by midday and they numbered over 800 by evening. The government facilitated their meeting with the parents and arranged buses and coaches to safely transport them to their respective homes.

Thirty-five buses had sent over 290 males and 82 female students home by evening. Officials said each student had been paid Rs 5,000, as announced by President Musharraf, adding that any students who had surrendered to the security forces were not arrested.

The students who surrendered were unsure of the exact number of students still in the mosque. One female student said the mosque administration was imparting training for jihad to the remaining students. However, she added that female students were not forced to participate in the training.

"We would never let anyone use our children for vested interests," said a parent, adding that he would never allow his daughter to return to Jamia Hafsa. Another parent said the declaration of jihad by the mosque administration made no sense, while a female student's brother said if anyone wanted to participate in jihad, they should join the people fighting in Kashmir.

Agencies add: A female student told Geo News that 6,500 to 7,000 female students were still in the madrassa.

Several parents termed the government action just and one Qari Liaquat Ali said the government should be praised for exercising restraint. He said the madrassa administration had not allowed him to retrieve his daughter before the operation.

A 17-year-old student, Raheela, said many female students were being forced to remain on premises and were being used as shields. "I came here for religious education but the brand of Islam propagated by the administration was horrendous," she added.

Several students said they would never return to the madrassa, even if conditions return to normal. "Though jihad is good, we are not here to fight," said Zabia, a young student from Jamia Hafsa.

A top-level government official, on condition of anonymity, told APP that male students were being detained for questioning before they were allowed to depart while female students were being released into their parents' custody promptly. — *DAILY TIMES 05/07/2007*

Lal Masjid militants stand defiant

By Zulfiqar Ghuman, Irfan Ghauri and
Azaz Syed

ISLAMABAD: Two heavy blasts and gunfire rocked the Lal Masjid on Friday evening, as a dense cloud of smoke rose over the building in the latest clashes.

Abdul Rashid Ghazi, deputy prayer leader of Lal Masjid, and his supporters said that they would prefer death to arrest after the government called for an unconditional surrender.

Security forces fired several teargas shells at Lal Masjid that also troubled inhabitants of the areas around the mosque. There were unconfirmed reports of many casualties inside the mosque. The security forces continued their strong buildup, but exercised maximum restraint in launching the final assault despite capturing strategic positions on Thursday evening. The restraint is being exercised to secure the release of maximum students, especially females, to avoid massive casualties in case of an operation, authorities said.

Security forces kept announcing safe passage for surrendering students throughout the day and the

number of students who have evacuated the mosque premises reached 1,221 - 795 male and 426 female students - on Friday night. The officials put the number of those killed in the operation at 19 and the injured at 98.

Addressing reporters, Interior Secretary Kamal Shah repeated the government's demand that Ghazi and his companions surrender unconditionally. Shah requested religious parties to come forward and play role in resolving the standoff.

The security forces relaxed curfew for three hours between 12:30pm to 3:30pm in Sector G-6 so that the residents could purchase daily use items.

Earlier in the day, Ghazi and his '400 followers' wrote wills. Ghazi's special assistant Abdul Qayyum told Daily Times on telephone that besides a collective will, all students had written individual wills which would be placed on the mosque's rostrum. In the collective will the students have demanded burial inside the mosque's courtyard if they are killed in the operation. Jamia Hafsa Principal Umme Hassan, wife of Maulana Abdul Aziz, claimed that more than 80 bodies - 50 men and 30 women - were lying in the compounds of the mosque and the madrassa.

Agencies add: Two students of Jamia Hafsa, who were surrendering to the authorities, were killed in crossfire between security forces and the madrassa militants. Also, 17 students including five females surrendered to security forces. Separately, a meeting chaired by Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao discussed law and order situation arising out of the Lal Masjid operation, Online reported.

Fire broke out at Jamia Hafsa at around 1:30 am Saturday after a mortar shell was fired, Geo TV reported

— open fire on parents

LAHORE: Militants holed-up in the Lal Masjid opened fire on a group of parents who had been allowed by the Islamabad administration to enter the mosque premises to get their children, injuring a man,

Geo TV reported. The channel said that some bearded armed youths deployed on the mosque's roof warned the parents of 23 students that they would be killed if they did not return. The youths opened fire on the parents when they insisted on taking their children away from the Lal Masjid, injuring Gul Khan who had come from Peshawar for his two teenaged daughters. daily times monitor

— ignore Bilqees Edhi's offer

ISLAMABAD: Social worker Bilqees Edhi on Friday asked the Lal Masjid administration to hand over the female students held in the madrassa for safe return to their families, to no response. "I have made six announcements by loudspeaker but no one has responded yet," Bilqees told Geo television. She said that she had obtained permission from those concerned. She said that there were many ways to serve Islam, but keeping innocent children locked up in such adverse conditions was not one. She urged Maulana Abdul Aziz to be flexible so innocent people could be evacuated from a risky place. — *APP / DAILY TIME 07/07/2007*

It's all over as Ghazi is killed

eight troops were killed on a day of the most intense fighting of the week-old operation, which sent shockwaves across the country and whose handling could cost the government politically.

But they said the toll could be much higher when a correct body count would be possible at the end of the operation which was launched on July 4, a day after at least nine people were killed and about 150 wounded when tensions erupted into street battles between security forces and militants around the Lal Masjid and adjoining Jamia Hafsa madressah.

Some other sources said that more than 80 militants were killed on Tuesday after the security forces launched their final assault at about 4.30am following the breakdown of night-long negotiations seeking a peaceful end to the impasse although the two sides were at one point reported to have nearly clinched an agreement to give a so-called "safe passage" to Abdul Rashid Ghazi...

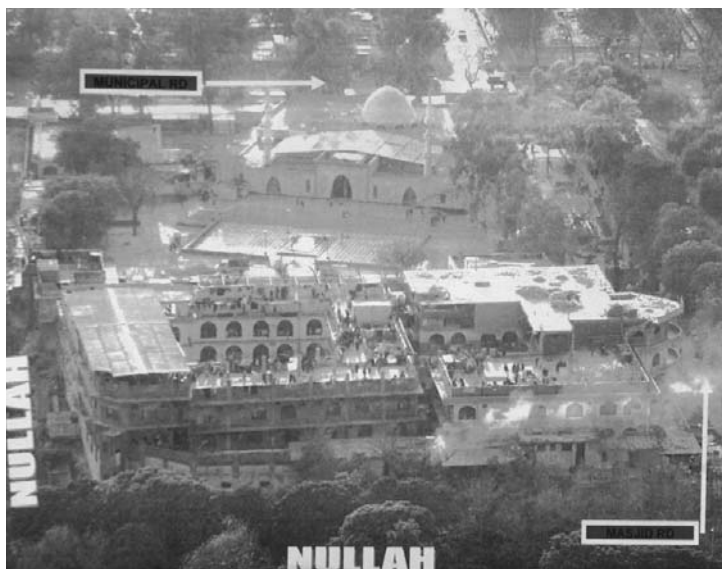
The ISPR chief Major-General Waheed Arshad estimated the death toll at the madressah complex at more than 50 but said exact figures were not available at the moment because the first priority of the authorities was to clear the area of heavily armed and very well-trained militants.

"The objective of the operation was to clear the

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD, July 10: Rebel cleric Abdul Rashid Ghazi was killed as a blitz led by army commandos almost crushed the last stand of religious militants at Islamabad's Lal Masjid-Jamia Hafsa compound on Tuesday after the failure of last-minute peace moves led to fierce battles that the government said took at least 58 lives on both sides.

Sporadic gunfire and blasts were still being heard, till our going to press, from the curfew-bound complex in the centre of the capital, after government spokesmen said at least 50 militants and



madressah complex of the militants and that has not ended as yet," he said. "It is very clear to us that whoever takes up arms against the troops will be taken to task."

Gen Arshad said a total of 86 people came out of the madressah complex on Tuesday, including Umma Hassan, the head of the madressah, and wife of Ghazi's elder brother, Maulana Abdul Aziz, who was arrested on Wednesday while trying to escape clad in a burqa. Others included men, women and children, and their screening process was being carried out.

The ISPR chief said some parts of the complex were yet to be cleared and all the militants would be taken to task...

He put the casualty figure of troops at eight "shaheed" and 29 wounded.

WHY IT TOOK SO LONG: About prolongation of the operation, the ISPR chief cited three difficulties faced by the troops -- the aim to ensure safety of women and children, well-armed militants who put up a lot of resistance, and a very difficult situation because of a multi-storeyed complex built in a haphazard manner where the troops had to progress from room to room.

Asked about the presence of any foreign militants inside the complex, Gen Arshad said there had been such reports but it was "too early to say anything about that" while the operation was not over.

"Once it is done, then the investigations would be started to reach any conclusion."

He sidestepped repeated questions about casualties of women and children, but interior ministry spokesman Javed Iqbal Cheema, who was present with him, said the no body of any woman or a child was encountered inside the complex so far.

Asked why Edhi Foundation chief Abdul Sattar Edhi had been asked by authorities to arrange 800 shrouds when they could confirm the deaths of only 50 militants and eight troops, Gen Arshad said the move was meant to prepare for all contingencies.

Bodies of the dead were sent to various hospitals

in Islamabad and Rawalpindi where reporters were barred and at times faced rude behaviour from security officials while trying to seek information about the casualties.

RESIDENTS' ORDEAL: Islamabad's densely populated Sector G-6, where Lal Masjid is located, and the areas in its vicinity were jolted by big bangs of grenades, heavy shelling and other heavy arms used in the battle early in the morning.

The entire federal capital was declared a red zone as there was a complete ban on people's entry and exit from morning to evening.

Life in Islamabad was paralysed and most residents went on rooftops to see clouds of thick black smoke over Lal Masjid.

The fighting was so horrifying that bullets of heavy guns hit many multi-storeyed buildings located four to five kilometres away from Lal Masjid.

Heavy movement of troops continued around Lal Masjid throughout the day with machinegun-fitted armoured personnel carriers and trucks carrying armed troops.

Some of the parents of the children, who did not come out of the mosque or were shifted to other places without informing them, started weeping when they were told that the operation had almost concluded.

SPECIAL coverage of the Lal Masjid endgame by Syed Irfan Raza, Mohammad Asghar, Munawer Azgem, Khawar Ghumman, Ahmed Hassan, Amir Wasim, Khaleeq Kiani and Raja Asghar — DAWN 11/07/2007

From library occupation to Lal Masjid operation

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: The standoff between the government and the Lal Masjid administration began

on January 22 when Jamia Hafsa students took over the children's library adjacent to Lal Masjid, and ended on July 10 with the killing of Lal Masjid deputy prayer leader Abdul Rashid Ghazi and dozens of his followers.

The following is a chronology of events that took place at Lal Masjid:

January 22: Baton-wielding girl students took over the children's library to protest against the demolition of mosques and madrassas in Islamabad.

March 25: The girl students picked up three women for allegedly running a brothel, who were later released when they promised to lead a pious life.

April 6: The Lal Masjid administration set up a Shariah court inside the mosque and the chief prayer leader, Maulana Abdul Aziz, threatened to launch suicide attacks if the government tried to use force against them.

April 9: The Lal Masjid Shariah court issued a decree against former tourism minister Nilofar Bakhtiar for hugging an instructor after a parachute jump in France.

April 10: The government blocked the mosque's website and radio station in reaction to the Lal Masjid administration's provocative attitude.

May 19: The Lal Masjid students kidnapped four policemen following the arrest of their dozen supporters. The students kidnapped another two policemen, but later set all of them free.

June 23: The Jamia Hafsa students kidnapped nine people, including seven Chinese nationals (six women and a man) from an acupuncture clinic, claiming it was an undercover brothel. All were freed following protests from Beijing.

July 3: The students snatched weapons from policemen deployed at a building facing the Jamia Hafsa. Troops and paramilitary forces cordoned off the Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa compound, leading to a tense standoff between the security

forces and militants inside the Lal Masjid.

July 4: The government imposes a curfew around the mosque complex. It says anyone who wishes to may leave the premises, but any armed militants will be shot on sight. The first two days of fighting leave at least 16 people dead and some 140 injured. Among the hundreds of people holed up in the complex are women students and children.

Security forces capture Lal Masjid prayer leader Abdul Aziz while trying to leave disguised in a woman's burqa. This sparks an exodus, with some 1,200 people leaving the complex.

July 5: New fighting breaks out around the mosque complex, with students inside throwing hand grenades and the army demolishing most of a surrounding wall. Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao accuses Abdul Rashid Ghazi of retaining women and children as human shields inside the mosque.

Around 50 more militants leave the building voluntarily, and security forces say they have captured eight more.

July 6: Heavy explosions are heard around the mosque complex. From inside, Ghazi announces that he and his followers would rather die than surrender. Officials say that several hundred students remain inside the complex, along with some 60 armed militants, but the figures cannot be independently verified.

July 7: President General Pervez Musharraf said that all militants holed-up inside the mosque would be killed if they did not surrender.

The government puts the death toll from clashes at 19, while Ghazi says 70 have been killed.

Ghazi says he received a phone call from a man who claimed to have shot at Musharraf's aircraft on Friday in revenge for the siege. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz accuses the militants of holding hostages. Ghazi denies the claim.

July 8: Security forces tighten the noose on the

mosque complex, as a senior commando is killed in an operation to blast through the complex wall in a bid to allow women and children inside to flee.

Religious Affairs Minister Ejazul Haq says militants have stripped Ghazi of control of the mosque. Haq calls the militants "terrorists," saying some of them are foreign. Another senior official says 15 militants have been given explosives-laden suicide jackets.

Musharraf, Aziz and top officials meet to assess the government's options. The government puts the death toll at 24.

July 9: Musharraf meets with key officials to determine the next step. He appoints PML President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain to work with clerics to find a peaceful solution. Pro-Taliban militant commanders in Bajaur Agency tell 20,000 tribesmen that they must exact revenge for the siege. The tribesmen vow to wage "holy war" against Musharraf. A delegation of ministers and clerics hold last-ditch talks with Ghazi using loudspeakers. The government offers Ghazi house arrest. Negotiations break down.

July 10: The security forces launched a final operation against the Lal Masjid militants at 4am after all efforts to defuse the situation failed. Troops storm the mosque in a bid to free the women and children inside, sparking fierce gun battles with militants that leave at least 50 militants and eight soldiers dead, the army said. Ghazi is also killed in the operation. — *DAILY TIMES 11/07/2007*

Lal Masjid cleared, 73 bodies collected

By Zulfiqar Ghuman and Irfan Ghauri

ISLAMABAD: Security forces collected 73 bodies of militants as they cleared Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa of mines and booby traps on Wednesday after flushing out or killing all the militants holed up inside.

Special forces stormed the mosque at 4:30am on

Tuesday and finished the first phase - clearing the compound of militants - by noon on Wednesday, while the second phase - sweeping the complex for unexploded ordnance and booby traps and collecting bodies - was still underway, Major General Arshad Waheed, director general of ISPR, told reporters in the afternoon.

He said later in the day as the cleanup operation was almost complete that 73 bodies had been collected, and none of them were of women.

However, a promised tour of the compound for the media was delayed from Wednesday to Thursday, and restrictions on journalists visiting hospitals in Rawalpindi and Islamabad remained in place.

Gen Arshad said that another soldier was injured in fighting overnight, taking the casualty figures for the armed forces to 10 deaths and 33 wounded. The death toll includes Lt Colonel Haroonul Islam, who was killed on Monday. Three more militants were also killed in fighting overnight, the military spokesman said. Some 50 militants were said to have been killed on Tuesday.

He would not comment on any civilian casualties. Militants were said to be holding hundreds of women and children hostage in the compound before the operation was launched. A group of 27 women were able to leave the mosque unharmed on Tuesday.

Gen Arshad said the 164 commandos who stormed the mosque had cleared each room in the complex in a systematic manner to avoid collateral damage. "No suicide attack was reported on security forces during the operation," he added.

Earlier in the morning, a series of blasts rocked the area prompting re-enforcements to be called in. Sporadic gunfire and blasts were heard throughout the day as security forces continued the cleanup operation.

The security forces claimed to have arrested 15 injured militants on Wednesday. The government handed over 100 more students to their parents, taking the total to 247.

Daily Times Monitor adds: Around 100 graves



were being prepared in Sector H-11 graveyard for the collective burial of militants killed in the Lal Masjid operation, Geo news reported. — *DAILY TIMES 12/07/2007*

many dead, the government has also discovered that the Lal Masjid-Jamia Hafsa Complex was being used as a terrorist spot.

Lal Masjid weapons cast doubts on role of agencies

By Ansar Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: A large quantity of arms and ammunition was found in the Lal Masjid-Jamia Hafsa Complex, as claimed by the military authorities, leaving the vital question unanswered as to how did these weapons get into the building, situated right in the heart of the federal capital.

The government's declaration that the ammunition belongs to the Lal Masjid's "militants", even if blindly accepted, is a charge sheet against the whole network of intelligence agencies in the country. Now after the Lal Masjid operation is over leaving

The weapons, which were shown to have been found from the mosque premises, include rocket launchers, landmines, Kalashnikovs (AK-47 assault rifles), hand grenades, RPGs (rocket propelled grenades), pistols, guns, loads of rounds, etc.

Interior Minister Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao has said that Jamia Hafsa was not a religious seminary but a place from where every kind of terrorist activities were taking place. He, however, did not bother to explain how it became possible in the heart of Islamabad. Lal Mosque is located just a few kilometers from the headquarters of the top intelligence agencies - the Inter Services Intelligence and the Intelligence Bureau.

There is a general perception that the agencies had their role in the making of Lal Masjid force. Contrary to their primary role of doing espionage for the security of the country, the intelligence agencies here

have been repeatedly caught napping as they have been more concerned with spying on judges, politicians, bureaucrats and even journalists. Now these agencies are even making political parties and fielding candidates for elections.

Of late, the Full Court of the Supreme Court that is hearing the constitutional petition of the Chief Justice of Pakistan, directed the DG IB to clean the official residences and chambers of the superior judiciary from bugging devices after it was revealed through government documents, submitted to the apex court that Justice Iftikhar was being spied upon.

During the initial years of his rule, President Musharraf did realise that the intelligence agencies had become extremely politicised. He had once even, in 2001, directed the revamping of the intelligence network but later his growing dependence on these agencies for sustainability of his rule further politicised them.

At that time, Musharraf, while expressing his concern over the continuing incidents of terrorism, had directed the intelligence agencies to "re-orientate their focus to criminal activities, sectarian violence and terrorism instead of political intelligence".

It was admitted that the intelligence agencies had, so far, concentrated on political intelligence and had been used to attain the political objectives of the successive governments. Contrary to their condemned role of harassing, influencing or following politicians, it was said, there was an immediate need that these agencies should infiltrate into terrorist groups to find out their contacts, plans of action and modus operandi.

The president, at that time, had resolved that the intelligence agencies would be geared up for provision of tactical and strategic information with complete analysis so that pre-emptive action could be taken against terrorist organisations and individuals.

Even, on that occasion, the government had expressed its dissatisfaction over the overall performance of the agencies, particularly their role of checking crimes, mainly terrorism. The agencies, it was

noted, were providing information and reports after an event had taken place, which was even otherwise available through the print media.

To make them effective, the president had directed re-organisation of the agencies in a manner that they could provide tactical and strategic information with complete analysis so that pre-emptive action could be taken before the planned event.

The authorities were also told to ensure that there should be a vertical as well as horizontal coordination for collection and supply of information so that not only coordination was there among various agencies, both federal and provincial, but also timely action could be taken by the law-enforcement agencies.
— *THE NEWS 13/07/2007*

Lal Masjid enrolment registers will help clear ambiguity about number of students

By Sharif Khan

ISLAMABAD: Investigators probing links between Lal Masjid and terrorists have discovered enrolment registers detailing the male and female students who studied at the mosque's madrassas, information that they believe will help clear up uncertainty about the number of people killed or missing in the operation to clear the mosque of militants.

"The lists of the registered students match the number of students evacuated or captured from the mosque and Jamia Hafsa. The lists are in the writing of the Jamia Hafsa administrative staff and these will quash rumours regarding the number of students missing, dead or alive in the entire operation," said a government source on condition of anonymity. These lists would also be issued to the media and the parents of the students, he added.

The source said intelligence agencies were

"shocked" at the highly sophisticated and modern weapons, including bullet-proof and explosion-proof blankets, that the militants in the Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa compound had, some of it even better than the gear given to Pakistani commandos.

"Bullet- and explosion-proof blankets are the latest combat gear, and even the Pakistan Army has not been equipped with this protective gear. The agencies are now investigating where these militants got such sophisticated equipment," said the source.

Similarly, the militants had smoke grenades, fire grenades and splinter grenades, and "dum-dum" bullets, which explode after penetrating the body of the target, causing maximum internal damage. "Smoke grenades and fire grenades are not provided to the Pakistan Army as these are very exceptional," said the source. He said 29 of the commandos injured in the operation got their injuries from splinter grenades. The source also said there was one "accidental" suicide bombing during the operation which killed six students. "When the commandos tried to enter a room where half a dozen militants were present, one of the militants detonated his suicide jacket killing everyone present in the room."

Azaz Syed adds: Security agencies in Islamabad are interrogating 12 aides of the Lal Masjid clerics at Adiala Jail about the sources of funding for the mosque and the clerics' friends and acquaintances. Arrested on July 10 and July 11 from Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa, the 12 men have also been implicated in the kidnapping of four policemen and seven Chinese nationals during the mosque's moral policing drive.

The arrested men are Abdul Qayum, 23, Safeer Ahmad, Muhammad Amaan, Bashir Ahmad, Fidaullah, Nawabzada, Inamullah, Maqsud Akbar, Nazakat Ali, Asif Khan Shah, Muhammad Saeed and Shah Wali. Sources told Daily Times the men have also been questioned about 11 'foreign' militants that were killed in 'Operation Silence'. The government had earlier claimed that 14 foreign militants were killed, but Pakistani families identified three of them.

— DAILY TIMES 17/07/2007

Lal Masjid student says she will work for jihad

Daily Times Monitor

LAHORE: BBC Urdu has conducted the first in-depth interview with one of the Islamic militants who were holed up inside Lal Masjid in Islamabad.

For six months, the mosque complex - which also housed a women's madrassa and a children's library - had been occupied by Islamic militants, among them children and several hundred women. One of them was an 18-year-old girl - the eldest of seven children from a village in the Punjab. She spoke to a reporter from BBC Urdu at her village this week.

Below are selected quotes from the interview.

On the thoughts of her family: I was not in contact with my family. The last time I contacted them, I told them that the army would not start an operation. They asked me to come back but I said I would never come back as I wished to be martyred. My brother said that he would force me to return, but I told him that he could be beaten up if he came near the madrassa.

(She refused to leave the mosque but about 430 women and children left the mosque on July 4, after troops lay siege to the complex.)

A girl who came with us was taken home forcibly. She was crying and told the teacher that she didn't want to go back. The teacher asked her to go back with her parents. We felt sorry for her as we came here with the passion of jihad and to preach Islam and now, because there was a problem, the girls had gone back. We did not appreciate the parents' behaviour. The teacher said that no one was being stopped from going home and she asked parents to go and find their children to take them home. Very few girls left because they were afraid - those who left were either minors or they forced to leave by their parents.

As the assault by the Pakistani troops intensified:



Source: INTERNET

We were shocked that they cut off the electricity and also cut off the water and gas supply. What could we do? We were only praying to God to show them the right path. They were throwing teargas shells in large

amounts. We were continually cleaning our eyes with salty water. Glass windows were breaking, doors were breaking. We couldn't sleep, sometimes one would sleep for an hour, or half an hour, the others would stay awake. That way we managed. On July 10, the last day of the battle: We wanted to carry out suicide attacks. We asked the teacher to provide us with arms necessary for suicide attacks.

She said that we didn't have sufficient explosives. Yes, we had a passion and we were willing to go to all lengths. We had been told by our teacher that they had put explosives in the building and that we shouldn't die in this manner, but come outside to face the bullets or even surrender. It was better to come out rather than die under the debris. The final assault by the troops on the mosque: We came outside with our hands raised and saw that the doors were closed and they were on the roof. There was no way to leave. We told them that we had surrendered and they should not shoot at us. A policeman showed us the way out and finally, we were taken outside. They took us to another room and gave us food. We were crying a lot because the Qurans were burning inside Lal Masjid, which was on fire. We pleaded to them to let us take the Qurans. We were sad to see Qurans being burnt in front of our eyes. At sunset we were told that we were going to be sent home, and at night, we left the area.

On returning home to her village: After meeting my father, I was overcome by grief as I had gone hoping to be martyred, but came back alive. Now they've attacked the mosque and Jamia Hafsa. I wish the whole country has Lal mosques. I will work for jihad, and open a madrassa and train people for jihad.

— *DAILY TIMES* 20/07/2007

2,520 female students were enrolled in Jamia Hafsa

By Irfan Ghauri

ISLAMABAD: There were 2,520 students enrolled in Jamia Hafsa, according to data collected by the Ministry of Education during the National Education Census in 2006.

The data, which was recently provided to the Ministry of the Interior, also contained the break-up of students enrolled in different grades of the madrassa.

Sources in the Interior Ministry told Daily Times that 205 female teachers taught the 2,520 students of the madrassa. These statistics, provided in the middle of 2006, appear to negate the clerics' claims that there were over 4,000 female students in the madrassa.

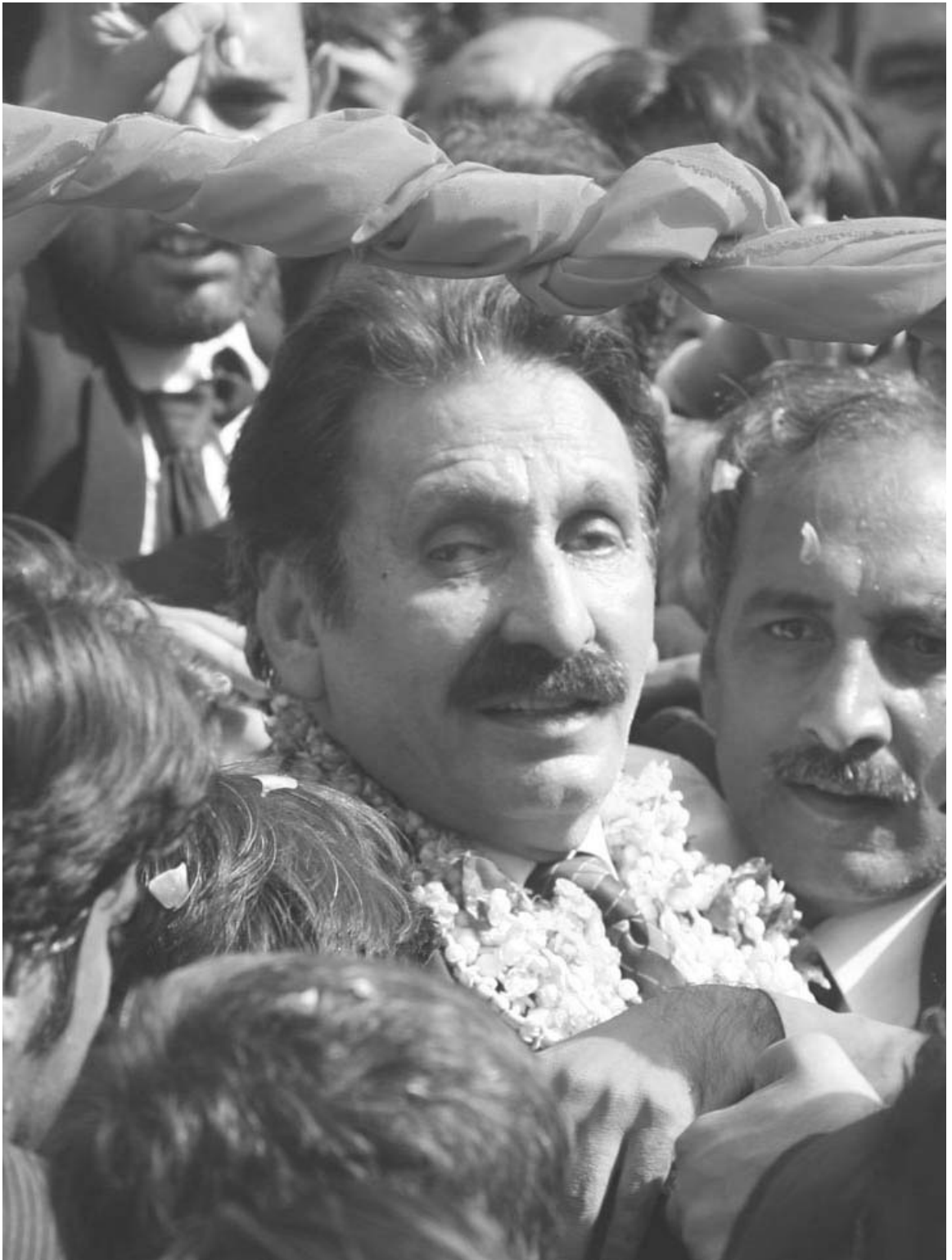
According to the census, there were no male teachers or students in Jamia Hafsa.

The grade-wise break-up of the students shows there were 139 students in Hifz, 421 in Aalmia, 420 in Allaia, 136 in Ibtidiya, 324 in Matwasat, 579 in Aama, 441 in Khasa and 60 in Takhsees.

The Education Ministry also gave the Interior Ministry a list of 826 madrassas that had refused to provide the relevant data. It states that the majority of them, 275, were in the NWFP, 159 were in Punjab, 119 were in Sindh, 99 were in Balochistan, 15 were in the Islamabad Capital Territory, 43 were in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), 39 were in Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA) and 77 were in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

According to official statistics, there were 12,979 madrassas in the country during 2006, including 5,459 in Punjab, 1,935 in Sindh, 2,843 in NWFP, 769 in Balochistan, 135 in FATA, 1,193 in FANA and 568 in AJK. Over 1.6 million students are enrolled in these madrassas and they employ 58,391 teachers, statistics add. — *DAILY TIMES* 23/07/2007

The lawyers' movement



Source: ARIF ALI

A year of agitation

By Asad Jamal

Lawyers made headlines for most of 2007. Since the removal of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry on March 9, 2007 the 'lawyers' movement' can justifiably be said to be the best sustained, longest agitation by any one group in the history of Pakistan. This phenomenon has caught the attention of many, not just in Pakistan but across the globe.

The lawyers' movement started not as a well-organised affair but as a spontaneous reaction to executive arbitrariness and to yet another attempt to keep the judiciary pliant. While the outcome of the movement has remained uncertain, its aims have been clear, and its tactics, according to some observers, close to being revolutionary. Successes such as the restoration of the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP), after his forced sacking by a military ruler, and the mobilisation of civil society against an oppressive state can rightfully be attributed to lawyers' agitation.

It remains an enigma how a professional group as diverse as the lawyers, often divided along parochial *biradari* (clan), class and political lines and often considered to be an agent of the status quo, could pose the biggest challenge to a military regime in place since 1999. A recounting of important events in 2007 can help make sense of what has happened.

Before March 9

When Pervez Musharraf, then Chief of Army Staff and President of Pakistan, filed a reference for alleged misconduct on March 9 against CJP Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, it could not be imagined that lawyers would react in this manner. Just two days before March 9, one heard a senior Supreme Court advocate saying that as things stood it was only a matter of days that the CJP would be forced to resign by Gen Musharraf. Her words did not betray concern for the chief justice; rather they were spoken with a sense of frustration and disappointment over the attitude of the Pakistani state and the way the courts had become pawns in power games played by the establishment. There was also a sense of resignation that the CJP would submit to the mighty rulers. The judiciary has long been seen as a conservative institution and a tool in the hands of the 'establishment', a word used for unrepresentative but powerful elements within the state.

But the Supreme Court under Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry showed a certain degree of defiance

The Supreme Court under Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry showed a certain degree of defiance against the government in some of the cases it decided or took up.

against the government in some of the cases it decided or took up. These included the high profile case of the privatisation of the state-owned Pakistan Steel Mills, the missing persons' case, and some lesser known suo moto notices of human rights violations. There are no two opinions that the cases, which became big news, were a source of huge embarrassment and annoyance for the government. Despite creating ripples, these cases failed to change the public impression that the judiciary was not independent - among lawyers as well as the general public. Senior lawyers and human rights defenders were seen

accusing the apex court of dragging its feet in cases of serious human rights violations.

A couple of weeks before March 9, an open letter written to the chief justice by lawyer Naeem Bokhari was in circulation that contained charges of his alleged misconduct inside and outside the courtroom, and went on to warn of a "rebellion" if he (CJP) did not change his behaviour. The letter also made strong references to the chief justice's alleged attempts to get his doctor son inducted in the police service. The letter became a topic of discussion in bar rooms across the country. It was generally believed by the lawyers that the letter was a feeler sent out by the government.

March 9 and after

It is difficult to explain how the events of March 9, unfolding in this context, backfired against the establishment. In the past similar events involving the ouster of chief justices and introduction of Provisional Constitution Orders (PCO) had passed without much fuss. Perhaps the projection of March 9 in the media determined the subsequent direction of events, or perhaps the best explanation is a general fatigue and disenchantment with the unrepresentative rule of the army, which despite having shown some good figures on the accounting books failed miserably to distribute these dividends across the social strata. Though the lawyers' movement was not confined to the most deprived sections of the population, many of the lawyers who came out in the streets were from the lowest income bracket.

The news that the chief justice had refused to surrender to the president's demand, while sitting in Army House, won him many supporters. Government officials who circulated images of the chief justice sitting before the army chief in Army House must have later cursed themselves. This image of the humiliation of an institution sparked voluntary protests among lawyers.

What happened between March 9 and the CJP's first in-camera appearance before the Supreme Judicial Council on March 13 further fuelled opposition. Lawyers across the country took the swearing in of Justice Javed Iqbal as Acting Chief Justice of Pakistan on March 9 and the convening of Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) on the same day in unholy haste as a sign of mala fide intentions. The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), led by its President Muneer A Malik, and the Pakistan Bar Council as well as all the provincial bar councils announced a boycott of court proceedings and protests for March 12, 2007. Law enforcement agencies resorted to the worst kind of baton-charging as the lawyers took to the streets. This too got instant projection in the electronic media. Henceforth, boycott of courts became a regular feature every Thursday and was sustained throughout the year (barring a short interval between July 20 and November 3, 2007).

The battle in the courtroom unfolded in an uncertain and dramatic manner. Proceedings before the SJC were stayed after the chief justice filed several petitions before the Supreme Court challenging the mode and legality of the reference proceedings. While forceful arguments made by CJP's lawyer, Aitzaz Ahsan, were being heard by the Bench, the voices of thousands of lawyers reverberated outside the Supreme Court and in every town of the country.

From the 'lawyers' movement' to the movement led by lawyers

Lawyers were soon joined by other components of civil society. First they appeared to be miniscule but the numbers increased as Aitzaz Ahsan, the lead lawyer and chief strategist of the chief justice, took him to address local bar associations. Gradually, students, members of non-government organisations and a significant number of political workers of various political parties also joined the lawyers wherever the CJP went. Soon, this came to be seen as a movement against military rule as much as for the reinstatement of the chief justice.

The chief justice was welcomed by people in huge numbers wherever he travelled to address bar associations from Sukkur to Peshawar to Faisalabad to Lahore and several other towns. The 25 hours it took the chief justice to travel from Islamabad to Lahore High Court became an index of his popularity.

The heat in the street was also felt inside the courtroom. Finally, the CJP's fellow judges decided to defy the executive. The big news came on July 20 in the form of a decision whereby the proceedings initiated against the chief justice were quashed by the 13-member bench of the Supreme Court. The chief justice and the lawyers stood vindicated!

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The second phase

But the lawyers did not stop at that. The chief justice's restoration gave them new hope. Independence of judiciary and rule of law could not be achieved with an army chief holding the position of president of the country. What they had achieved on July 20, 2007 with the restoration of the chief justice was described by the lawyers themselves as the completion of the 'first phase'. The 'second phase' started with the initiation of the process of election to the office of the president in September 2007, when the lawyers decided to challenge the candidature of General Pervez Musharraf.

The second phase proved to be tougher and demanded much more sacrifice. On November 3, 2007 Gen Musharraf, fearing an adverse judgment from the apex court hearing various petitions challenging his candidature, imposed martial law in the garb of unconstitutional emergency by abrogating the constitution and suspending fundamental rights through a Provisional Constitution Order (PCO). Never before had the judiciary figured in a martial law proclamation. Nine out of the thirteen grounds cited the transgression of limits by the judicial organ as the reason for taking the extra-constitutional steps. If earlier martial laws were aimed at removing elected political dispensations from the scene, this one was clearly aimed at the judiciary.

Leaders of the Bar including Aitzaz Ahsan, Muneer A Malik, Ali Ahmed Kurd, Tariq Mehmood were arrested immediately after the imposition of emergency and sent to jails. Senior Supreme Court Advocate Asma Jehangir was put under house arrest. In the week starting on November 5, thousands of human rights defenders including lawyers, teachers, students and political workers were beaten and arrested from court premises, their offices or even their residences, on charges as serious as terrorism and sedition. They were kept in jails for several weeks. In Lahore alone some 1000 lawyers and other protesters were arrested on November 4 and 5. They also included valiant women activists of the bar and several civil society organisations. Independent television channels, which played an important role in spreading the news instantly, were shut down.

Judges of the superior courts were asked to take oath anew under the PCO. Judges seen to be unfriendly towards the regime were not offered the opportunity to take oath. Even among the ones offered oath, many refused. In the Supreme Court alone 14 out of 19 judges did not take oath. The defiance was unprecedented.

The working of the courts came to a grinding halt and absolutely no court work took place for two weeks at a stretch throughout Pakistan, perhaps an unparalleled occurrence. Most importantly, judges of the superior courts were detained and stopped from working. Several including the chief justice and his family, were kept under house arrest. The aim of getting rid of Gen Musharraf was replaced with the demand for restoration of judiciary and constitution as of November 2, which necessarily meant the departure of the General.

Several unconstitutional changes were introduced to the constitution, which the PCO had allowed to be operational only so far as necessary for the working of the state. The changes gave immunity to the General's acts since November 3.

Soon the international pressure and domestic compulsions forced the General to relent; he had to lift the emergency and doff his uniform.

Failures and successes

As we enter the second year of the movement, several political developments have taken place: general elections were held on February 18 with the people giving a heavy mandate against the political elements backed by Gen (ret'd) Musharraf. A new coalition government of PML(N) and PPP is in place.

The top leaders of the bar have been released. The proposed coalition had announced the restoration of deposed judges within thirty days of government formation, a deadline that was later extended. Lawyers remain in a mood of agitation and have decided to allow some space and time to the elected leadership to strengthen Parliament, simultaneously warning of strong reaction in case of any resistance to the restoration of judiciary.

What seemed to be an almost impossible task after the imposition of emergency on November 3, now seems achievable. It is now quite possible that the 'deposed' judges of the superior courts may go back to their duties in a few weeks' time. But the lawyers' agitation has achieved things other than the restoration of judges and strengthening of the judiciary's hands, though it has also failed on some counts.

While the judges are yet to be restored, it may be argued that the most important achievement of this movement has been the mobilisation of some segments of civil society for a politico-legal aim to which, initially, the majority of the population could not easily relate. It is not easy to convince people of the message of rule of law and constitution, especially in view of Pakistan's history and social circumstances. The large urban crowds that came out to receive the chief justice in the first phase can justifiably be considered a success in this context. The rural population, however, remained untouched in great part, as they were never approached or perhaps could not be approached due to the inherent urban bias of the movement.

What is more intriguing is the participation in the protests of a noticeable number of people classed as 'liberals', including students of elite institutions and representatives of NGOs. Many of these usually upper-middle-class members of the urban population have in the past supported the Musharraf regime. On the other hand, the movement failed to attract the working classes, including trade unions.

Another failure of the movement has been its non-engagement with mainstream popular political forces. While there were individual contributions from some politicians, as a class they were not perceived to be part of the movement. Political parties, in 2007, remained on the sidelines. The lawyers, in a somewhat undemocratic and non-political manner, decided to support the boycott call given by those political forces which had little or no stake in the growth of parliamentary democracy in the present conditions. As a result, they grew apart from the most popular political parties of the country.

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However, it was for the first time that the armed forces became the target of street slogans and were so openly criticised. The most important achievements of this movement have been to force the army to retreat, even if temporarily, from the political front and to contribute towards making some space for democratic forces. To take the movement further political parties must now get their act together and civil society, including lawyers, must support the political process.

National Judicial Conference: Make courts administratively, financially independent: CJ

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry on Sunday presented a six-point declaration at the concluding session of the National Judicial Conference, calling for administrative and financial independence of courts, merit-based appointments of judges and a protective work environment.

The declaration is based on the recommendations of participants of the conference, which they presented after daylong deliberations on Saturday.

Outlining the recommendations on judicial independence, the CJ said that an independent judiciary was an essential ingredient of democracy. The maintenance of law and order depends on the interpretation of the Constitution and legislative instruments by the superior courts and, therefore, it is of utmost importance that the judiciary is independent and no restraints are placed on its performance and operation, he said.

Professional standards should be followed for

appointment of judges as prescribed in the Constitution, Chaudhry said. Judges should be prohibited from earning an income through commerce to maintain the highest standards of decorum.

The judiciary should not be left to the mercy of the executive for its administrative and financial needs and steps should be taken to make it financially independent, he added.

Deliberating on the recommendations, the chief justice said that to protect judicial independence, a judge should have a complete sense of protection. He should not be sacked for delivering decisions disliked by the executive. The terms of office of judges should be fixed in a way that they can give their honest opinion in cases in which any other branch of the state is a party.

Addressing public interest litigation, the chief justice said that urgent steps were needed to start a mass awareness campaign, particularly through media, conferences and seminars. The bench and the bar should demonstrate greater understanding and cooperation for taking up public interest litigation. The scope of the ombudsman's work must be extended, he added.

The chief justice said that Section 89-A of the Civil Procedure Code (CPC) should be amended to the effect that alternative dispute resolution is made binding on litigant parties. "The judiciary may embark on setting up a specialised system at all

levels to provide a list of available mediators, consultants and experts to provide the ADR services," he added.

On the quality of judgments, Chaudhry said that judges' skill and knowledge should be enhanced so they can produce well-written and succinct judgments. Research facilities and law libraries, including electronic databases, should be provided to the judges.

Chief Justice Chaudhry said that procedural law should be strictly followed, particularly the laid down timeframes. Frivolous litigation should be discouraged through all available means, including imposition of costs. Adequate court infrastructure and human resources should be made available to the judiciary to reduce the delay in administration of justice.

He said that recommendations given by the participants of the conference would be converted into an actionable National Delay Reduction Programme through the National Judicial Policy Making Committee.

On the standard of legal education, the CJP said the syllabus and curriculum needed overhauling to help aspiring lawyers in their role as problem solvers, arbitrators, counsellors, negotiators and administrators. The syllabi should also include subjects such as human rights, gender issues, ADR, WTO and globalisation. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) should build public law universities.

Earlier, Supreme Court justices Rana Bhagwandas, Abdul Hameed Dogar, Muhammad Nawaz Abbasi, Faqeer Muhammad Khokhar, Shakirullah Jan and Javed Buttar presented their recommendation reports.

Other judges of the Supreme Court, the chief justice of the Federal Shariat Court, the chief justices of the Sindh, Peshawar and Balochistan high courts, and office-bearers and members of the Supreme Court Bar Association attended the conference.

— DAILY TIMES 12/2/2007

CJ suspended, escorted home

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD, March 9: In a highly dramatic move that has the potential to change the course of

judicial activism in the country, President General Pervez Musharraf on Friday virtually suspended the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Iftikhar Mo h a m m a d Chaudhry, and appointed the



available senior-most judge, Justice Javed Iqbal, as the acting Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

The move to make Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry 'non-functional' was immediately followed by yet another decision by the president to send a reference under Article 209 of the Constitution to the Supreme Judicial Council to investigate allegations of misconduct against him.

Notwithstanding the intense debate that soon started within the legal fraternity on the question of the president's authority to make the Supreme Court chief justice 'non-functional', it was being said that if the newly constituted judicial council found him guilty of the charges, he would be removed from office.

Although the country's judicial history has been a chequered one all along, and judges have been removed by various methods, this is the first time that the chief justice of Pakistan has been made, in the words of the official handout, 'non-functional' and his case has been sent to the Supreme Judicial Council for action.

The president's orders came in the afternoon, and



within minutes took the country by storm. Many in the legal fraternity were shocked by the way the country's top adjudicator had been treated. Among them was the President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, Munir A. Malik, who described it as a 'blatant attack on the independence of the judiciary', and former chief justice Saeeduzzaman Siddiqui.

Still, a few thought it was bound to happen as, according to them, the chief justice's style of judicial activism, and his personal conduct on some issues, was a bit too unsettling for the government. The most vocal defender of the move was the minister of state for information, who said the president had no choice but to take action after serious allegations of misconduct and misuse of authority had been levelled against the chief justice.

But as the debate continued to rage, with private televisions having a field day in covering the story, most legal and constitutional experts were of the view that the move was likely to create a new crisis rather than resolving it.

As speculations started to grip bar rooms and political circles about the fate of the judiciary, and the impact of the move on other key issues, the acting chief justice was sworn in by a brother judge, Justice Abdul Hameed Dogar, in an 'uncharacteristically simple ceremony'. The traditional fanfare that has been the highlight of such ceremonies was missing and instead of the main hall of the Supreme Court, a small room on the third floor of the judges' block was chosen for the occasion.

The media persons and the accompanying cameras clearly outnumbered the officers of the court at the ceremony as most of the brother judges (as they

are mostly referred to by their colleagues) were conspicuous by their absence. So was the Attorney General Makhdoom Ali Khan, even though he was seen in precincts of the court house, and also the veteran lawyer and Prime Minister's adviser, Sharifuddin Pirzada.

Along with a handful of lawyers, Justice Muhammad Nawaz Abbasi witnessed the ceremony as Justice Hameed Dogar administered oath from the acting chief justice. Later on it was explained to the media that the senior-most judge after chief justice was Justice Bhagwandas, but since he was away from the country, so Justice Javed Iqbal being the second in line was made the acting head of the apex court.

Lawyers and other staff at the Supreme Court said the day started with the usual routine, with even the Chief Justice, Iftikhar Chaudhry handing cases in the courtroom. However, events started to take a dramatic turn around noon when the country's chief adjudicator was summoned to the President's Camp Office, located in the annexe of the army chief's official residence in Rawalpindi. There in the presence of

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, President Musharraf informed him of the allegations that had been taking rounds in the country, particularly his



alleged misconduct in handling matters within and outside the court. According to an official handout, when confronted, the chief justice had no answer.

The President also informed the chief justice that he was being made "non-functional", an acting chief justice was being appointed, and a reference against him was being sent to the Supreme Judicial Council, comprising senior judges of the Supreme Court and the chief justices of the four provinces.

Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry's reaction was not known as since his "suspension" or being made "non-functional" he had remained incommunicado. After

his meeting with President Musharraf, he remained inside the President camp office for a few hours, and was later prevented from going to the Supreme Court by the security officials. Informed sources told Dawn that when late in the afternoon Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry was returning from the President's camp office he tried to go to the apex court, but a strong police posse chased his car which was blocked near Serena hotel. In the meantime senior superintendent of police Tariq Yasin rushed to the spot, and escorted the chief justice to his official residence. The security outside his residence had already been increased, and it was not possible to even contact him on telephone.

By this time security had also been stepped up outside the Supreme Court building where only lawyers and journalists were being allowed after proving their identity. As the oath taking ceremony ended, a beaming acting chief justice hugged his brother judge, Justice Dogar who had administered the oath, and started to walk towards his chamber. He was repeatedly asked for comments by a battery of reporters, but understandably he constantly parried the questions. "It's premature to say anything right now," he observed on being asked about the likely outcome of the reference sent against the chief justice.

Soon after the oath taking ceremony, the Supreme Judicial Council went into a session and decided to call Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry on March 13 to answer the allegations of misconduct levelled against him. Presided over by Acting Chief Justice Javed Iqbal, the SJC also ordered the chief justice not to perform functions as judge of the Supreme Court or as the chief justice till the reference was decided by the council.

The SJC meeting was also attended by apex court judges namely Justice Abdul Hameed Dogar and Justice Sardar Muhammad Raza Khan, Chief Justice of Lahore High Court Iftikhar Hussain Chaudhry and Chief Justice Sindh High Court Sabihuddin Ahmad, who had flown into Islamabad earlier in the day.

Although the events during the day had moved at a fast pace, the action against the chief justice was not entirely unexpected. Stories about favours given to his

son had already been taking rounds, and his desire to remain in the news through his court decision was becoming a source of annoyance for some in the government. But it was most his judicial activism, which on the one hand had made him popular in the eyes of ordinary people seeking justice but on the other had also irked a few in the establishment. Some of his decisions had started to appear like an open challenge to the government, and in recent weeks cases of missing persons had been a cause of embarrassment for a few in high places.

But members of the legal fraternity point out that the turning point came with the appearance of a so-called "open letter" by a lawyer-cum-television personality, Naeem Bokhari in which Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry was accused of a series of doing favours and violating judicial norms and practices. He was accused by Mr Bokhari of running a "slaughter house" in the name of courtroom, and warned of a "rebellion" if he did not change his style and behaviour.

Since then it was widely believed in the legal and political circles that there was more to the "open letter" than a simple attempt by an officer of the court to challenge the highest adjudicator of the country. Whether the president's action was a direct result of this letter is not clear, but the minister of state for information, Tariq Azeem, while taking part in a discussion on a local television, said after the serious allegations levelled by Mr Naeem Bokhari it was not possible for the President to sit idle and not take any action. — *DAWN 10/03/2007*

Landmark judgments of Justice Iftikhar

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD, March 9: Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, who was suspended on Friday, has several important judgments to his credit, the most significant being the case in which he overturned the privatisation of the Pakistan Steel Mills and

another in which he forced the government to locate 'missing' persons.

During his 21-month tenure as chief justice, Justice Chaudhry initiated suo motu action even on a simple application filed by any aggrieved person. Despite his popularity among ordinary people, such moves were regarded by some members of the legal fraternity as being against the norms of the apex court.

There were so many suo motu actions against government officials, especially the police, that the chief justice had to set up a fully-fledged human rights cell in the apex court.

Contrary to public perception that victims of rape or other injustices were unlikely to get justice from lower courts, Justice Chaudhry opened the gates of the Supreme Court, bringing some relief to the needy.

In the privatisation of Pakistan Steel Mills, which is his most famous case, the chief justice's detailed judgment of Aug 8, 2006, had put the government under severe pressure by accusing it of holding the mills' privatisation in 'indecent haste'.

In his judgment, the chief justice held that the entire transaction was the "outcome of a process reflecting serious violation of law and gross irregularities" in which various aspects of profitability and assets of the state-owned enterprise were totally ignored.

Likewise, on Feb 20, 2007, the Supreme Court upheld most parts of the Hasba Bill, re-legislated by the NWFP Assembly, though it asked for minor modification to clauses related to the definitions of the Mohtasib and religious scholars.

On June 27, 2006, the chief justice decided a case about Section 2A of the Services Tribunal Act 1973 and ruled that employees in most government corporations not governed by the statutory rules were not civil servants.

The most important and sensitive case to-date,

which the chief justice had heard just a day before his removal related to 'forced disappearances' and he had expressed strong disappointment over the government's failure to locate the whereabouts of the disappeared people because of their suspected links with Al Qaeda or other jihadi outfits.

On Jan 22, 2007, the chief justice, while leading a bench, had turned down the Punjab government's request to approve its decision to briefly lift the ban on kite-flying during the spring festival and asked the provincial government to celebrate 'Basant' at their own risk. The apex court had taken suo motu notice on the reported deaths of children because of kite-flying.

Another important matter, which had deep political implications, was the case filed against educational degrees of Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal's (MMA) members in parliament. They had been challenged on the grounds that the degrees issued by religious seminaries were not equivalent to graduate degrees.

On Jan 18, 2007, the chief justice had settled the custody dispute of UK-born Muslim girl Misbah Irum Rana through a compromise reached between her divorced parents.

On Jan 22, the chief justice had directed the Balochistan government to submit a detailed report about illegal allotments of 241,600 acres of land to ministers, politicians and other bureaucrats in Gwadar. The order was passed on a petition filed by Bibi Zahra against the the Balochistan government's Board of Revenue.

The chief justice had also taken strict action against violators of the Supreme Court's ban on meals in weddings, forcing the government to adopt a private member's bill, allowing one-dish during marriages.

Due to the apex court's intervention, the government also had to take action against fake drugs and the use of tobacco in public places.

— *DAWN* 10/03/07

People reject suspension

By Irfan Ghauri and Shahzad Malik

ISLAMABAD: An overwhelming majority of public on Saturday showed their resentment towards the filing of a reference against Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, saying that the action was based on "mala fide" intentions.

According to the results of a survey conducted by Daily Times in the city, majority of the people also wanted accountability of top government leaders, cabinet members and military officials. People contacted in the survey included businessmen, students, vendors, teachers, policemen and housewives and among them, only a small group supported the action, while others said that they were unaware of the action.

Safdar Mir, a businessman, said, "A general has no authority to summon a chief justice and to keep him in custody for six hours. There is no such precedent anywhere in the civilised world." Referring to the charges against Justice Chaudhry, he said that they were "baseless". "Who is not using protocol? Even a senior superintendent of police (SSP) keeps several official vehicles for his personnel use. I can show you six official cars that are in the use of a secretary-level bureaucrat."

Imran Malik, a banker, said, "Why does our prime minister, who recommended action against Justice Chaudhry, not take any action against his cabinet members for their involvement in corruption?" He said that the move was meant for postponing the elections. "Many important cases are pending with the apex court and bold decisions were expected in the coming few weeks. How could a general tolerate stern action against secret agencies in the expected SC verdict on missing persons' case?" he asked.

Malik appreciated the Supreme Court's decision in the steel mills privatisation case, the ban on kite flying and summoning police and bureaucracy in suo moto actions taken by the chief justice. He said that the people held Justice Chaudhry in high esteem due to

his public interest verdicts. Shaukat Abbasi, a restaurant worker, said that the real issues facing the people were price-hikes and lawlessness and not the action against Justice Chaudhry.

His fellow waiter, Saleem said, "Most people here in our restaurant say it was a wrong decision. Judiciary should be independent. I earlier read in a newspaper that the chief justice had fined the NWFP government for not granting admission to the son of a watchman who deserved it on merit."

Ali Imran, a salesman, said, "Who has given a general the authority to sack a chief justice? He summoned the chief justice and held him under house arrest. He was not allowed to hire a lawyer?"

Mohsin Bashir, a chemist, said: "If he (Justice Chaudhry) was not corrupt, he should return. I am not sure if the allegations were right or not, but if he was honest it (his suspension) is unjustified."

Samiullah, a vender, said that he was unaware of the issue and was only concerned about earning his living. Nasir Ahmed, a taxi driver, said that he did not know anything about the chief justice or his personal conduct, so it will be unfair for him to give any statement. However, he supported the military government saying, "At least the military governments survive for a few years as opposed to civilian governments".

Muhammad Raza Khan, a photocopier operator, said that the news had "shocked" him, as Justice Chaudhry's decisions were in "public interest" and he was popular.

Bushra Hameed and Noshaba, two business administration students, said that the chief justice should have been given a "fair chance" to explain his position.

Atif Rasheed, another student, said, "If the action was according to the constitution, it is right, otherwise not. But first of all, charges against the chief justice should have been proved before suspending him."

Muhammad Usman, a university student, said,

"Are the president and the prime minister not misusing their authority? At least 30 Islamabad police's cars are used for their protocol?" Some other students: Asad Abbass, Adnan, Shazia, Fawad, Umbrene, Sana and Fatima, also expressed similar views.

Mumtaz Begum, Mehwish Saeed, Samina Khalid, Wafa Sadiq, who are housewives, opposed the move and said that their sympathies were with Justice Chaudhry.

Qazi Younas, the member of a reconciliatory committee, said that he supported the government's decision, stating the president had the authority to carry out any such action. — *DAILY TIMES 11/03/2007*

Aitzaz to submit 4 pleas to SJC today

By Ejaz Haider

LAHORE: Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan, the counsel for the suspended Chief Justice of Pakistan, Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, will move four applications before the Supreme Judicial Council today (Friday), beginning with requesting the SJC to adjourn the proceedings until he can meet with his client freely.

"On March 13 a large police contingent prevented me from meeting with the chief justice. I informed the



Source: DAILY TIMES



Source: DAWN

law and information ministers but to no avail. I am going to move an application asking for adjournment until the Council can ensure that I can meet with the CJ without any obstruction," Mr Ahsan told Daily Times.

The second application deals with requesting the SJC to adopt a fair procedure according to its own precedent. In this, Mr Ahsan shall refer to the 1971 reference against Justices Sh. Shaukat Ali and Fazle Ghani, the latter the father of current Attorney-General of Pakistan, Makhdoom Ali Khan. While Justice Ghani resigned and was not proceeded against, Justice Ali chose to contest and was tried by the SJC with then-CJP Hamoodur Rehman in the chair.

The case culminated in the Council's advice to the president against Justice Ali after a 10-month-long trial. "We want a fair trial according to that precedent. Those proceedings were also in camera but expressly with the consent of the respondent judge," said Mr Ahsan.

The third application deals with the removal of the SJC's gag order. The order was not passed in the presence of the respondent and his counsel but was made available to the government which divulged it to the media. "No order can now be passed except in the presence of the respondent or his counsel," Mr Ahsan said.

Mr Ahsan also intends to challenge the reference on the grounds that there are 23 other references pending decisions before the SJC. "Why has this

reference been picked up out of turn when there are preceding references against two current members of the Council?" asked Mr Ahsan.

This approach leads to questioning the SJC's composition, the intention behind suspending the CJP in the manner that it was done, and filing the reference before the Council. The suspended CJP has already rejected the locus standi of the current SJC, and has asked for an open trial, which would require the government to go public on the reference.

This is where the rub lies. Insiders say the reference, barring some details, contains nothing beyond the now-infamous "Bokhari Letter". The most "serious" charge that the suspended CJP had changed a decision made in the open court in the written order is reportedly not corroborated by the two counsels in that case - Khalid Anwer and Fakhruddin G Ebrahim.

"Even if we accept that the allegation is true, there were five judges on the bench in that case. Why try only the CJP. No judge is subordinate to the chief justice in performing the legal function. Any one could have objected to what the CJP is alleged to have done," says a jurist.

Sources term as "laughable" the other "serious" charge about using the aeroplane. "Two chief justices of the High Courts [Lahore and Sindh] were flown in on a special plane after the CJP was suspended so they could be on the Council. Should they also be tried," asks another source. — *DAILY TIMES 11/03/2007*

Iftikhar refuses to step down

By Mohammad Kamran

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry declined to resign on Saturday - a day after he was suspended for "misuse of authority" - and showed intent to challenge a presidential reference against him.

"I will never resign voluntarily ... I have done

nothing wrong," Chaudhry told Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Munir A Malik, who called the chief justice over the telephone in front of reporters.

Malik assured the chief justice of lawyers' moral and legal support, and advised him not to give in to pressure.



Malik asked Chaudhry for permission to switch on his cell phone's loudspeaker, so that the media could listen to their conversation, but the chief justice refused, saying, "Just deliver my message to the media".

Malik claimed that the chief justice was not free to move, and the government was pressing Chaudhry to resign. Later, media and bar representatives waited for two hours in front of Chaudhry's house, but were not allowed to meet him.

Agencies add: Also on Saturday, Chaudhry's nephew Amir Rana said Musharraf had asked his uncle to resign. Rana said the judge was being "victimised" by the president for political reasons. "The chief justice of Pakistan has been disgraced. He is being pressured to resign, and his movement has been restricted," said Rana.

Rana said when Chaudhry was summoned to the Army House on Friday, Musharraf talked to him for almost four hours to reach a "compromise".

He said Musharraf asked the chief justice not to make anti-government statements while hearing the case of missing citizens. Musharraf also asked the chief justice to let him run government affairs smoothly, Rana added. Rana said that Chaudhry refused to strike a "deal", and this led to his suspension.

Government public affairs officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

— *DAILY TIMES 11/03/2007*

Lawyers rally against suspension

RAWALPINDI: Lawyers from the Rawalpindi District Bar Association boycotted court proceedings on Saturday in protest at the suspension of Chief Justice Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry. They marched from the district courts to Kutchery Chowk, chanting slogans in favour of the CJP and demanding the withdrawal of charges against him. The protesters said the move to suspend Chaudhry showed that the independence of judiciary had been attacked. RDBA President Raja Khalid said that the objective of "this protest is to tell the international community that the judiciary in Pakistan has not been librated". Meanwhile, members of the Islamabad District Bar Association (IDBA) attended courts on Saturday. Advocate Syed Muhammad Tayyab, the IDBA general secretary, said that in light of the PBC decision, the lawyers' community of the federal capital would not appear in the courts on Monday and Tuesday to lodge their protest. staff report

Hundreds march in Quetta

QUETTA: Hundreds of lawyers demonstrated in Quetta on Saturday against the sudden suspension of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry. The lawyers marched from Court Road to the Balochistan Assembly, chanting slogans against the presidential move and expressing solidarity with Chaudhry. Prominent lawyers, including Raja Rab Nawaz, Hadi Shakil, Sakhi Sultan, Rauf Ata and Qahir Shah, led the procession. They demanded that the chief justice be reinstated immediately. They alleged that the presidential move against the chief justice was aimed to pressure the judiciary. "It is a direct attack on the freedom of judiciary. In a state where the judiciary comes under such blatant assaults, democracy is unlikely to flourish," said

Hadi Shakil, a member of the Balochistan Bar Council. staff report

KBA, HCA, SBC to go on strike

KARACHI: A resolution was passed in favour of a strike on March 12 and 13, during a general body meeting of the High Court Bar Association (HCA), Karachi Bar Council (KBC) and Sindh Bar Council (SBC) Saturday.

No proceedings took place in the court Saturday and all courts are expected to remain closed Monday and Tuesday. Lawyers have also organised a protest march from MA Jinnah Road to the high court and the Karachi Press Club on Monday.

The authorities believed that this act was unconstitutional and the suspension order by the president was in violation of Article 209 of the Constitution of Pakistan. They held the view that the president cannot appoint an acting chief justice while the chief justice still in office.

NWFP lawyers boycott courts

PESHAWAR: Lawyers NWFP strongly reacted on Saturday to the suspension of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, and boycotted court proceedings, saying, "A military dictator has now targeted the country's judiciary after attacking the Constitution". In a resolution, the PHCBA and NWFP Bar Council said that the presidential move against the chief justice was "illegal", and demanded that the SJC adopt "legal procedures" while conducting the hearing of a presidential reference against Chaudhry.

Lawyers praised Chaudhry for refusing to resign and deciding to defend himself. The resolution, tabled by PHCBA President SM Attique Shah, said the manner in which the chief justice had been suspended was a "clear violation" of Article 209 of the constitution. staff report — *DAILY TIMES 11/03/2007*

3 SJC members face different charges

By Ansar Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Three members of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), which is all set to try Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry following a presidential reference, themselves find the sword of Damocles hanging over their heads.

Reliable sources told The News that some government authorities in knowledge of these facts are reviewing the situation to see if the judges facing allegations themselves could sit in the SJC.

These sources said that two of the three judges are already faced with references pending before the SJC. A third judge is said to have had his two daughters admitted to a medical college on the basis of special seats offered by a chief minister. A son-in-law of the same judge was also appointed deputy secretary in the provincial secretariat of the same province on deputation.

The pending references against the two judges, who along with three other members of the Supreme Judicial Council will decide the fate of the recently rendered "inactive" Chief Justice of Pakistan, pertains to alleged corruption and embezzlement. One of these two judges is facing allegations of involvement in a land corruption case while the other is accused of being involved in financial embezzlement.

The SJC that has summoned the Chief Justice of Pakistan on March 13 comprises acting Chief Justice Justice Javed Iqbal, who is the chairman of the SJC, the two most senior judges of the Supreme Court and two most senior chief justices of the high courts.

The two most senior SC judges, who will sit in the SJC, are Justice Abdul Hamid Dogar and Justice Sardar Muhammad Raza Khan. The two provincial

chief justices, who by virtue of their seniority would sit in the council, are Lahore High Court Chief Justice Chaudhry Iftikhar Hussain and Justice Sabihuddin Ahmed of the Sindh High Court.

Apart from what is under review about the "pending cases" of the judges who will sit in the SJC, some legal minds have already raised the important question of whether the acting Chief Justice Javed Iqbal could sit in the SJC.

Babar Sattar, an Islamabad-based lawyer, has pointed out, "The inclusion of Justice Javed Iqbal in the Supreme Judicial Council creates a conflict of interest. Only finding the chief justice guilty of misconduct would enable Justice Javed Iqbal to become the chief justice of Pakistan or otherwise he would retire prior to expiry of the term of the current Chief Justice."

Sattar wrote in his article, published in The News on Sunday, "There is scant possibility of a fair inquiry being conducted by a council of peers led by a judge who has a personal interest in the outcome of the inquiry. Further, his appointment as acting chief, if made permanent, will also be a violation of the principle of seniority as Justice Rana Bhagwandas is the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court after the chief justice."

Meanwhile, a source pointed out that SHC Chief Justice Sabihuddin Ahmed should also not sit in the SJC for the reason that the much-condemned open letter of a supreme court lawyer also included an allegation against the chief justice regarding the use of the official residence of the Sindh CJ by Justice Iftikhar.

The government has not yet shared the details of the charges that make up part of the reference filed by the president before the SJC against the chief justice of Pakistan. However, the government functionaries mostly refer to the open letter of the lawyer (who is at present, widely being denounced by members of the lawyer's community for his work), as the basis of the charge sheet against the CJ.

Meanwhile, according to a report published in

an English daily, ahead of the presidential reference against the chief justice, there are already 23 references/complaints pending for a hearing with the Supreme Judicial Council against several judges.

"These complaints include serious charges against several senior judges of the high courts," the report said, adding that one sixth of these complaints are against just one individual judge. The report said that some of these complaints, which range from corruption to misconduct, are pending adjudication for the last several years.

Quoting Habib Wahabul Khairi, a senior lawyer and one of the complainants, the report said, the fate of complaints filed before the presidential reference must be adjudicated ahead of the charges against the Chief Justice of Pakistan.

— *THE NEWS* 12/03/2007

SCBA chief comes under govt pressure

Staff Report

LAHORE: The government is bringing pressure to bear upon Supreme Court Bar Association President Munir A Malik to dissuade him from leading lawyers in a protest against the presidential reference to the Supreme Judicial Council and the way the chief justice's suspension has been handled by the government, Daily Times has learnt.

Malik's sister, who lives in Karachi, has been persuaded to go to Islamabad and talk to him about this. To avoid embarrassment to her, he has conveyed to the media, he will not see her.

— *DAILY TIMES* 12/03/2007



Source: DAILY TIMES

Clashes as lawyers protest CJP's suspension

By Rana Tanveer

LAHORE: Dozens were injured in clashes with riot police in Lahore on Monday as thousands of lawyers protested against the suspension of the Supreme Court chief justice. Demonstrations were held across the country and most lawyers boycotted courts.

In Lahore, lawyers staged two major processions, one starting at Awan-e-Adal and the other at the Lahore High Court, and police baton-charged both. Some 50 lawyers were injured in the clashes, though some lawyers claimed up to 200 were hurt. Police said 35 police officials, including one SP and two DSPs, were injured by objects thrown at them by the protestors.

Over a thousand lawyers, many holding placards inscribed with anti-government slogans and in support of the chief justice, gathered at the LHC building, which was surrounded by police. The two sides clashed as the lawyers attempted to leave the building, dismantling police barricades near the State

Bank Chowk, and marched towards the Punjab Assembly building on The Mall.

Lawyers with bloodied heads were seen after police waded in among them, hitting out bamboo batons. Lawyers threw stones at police, damaging some vehicles parked in the LHC compound, witnesses said.

PPP Senator Sardar Latif Khosa, MNA Mehreen Raja, Lahore High Court Bar Association (LHCBA) President Ahsen Bhoon, Vice President Firdous Butt, Secretary Sarfaraz Cheema and Finance Secretary Ruby Hayat Awan were among those injured.

Meanwhile, a rally organised by the Lahore Bar Association (LBA) was baton-charged in front of the Punjab University Old Campus as it headed towards the LHC. LBA Vice President Mian Asmatullah and Finance Secretary Khawar Bashir were injured. Dozens of lawyers were arrested, but the rally managed to join up with the main procession at the General Post Office Chowk on The Mall. The clashes continued here and then near the LHC building.

Elsewhere in the country, lawyers boycotted courts in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta, though an SC public relations official claimed that there had been no boycott and the court's benches at Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi had a "normal working day".

"We thank lawyers for giving a tremendous response to the strike call throughout the country. From Khyber to Karachi, lawyers came out to protest at the military attack on the judiciary. This is unprecedented in the judicial history of Pakistan," said Supreme Court Bar Association President Munir Malik in Islamabad at a joint press conference with the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC).

The bar associations of Islamabad and Rawalpindi held emergency meetings at which they passed resolutions condemning the presidential reference against the chief justice.

In Karachi, some 500 lawyers marched in protest on MA Jinnah Road. "This act is purely unconstitutional and the strike is in protest to protect

the rights of all future judges and the law itself," said one of the protestors, Salaman, who is a law graduate. Lawyers from across NWFP staged a protest in front of Governor's House. The Peshawar High Court Bar Association, NWFP Bar Council and district bars associations also asked judges to boycott courts on Tuesday.

Cases in Balochistan were also adjourned as lawyers boycotted courts in Quetta, Sibi, Panjgur, Khuzdar, Pashin, Kalat and Loralai. "Article 209 of the Constitution does not empower a military officer to dismiss the chief justice of Pakistan," said Ali Ahmed Kurd, vice chairman of the PBC, in a press conference in Quetta. — *DAILY TIMES 13/03/07*

PBC to challenge Judicial Council's legitimacy

Staff Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) will challenge the legitimacy of the Supreme Judicial Council (PJC) through a petition in the Supreme Court today (Tuesday).

Speaking at a general meeting of the Lahore High Court Bar Association (LHCBA) on Monday, PBC member Hamid Khan said the PJC was unconstitutional and did not fulfil its criteria given in Article 180 of the constitution.

He said the PJC was not empowered to hold a



Source: DAILY TIMES

trial against the chief justice. He said that according to Article 180 the senior most judge after the chief justice should be a member of the PJC. "However, Justice Rana Bhagwan Das, who is second in line, is not a member," he added. Other lawyers also addressed the meeting, saying all lawyers in the country should converge on Islamabad on Tuesday (today) to protest the PJC proceeding against the chief justice.

They accused President Pervez Musharraf of committing treason by suspending the top adjudicator of Pakistan, saying Musharraf should be tried for treason under Article 6 of the constitution....

He asked all judges of the country to protest in favour of the chief justice. He said it was painful to see that another judge had taken oath as the acting chief justice. Human rights activist Asma Jehangir said lawyers should stand firm because if they did not unite even now there would be no supremacy of the law and judiciary.

She also urged all lawyers to converge on Islamabad to surround the Supreme Court building against unconstitutional suspension of the chief justice of Pakistan....

LHCBA also passed two resolutions against the unconstitutional suspension of the chief justice and attack on lawyers by the police during protest rallies. The first resolution condemned the baton charge on lawyers demanded Supreme Court judges resign from their offices in protest of the chief justice's suspension.

It also demanded the registration of a treason case against Musharraf for unconstitutionally removing the chief justice and the restoration of the chief justice. The second resolution demanded cases be registered against police officials involved in the attack on lawyers. LHCBA president Ahsan Bhoon said the lawyers did not violate the law and that the police attacked a peaceful protest.

He said the Supreme Court was the only institution providing justice to the deprived and that Musharraf's unconstitutional action had ruined the judicial system. — *Daily Times 13/03/2007*

Text of chief justice's statement to SJC

ISLAMABAD: Following is the full text of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhamamd Chuadhry's reply to the charges against him brought before the Supreme Judicial Council.

"Reference before the Supreme Judicial Council (constituted against the provisions of Article 209 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan) (Application for obtaining copies of documents/evidence and raising objection on the constitutionality of the SJC)



The above noted reference came up for hearing on March 9, 2007 after 6pm in indecent haste, as is evident from news published in daily Nawa-i-Waqt dated March 10, 2007, where it has been published that the chief justices of Lahore and Karachi were brought to Islamabad in a special flight.

The SJC, on having gone through the record, passed an order detrimental against my interest and against the interests of the institution whereby I have been restrained to work as a Supreme Court judge and chief justice of Pakistan. Such powers are not available at all to a fact finding inquiry commission/council as such powers are available to courts and my understanding of the Constitution under Article 209 is that no such powers are available to the council as it is not in exercise the power of the court.

Be that as it may, by passing the restraining order, the council, as well as the earlier order notified in notification no 529/(2)/2007 issued by the president of Pakistan, which is equally contrary to the Constitution, I have suffered as under:

[I have been] detained for all intents and

purposes with my family members including my infant child of seven years from the evening of March 9, 2007, up till now. My official residence is besieged by heavy contingents comprising police and members of other agencies, for which there is no justification.

The vehicles which were in my use have been taken away by means of a lifter, out of which one has been brought back by a lifter without its keys.

The Supreme Court staff attached with me is reportedly missing and has been kept at an unknown place. I believe that they have been detained just to fabricate evidence against me. I have also learned reliably that my chamber was sealed and reportedly files lying there have been removed and some of them have been handed over to the ISI under the supervision of the newly appointed registrar. Such an act is contrary to all norms and practices. I, being the CJP, am entitled to occupy my chamber along with my staff.

On account of deployment of heavy contingents I am not allowed to go outside, nor are my family members allowed to do so. Similarly, no one is allowed to meet me freely, in as much as my colleagues have no access to me and whenever they want to visit me they have to wait at the gate for a considerable period during which permission is sought from high ups. Example of Justice Raja Fayyaz Ahmed can be quoted as on one occasion he had to go back without meeting me. Similar treatment was offered to Justice (r) Munir A Sheikh.

My children are not allowed to go to school, college and university. I am not getting facility of telephones, cable and DSL. Similarly, I along with my family members have been deprived of basic amenities of life, i.e., medicines and doctors, etc.

No panel of lawyers is available to discuss the legal and factual issues involved in this reference. This fact I have already highlighted in the notice received on March 10, 2007.

By noting the above agencies which are being suffered by me I do not want to seek any relief from

the council except that an unconstitutional order dated March 9, 2007, passed by the council, has persuaded me to show distrust on the formation of the council because of the manner in which I have been dealt with. I do not expect a fair inquiry, particularly for the following reasons with reference to the chairman and two other members.

Justice Javed Iqbal

He has been appointed as acting chief justice contrary to Article 180 of the Constitution of the Islamic republic of Pakistan, which provides that the acting chief justice can be appointed when the office of the chief justice of Pakistan is vacant or the chief justice of Pakistan is absent or is unable to perform the functions of his office due to any other cause. The cause could be that the chief justice is incapable of properly performing the duties of his office by a reason of physical or mental incapacity, which is not the case over here. Therefore, he should not have taken the oath of the office of the acting chief justice, not withstanding that whosoever has issued his notification.

As per the mandate of Article 209 of the Constitution, if a reference is to be heard against the chief justice of Pakistan, the judge of the Supreme Court who is next in seniority would head the council but without being appointed as acting chief justice.

Justice Rana Bhagwandas is admittedly the senior most judge, therefore, on account of his temporary absence from the country up to March 22, 2007, there was no urgency to convene the meeting of the SJC at night/after office hours and by ensuring presence of two chief justices by making arrangements for a 'special plane'. Such actions on his part speak volumes as it has been reported in international 'The News', an extract of which is appended here as annex-B.

Justice Abdul Hameed Dogar: He administered oath to Justice Javed Iqbal on March 9, 2007, for the office of acting chief justice, disqualifying himself from being a judge of the Supreme Court knowing well that the office of the chief justice is not vacant as

he is not incapable of performing his duties physically or mentally.

A reference/complaint is pending against him before the SJC in respect of financial misappropriation in the Shah Latif Bhatai University Khairpur along with the vice chancellor of the university. The reference is lying in the SJC record which was in the custody of Doctor Faqir Hussain.

Justice Iftikhar Hussain Chaudhry: More than one reference of misconduct, etc, are pending against him before the SJC. The chairman is fully aware about it as files are lying in his custody for the purpose of scrutiny, therefore he cannot sit as a member of the council. His inclusion is based on malafides because the chairman, knowing about these facts, may have not notified him as member of council.

He has developed strong hostilities against me which is known to everyone on account of my not accepting his recommendations of advocates and judicial officers for elevation as judges of the Lahore High Court.

His elevation to judge of the Supreme Court was opposed by me in August 2005 for a very important reason, which cannot be disclosed here. However, this letter is available in the record, which may be looked into, and if it has been misplaced/tampered, as reportedly all files from my chambers have been removed, the copy of the same may be requisitioned from the concerned office.

I may point out that we are not even on talking terms with each other. He himself disconnected all relations including the working one.

He is otherwise interested in the positive result of the inquiry sent by the president on the advice of the prime minister because one his brothers is a minister in the cabinet of the prime minister and he has been expressing his views in favour of the reference and against me on TV channels (reportedly).

Therefore, I have serious objections to his being a member of the council for the above reasons and I do not have expectations of a fair inquiry from him. Thus

his name should be excluded from the panel in the interest of justice and fair play.

In view of the above objections I am of the opinion that the SJC is incapable of holding an inquiry against me.

Without prejudice to the above, I reserve my right to raise any other objection at the time of submitting my reply to the charge sheet because so far no documents have been supplied to me, nor have I any facility to consult my panel of lawyers because no one has been allowed to accompany me. Therefore, I may be supplied a précis of oral evidence and documentary evidence.

I will be submitting a list of documents in support of my defence which shall be summoned by the SJC as I have no access.

Public inquiry

The contents of the notice indicates an in-camera inquiry but I am of the opinion that the charges against me are not sustainable, being unfounded. Therefore, to vindicate my honour, I would prefer a public inquiry, so the whole world may know the nature of the allegations, and I am confident that I will be exonerated of the charges if a fair inquiry is allowed. As for as rule 13 on conducting inquiries is concerned, it pertains to an inquiry of which a direct complaint has been received by the SJC and powers are to be exercised by the council under Article 209 (5), but in my opinion, for the reference received from the president of Pakistan, the SJC can follow any other procedure including a public inquiry.

The necessity of a public inquiry is also called for because the reference is based in letter and spirit on an open letter written by Naeem Bokhari which has already been publicised widely. Therefore, there should not be any objection/observation in holding a public inquiry. As a question of my and the institution's prestige is involved, therefore I volunteer for an open inquiry so the public of this country may

have more respect and confidence in the institution of the higher judiciary.

Thus for the above reasons the council may be reconstituted accordingly, excluding the members in respect of whom objections have been raised here, and to negate the impression nationwide and to save the country's image internationally that this is a one-sided, biased, dummy and command performance.

The copies of requisite document be supplied to me along with the SJC.

A panel of the lawyers ready to defend me and the judicial system of this nation is present outside the court building since they are not being allowed to enter in the court premises, against all norms and ethics, as well as the principle of access to justice and justice for all. Therefore, lawyers should be allowed inside to argue these. At the end I say that the order dated March 9, 2007, restraining me from functioning as a judge of the Supreme Court and the chief justice of Pakistan be recalled, being contrary to the provisions of the constitution.

— *NNI / DAILY TIMES 14/03/2007*

JAC stages demo against Ch Iftikhar's suspension

Our Staff Reporter

Lahore - Jact Action Committee (JAC) Tuesday held a protest demonstration outside Lahore Press Club to condemn the suspension of Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry.

General Secretary Labour Party, Farooq Tariq, Khawar Mumtaz of Shirkat Gah and dozens of other demonstrators changed slogans against President Pervez Musharraf demanding immediate release of CJP and independence of judiciary.

Later, the participans of demonstrationheld a seminar on 'Democracy in Pakistan, Challenges and Solutions'. A large number of people from different

walks of life attended the seminar.

Addressing the participants of seminar, Zaem Qadri, spokesman of PML-N said solution of all political, social and economic problems of Pakistan lies in the democracy, if it could be restored in its real letter and spirit.

He said presently no system is working in its real form and circumstances are becoming worst with the passage of time. He said it is time to restore the basic political structure and responsibility is on all political parties to raise political awareness among people.

He said PML-N believe that dictatorship is the main obstacle in the way of democracy and it was army who always demolished constitutional bodies. How ever, General Secretary of Labor Party, Farooq Tariq, Wajahat Masood, Peter Jacob and General Secretary of PPP Punjab chapter Ghulam Abbas also spoke on the occasion.

They condemned the illegal suspension of CJP and termed it a show of power.

National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP) had arranged the seminar in collaboration with Chanan Development Association. — *THE NATION 14/03/2007*

Civil society groups vow to support lawyers

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR, March 13: With the lawyers' boycott of courts continuing for a second consecutive day on Tuesday, some civil society groups expressed their support for the legal community over the chief justice affair.

Like Monday, members of the Peshawar High Court Bar Association (PHCBA) and the Peshawar District Bar Association (PDBA) held a protest meeting followed by protest demonstration and rally. The Pakistan peoples Party also held a demonstration

on the premises of the high court...

Meanwhile, the Alliance for Protection of Human Rights (APHR) - a group of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) - condemned the action against the chief justice and termed it an attempt to undermine the independence of judiciary.

In a press release issued by the alliance, comprising the Aurat Foundation, Strengthening Participatory Organisation, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Sungi Development Foundation, Noor Education Trust, Human Resource Management and Development Centre, and Legislative Watch Group, said the filing of a reference against Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry was a highly disturbing development.

The press release said Justice Iftikhar had several important things to his credit, the most notable among them being the clearing of the huge backlog of cases.

The Khyber Union of Journalists also expressed concern over making the chief justice "non-functional" and demanded his restoration to his original high position.

A meeting of the union's executive council, chaired by its president Jan Afzal, was held here on Tuesday. The meeting announced complete support for the legal community.

The participants demanded that the proceedings against Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry be held in open court and not in camera. — *DAWN 14/03/2007*

Justice Iftikhar seeks reconstituted SJC

By Nasir Iqbal and Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD, March 13: In a day of high drama on the streets of the federal capital, the 'suspended' Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, tried to march up to the Supreme Court

along with his wife and children, seeking justice amidst an orchestrated official campaign that accuses him of misconduct and misuse of authority.

Having been roughed up and prevented from marching on, Justice Chaudhry was briefly confined to the nearby Balochistan House. Later, after some persuasion he was driven amidst tight security to the apex court to defend himself. Scores of lawyers present there ignored the police cordon to greet him by showering flower petals and raising anti-government slogans.

After an initial attempt by security officials failed to prevent a rousing reception for the 'suspended' chief justice, better sense prevailed among police which, instead of using the traditional high-handed methods, stepped back to allow the lawyers and some opposition politicians to take Justice Chaudhry inside the court house in the form of a procession.

This was the first time since his 'suspension' on Friday that Justice Chaudhry had been seen in the public. And what a sight it was! He was brought to his own court in a situation where the city which had been under police siege since morning.

All entry points to Islamabad were being watched by security officials to prevent lawyers from coming to the city, and the area around the Chief Justice's residence had been barricaded. From the Presidency to the Foreign Office and beyond, the area had many rings of barbed wires thrown on the main road and streets as if a major terrorist attack was being prevented.

All these arrangements were meant to hold in-camera proceedings of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), which began hearing of the reference filed by President Pervez Musharraf against Justice Chaudhry.

Despite tight security, dozens of lawyers managed to slip through the barbed wires and police barricades. So did many opposition politicians and a large number of journalists.

It was also a heyday for opposition politicians. Qazi Hussain Ahmed, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Raja

Zafarul Haq, Imran Khan and a host of PML-N and PPP leaders were present there to show solidarity with the 'suspended' chief justice.

And by the time Justice Chaudhry was brought outside the court premises, a large crowd had assembled there to greet him with slogans of support. As leaders of the opposition, particularly those like Liaquat Baloch of the MMA, joined the lawyers to climb over Justice Chaudhry's car and take his virtual 'custody', the officials decided that any attempt to stop the crowd might have disastrous consequences. The police allowed the crowd to take control of the events, and soon opposition MNA and seasoned lawyer Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan and others escorted a visibly harassed Justice Chaudhry inside the court premises.

As Justice Chaudhry got the first chance to speak to the media, he decided to speak his mind. "I am not going to resign as allegations against me are useless," he told reporters after coming inside the court premises.

Even in the court house, he refused the protocol that the officials had suddenly decided to accord him. On entering the judge's block of the Supreme Court building, he refused to wait in the chambers meant for judges, saying he would prefer to sit in the office of any clerk before attending in-camera proceedings of the SJC.

However, he freshened up in a court house dispensary and refused to appear before the SJC without his panel of counsel, comprising Aitzaz Ahsan, vice-chairman of Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) Ali Ahmed Kurd, President of Supreme Court Bar Association Munir A. Malik, Tariq Mehmood and Hamid Khan.

Finally, when he appeared before the SJC, he submitted a four-page statement which, among other things, called for reconstitution of the judicial council by excluding three members against whom he had raised objections.

The SJC then decided to serve a notice on Attorney-General Makhdoom Ali Khan for March 16 to respond to the objections, Hamid Khan told

reporters after an hour-long proceeding.

Headed by the acting Chief Justice, Justice Javed Iqbal, the SJC comprised Justice Abdul Hameed Dogar, Justice Sardar Mohammed Raza Khan, Chief Justice of Lahore High Court Justice Iftikhar Hussain Chaudhry and Chief Justice of Sindh High Court Justice Sabhiuddin Ahmed.

In his objections, the 'suspended' chief justice stated that the acting chief justice had been appointed contrary to Article 180 of the Constitution which provided that the acting chief justice could be appointed when the office of the chief justice becomes vacant.

Moreover, under Article 209 of the Constitution, reference against the chief justice could be heard only by the senior-most judge who, in the ongoing situation, is Justice Rana Bhagwandas.

There was no urgency to convene the SJC meeting in the absence of Justice Bhagwandas who is abroad till March 22, said the statement.

It added that a reference was pending against Justice Abdul Hameed Dogar before the SJC in a case of financial misappropriation in the Shah Latif Bhatai University, Khairpur. Justice Dogar had administered oath to the acting chief justice on Friday last. According to the statement, the LHC chief justice could not sit in the council since more than one reference of misconduct was pending against him before the SJC. He said the LHC chief justice had also developed strong hostilities against him as he had not accepted his recommendations of advocates and judicial officers for elevation as judge of the high court. Moreover, his elevation as the judge of the apex court was also opposed by him in August 2005 for some reasons which could not be divulged now.

"We are also not on speaking terms with each other," Justice Chaudhry said and demanded a public inquiry to apprise the people of the nature of allegations against him.

He said he had little doubt that if the inquiry was fair, he would be exonerated of all charges.

In his statement, he also mentioned the 'sufferings' he and his family, including his seven-year-old child, had been undergoing since March 9.

He said his official residence was besieged by heavy contingent of police and agency sleuths, without any justification. Moreover, all vehicles in his use had been taken away through a lifter, he said, adding that only one vehicle had been brought back by a lifter, and that too without keys.

The Supreme Court staff, attached with the chief justice, was also reportedly missing and had been kept at some unknown place.

"I believe that they have been detained just to fabricate evidence against me," the statement by Justice Chaudhry said. "I have learnt that my chamber has also been sealed and reportedly files have been handed over to the ISI," he alleged.

Due to heavy deployment, the statement said, the chief justice or his family has not been allowed to go outside. Similarly, no one was allowed to meet him freely, he said.

"Even my colleagues have no access. And whenever they wanted to visit, they were asked to wait for a considerable period of time during which permission was sought from high-ups," he said.

He said his children were also not allowed to go to school, college and university; and facilities like telephone, cable and Internet, as well as basic amenities had been denied...

The proceedings are adjourned till 3pm on March 16.

LAHORE: Lawyers in Lahore and elsewhere in Punjab observed black day by boycotting court proceedings.



Source: DAILY TIMES

Except for Ferozwala, where three lawyers and a policeman were injured in a clash, no violence was reported from anywhere in the province.

QUETTA: A complete strike was observed in Quetta where all shops, markets, shopping centres and business concerns remained closed.

Lawyers boycotted court proceedings in Quetta and other parts of the province for the fourth consecutive day.

MUZAFFARABAD: Lawyers in Azad Kashmir held demonstrations on the second consecutive day. They boycotted courts and staged demonstrations to express solidarity with the lawyers' community in Pakistan. — *DAWN 14/03/2007*

Acting CJ takes suo motu notice: Manhandling of Justice Iftikhar

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD, March 14: The Supreme Court on Wednesday took suo motu notice of the police

manhandling of the 'suspended' Chief Justice, Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry.

On Tuesday, Justice Chaudhry was roughed up by police for refusing to ride an official car and attempting to march towards the Supreme Court to attend the proceedings of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) against him. His wife and daughters were also reportedly manhandled by policemen....

Notices have been served on IGP Chaudhry Iftikhar, DIG Islamabad Shahid Nadeem Baloch, SSP Islamabad Capt (retd) Zafar Iqbal Awan and DSP I-9 Circle Jamil Hashmi. They have been asked to appear before the Supreme Court on March 19.

Referring to his appointment as the acting chief justice, Justice Javed Iqbal pointed out that a grave constitutional void would have occurred had he not taken oath as acting chief justice.

He asked if it was possible to keep the post of the acting chief justice vacant when the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court, Justice Rana Bhagwandas, had been away from the country for almost four months.

There has been no information about Justice Bhagwandas since Friday when Justice Chaudhry was made non-functional through a notification by President Pervez Musharraf.

The chamber of Justice Bhagwandas, who is to join his office on March 23, is locked and nobody is picking up the telephone at his residence. Even his close relatives are reluctant to divulge any information about him. The acting chief justice informed the reporters that even the Supreme Court was not in contact with Justice Bhagwandas and his mobile phone was not responding....

Meanwhile, lawyers in most cities and towns in the country continued boycott of court proceedings for the fifth consecutive day against the reference sent to the Supreme Judicial Council.

Amanullah Kasi adds from Quetta: Lawyers

marched on city roads and boycotted courts as protest against the suspension of the chief justice continued here on Wednesday. — *DAWN 15/03/2007*

WAF denounces reference against chief justice

Staff Report

LAHORE: The Women's Action Forum (WAF) has denounced President Pervez Musharraf's reference to the Supreme Judicial Council against the Chief Justice of the Pakistan (CJP). WAF representatives claimed that the reference contains unsubstantiated allegations against the CJP. They accused the government of attacking the judiciary.

In a press statement released on Wednesday, the WAF alleged that the administration was conducting attacks against the country's judiciary by suspending the CJP.

The WAF believed that the suspension of the CJP was part of the military's plan to ensure the re-election of General Pervez Musharraf as president. The statement said that the CJP being made ineffective was a clear sign that the state institutions in Pakistan were no longer independent. "The WAF strongly condemns such unjustified actions", the statement said. "They will have long-term repercussions concerning a strong and independent judiciary," it added.

The WAF praised the CJP's ruling against privatisation of the Pakistan Steel and the violation of human rights. They also acclaimed his intervention for the cancellation of illegal land allotment in Gawadar.

The statement criticised the government for ignoring senior-most judge of the Supreme Court, Justice Bhagwan Das. The WAF feared that his reputation for being independent in his judgement and his position in the society's religious minority had made the government bypass him.

The WAF appreciated the stand of the bar councils concerning the unwarranted actions of the police against the CJP. The statement called for an open trial for Chief Justice Ifikhar Ahmed so that the citizens could witness the proceedings. staff report — *DAILY TIMES 15/03/2007*

Govt in talks with CJ as way out of crisis

By Bahzad Alam Khan

KARACHI, March 15: Shaken by spontaneous outpourings of public support for the chief justice, the government has nervously initiated talks with Justice Ifikhar Mohammad Chaudhry for a mutually acceptable resolution of what has been described as the country's most bitter judicial crisis, it emerged on Thursday.

Sources in the presidency said it was too early to say what the outcome of the talks would be.

They refused to divulge details of the negotiations...

A top presidential aide conceded that the government had only itself to blame for the crisis of confidence it was currently suffering.

"It was never our intention to place the suspended chief justice under house arrest, hold him incommunicado and stop his children from going to school. This was completely mishandled down the line by more-loyal-than-the-king officials. But he also made things difficult for us by behaving like a politician. Contrary to what is being said in the media, no heads (on the government side) will roll," he said in remarks that at once indicate an acknowledgment of oversight and a lack of contrition.

The sources in the presidency said the March 9 action against the suspended chief justice had taken even cabinet ministers by surprise.

"As a result, everybody responded to frantic queries by the media according to their understanding

of the situation. It should also be made clear that the prime minister, being the chief executive of the country, does not have to take the cabinet into confidence on such decisions."

They, however, refused to name the government lawyers who had okayed the presidential reference against the chief justice. They added that the government had weighed the pros and cons of the reference.

"Our problem is that under the Constitution a presidential reference against the chief justice remains a secret document until the Supreme Judicial Council takes a decision on it one way or the other. Our hands are tied while the opposition parties are having a field day," they said. — *DAWN 16/03/2007*

190 arrested in Punjab

Dawn Report

LAHORE, March 16: Police arrested 190 political leaders, activists and lawyers on Friday who tried to take out processions in Lahore and other parts of Punjab to condemn the 'suspension' of the chief justice.

The police tear-gassed and baton-charged political activists at Neela Gumbad in Lahore and arrested around 100 of them, including Punjab PML-N president Sardar Zulfikar Khosa, MNAs Pervaiz Malik and Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, MPAs Afzal Khokhar, Chaudhry Abdul Ghafoor, Dr Asad Ashraf, Mujtaba Shujaur Rehman, Ehsanullah Waqas, Rana Mashood, and Ameerul Azeem of the MMA and Ehsan Rasheed of the PTL.

They were bundled into prison vans, in some cases after having been roughed up by personnel of law-enforcement agencies who were present there in large numbers in uniform and in civvies.

There was no official word whether cases would be registered against them.

Earlier, the police arrested around 200 activists and leaders of opposition parties, including Liaquat

Baloch of the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal, from their homes or offices in various parts of the city since Thursday evening.

Over three dozens activists were arrested in Gujranwala. Among them were former federal minister Ghulam Dastagir Khan and former provincial minister Barrister Usman Ibrahim. The rest of the arrests were made in Faisalabad, Sargodha and Mandi Bahauddin. — *DAWN 17/03/2007*

Lahore police clash with lawyers

By Salman Aslam, Arslan Rafiq Bhatti & Wajih Ahmad Sheikh

LAHORE: The police on Saturday intruded on the LHC building, thrashing and injuring around 55 lawyers in a bid to sabotage an all Pakistan lawyers' convention.

The Capital City police led by SSP Operations Aftab Ahmed Cheema fired teargas shells and hurled stones at the lawyers when they tried to stage a peaceful demonstration on The Mall.

Heavy contingents of the police started teargas shelling on the lawyers in order to stop them from protesting against the government on the order of Cheema, who monitored the operation from GPO Chowk.

Several hundred demonstrators clashed with the riot police as part of continuing protests against the suspension of chief justice of Pakistan. The baton-wielding cops of the Lahore police also followed in the footsteps of the Islamabad police by vandalising private chambers of lawyers and searched several empty chambers in an attempt to track down the lawyers. The policemen thrashed the lawyers sitting in their offices and those who were making efforts to get rid of the intruders.

Heavy contingents of the police wearing anti-riot uniform had cordoned off the Lahore High Court

building since morning. The police set up barricades at all main intersections leading to the LHC, creating problems for commuters and motorists. Even pedestrians were not allowed to cross The Mall from GOR-I, Canal, Hall Road, Chairing Cross, GPO Chowk, LHC Chowk, Nila Gumbad Chowk and New Anarkali Chowk.

To confine the lawyers to the premises, the police locked the main gate of the LHC by putting a barricade and barbed wire on it besides deploying heavy police contingents. The main clash between the lawyers and the police was observed on the LHC gate behind the State Bank of Pakistan building. The riot police resorted to teargas shelling that infuriated the lawyers who retaliated by hurling stones and teargas shells back at the police. The lawyers also erected iron shields to protect themselves from stone pelting by police and teargas shelling.

Smoke emitting from teargas shells made it hard to breathe even in open air. Opposition leaders including Yousaf Raza Gillani, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Jehangir Badr, Farzana Raja, Sajida Mir and others also reached the LHC to express solidarity with the lawyers. They also took part in the demonstration and condemned the government for its unconstitutional acts. HRCP chairperson Asma Jehangir also joined the lawyers in their protest....

As the police continued to tear gas and pelt stones at the protesting lawyers gathered inside the premises of Lahore High Court, the female lawyers played a crucial role of providing their male counterparts with assistance in the shape of water bottles and salt to wither away the effect of heavy teargas shelling.

— *THE NEWS 18/03/2007*

Woman judge 'rewarded'

By Ansar Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Sajida Chaudhry, a lady civil judge, who was the first serving judicial officer to have attended Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry's maiden address to the Rawalpindi Bar on

March 26 during the ongoing judicial crisis, has been posted to Bhakkar, several hundred kilometres away from her family.

On March 27 - a day after she added a new flavour to the judicial crisis, while no other judge from the Punjab attended the March 26 address of the chief justice - Sajida Chaudhry was made official on special duty (OSD) and asked to report to the Lahore High Court.

Settled in Islamabad with her husband and three young children the lady judge got an order to move to Bhakkar and join her duty as the civil judge there. She is believed to be the first ever lady judge to have been posted in Bhakkar, located in southern Punjab.

With her husband already doing a job in Islamabad and children attending local schools, Sajida Chaudhry's transfer to Bhakkar has become a unique case where a mother and a wife has to leave the family to join her new assignment hundreds of miles away.

Under the federal or the provincial government policies, a woman government servant could not be posted out of a station where her husband is settled or posted. In case both the husband and the wife are in government service, it is envisaged in the policy that they will be posted in the same station.

In cases where the wife is in the government service and the husband is in the private sector, even then she could not be posted to any other station. The Lahore High Court, however, has not adhered to such policy.

Her presence in Justice Chaudhry's address to the Rawalpindi Bar on March 26, when the rest of the members of the Punjab judiciary were sitting in their chambers, became the focus of the media. When asked if she would quit, she calmly replied: "Why should I resign? I did nothing against the law, I came here to welcome the chief justice, and it is my duty."

Though the lady judge was made an OSD the very next day and transferred from Gujar Khan to Lahore and now posted to Bhakkar, she served as the first drop of rain for her brother judges..

— *THE NEWS* 27/04/2007

States cannot survive under dictatorship: CJ

By Asif Shahzad

LAHORE, May 6: Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry said on Sunday that history showed that nations and states could not survive under dictatorship.

The chief justice, whose motorcade took 25 hours to reach the Lahore High Court from Islamabad, was



accorded an unprecedented welcome by lawyers, political and rights activists and serving and retired judges of superior and subordinate courts.

"The nations and states based on dictatorship, instead of supremacy of constitution, rule of law and protection of basic human rights are destroyed. There is no more concept of dictatorship. These all are bitter lessons of history, and the nations which do not learn from history and repeat mistakes have to pay the price," Justice Chaudhry said in his address to a reception hosted for him by the Lahore High Court Bar Association.

Seventeen serving and 15 retired judges of the Lahore High Court, three former judges of the Supreme Court and some serving and retired judges of subordinate courts were among thousands of lawyers and activists who greeted Justice Chaudhry in

the parking compound of the high court.

"Today, I would mention specially the son of the soil whose name is Justice Jawad S. Khawaja," the chief justice said after thanking all the serving and former judges in his opening remarks.

Justice Khawaja of the LHC had tendered his resignation in protest against the suspension of Mr Chaudhry. Organisers of the reception also seated Mr Khawaja among the serving judges despite his repeated refusal to do so.

After entering the city at Ravi Bridge at 4:15am, it took over four hours for his caravan to reach the reception venue at 8:30am. As the caravan proceeded to the venue, thousands of lawyers and political and rights activists joined it, and at times made it difficult for it to move ahead.

Everybody was seen trying to get close to the vehicle of the chief justice, and chanting slogans in his favour and against President Gen Pervez Musharraf. People in long queues would also shower rose petals on the motorcade amid slogans of "Go Musharraf Go".

The scheduled time for the arrival of the chief justice was 4pm on Saturday, and lawyers and activists of the PPP, PML-N, MMA, PTI, JUP, Khaksar Tehrik and Labour Party Pakistan had gathered outside the high court since Saturday noon.

Major political parties had also set up camps on The Mall, with hundreds of banners and placards inscribed with their party slogans.

With every passing moment, the number of activists and lawyers kept on soaring, and they waited all night for the guest with more and more enthusiasm and fervour.

Leaders of the political parties, including Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Syeda Abida Husain, Fakhar Imam, Jehangir Badar, Naheed Khan, Khwaja Saad Rafiq and Liaquat Baloch, also remained there for hours. "It is very much visible that it is time for a change," said Mr Baloch and Ms Naheed Khan. — *DAWN 07/05/2007*

Arrests, blockades ahead of CJP's Karachi visit

Staff Report

KARACHI: An estimated 500 opposition political workers were arrested from late Thursday night onwards ahead of the chief justice's rally scheduled for today (Saturday).

Chaudhry is set to address lawyers and opposition party supporters here, while tensions rose after pro-Musharraf parties said they would hold rival demonstrations at the same time. The pro-government Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) said it was holding a counter-rally on Saturday because opposition parties were politicising the CJP's suspension issue. The CJP and his supporters will hold their rally at Sindh High Court while the MQM will gather about one kilometre away, on the city's main boulevard....

Meanwhile, the legal fraternity, political and religious parties, non-government organisations and civil society groups are set to give a warm welcome to the CJP when he arrives here today (Saturday).

Public transport disappeared from Karachi's roads on Friday evening, while all shopping markets along the route of the CJP's rally will remain closed on Saturday due to the tense situation in the city.

Citizens of Karachi are expected to stay indoors on Saturday following television reports that the Sindh Home Department had asked government hospitals situated on the rally's route to remain alert on Saturday keeping in view the tense environment in the provincial capital.

In another development late on Friday night, empty shipping containers were used to block all four sides of the Sindh High Court. The roads leading to the SHC building from the Arts Council, the Sindh Assembly, MPAs Hostel and Saddar and Burns Road were blocked with the containers. — *DAILY TIMES 12/05/ 2007*

34 dead, over 100 injured, 40 buses, cars torched

Karachi bleeds, nation weeps

Staff Report

KARACHI: Thirty-four people were killed and over 100 injured in bloody clashes between pro-government and opposition activists as Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Chaudhry arrived here on Saturday.

Most of the dead were said to be opposition activists and four were from the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM). Mobs armed with assault rifles and shotguns fought pitched battles in the streets and torched at least 40 buses and cars. The government and opposition blamed each other for the violence. Justice Chaudhry remained stranded at Karachi airport after flying in because government supporters had used trucks with deflated tyres to shut down all main roads.

The first gunfire was reported at around noon at Malir Halt as an opposition rally headed by the Awami National Party (ANP) passed through the area. People who had blocked Shahra-e-Faisal attacked the rally and an exchange of gunfire ensued. Several people were killed, most of them ANP workers. Nine motorcycles and six cars were set on fire.

Gunmen killed three members of the pro-MQM faction of the Punjabi Pakhtoon Ittehad. A convoy of Pakistan People's Party workers heading for the airport was ambushed at Natha Khan Bridge, Drigh Road. The workers ran back, some of them injured, leaving behind 14 motorcycles and five cars that were subsequently torched.

People injured in Malir and Al Falah could not reach hospitals because Shahra-e-Faisal was blocked. The third major incident took place at Baloch Colony Bridge on Shahra-e-Faisal. ANP workers said their bus was

stopped by armed men who forced them to get off and walk back, upon which they were shot at from behind.

Shahra-e-Faisal from Baloch Colony Bridge to Malir 15 was turned into a war zone even though the Rangers and police were present. They did not interfere. A low-ranking policeman on duty at Shahra-e-Faisal said that he was only carrying a baton. "There were some orders and our weapons were taken from us," he said. "It was as if we were put here just to watch." A clash was reported on the Super Highway and Abul Hasan Ispahani Road after an ANP and MMA rally was attacked. Two men were shot dead at Chandni Chowk, while two more were killed in Bin Qasim Town.

Agencies add: Earlier, gunmen killed two PML-N activists as they put up posters welcoming the CJP. Separately, Sunni-Tehreek leader Sohail Qadiri was shot dead. A policeman and a paramedic were also reported to be among the dead.

Thousands of MQM activists armed with sticks roamed Karachi city warning opposition activists and lawyers to stay in their homes prior to the CJP's arrival. — *DAILY TIMES 13/05/2007*

Countrywide shutdown

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD, May 14: A sense of anger and grief was more than evident on the streets across the country on Monday, as most businesses and shops from Khyber to Karachi remained closed. In many cities and towns, public transport remained off the road, bringing normal life to a halt on what was supposed to be the first working day of the week.

The strike was observed on a call given by the combined opposition in protest against mayhem in Karachi on Saturday when hundreds of armed men took control of the streets and Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry and his lawyers were prevented from leaving the airport to attend a bar association function in downtown Karachi.



Source: DAILY TIMES

The nationwide shutdown was on a scale not seen for many years. So widespread and effective was the response to the opposition's call that even traders in Islamabad, who ignored such pleas in the past, kept their businesses shut throughout the day. The shutdown in adjoining Rawalpindi was more comprehensive, with even smaller bazaars remaining closed.

Reeling under the after-effects of Saturday's bloodbath, Karachi also observed a complete strike and witnessed more bloodshed when another four people were killed, taking the death toll in the ongoing violence to 46.

Two of those killed, reportedly belonging to Pakistan People's Party, were gunned down when a contingent of Rangers, who have been empowered to shoot on sight anyone involved in rioting, opened fire to disperse protesters in the Lyari area.

Residents said a large number of people had taken to the street in protest when a police contingent forced shopkeepers to pull up their shutters. They said a Rangers' party reached the area and opened fire on the protesters.

However, a Rangers spokesman categorically denied involvement of their personnel and attributed the killings to the Lyari gang war.

All commercial and shopping centres, markets, showrooms and shops were closed and public transport remained off the roads. The entire city wore

a deserted look throughout the day.

Life crawled back to normalcy in the evening, though scattered incidents of violence were reported from certain violence-prone localities in the downtown and western district.

A few petrol pumps and gas stations resumed their business late in the evening, but most of them preferred to keep them covered with marquees for the third consecutive day.

Hyderabad and most other cities and towns in the interior of Sindh also remained completely shut. Tharparkar, the hometown of Sindh Chief Minister Arbab Ghulam Rahim, and a couple of other places ignored the strike call.

The offices of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement in several towns faced protesters' ire and were ransacked.

There was almost a complete business shutdown in Lahore and also in most other cities and towns of Punjab. Lawyers boycotted court proceedings and took out processions. They were supported by political parties, NGOs and the public. In Lahore, the wholesale markets wore a deserted look and traffic was thin. A large number of lawyers, political and human rights activists rallied on The Mall in sweltering heat to protest against Karachi killings.

They demanded registration of murder cases against President Gen Pervez Musharraf and MQM chief Altaf Hussain. The public also joined the rally...

The strike call received a positive response also in the NWFP and Balochistan. In Peshawar and Quetta, protest rallies were taken out. Even the small town of Chaman, situated along the Pakistan-Afghan border, saw a shutdown.

Another feature of Monday's strike was that it was largely peaceful, with Karachi and a couple of other places being the exceptions. — *DAWN 15/05/2007*



Source: DAILY TIMES

SC additional registrar target-killed

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Four men sneaked into the house of Supreme Court (SC) Additional Registrar Hammad Raza in Sector G-10/2 early on Monday morning and gunned him down, apparently in a target killing.

Raza's widow Shabana claimed that her husband had been target-killed because the intruders had not touched anything in the house. "They just came and shot him. He opened the door and they shot him and ran away," she told Reuters. She said that the killers were able to escape even though a police vehicle was patrolling their neighbourhood at the time of the incident. Shabana said that Raza did not have enmity with any person and had not received threats from any person.

Raza was stationed in Balochistan before being reassigned to the SC by CJP Iftikhar Chaudhry. "You called him to Islamabad. You should have protected him, and now my children need protection as well," Shabana told Chaudhry when he visited Raza's house to offer his condolence. — *DAILY TIMES 15/05/2007*

CJP restored unanimously, presidential reference thrown out 10-3: Justice triumphs

By Mohammad Kamran

ISLAMABAD: A 13-member full court of the Supreme Court (SC) on Friday reinstated Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, ruling that his suspension by President General Pervez Musharraf was "illegal".

By a 10-3 vote, the judges also quashed a case of alleged misconduct by Justice Chaudhry that the president had referred to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC).

Following the SC's verdict, Chaudhry assumed the charge of his office at 4:20pm on Friday. He was appointed as the CJP on June 30, 2005, and is due to retire on December 12, 2013.

The SC gave its short order on a petition filed by the CJP challenging the presidential reference against him after hearing the case for 43 days. The full court unanimously declared the two restraint orders and one compulsory leave order against the CJP illegal, and also annulled the notifications of the appointment of Justice Javed Iqbal and Justice Rana Bhagwandas as



Source: DAILY TIMES

acting chief justice of Pakistan passed on March 9 and 23 respectively.

Three judges - Justice Faqeer Muhammad Khokhar, Justice Javed Buttar and Justice Saiyed Saeed Ashad - dissented on the reference, saying it had been competently filed by the president under Article 209 of the Constitution. However, the 10 other judges set aside the reference.

The bench unanimously ruled that the President's Order No 27 of 1970 in which a judge could be sent on forced leave had been declared unconstitutional and this law would have no legal worth in the future.

"As a further consequence the petitioner, the chief justice of Pakistan, shall be deemed to be holding the said office and shall always be deemed to have been so holding the same," the bench ruled, covering the 134 days of the CJP's suspension. "It has never been anybody's case before us that the chief justice of Pakistan was not accountable. The same issue, therefore, does not require any adjudication. All other legal and constitutional issues raised before us shall be answered in due course through the detailed judgment to follow."

Before pronouncing the judgment, Justice Khalilur Rehman Ramday urged those present in the courtroom to hear the verdict with patience. — *DAILY TIMES 21/07/2007*

KARACHI: Legal fraternity up in arms

By A Reporter

KARACHI, Sept 14: The legal fraternity on Friday observed a complete strike in the City Courts, Anti-Terrorism Courts and Malir District Courts against an attack on lawyer Ateeq Ahmed Qadri, who had sustained serious injuries in an armed assault on his residence on Thursday night.

Though judges remained present in their

chambers, cases could not be processed as lawyers stayed away from court proceedings, while 297 undertrial prisoners were returned without being produced in court. — *DAWN 15/09/2007*

Full Court sought to hear dual-office plea

Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD - Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) on Saturday moved an application in the Supreme Court of Pakistan for constitution of a full court for hearing the constitutional petitions challenging the holding of dual offices by President General Pervez Musharraf.

Muhammad Akram Sheikh, the counsel for JI Ameer, Qazi Hussain Ahmed, has filed this application for seeking a full court.

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP), Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, has already constituted a nine-judge bench of the apex court for hearing the plea of Qazi Hussain Ahmed against General Musharraf's simultaneously holding the offices of President of Pakistan as well as the Chief of Army Staff (COAS).

Six more similar petitions filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chief Chairman, Imran Khan, Communist Party of Pakistan, Eng Jamil Malik, Dr Anwarul Haq and others on the same issue are also clubbed with the constitutional petition of Qazi Hussain Ahmed.

Justice Rana Bhagwandas, the senior most judge of apex court after the CJP, will chair the larger bench, which is scheduled to start hearing these petitions from Tomorrow (Monday).

Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry himself is not a member of the larger bench set to hear the plea against President Musharraf.

However, Qazi Hussain Ahmed's counsel, Muhammad Akram Sheikh, has moved the fresh application before the CJP seeking constitution of a full court for hearing the issue of President Musharraf's uniform as it involves greater public and political interest.

The applicant has requested the CJP to form a full court comprising all the judges of apex court except those unwilling to become a part of full court for any reason, to decide the vital question about holding of two offices by President Musharraf and his qualification to contest the next presidential polls...

— *THE NATION* 15/09/2007

Judge points out deviation by politicians: 17th Amendment

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD, Sept 19: The Supreme Court, hearing identical petitions against President Pervez Musharraf holding two offices, on Wednesday asked why no legislator pointed out any anomaly when the parliament was voting for the relevant amendment.

"It may be a jugglery of words, but how can it be said that the President to Hold Another Office Act, 2004, is for one time when the holder is to continue as the president," Justice Sardar Mohammad Raza Khan observed and wondered why a writ petition was needed to understand this.

Justice Javed Iqbal was similarly struck by the politicians' own extra-constitutional deviation reflected in their senior counsel Hamid Khan's reference to the agreement between the government and the Muttahida

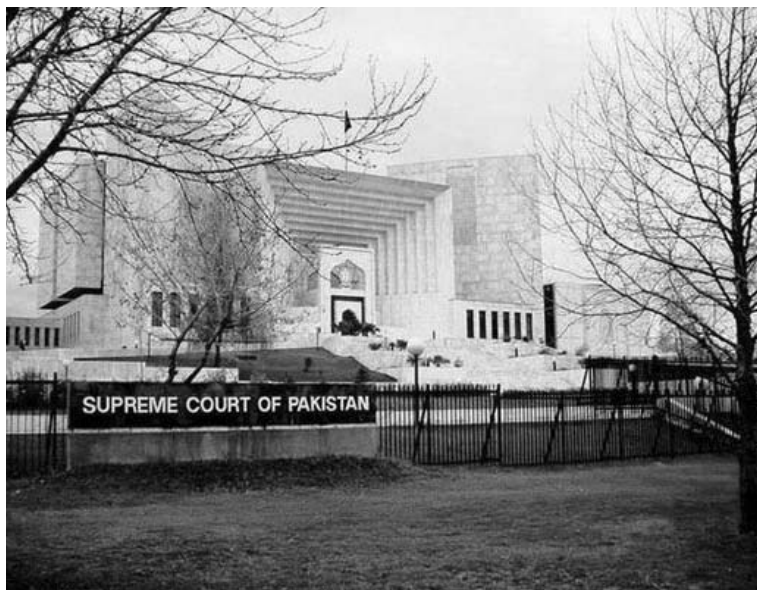
Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) to indemnify all actions of the president through the 17th Constitutional Amendment.

Counsel Hamid Khan, representing Jamaat-i-Islami President Qazi Hussain Ahmed and Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaaf chief Imran Khan, cited the book 'Dialogue' authored by S.M. Zafar, suggesting that Article 63(1-d) about disqualifications was non-applicable with effect from December 31, 2004.

He also told the nine-member bench, seized with a set of identical petitions challenging the president's dual offices, that Imran Khan had moved an application before it to strike down the amendment made on Sept 10 by the Chief Election Commissioner in the President Election Rules, 1988. The application requested the court to make the CEC respondent in the main petitions as the amendment to Article 63 of the Constitution had been made in a secretive manner.

The CEC colluded with Gen Musharraf to help the latter escape disqualification under the Article 63, in a mala fide exercise allegedly on the part of the CEC, the application said.

"The notification was neither made public nor circulated till Sept 17, that too after one of



Source: DAILY TIMES

the federal ministers disclosed it to the media," it said.

Justice Sardar Mohammad Raza Khan recalled that the Election Commission had explained that they had amended the law in line with the judgment of the Supreme Court in the 2002 Qazi Hussain and 2005 Pakistan Lawyers Forum cases.

Hamid Khan said the review petitions in both cases were pending in the Supreme Court, adding that the notification had come on a question on which he had to argue, besides the provisions relating to the qualifications and disqualifications were never discussed in these judgments, though passing remarks had been made.

Justice Faqir Mohammad Khokhar observed that rules could not neutralise the effect on Article 41 (the office of the president). "If Article 63 is applicable then it is applicable and cannot be made non-applicable through simple amendments to the rules."

Hamid Khan contended that Gen Musharraf was not eligible to contest the presidential election for the next term because he had already served two terms -- first he assumed the office by removing Rafiq Tarar on June 20, 2001, under the President Succession Order, 2001, Chief Executive Order 3 of 2001 without assigning any reason and, secondly, when he became president after a referendum.

He said that according to the Army Act and the Constitution, the president had completed his army service in respect of age and as well as service as a general because his three years' term as the army chief had expired on October 2001, while he attained the age of 60 on August 10, 2003.

"Therefore, he cannot continue with the army post," he argued.

The age requirement for a general in service is 60 years or 35 years of service under the Pakistan Army Regulations.

Justice Faqir Khokhar, however, clarified that the

post of army chief was not regulated through the regulations but through the Constitution as it was a constitutional office.

Likewise, under the 17th Constitutional Amendment his tenure as the army chief had also been expired on December 31, 2004 and, therefore, the question to hold the post after that date did not arise, he said.

Criticising the dual-office law, Hamid Khan said the person-specific amendment to the Constitution amounted to violation of fundamentals of the Constitution because the amendment to allow the president to retain the two offices violated articles 25 and 260 of the Constitution.

"One person cannot hold two constitutional offices simultaneously at a time in substantive capacity which is of permanent nature," he said.

Towards the end of Wednesday's proceedings, the bench declined to accept the request of the former vice-chairman of the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), Ali Ahmed Kurd, to initiate contempt of the court proceedings against Advocate Ahmed Raza Qasuri for threatening one of the amicus curiae, Aitzaz Ahsan, assisting the court in the instant petitions.

— *DAWN* 20/09/2007

Justice Wajih comes out against Musharraf

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD, Sept 24: As part of its challenge to President Pervez Musharraf's election, the lawyers' community on Monday nominated a retired Supreme Court judge, Wajihuddin Ahmad, as its candidate in the Oct 6 presidential election...

Justice Wajihuddin had refused to take the oath of allegiance to a provisional constitution order (PCO) in 2001. The President of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), Munir Malik, was quoted as

saying after the announcement that Justice Wajihuddin was the first judge to resist the Musharraf-led military rule...

Justice Wajihuddin is the second candidate to have come to the fore. Earlier, Dr Anwarul Haq, a pathologist, had said he would contest the election. Prof Haq is among the petitioners who have filed a petition with the Supreme Court against the president's dual office...

Justice Wajihuddin told DAWN NEWS TV that it was his national obligation to contest the election. "This is something you cannot refuse."

He said he had not been in touch with any political party and had no illusions. He also said he was ready to hold a debate with President Musharraf on national issues.

"At least the ball has been made to roll. We need a person who could stand up before Gen Musharraf."

— *DAWN 25/09/2007*

SC keeps Musharraf's fate in its hands: Go-ahead for presidential election

By Iftikhar A. Khan

ISLAMABAD, Oct 5: The Supreme Court on Friday declined to stay the presidential election, but directed the Election Commission not to notify the result till it gave its verdict on petitions challenging the eligibility of Gen Pervez Musharraf to run for the office of president.

After hearing arguments for and against staying the election, a 10-member bench of the apex court unanimously decided on Friday that the election process should continue in accordance with the schedule announced by the Election Commission, but the result should be withheld till the disposal of petitions challenging General Musharraf's candidature.

The court will now hear the case on Oct 17.

The bench is headed by Justice Javed Iqbal and comprises Justice Abdul Hameed Dogar, Justice Khalilur Rehman Ramday, Justice Mohammad Nawaz Abbasi, Justice Faqir Mohammad Khokar, Justice Tasadduq Hussain Jilani, Justice Nasirul Mulk, Justice Raja Fayyaz Ahmed, Justice Syed Jamshed Ali and Justice Ghulam Rabbani.

— *DAWN 06/10/2007*

Deployment of police in plain clothes illegal: CJ

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD, Oct 23: Terming the deployment of policemen in plain clothes to quell demonstrations an illegal practice, Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry on Tuesday wondered who would be blamed in case of serious mishap.

The observation was made by the chief justice on a set of guidelines proposed by senior advocate Khalid Anwar to the court hearing the complaint on a suo motu notice against the use of force by law-enforcement agencies on Sept 29 against lawyers, journalists and other civil society representatives protesting outside the Supreme Court building and the Election Commission of Pakistan.

Over 70 lawyers, journalists and other people were injured when police use brute force against them.

Appearing as an amicus curae (friend of the court), Mr Anwar requested the Supreme Court to lay down guidelines for dealing with such situations.

He suggested that the deployment of policemen in plain clothes should be banned and that police or other law-enforcement personnel should be in uniform, with their name or badge on it so that they could be identified in case of any illegal or unlawful action.

The Supreme Court had on Oct 1 ordered the suspension of Deputy Commissioner Chaudhry Mohammad Ali, Inspector General of Police Moravet Ali Shah and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Dr Naeem Khan after holding them responsible for using force against lawyers, journalists and other civil society representatives. They were protesting against President Pervez Musharraf's re-election and scrutiny of his nomination papers by the Election Commission.

On Tuesday, the Supreme Court directed the SSP, executive director of the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences and medical superintendent of the Federal Government Services Hospital, commonly known as Polyclinic Hospital, to submit by Oct 31 a complete record of medical certificates issued about injured journalists.

The suspended IG informed the court that the Police Order 2002 had not yet been enforced. The court observed that the law should also be implemented in the capital.

The proposed guidelines suggest special training for police personnel to deal with riots, protests, rallies and demonstrations and manage large public events. Besides, a command system headed by an officer of at least of the rank of DIG should also be developed for the police force.

All operation plans and orders relating to an event should be documented for future review by courts, if needed.

The guidelines also suggest that a police complaints authority should be established and made functional to ensure that it fulfilled the role of accountability as enshrined in the Police Order 2002.

"Police have a strong in-built bias against protesters raising voice against policies of the government. Police officers also expressly or tacitly or by way of acquiescence are assured that they would be rewarded for indulging in unlawful and illegal actions like use of force with an implied assurance about immunity from prosecution. This encourages police to use unlawful and illegal measures against protesters."

The guidelines also say that police should be insulated from the government pressure and intervention.

"There should also be an absolute prohibition on the use of unlawful force or any other measures by police that could result in the death or injury of any of the protesters."

About the Pakistan Television, the guidelines said, the state-controlled TV should not act as an advertising agency of the ruling party; rather it should promote and present a neutral and factually objective account of a public event.

He requested the court to direct the government to publish on a monthly basis in leading newspapers a summary of the amount it was spending on publicity to discourage the favour being extended to certain channels and newspapers and promote accountability.

About journalists, Mr Anwar said they had the right to be present at and report from a scene of crime or event and, therefore, it should be made mandatory that if a journalist was injured or any of his equipment/camera damaged or broken, an FIR should be registered against those responsible.

He said that all TV channels should be allowed to cover the proceedings closely and from a vantage point. — *DAWN 24/10/2007*

CJ vows to ensure release of the missing

By Iftikhar A. Khan

ISLAMABAD, Oct 29: Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry has said he will go to any extent to secure release of the victims of enforced disappearance. Hearing the case of missing persons, the Chief Justice admonished the authorities concerned for not speeding up the process of producing and releasing the missing persons.

"Are the authorities trying to legalise abductions

by releasing these people one after another?" he asked.

He regretted that secret agencies, despite being the abductors, were producing victims through police departments.

The court directed government lawyers to produce correct number of the victims of enforced disappearance. It also asked the authorities to either release the missing persons or regularise the cases.

The court said that it was exercising restraint and there was ample evidence that secret agencies were involved in picking up the missing persons. It directed government lawyers to consult aggrieved parties and consolidate the list of the missing persons.

The court warned the authorities of stern action if the missing persons were not released by the next hearing on Nov 1.

The government lawyers maintained that 186 people had so far been traced and released.

— *DAWN* 30/10/2007

Gen Musharraf's second coup

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD, Nov 3: In what is a virtual martial law, President Pervez Musharraf, acting as army chief, on Saturday imposed a state of emergency throughout Pakistan, suspended the Constitution and replaced superior courts in a move that could put the country's political future into disarray.

In his proclamation of emergency, the general blamed growing violence by militants and a judiciary which he said was working at "cross purposes" with his government and the legislature for his most drastic action since he seized power in an October 12, 1999 coup.

A Provisional Constitutional Order was also

issued, putting the Constitution in 'abeyance' but saying the country would be "governed, as nearly as may be, in accordance with the Constitution" although seven of its articles relating to fundamental rights would remain suspended, and empowering the president to amend the document 'as is deemed expedient'.

The move, greeted with immediate condemnation at home by opposition parties, lawyers and human rights groups and concern from "war on terror" allies like the United States and Britain, came only 12 days before the expiration of General Musharraf's presidency and the present assemblies and while an 11-judge bench of the Supreme Court was in a weekend recess in its hearing of challenges to his election for another five-year presidential term mainly on grounds of his army office.

General Musharraf seemed to have run out of other political and constitutional options as he took one of the most extraordinary steps by a ruler in 60 years of Pakistan's life, putting aside not only the Constitution but also his own sweeping powers as president and preferring to act as Chief of the Army Staff.

The emergency proclamation said a situation had arisen where the "government of the country cannot be carried out in accordance with the Constitution" and "the Constitution provides no solution for this situation".

However, the present federal and provincial governments, both houses of parliament and the provincial assemblies were kept intact.

CHARGE-SHEET AGAINST JUDICIARY: While it started with what it called "visible ascendancy in the activities of extremists and incidents of terrorist attacks" as grounds for the action, the proclamation contained a long charge-sheet against the superior judiciary some of whose members, it said, "are working at cross purposes with the executive and legislature in the fight against terrorism and extremism, thereby weakening the government and the nation's resolve and diluting the efficacy of its actions to control this menace".

"... (T)here has been increasing interference by some members of the judiciary in government policy, adversely affecting economic growth, in particular," it said, adding that there was "constant interference in executive functions."

It also blamed the judiciary's interference for having "weakened the writ of the government, the police force ... been completely demoralised and ...fast losing its efficacy to fight terrorism, and intelligence agencies ... thwarted in their activities and prevented from pursuing terrorists."

While "some hard core militants, extremists, terrorists and suicide bombers, who were arrested and being investigated were ordered to be released," it said and added: "The persons so released have subsequently been involved in heinous terrorist activities, resulting in loss of human life and property. Militants across the country have, thus, been encouraged while law enforcement agencies (were) subdued."

CONSULTATIONS: The proclamation said the general acted after reviews of the situation in meetings with the prime minister, governors of all four provinces, armed forces chiefs and army corps commanders.

"Now, therefore, in pursuance of the deliberations and decisions of the said meetings, I General Pervez Musharraf, Chief of the Army Staff, proclaim emergency throughout Pakistan," it said. "I hereby order and proclaim that the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan shall remain in abeyance."

BLOW TO JUDICIARY: The emergency proclamation's charges against judicial activism, which were immediately followed by change of command at the Supreme Court as well as changes in provincial high courts, appeared aimed at reversing what was hailed as a revival of independence of the judiciary after months of an epic movement led by lawyers since the president suspended Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry on March 9.

Justice Iftikhar, who was reinstated by a bench of

Supreme Court judges on July 20, and several of his colleagues got marching orders under the new Provisional Constitution Order (PCO) though some of them put up a last-ditch resistance by holding the action void.

The proclamation accused "some" unspecified judges of the superior courts of "overstepping the limits of judicial authority" and having "taken over the executive and legislative functions".

The references seemed to be mainly directed at Justice Iftikhar and his colleagues for some of their actions against government officials and pursuance of the cases of missing people allegedly detained by intelligence agencies.

The fundamental rights suspended by the PCO related to security of persons (article 9) safeguard as to arrest and detention (article 10), freedom of movement (article 15), freedom of assembly, (article 16) freedom of association (article 17), freedom of speech (article 19), and equality of citizens (article 25).

It said the Supreme Court or a high court or any other court "shall not have the power to make any order against the president or the prime minister or any persons exercising powers or jurisdiction under their authority".

Reports on Saturday's events in Islamabad were filed by Raja Asghar, Nasir Iqbal, Amir Wasim, Khaleeq Kiani, Baqir Sajjad, Ahmed Hassan, Munawar Azeem and Muhammad Asghar. — *DAWN 04/11/2007*

Seven judges reject PCO before being sent home

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD, Nov 3: In an unprecedented move, seven judges of the Supreme Court on Saturday overturned the Provisional Constitutional Order and restrained the Chief of Army Staff, corps commanders, staff officers and other civil and military

officers from acting under the decree.

The judges restrained President Gen Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz from taking actions contrary to the independence of the judiciary and asked the judges of the Supreme Court and the high courts, including their chief justices, not to take an oath under the PCO or follow any other extra-constitutional step.

Headed by Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, the bench that handed down the unanimous two-page order consisted of Justice Rana Bhagwandas, Justice Javed Iqbal, Justice Mian Shakirullah Jan, Justice Nasirul Mulk, Justice Raja Fayyaz and Justice Ghulam Rabbani.

Anticipating something unusual, the judges remained in the Supreme Court till late afternoon on a day when the court never assembles. It otherwise would not have been possible for them to pass the order. "We feel that the government has no ground or reason to take extra-constitutional steps, particularly for the reasons being published in newspapers that a high-profile case is pending and is not likely to be decided in favour of the government, although the matter is still pending," the order said.

Appointment of the chief justice or judges of the Supreme Court or chief justices of the high courts under the new PCO would be unlawful and without jurisdiction, it said.

Copies of the order were sneaked out to the awaiting newsmen outside the court premises.

The order came on an application of Supreme Court Bar Association president Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan. The application was fixed for Monday to be taken up by a full court.

A constitutional expert, who wished not to be named, said the oath taking of the new chief justice was illegal because the PCO was struck down the moment it was issued.

More than seven judges of the Supreme Court

were required to reverse the restraining order, he said, adding that to the best of his knowledge only four judges were available in the capital till late Saturday night.

Another lawyer close to the government circles put the blame on the judiciary and lawyers, saying "they asked for it". He termed the extra-constitutional measure a bitter pill necessary for the treatment of an ailment.

In its order, the Supreme Court said the PCO had been promulgated to enable the government to administer a fresh oath to the chief justice and judges of the court so that favourable judges could be appointed.

Aitzaz Ahsan, while filing his application on Friday, had requested an 11-member bench to take immediate action before the axe fell on the judges. Attorney-General Malik Mohammad Qayyum had replied in an angry tone that no martial law was being imposed.

HOUSE ARREST: Sacked Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry and some other judges who refused to take an oath under the new PCO were placed under house arrest shortly after the seven-member bench declared the proclamation of emergency unconstitutional, sources in the police department said.

Justice Chaudhry had earlier been told by the government that his services were no longer required and he had been escorted back to his home.

He returned home in his car carrying the chief justice flag, along with the official motorcade. Alighting from his vehicle, he looked calm and composed and was greeted by his personal staff.

His home was later surrounded by personnel of the Islamabad police, Punjab Constabulary and intelligence agencies. The road leading to judicial colony had been blocked since evening.

— **DAWN 04/11/2007**

Crackdown on lawyers

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD, Nov 3: In a countrywide crackdown, the government detained several political leaders, lawyers and civil rights activists in their houses on Saturday to stop them from taking any action against the imposition of emergency.

In Islamabad, leading lawyers Aitazaz Ahsan, Ali Ahmed Kurd and Munir Malik were detained under the 3 MPO for 30 days each, and police were looking for other leaders, particularly Hamid Ali Khan, to pre-empt the legal fraternity's reaction to the government move.

The crackdown forced many lawyers and political workers in the capital to go underground to avoid arrest.

PUNJAB: In Lahore, police raided the house of human rights activist and lawyer Asma Jehangir and put her under house arrest in Gulberg.

Another police team raided the residence of Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaaf chairman Imran Khan's in Zaman Park, but he was not present there, police sources told Dawn. A police team was deployed outside his residence.

(However, Mr Khan told AFP by telephone he had been placed under house.

"Police entered my house in Lahore and told me that I have been placed under house arrest. They did not show me any detention order at all," the AFP quoted Mr Khan as saying.)

A senior police officer of Lahore city police told Dawn on condition of anonymity that an operation had been launched to detain active members of the lawyers' community and leaders of opposition political parties.

"We have updated lists of 'trouble-makers' and will act against them with the passage of time," he said.

SINDH: Police arrested Sindh Taraqqi Pasand Party (STPP) chairman Dr Qadir Magsi after a raid on his residence amid reports of similar raids on homes of senior politician Rasool Bux Palijo and other political leaders and activists in the district.

Confirming the arrest, an STPP spokesman said that Dr Magsi asked for arrest warrants but the DPO said he had 'orders from above' to arrest him.

A source in police said they had received directives to arrest political leaders. DPO Shaukat, however, denied reports of arrests.

"We are awaiting directives for arrests of some lawyers and nationalist leaders, but so far no directive has been received," he told Dawn late Saturday night. But another police source said they had received directives to arrest all those leaders who had been in the forefront of the struggle for restoration of Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry.

BALUCHISTAN: Several political leaders and lawyers were arrested in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan on Saturday night.

Police sources told Dawn that Pashtoonkhwa Mili Awami Party Chairman Mehmood Khan Achakzai, BNP Secretary General Habib Jalib, Kachjol Ali advocate and Mir Akhtar Hussain Lango had been arrested.

The sources said police also arrested former MNA of BNP Rauf Mengal former MPA Mir Akbar Mewngal, Balochistan High Court Bar Association President Manzoor Lango, Hadi Shakeel Ahmed, Andul Qahir advocate and Khalid Khan advocate.

The sources said that police also raided houses of several lawyers and political leaders but they were not present at their homes.

Meanwhile, the personnel of the Frontier Corps were deployed at all important places in the provincial capital late Saturday night while contingents of FC patrolled the city.

COUNTRYWIDE CRACKDOWN: Hundreds

of lawyers, rights activists and politicians detained.
— *DAWN* 04/11/2007

Army Act scope widened

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf has declared the Pakistan Army Act 1952, Amended Ordinance 2007, which would henceforth be referred to as, Pakistan Army Amended Ordinance 2007. Official sources have announced implementation of the said Ordinance from 1st Jan 2008, in accordance with clause 1 of Article 89 of Pakistan's Constitution, read with Proclamation of emergency of the third day of November 2007, and the Provincial Constitution Order No 1 of 2007, the amendment rendered Section 2 of the Army Act 1952 (xxxix of 1952) amended by adding a new sub-section (iia) after changing its sub-section (i) clause D, and subsection (ii). Henceforth, any such crime committed against the defence, integrity of Pakistan of against army itself, punishable under the explosive substance act of 1908, prejudicial conduct under the security of Pakistan Act 1952 (xxxv of 1952), the Pakistan Arms Ordinance 1965, (W.P Ord XX of 1965), the Prevention of Anti-National Act, 1974 (vii of 1974), and section 505 of the Penal Code of Pakistan, would be punishable by this law.

The said ordinance had been necessitated to punish elements found guilty of conspiring against the integrity, defence, and other heinous crimes perpetuated against the Army.
— *THE NEWS* 11/11/2007

Amended PCO vests president with power to lift emergency

By Ihtasham ul Haque

ISLAMABAD, Nov 15: President Gen Pervez Musharraf who as Chief of Army Staff promulgated

the state of emergency and Provisional Constitution Order on November 3 has transferred the power of lifting the emergency to the office of president. He amended the PCO with the Provisional Constitution (Amendment) Order 2007, issued on Wednesday night.

The order comes into force at once and will be deemed to have taken effect on Nov 3, 2007...

Political observers, however, say the amendment reflects Gen Musharraf's desire to rule with the powers of emergency even after hanging up his uniform...

In reply to a question, the AG said that generally anybody "who imposes the emergency, himself removes it, but now the situation is changing, keeping in view that the president is quitting as the COAS and, therefore, he wants to keep these powers with him," he said. — *DAWN* 16/11/2007

Bars to continue strike

Dawn Reporter

OKARA: Nov 17: The District Bar Association (DBA) has decided to continue strike and boycott of court proceedings to press the government to lift emergency, recall the Provisional Constitution Order (PCO) and restore the Constitution.

DBA members staged a rally within court premises and chanted slogans against General Musharraf.

Similarly, Deepalpur Tehsil Bar Association also decided to continue boycott of court proceedings till Nov 26.

GUJRANWALA: The DBA observed a complete boycott of court proceedings and decided to offer

voluntary arrests to reinforce their ongoing movement.

The DA formed a special committee, headed by Khursheed Ahmad Sodhi, to supervise the voluntarily arrests campaign. It was decided that the committee would maintain a register to keep records of the lawyers offering voluntary arrests and membership of those lawyers who could not offer arrest would be cancelled.

FAISALABAD: The DBA decided to continue boycott till the release of the bar president and other detained lawyers, and decided to build a 'justice corner' in its barroom to pay respect to deposed superior court judges.

This was first-ever meeting after the promulgation of the emergency as the lawyers had been hemmed in by the police for the past 12 days.

The lawyers also staged a rally on the court premises.

KHANEWAL: the lawyers continued their strike throughout the district and decided to observe a 'black day' on Monday to show solidarity with journalists.

"We have planned to allocate a full-day for protests and rallies on Monday to protest curbs on media," DBA president Chudhry Ghulam Husain told Dawn.

MIANWALI: DBA members along with members of Isakhel and Piplan TBAs observed a complete strike.

The action committee of lawyers demanded continuing strike for another week on which the suggestion was presented before the DBA general house meeting presided over by its president, Malik Rafiq.

The house decided to continue the strike till the acceptance of their demands.

TOBA TEK SINGH: bar members continued their strike for the 14th consecutive to protest the imposition of emergency. — *Dawn 17/11/2007*

Three SC judges want to quit bench: Petitions against emergency

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD, Nov 16: Three judges on a 10-member Supreme Court bench hearing petitions against the imposition of emergency on Friday said they wanted to opt out of the bench.

Justice Mohammad Nawaz Abbasi, Justice Faqir Mohammad Khokhar and Justice M. Javed Buttar said judicial propriety demanded that they detached themselves from the bench after President Gen Pervez Musharraf had cited their recent judgments to justify the imposition of emergency. They said they would make their decision known at the next hearing on Monday...

"Since I was a member of the bench which restored Chief Justice Ifikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, now again deposed under the Provisional Constitution Order, I should recuse myself from the bench," Justice Khokhar said.

Justice Abbasi said if his brother judge would not sit on the bench how could he and Justice Buttar sit because they too were part of the benches which had heard the cases of missing people and the Lal Masjid.

One of the reasons cited for the proclamation of emergency was that militants had been released on the orders of the Supreme Court, Justice Abbasi said.

"But this is a misconception," he said, adding that not a single instance was on record to prove that militants had been released on court orders. Advocate Irfan Qadir, the counsel for Tikka Khan, said he had complete faith in each member of the bench but every judge had the right to opt out of the bench.

Attorney General Malik Mohammad Qayyum said the bench was being over sensitive and suggested that it could hold in its judgment that failure of the

judiciary could not be made a ground to justify the emergency rule.

After hearing the petitions for three days, the members of the bench were now saying they wanted to excuse themselves from the bench, he said.

— *DAWN 17/11/2007*

KARACHI: Lawyers stay away from PCO courts

By A Reporter

KARACHI, Nov 17: The legal fraternity observed a complete boycott of court proceedings at the City Courts and Malir District Courts on Saturday in response to the call of the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) against the imposition of emergency rule in the country, the ousting of the chief justice and other judges of the Supreme Court and high courts and Provisional Constitution Order.

Around 362 undertrial prisoners from different prisons of the city were brought to the City Courts, but due to the lawyers' boycott the hearing of their cases could not be conducted.

Meanwhile, a general body meeting of the Karachi Bar Association (KBA) was held at the Shuhada-i-Punjab Hall of the City Courts with senior advocate Sathi Ishaq in the chair. The meeting condemned the imposition of emergency rule in the country and urged the government to restore the 1973 constitution, release all the arrested lawyers across the country and restore the deposed judges of the Supreme Court and high courts.

Advocate Iqbal Aqeel moved a resolution in which he urged the government to lift the emergency, restore the constitution, release all lawyers and restore all the deposed judges who did not take an oath under the PCO....

It was decided in the meeting that a complete boycott of court proceedings would be observed on

Saturdays at the City Courts and Malir District Courts in accordance with the announcement of the PBC, while a one-hour boycott of court proceedings from 11am to 12 noon would continue on a daily basis. —

DAWN 18/11/2007

Challenge to Musharraf's candidacy: SC dismisses main petitions

Assad Hameed

ISLAMABAD - A full court of the Supreme Court on Monday dismissed three constitutional petitions, challenging the eligibility of President General Pervez Musharraf to hold presidential office for another term, while Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Vice Chairman Makhdoom Amin Fahim had withdrawn his petition on the same issue....

The apex court also rejected a contempt petition filed by Justice (Retd) Ahmed against Chief Election Commissioner because of not being pursued.

With the dismissal of these petitions, now only one petition against election of President Musharraf is still pending in the court, which will be taken up on Thursday.

Legal experts say the Monday's order had cleared the way for re-election of President Musharraf, as the bar on Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to notify him as a successful candidate in October 6 presidential election has also vanished with the rejection of legal challenge to his candidacy.

While allowing General Musharraf to contest the poll in uniform, a larger bench of the apex court headed by Justice Javed Iqbal, on October 5, had allowed the ECP to go ahead with its polling schedule but barred it from notifying the successful candidate till the final disposal of pleas.

— *THE NATION 20/11/2007*

CJ blames failure of legislatures for army rule

By Iftikhar A. Khan

ISLAMABAD, Nov 20: Supreme Court Chief Justice Abdul Hameed Dogar said on Tuesday that the failure of legislatures to properly perform their functions always led to military interventions in the country.

He made this observation during the hearing of identical petitions challenging the validity of emergency and the Provisional Constitution Order....

The Chief Justice said that jurisdiction of the courts remained intact even under the martial law and powers of the judiciary could not be curtailed through emergency. "Courts are working in routine," he remarked. He said the courts had the powers of judicial review even on matters relating to extra-constitutional steps, like the imposition of emergency. — *DAWN 21/11/2007*

Deposed judges free to go to their hometowns: Cheema

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD, Nov 20: The government has allowed deposed judges to move to their hometowns or keep their official houses till the law permitted them, said Interior Ministry spokesman Brig (retd) Javed Iqbal Cheema on Tuesday.

Talking to Dawn after a weekly press briefing, Mr Cheema claimed that no deposed judge was under house arrest and they were free to go to their homes.

Denying that many judges of the Supreme Court, including Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, were under house arrest, he said: "They can move to their

homes for which they will be facilitated by the government."

However, some lawyers were of the view that even after going back to their homes, the deposed judges would not be allowed to move outside and they would remain under a virtual house arrest.

Mr Cheema said he did not know if the judges would be allowed outside after they were back in their homes.

He said that under the law, the deposed judges could stay at their government accommodations for a month or so. — *DAWN 21/11/2007*

Musharraf's orders can't be challenged

By Haq Nawaz

ISLAMABAD - President General Pervez Musharraf promulgated Wednesday an ordinance, providing legal cover to the acts he has taken since November 3 including imposition of emergency.

The ordinance has given protection to all the orders passed by General Musharraf, including the emergency rule, the Provisional Constitution Order, appointments of the new judges, fresh oath under PCO, postings and election schedule 2008. The President's orders and acts, he has taken, cannot be challenged or brought into discussion in any court, it asserted.

It states, "All orders, proceedings, appointments made on or after November 3, in exercise of the powers derived from any Proclamation, Provisional Constitution Order, President's orders, ordinances, enactment and amendments in the Constitution, will be deemed valid and shall not be called in question in any court."

The new amendment order has been made part of the constitution 270 (AAA) through presidential ordinance 2007. The order has validated all the steps taken by General Musharraf as Chief of the Army Staff since November 3.

The orders which could not be challenged include: The proclamation of Emergency of November 03, 2007, all President's Orders, Ordinances, Chief of Army Staff Orders, including the Provisional Constitution order No.1 2007, the Oath of Office (Judges) Order, 2007, the amendments made in the Constitution through the Constitution (Amendment) Order, 2007 and all other laws made between the 3rd day of November, 2007 and the date on which the Proclamation of Emergency of the 3rd Day of November, 2007, (both days inclusive) are accordingly affirmed, adopted and declared as valid.

This Order may be called the Constitution (Amendment) Order, 2007 and it shall come into force at once.

Under the same ordinance, the President also ordered setting up the Federal High Court in Islamabad through Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO).

Under the Ordinance, the territory of federal capital will fall under the jurisdiction of Federal High Court.

According to the newly promulgated ordinance, the Supreme Court has the power to withdraw any case or appeal from the high courts and to dispose of it.

In addition to the setting up of Federal High Court, the composition of the Election Commission is also being increased from four to five members.

Before the formation of Federal High Court, all the appeals and petitions arising out of the legal dispute and issues from federal capital were adjudicated in Lahore High Court, Rawalpindi Bench. The local populace and lawyers both will benefit heavily from the establishment of Federal High Court, on one hand, while the backlog of cases in Lahore High Court, Rawalpindi Bench, will also drop...

The President's Order No 5 of 2007 also validates all orders and ordinances, promulgated and issued since November 03, 2007.

Under the order, with setting up a High Court in the ICT, the composition of the Election Commission has been enhanced from four to five members.

— **THE NATION 22/11/2007**

Munir Malik hospitalised in Islamabad

By Mohammad Asghar

RAWALPINDI, Nov 23: Former president of the Supreme Court Bar Association Munir A. Malik has been shifted from the Attock jail to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) hospital in Islamabad amid tight security, it is learnt...

Earlier, Mr Malik was examined in the Attock jail hospital by medical specialist of the Attock district headquarters hospital Dr Mohammad Riaz and Jail Medical Officer Dr Bukhari. The doctors reported that the lawyer was suffering from liver and kidney problems...

Mr Malik had been taken to the Attock district jail from Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi on Nov 11. He was detained under the Maintenance of Public Order for three months along with other senior lawyers, including Aizaz Ahasn, Ali Ahmed Kurd, Justice (retd) Tariq Mahmood following the imposition of emergency on Nov 3.

Dawn staff reporter in Karachi adds: nine representatives of the Bar in Karachi have demanded 'unconditional release forthwith' of Mr Malik in view of his serious illness... — **DAWN 24/11/2007**

Bar Councils Ord promulgated

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf has Promulgated Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils (Amendment) Ordinance, 2007.

Text: Short title and commencement: (1) This Ordinance may be called the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils (Amendment) Ordinance, 2007.

2) It shall come into force at once.

2. Amendment of section 9, Act XXXV of 1973.- In the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act, 1973 (XXXV of 1973), hereinafter referred to as the said Act, in section 9, in sub-section (1), in clause (a), the words 'and to remove advocates from such roll' shall be omitted.

3. Amendment of section 10, Act XXXV of 1973.- In the said Act, in section 10, in sub-section (1), clause (aa), shall be omitted.

4. Amendment of section 13, Act XXXV of 1973.- In the said Act, in section 13,-

(i) in sub-section (1), clause (c) shall be omitted;

(ii) for sub-section (2), the following new sub-section shall be substituted, namely.

"(2) Any person aggrieved by any decision, order or resolution of Pakistan Bar Council, a Provincial Bar Council, the Supreme Court Bar Association, or any other Bar Association may within thirty days of such decision, order or resolution prefer an appeal to the Chairman of the Pakistan Bar Council, whose decision in such matter shall be final."

5. Amendment of section 15, Act XXXV of 1973: In the said Act, in section 15, in sub-section(1), clause (a) shall be omitted.

6. Substitution of section 41, Act XXXV of 1973: In the said Act, for section 41, the following should be substituted, namely:

"41. Punishment of advocates for misconduct.- (1) Where on receipt of a complaint or otherwise, the Supreme Court or the High Court, as the case may be, has reason to believe that any advocate has been guilty of professional or other misconduct, it may for reasons to be recorded and after giving an opportunity of hearing pass any of the following orders:

(a) dismiss the complaint;

(b) reprimand the advocate;

(c) suspend the advocate for practice for such

period as it may deem fit;

(d) remove the name of the advocate from the roll of the advocates;

Provided that it shall not be necessary to give any notice for passing any ad-interim order of suspension during the pendency of proceedings.

(2) The Supreme Court or High Court may constitute a disciplinary committee comprising of at least two judges of the said court for exercising the powers under this section and may if it so desires co-opt one advocate of the Supreme Court to be a member of the Committee.

(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in section 55 and 56, the Supreme Court or the High Court the case may be, may make rules for giving effect to section 41 and 42 and the procedure to be followed in this regard."

7. Substitution of section 42, Act XXXV of 1973.- In the said Act, for section 42, the following shall be substituted, namely:-

"42. Appeal:- (1) An appeal shall lie against the final order passed by the High Court or its disciplinary committee under section 41 to the Supreme Court within thirty days of passing of such order.

(2) An intra-court appeal shall lie to the Supreme Court against the final order of the disciplinary committee constituted under section 41 by the Supreme Court, which shall be heard by three or more judges of the said Court and shall be decided within thirty days of the passing of the impugned order."

8. Omission of certain sections, Act XXXV of 1973.- In the said Act, sections 43 to 54, shall be omitted.

9. Amendment of section 55, Act XXXV of 1973.- In the said Act, in section 55, clause (s) shall be omitted.

10. Amendment of section 56, Act XXXV of 1973.- In the said Act, in section 56, clause (i) shall be omitted.

11. Amendment of section 59B, Act XXXV of 1973.- In the said Act, in section 59B, in sub-section (1),-

(i) for the word "removed" the words "expelled or removed" shall be substituted; and

(ii) in the existing proviso, for the full stop at the end a colon shall be substituted and thereafter the following proviso shall be added namely:-

"Provided further that no member of a Bar Association shall be expelled or removed from membership by any bar Association without giving him opportunity of being heard and except with the prior approval of the Chairman of the Pakistan Bar Council."

12. Consequential amendment in the Rules.- As a consequence of the amendments made through this Ordinance, namely, the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils (Amendment) Ordinance, 2007, rules 117 to 127 of the Paksitan Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Rules 1976, rules 6.1 to 6.10 of the Punjab Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Rules 1974, rules 54 to 63 of the Sind Legal

Practitioners and Bar Councils Rules 1975, rules 54 to 63 of the Baluchistan Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Rules 1975 and rules 6.1 to 6.2 of the NWFP Legal Practitioners and Bar Council Rules, 1974, shall stand omitted. — *APP / THE POST 25/11/2007*

LBA gives 24-hour ultimatum for lawyers' release

Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Lahore Bar Association (LBA) Saturday gave a 24 hours ultimatum to the government for the release of detained lawyers including SCBA president Aitzaz Ahsan. LBA president Syed Mohammad Shah said this while addressing lawyers at a hunger strike camp held in

protest against the imposition of emergency, removal of judges and curbs on media.

Responding to a call by LBA, lawyers went on a strike and boycotted courts' proceedings besides a large number of lawyers observed sit-in at the hunger strike camp at Aiwan-e-Adl courts. ..

Meanwhile, city courts remained deserted on Saturday following the lawyers' ongoing strike for the 18th consecutive day. As a result, the hearing in thousands of cases of different natures including murder, narcotics, Hudood and civil were deferred by the courts without any proceedings. — *THE POST 25/11/2007*

Ousted judges told to vacate houses by 30th

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD, Nov 25: The government on Sunday said all deposed judges including former Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry should leave their official accommodation in the Judges Colony till November 30.

"All deposed judges should leave their official accommodation till November 30 and return to their own houses," caretaker interior minister Lt-Gen (retired) Hamid Nawaz told mediapersons at a function in Liaquat Gymnasium.

Before this, the ministry's spokesman Brig (retired) Javed Iqbal Cheema had said the government had allowed all deposed judges to move to their hometowns or keep their official houses as far as the law permitted them to do so. He claimed that none of the deposed judge was under house arrest and they were free to go back to their homes. The official said according to the law the deposed judges could stay in their government accommodations till one month or so....

Justice Chaudhry on Sunday made the second attempt to go outside to proceed to Pakistan Institute

of Medical Sciences (Pims) to inquire about the health of senior lawyer Munir A. Malik who is suffering from renal disease under detention.

He had also negated the government claims on Wednesday (November 21) that all judges removed under emergency were free to move and go back to their hometowns by trying to go out of his official residence. However, the government did not allow him to do so.

Since the imposition of emergency rule, many demonstrations have taken place outside the Judges Colony and now the government may have realised that without sending all the deposed judges to their hometowns the wave of protests and demonstrations could not be minimised. — *DAWN 26/11/2007*

Lawyers have to revise strategy: Munir

The Post Report

ISLAMABAD: Former Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) president Munir A Malik has been released. Under police custody, he fell ill and had been under treatment at PIMS since Friday evening.

Giving an interview to a foreign news channel, he said the overall situation in the country had changed drastically after November 3 hence the lawyers would have to revise their policy regarding the lawyer's movement accordingly.

About the deposed judges of the Supreme Court, he said he was happy to see them firm at their stance, but the leader of the lawyers' movement Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry is still under house arrest.

He further stressed it is vital that the lawyer's movement should not be hijacked by the political parties. The unity of lawyers is important at this time, he added.

Mr Malik refuted the rumours of torture on him; he however, said that his health problem was because of the imprisonment.

According to him, on the first night of his arrest, he and Aitzaz Ahsan were kept in the same cell at Adyala Jail.

Mohsin Babbar adds: The family of Athar Minallah, eminent lawyer and supporter of deposed judges and former Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, expressing its concern said that Adiyala Jail administration is treating Athar inhumanely. They have also said they he is being dealt like criminals.

Athar Minallah was arrested on November 21 when he was accompanying Justice (Retd) Wajuddin Ahmad to meet deposed Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry.

Ghazla Minallah, the wife of Athar Minallah told The Post on Sunday that her husband has been kept in a cell with other prisoners and forced to sleep on the floor."Mattresses, pillows or quilts are not allowed for him. We were told that the maximum capacity of the jail is 2000 whereas it has 6,000 prisoners at the moment," Ghazala added.

She said that she met her husband on Saturday in the jail. — *THE POST 26/11/2007*

Lawyers not to appear before 'PCO judges': LHCBA

Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Lahore High court Bar Association (LHCBA) and Lahore Bar Association (LBA) Monday in a joint meeting passed a resolution to boycott all court's hearings till restoration of deposed judges of Supreme Court and High Courts....

On the decision of Pakistan Bar Council lawyers across the country would not appear in the courts of the judges who took oath under PCO, the resolution said. The resolution demanded that the judiciary of November 3 be restored and election be conducted under an independent election commission. — *THE POST 27/11/2007*

Media



Source: DAWN



Source: DAWN

Freedom of expression: Right or privilege?

By Muhammad Badar Alam

On May 12, 2007 Nadia Mirza, a news presenter with Aaj Television network, broke into tears when her car was set on fire during an attack on the channel's Karachi offices. "I can't do it, I can't do it," she cried as she left her seat in front of the cameras in terror.

The story of the abuses the media and its practitioners faced in 2007 is long and covers almost every aspect of media's operations. It runs from physical violence to monetary punishment, from arbitrary changes in laws to large-scale violations of even the changed laws, from banning an entire television network to restricting the distribution and broadcast of media products.

Violence:

Journalists found themselves on the wrong side of law enforcement agencies right from the start of the year. The police in Islamabad beat up dozens of local and foreign journalists who had gathered at the site of an explosion at the Marriott hotel on January 26. About ten reporters were injured as security officials tried to keep media-persons away from the site of the blast.

In the middle of March, a week or so after Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry had been suspended as the chief justice of Pakistan and legal proceedings against him had started, a group of about 24 Punjab police officials stormed the offices of the Geo Television Network in Islamabad. They were apparently enraged by the live coverage of an ugly police action against lawyers and political activists in front of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The invading policemen smashed windows and barged into newsrooms and production areas, threatening the people inside with dire warnings.

At about the same time, Federal Law Minister Wasi Zafar used obscene language against Ansar Abbasi, an Islamabad-based reporter working with the English daily *The News*, and his family in a live radio programme being aired by the Voice of America. A week or so later, a lawyer affiliated with Jamaat-e-Islami stopped a cameraman of Pakistan Television from filming inside the Peshawar High Court. Ghulam Nabi, a member of the Peshawar High Court Bar Association, forced cameraman Afsar Khan out of the court premises.

On April 15, 2007, the English daily *Nation* reported how a member of the National Assembly from Pakistan People's Party assaulted a journalist interviewing the party's senior leader Makhdoom Amin Faheem in the building of the National Assembly. Less than a week later, students of a madrasa in Kasur detained three employees of Geo Television Network for allegedly filming the female students of the seminary. The students snatched the camera and forced the men working for the television channel inside the madrasa before subjecting them to torture.

On May 3, journalists were barred from entering the premises of the Supreme Court while it was hearing the chief justice's case. Some unidentified men dressed as lawyers physically blocked the way and clashed with journalists when some reporters tried to skirt around this human cordon.

Men armed with assault rifles and other sophisticated weapons attacked the headquarters of the Aaj Television Network in Karachi following the bloody mayhem caused by Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry's botched attempt to address lawyers in Karachi on May 12. The staff at the television station had to take cover and continue their broadcast from behind walls and other protective objects. The television had earned the ire of the gunmen for airing pictures of young people brandishing weapons in front of its office. Arshad Zuberi, the network's executive director, said the gunmen belonged to Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM).

In fact, on that fateful day journalists faced mortal threats wherever they were in Karachi. Fareed Farooqi, a reporter with the *Daily Times*, wondered whether he had made the right choice of profession after being hit and kicked by the activists of a Karachi-based party who were unhappy over the way he had tried to argue with them.

On May 18, Shakeel Ahmad Turabi, who heads SANA news agency, was beaten up by intelligence officials for releasing news reports favouring Chief Justice Chaudhry. Turabi had also been abducted and kept in confinement for five hours by an intelligence agency.

Later that month, Karachi-based Mohajir Rabita Council issued a long list of journalists whom the organisation accused of working against the interests of the mohajir community. At least three of these journalists, including Federal Union of Journalists Secretary General Mazhar Abbas, found bullets on the driving seats of their private cars and all others received threatening phone calls and other messages to stop what was as seen as a negative propaganda campaign against the mohajirs and their political party, MQM.

The spotlight again shifted to the security agencies in October 2007, the month President Pervez Musharraf was trying to get himself elected for another term. Brutal state force was used against journalists covering protests against the submission of his nomination papers at the Islamabad headquarters of the Election Commission of Pakistan.

In the third week of November, the Karachi police ran roughshod over a protest demonstration by journalists wanting to convey their concerns about undue curbs on the media to the provincial governor. Around 200 journalists, some of them women, were arrested after the protesters were badly beaten. Some of them had to be taken to hospitals for treatment. The same ugly official behaviour was repeated in Faisalabad where a protest by local journalists against the Karachi incident was turned into a battle by baton-wielding, teargas throwing policemen.

But perhaps the most brutal atrocity was the murder of Mehrunnisa, the widow of a slain journalist in the tribal areas, in November 2007. Mehrunnisa was killed by a bomb blast at her house. Her husband Hayatullah, a BBC correspondent for the restive North Waziristan, was killed in 2006 under mysterious circumstances,

Banishment

Most conflict zones - in the tribal areas and Swat - remained off limits to the media. Government functionaries or militants fighting the government were the only sources of information. This put media-persons in a very difficult situation: unable to confirm anything through independent sources, they had to rely on either the official version or that of the militants. For those who are confronted with this dilemma, it is like living under perpetual cross-fire. If one side is not happy with the report, it will find fault with the journalist, not with the system that limits access to reliable information. This has forced many journalists working in or near the conflict zones to relocate to protect themselves from the accusation of being biased and consequently be harmed by one or the other side.

Monetary punishments

In March 2007, the daily Dawn moved a court in Karachi accusing the government of denying it due share in public sector advertisements. The newspaper reported that the government was angry with some news reports about the situation in Balochistan. After the publication of these reports, "several influential functionaries" of the government warned the newspaper that "all advertisements to Dawn would be stopped".

About eight months later newspaper editors and publishers in Balochistan announced that they had decided to stop coverage of government activities because of official failure to pay the newspapers for government advertisements. The editors and publishers said the non-payment had put them under tremendous financial stress, rendering it almost impossible to continue bringing out their newspapers.

The government advertisements to the Jang Group of newspapers completely stopped starting in the last week of October and were not restored till well after two months.

Laws

In a major departure from standard practice, the government in early 2007 disallowed journalists covering Parliament to go into any part of the parliament building other than the press gallery. The ostensible reason was to ensure the security of the legislators but there are strong indications that the move was prompted by television talk shows arranged and aired from the parliament's cafeteria. The ban severely restricted journalists' access to the parliamentarians, something no law has so far done.

Last February, a court in Lahore put Geo News on trial for showing a court official taking bribe on camera. The network moved the Supreme Court arguing that the proceedings were against the constitutional and legal guarantees on the freedom of expression.

Two months later, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) issued a notice to Aaj Television Network for violating laws and regulations in its coverage of the crisis emerging from the trial of Justice Chaudhry. The notice said the network had failed to produce a no objection certificate from the government for the processing of its short-term up-linking license. The implication was that in view of the failure the government could ban the channel if and when it desired. The notice was a veiled threat that the network had better be careful about broadcasting programmes not to the government's liking.

As the Lal Masjid siege drew unparalleled media attention worldwide, the government sought to restrict its coverage through a ban on what can be and what cannot be shown on television. On the first day of June 2007, PEMRA issued a notice to all satellite television channels requiring them to strictly follow the code of conduct that they had signed with the regulatory authority as well as the guidelines of the Supreme Court while covering the judicial crisis involving justice Chaudhry and his trial. The authority warned that failure to comply with its orders could trigger legal action against the channels under the PEMRA Ordinance 2002.

The government further tightened its already strict rules only days later. On June 4, President Pervez Musharraf issued an ordinance empowering the electronic media watchdog, PEMRA, to seize broadcast equipment, seal premises and even suspend licenses of networks violating any government laws, rules and directives. Called PEMRA Amendment Ordinance 2007, this draconian law was promulgated without even a hint of debate within the government. Even the cabinet was not informed before its promulgation and the National Assembly, due to meet a couple of days after the promulgation, was also disregarded.

After media organisations launched a fierce resistance against the draconian ordinance, the government relented a little on June 7 and the prime minister halted the implementation of some of its harshest provisions. Sadly, however, the ordinance was used unsparingly in banning television channels and talk shows after President Musharraf imposed emergency in the country on November 3, 2007.

Before putting the ordinance to indiscriminate use, however, the government announced tough changes in media regulations and along with the proclamation of emergency issued constricting guidelines for media to follow in the wake of the emergency. The new laws issued immediately after the imposition of emergency barred media from entering into agreement with any foreign broadcaster to sell or provide airtime without permission from the government. They also barred television

networks from airing footage of suicide bombers, terrorists, victims of terrorism, statements and pronouncements of militants as well as broadcasting anything that ridicules the head of the state (read Pervez Musharraf), or members of the armed forces, or the executive, legislative, judicial organs of the government - pretty much everything that our news reports, analyses and talk shows are made of.

When Geo Television Network moved the superior judiciary against these oppressive laws, it was told that emergency had usurped fundamental rights, like the right to freedom of expression, and there was no legal remedy against this unless the emergency was lifted.

But even after the emergency was lifted, the government continued to control and muzzle the media. In their parting shot for 2007, on December 24 the regulators banned live coverage of election rallies and public gatherings.

Bans

Not content with changing the rules of the game every now and then, the government did not hesitate from taking the ultimate step to gag the media - that is, banning media houses, broadcasts as well as meddling media persons.

As early as March 15, 2007, the government banned a Geo Television programme, *Aaj Kamran Khan Key Saath*, because of its coverage of Chief Justice Chaudhry's suspension a week ago.

In the first week of May, three television channels - Geo, ARY, and Aaj - were put off air in Karachi and southern parts of Sindh. Officials at PEMRA denied even having information about the ban, let alone having ordered it. Apparently MQM had told cable operators to stop the transmission of these channels in the areas mentioned above for reasons best known to the party.

In the first week of June, however, the government swung into action on its own and forced Geo to stop airing its talk show *Mere Mutabiq* hosted by Dr Shahid Masood. The host of the programme and the management of the television said they received threatening calls from the government when they were recording the programme on June 3. Masood was interviewing a retired general, Aslam Baig, on the implications of the crisis involving Chief Justice Chaudhry's trial.

Same day, Geo and Aaj televisions were blocked by the cable operators in Lahore and Islamabad. The operators later addressed a press conference and said they would not allow any television channel to air anti-state programmes.

But the most comprehensive ban on the media came after the emergency. A week after President Musharraf imposed emergency on November 3, the government ordered all private channels - local as well as foreign - to stop showing their programmes in Pakistan through cable networks. After the viewers and television managements found a roundabout way of accessing these channels through

The most comprehensive ban on the media came after the emergency. A week after President Musharraf imposed emergency on November 3, the government ordered all private channels - local as well as foreign - to stop showing their programmes in Pakistan through cable networks.

dish antennae, the government banned the import of all equipment that went into the erection of a dish antenna. Police in the meanwhile launched a campaign against the sale and purchase of the antennae in all the major cities in the country, sometimes confiscating huge quantities of electronic and broadcast equipment. The government also persuaded the authorities in Dubai to stop the transmission of Geo and ARY televisions from there.

Though most of these channels were allowed to come back on air very grudgingly and after they had signed some surety bonds, some leading anchorpersons were still not allowed to host talk shows. Geo was an exception -- it remained under a strict ban even at the turn of the year.

Conclusion

In many ways, last year was one of the worst years in Pakistan's history as far as the media is concerned. Reports by some media organisations suggest that as many as six journalists were killed in the country in 2007, easily the highest in South Asia and even higher than the number of media people killed in 2006.

According to the US-based Committee to Protect Journalists, Pakistan was at sixth position in the list of worst offenders of media rights, in the unenviable company of such African countries as Ethiopia, Gambia and Democratic Republic of Congo, all of whom were facing violent and long-running internal conflicts of varying intensities.

Perhaps this bleak situation was due to the increasing weakness and vulnerability of the Musharraf regime on various fronts. It was on wrong side of public opinion on all the issues that it grappled with in 2007 - the judicial crisis, the Lal Masjid affair, the presidential elections, emergency and even the run up to the general elections. Perhaps this was why the government that never tired of claiming credit for freeing the airwaves like never before embarked on a campaign to muzzle the media and media people like never before. Sadly, senior government functionaries including Musharraf continued deluding themselves that public opinion was being instigated, if not created, by a hostile media and hence their hostility towards media houses, media persons and their products.

The government made no bones about this. While inaugurating the Dawn News, an English news channel based in Karachi, Musharraf said in so many words that the media was creating unnecessary alarm by projecting negative events. He rejected the idea that the media has won its freedom through a long and persisting struggle and claimed that it was he who gave them this freedom on a platter.

Obviously when someone believes he has given something to someone, he can be forgiven for thinking that he can take it back at will. But if the media's freedom is hard won, then of course nothing can condone its being taken away.

Journalists restricted to press gallery in parliament

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to restrict the movement of reporters and cameramen of the print and electronic media to the Parliament House press gallery. Daily Times learnt that journalists had been barred from entering the Parliament House cafeteria and other areas on parliament premises for security purposes. This decision was made on Monday at a meeting that was presided over by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, and a formal notice is expected soon. Sources said the prime minister had asked the authorities to make reporters and other media crew display their press cards at all times. "The cafeteria will only be used by senators and MNAs, and if reporters want to go there, they will have to seek special permission," said the sources. Security officials have also been asked to stop journalists from parking their cars in front of the parliament building and entering the building through the front door. staff report — *DAILY TIMES 07/02/2007*

Pakistan tops SA list in killed journalists

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Despite some advancement in

press freedom, Pakistan tops the list in murdered journalists with four killed in 2006, followed by Sri Lanka where two journalists and five media employers were murdered in 2006....

The report said that despite remaining independent, the media in Pakistan continued facing outbursts of intolerance by intelligence agencies, landlords and clerics. The tribal areas were turned into no-go areas for journalists. The situation in Balochistan and interior Sindh remained quite dangerous for journalists. The government amended the PEMRA law to curtail the freedom of the electronic media and weighed its options on bringing in yet another law named PAPRA to contain the print media. Four journalists were killed during the year while performing their professional duties. These included Hayatullah, Muneer Ahmed Sangi, Maqbool Hussain Siyal.

Malik Muhammad Ismail, the resident editor of Pakistan Press International, was killed in Islamabad and the motives behind his killing could not be ascertained and the police failed to apprehend any culprits, the report said.

The report said that on the legal front, except for India where information laws have been further relaxed, there was no significant development in terms of improvement in press laws. The report said that corporatisation of media remained the dominant trend in the region with contents and format being decided by the advertisers.

The public sector media, despite competitive

pressure from the private sector, remained in government control without responding to the imperatives of public services, openness and pluralism. In terms of inter-state relations in the region, media with a few exceptions followed the official line. — *DAILY TIMES 12/02/2007*

Journalists in tribal areas will get govt protection: Durrani

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: "The government is ready to provide protection to journalists if they want to travel to the tribal areas," said Federal Information Minister Muhamamd Ali Durrani on Saturday.

He said this while talking to a media delegation, consisting of International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) President Christopher Warren, National Union of Journalists (NUJ) President Chris Morley and Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists President Pervez Shaukat.

He said that the issue of wage board award for journalists will be resolved within a few days or weeks. The minister said that implementation of the wage award tops the priorities of the information ministry. "We have consulted all parties concerned and negotiations are in the final stage. I am sure that the matter will be resolved within days or weeks," he said, adding that all options were open to the government. "We have alternate options to resolve the issue. In my opinion, all concerned parties also want an amicable solution and hopefully the matter will be resolved through dialogue," he said, adding that the government was ready to facilitate the owners of media organisations if the issue were resolved. Durrani said that the country's media had unparalleled freedom and its active role was assisting the government in ensuring good governance.

"Criticism by media either specifies inefficient

elements or assists the government in correcting them," the minister said. To a question regarding information laws, Senator Durrani said that under the Freedom of Information Law, any journalist could access the required information. He said that the Pakistan Electronic Media Regularity Authority (PEMRA) had issued a number of new FM radio licences. "Besides entertainment programmes, community-based radio channels also transmit news in national and local languages," he said.

He said that the government was working to set up more media offices to facilitate journalists to enable them to access information in emergency situations. Durrani said that the government was developing infrastructure in the tribal areas to ensure to control them.

Responding to a question regarding public sector advertisements to media organisations, he said, "The Information Ministry is only a link between the media and the public sector departments." "The concerned departments have the prerogative to name newspapers for giving advertisements and the ministry is a bridge between the two," said State Information Minister Senator Tariq Azeem, on the occasion. — *DAILY TIMES 25/02/2007*

Dawn advertisement ban challenged

By Shujaat Ali Khan

KARACHI: The Pakistan Herald Publications Limited has challenged in the Sindh High Court the withholding of advertisements by the federal government from Dawn.

A writ petition moved by the publisher through Advocate Muneer A. Malik says that Dawn is a 'Metropolitan A' newspaper falling within the highest circulation bracket. The circulation figures are verifiable by the government's own Audit Bureau of Circulation.

The daily is widely read for the quality and

objectivity of its news coverage, comments and features. It is not aligned to any political party, which is one reason why the public looks up to it for credible news and objective analysis.

Its editorial team operates independently of its management and ownership. A newspaper, however, is a product sold below the cost of its production and makes up for the loss through revenues earned from advertisements.

The federal government, says the petition, is a major source of advertisements, usually public notices and awareness campaigns placed by the federal ministries and divisions and institutions working under the government.

Publication of such advertisements is mandated by law and they are distributed among newspapers on the basis of rational criteria including circulation, readership, language and the target population. In conformity with the criteria, the release of advertisements to Dawn remained normal till November 2006.

Following publication of news reports dealing with the situation in Balochistan, however, several influential functionaries of the respondent government warned the petitioner publishing concern that all advertisements to Dawn would be 'stopped'.

In the latter part of December 2006, the flow of advertisements was actually curtailed by the respondent government. To mask the policy of punishing the petitioner though, advertisements were placed occasionally. In fact, a partial ban on advertisements to Dawn was imposed in violation of the fundamental right of freedom of Press guaranteed by Article 19 of the Constitution.

Instructions were conveyed to various departments that adverts specifically intended for Dawn by the originator be diverted to other newspapers. (Copies of cancellation of orders by advertising agencies 'due to ban on release of advertisements to Dawn by the Press Information Department', including a January 10 Orient

Advertising letter cancelling a PSO advertisement, have been annexed to the petition).

The petition says the government being repository of public power is required to act justly and fairly while releasing advertisements to the print media. It cannot act on its whims and prejudices and in an arbitrary manner. No reason has been communicated to the petitioner for the sudden fall in the number of government advertisements published by the daily for decades.

Placement of advertisements is not a largesse the government can bestow on whomsoever it desires for whatever reason. It is a sovereign function to be discharged in accordance with a rational policy and without any discrimination. The withholding of advertisements will compel the petitioner to raise the price of the newspaper and risk a decline in circulation.

It has already deprived the Dawn readers of valuable information in respect of job vacancies, tenders and bids, etc.

The government action, the petition states, is repugnant not only to Article 19 but also to Article 25, which bars discrimination. It prays to the court to declare the action illegal and unconstitutional and direct the government to release advertisements to the newspaper in accordance with the established policy and practice.
— *DAWN 07/03/2007*

Wasi Zafar, journalist exchange harsh words

LAHORE: Harsh words were exchanged between Federal Law Minister Wasi Zafar and Islamabad-based journalist Ansar Abbasi on a radio programme - Voice of America - with the former making blatant use of abusive language, reported Geo TV. On Wasi Zafar's insistence, the channel later aired a recording of the radio programme in which the minister and the journalist lashed out at each other's families.
— *DAILY TIMES 14/03/2007*

Media under siege

By Tariq Butt

ISLAMABAD: The press was under siege on a Friday that turned into a black day due to the use of brute force by the police.

The office of The News, Islamabad and Geo's capital headquarters located on the same premises were vandalised by the Punjab police without provocation, as Islamabad's deputy commissioner and the senior superintendent police kept standing at the corner of the building.

While we were preparing to evacuate to save ourselves from the thrashing by the police, which had entered the premises, the thick smoke of teargas enveloping the surroundings prevented us even moving an inch.

Our Karachi office was insisting that we should leave the building immediately but that was simply impossible because of zero visibility. Initially, it was the Jang building's main glass entrance that was smashed into pieces by the police.

We never thought that the police would dare enter our office as well. But what happened later was that The News office was twice attacked by the police as if it was the main target. The first assault was launched by a contingent of three or four cops, when we were watching Geo coverage after being literally confined to our office.

Suddenly, an office boy of the Jang group entered the room, followed by a few gun-wielding Punjab policemen. Two cops gatecrashed while others followed. We jumped from our seats to block this unlawful entry of the policemen and tried to push them back. When one cop tried to proceed further, he was stopped by us, while the other policemen were prevented from entering the office. "We are doing this on the orders of the SP," the cop said. We finally shoved the policeman out of our office. In the scuffle, his cap fell in our room.

Several staffers, including Ansar Abbasi, the Editor Investigations, were present in the office. However, none of the cops touched anyone there. Within a few minutes, a comparatively larger contingent returned with vengeance. They started smashing the windows - as shown in the Geo footage - repeatedly. We were just helplessly watching the scenario.

With the windows completely smashed, we were preparing ourselves for a thrashing but to our good luck, this time none of the cops entered. From outside the room, one of the policemen asked us to give his cap back, which we did. As he got it, he and his other colleagues smashed the remaining windows of The News offices, while hurling abuse at us. But we did not react.

Ironically, the policemen had destroyed The News offices, when Information Minister Muhammad Ali Durrani entered our corridor after visiting the adjacent Geo headquarters. He saw the attack with his own eyes but was helpless to do anything.

Before that the glass of the back and main entrance gates of the Geo offices was smashed. The police manhandled the staff and beat the security guards. Geo staffers tried to prevent the trespassing by the Punjab police but failed.

Sensing the attack, Geo Bureau chief Hamid Mir went live on air and said the police were about to attack the offices. Geo reporter and producer Asma Chaudhry came under severe assault while Durrani was entering the Geo offices.

At the same time, she was on air, while standing near the outer gate of the Jang building. The police threw stones at her, and she faced teargas shells while discharging her professional duty on the rooftop of the building. When she complained that she was being attacked, Durrani said he could not do anything except to apologise.

Geo reporter Hassan Nasir was arrested but later released. Geo cameramen Khaliq and Alexander were injured by rubber bullets fired by the police. Without any provocation, the police broke the glass of the back door, while hurling abuse at the TV network.

Hamid Mir tried to stop policemen, who wanted to enter the building through the front gate. Police also tried to take him away in a jeep, but security guards saved him.

When Durrani visited our office a few minutes after the assault, he condemned the attack in the harshest terms. Deputy Inspector General of Police Shahid Nadim Baloch came to our office, but could not bear the heat of our arguments. He left the office saying there was no point in being here.

Following him was Minister of State for Information Tariq Azim, who was briefed about the attack. He condemned it and expressed solidarity with us. Following the timely photo sessions of Durrani and Tariq Azim, The News and Geo offices saw a beeline of concerned sympathisers including politicians, lawyers and members of civil society. They offered their full support during this testing time and assured the media that they were only a call away if they were ever needed. — *THE NEWS 17/03/2007*

Police storm office of TV channel: Musharraf apologises for raid

By Amir Wasim

ISLAMABAD, March 16: About two dozen personnel of the Punjab Police on Friday attacked and ransacked the offices of a private TV channel some 30 minutes before the conclusion of the Supreme Judicial Council proceedings against Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, apparently in an effort to stop the channel from airing live pictures of police action against protesting lawyers and activists of various political parties.

The police action against Geo TV came minutes after the channel telecast footage of running battle between the police and protesters, captured from its cameras on the rooftop of the office building situated about 500 metres from the Supreme Court building

where the protesters were trying to reach to welcome the 'non-functional' chief justice.

A strong reaction from journalists, politicians, lawyers and traders against the attack on the TV channel prompted President Pervez Musharraf to come live on TV and 'apologise' for the incident.

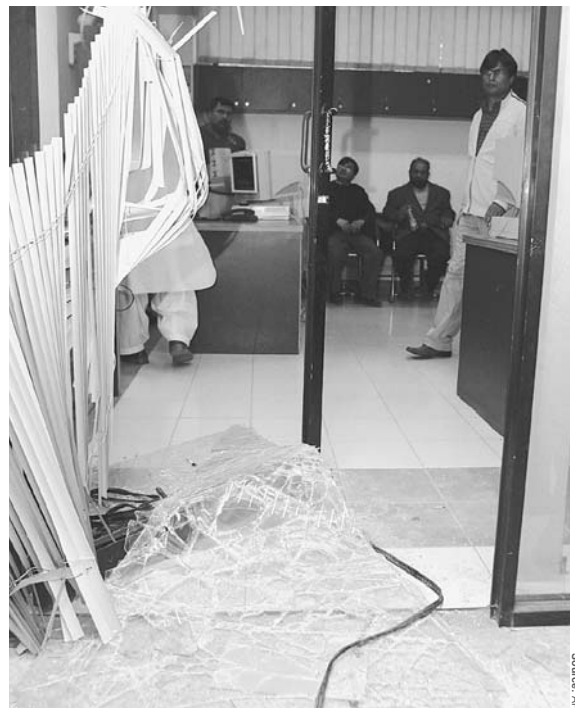
President Musharraf said the incident was 'regrettable' and promised swift action against people responsible for it.

The TV channel aired scenes in which policemen, armed with sticks, were seen breaking the windowpanes of the offices.

Within minutes of the attack, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad Ali Durrani also reached there and criticised the police action.

Eye-witnesses said some of the policemen were present inside the office when the minister arrived there.

According to Hamid Mir, Chief of Geo's Islamabad Bureau, three to four policemen, including



Source: AP

an inspector, came to the office and asked him to remove the cameras installed on the rooftop. Mr Mir asked the police personnel to show any written order in this regard. He said that instead of showing him any written directives, they ordered his men to carry out the operation and a group of policemen entered the building, pushing him aside.

Bureau chief of The News Ansar Abbasi, who was also in the office at that time, termed it a 'pre-planned attack' and claimed that senior officials of the district administration and police remained outside till the completion of the operation.

Soon after hearing the news of the attack, a number of journalists who were outside the Supreme Court staged a protest march and reached the Geo office. — *DAWN 17/03/2007*

PHC lawyer manhandles PTV cameraman

Staff Report

PESHAWAR: A Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) lawyer and member of the Peshawar High Court Bar Association (PHCBA) manhandled a senior Pakistan Television Network cameraman who was filming court proceedings on Monday, while lawyers had announced a one-hour token boycott of courts.

Advocate Ghulam Nabi forced cameraman Afsar Khan out of the Peshawar High Court (PHC) premises when the latter was filming lawyers outside the courtroom. The lawyer humiliated Khan, and threatened to damage his camera if PTV telecast lawyers' court attendance.

"The PTV is playing an unfair game in the lawyers' protests against the suspension of Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, and the ruling parties are concealing facts and true information through PTV," senior NWFP lawyers told reporters after the incident.

The PTV cameraman called the lawyer's actions

"terrorism", and an attack on the freedom of the press. "I was performing my professional duty assigned to me by PTV's Peshawar centre," he said.

"I am accountable to PTV for the coverage ... my job is at stake if I don't complete my assignment," Afsar Khan told Daily Times.

Later, on court reporters' request, lawyers allowed Khan to cover a PHCBA general body meeting.

Talking to Daily Times, Advocate Qaiser Rashid, a member of the NWFP Bar Council's executive committee, condemned the incident, but said lawyers would be pleased if PTV boycotted their protests. At the general body meeting, PHCBA members condemned PTV for "misguiding" viewers. "It was surprising for citizens that PTV is presenting a different situation about the lawyer's boycotts and protests, while private channels' live coverage of the events is totally different," said PHCBA President SM Attique Shah. — *DAILY TIMES 20/03/2007*

Baloch editors threaten to suspend press coverage of govt

Staff Report

QUETTA: Enraged newspaper editors in Balochistan have decided to boycott press coverage of government programmes and activities from June 6 to protest the provincial government's failure to pay newspapers for official advertisements published in their papers.

A meeting of the Daily Newspapers Editors' Council held here on Wednesday criticised the provincial government for its failure to pay its dues for official advertisements and supplements and decided not to publish photographs of the provincial chief minister, governor, ministers and any programme organised by government departments as a symbolic protest. The decision came after an earlier warning

issued by newspaper editors a week ago to the government that they would be compelled to "take stern action against the constant government indifference towards our problems".

The newspaper editors said that the non-payment of bills to newspapers had resulted in serious financial problems for the local newspapers. In spite of repeated reminders to the government of the problems the local newspapers were facing due to the delay in the payment of dues, the government had continuously requested more time. The editors said that they were unable to pay salaries and afford the costs of publishing newspapers due to the inordinate delay in the payment of bills.

A government insider told Daily Times that the ongoing crisis was largely the result of the unjust distribution of advertisements among publications owned by government officials of the Information Department.

"There are around 30 daily newspapers and periodicals which are owned by officials of the Information Department. Twenty-five percent of the total revenue of advertisements goes to these publications," a government official in the Information Department, requesting anonymity, confided to Daily Times.

He said the extent of corruption in the provincial Information Department was so high that a Quetta-based four-page Urdu 'dummy' newspaper owned by an information officer was accorded advertisements of Rs 1.8 million in a single day; in comparison, a leading premier English daily of the country received advertisements of Rs 1.1 million in a day. Balochistan government spokesman Raziq Bugti told Daily Times that the government was engaged in negotiations with the editors and wanted them to review their decision. The government of Balochistan was going through a financial crisis and was facing problems in paying the bills of certain local newspapers. However, he pledged that the government would pay the newspapers' bills soon.

"We hope that the newspapers will cooperate with the government and take back their decision. This year the government gave an unprecedented number of supplements and advertisements to newspapers on

development activities being undertaken in Balochistan. This has created some problems for the government in terms of paying all the newspapers at the same time," he said.

Raziq also held "certain bureaucratic quarters" responsible for the delay in payment.

On the other hand, the editors refused to soften their stance against the government. Instead, they warned of a complete boycott from June 6 if the government fails to clear its dues to all newspapers. It is the first time in Balochistan's history that newspapers have decided on such a bold line of action against the government.

A senior member of the editors' council said that if the government failed to meet their demands, as a next step they would stop publishing government advertisements. He said they would also issue a request to All Pakistan Newspapers' Society (APNS) member publications not to print any advertisements of the Balochistan government until their dues are paid. — *DAILY TIMES 31/03/2007*

Ban on burqa play 'unveils mulla-military alliance'

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE, April 27: Ajoka theatre head Madeeha Gauhar whose play about burqa or veil was banned by



the federal government says ban on the play has exposed the government's enlightened moderation, and it seems as if military and mulla have made an alliance.

Ms Gauhar was addressing a press conference at the Lahore Press Club on Friday. Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal's (MMA) women MPs raised the issue in parliament on Thursday that *Burqavaganza*, a play by the Ajoka, was against "Quranic injunctions on the veil". Reacting to their complaints, Federal Culture Minister GG Jamal said the play had been banned.

Ms Gauhar is, however, determined to stage the play, saying the venue of the performance will soon be announced.

Ms Gauhar said such tactics employed by the government were not new to the Ajoka as it was one of the oldest theatre group in the country, and had faced censorship before, particularly during the military government of Gen Zia. She said the group had not received any official notification of the ban and had just heard the news from the press, adding that "the government has not contacted us so far"....

She said the MNAs had levelled baseless charges that the play ridiculed the burqa and hence the writer and the producer of the play should be punished.

She said if the government was serious in enlightened moderation and promotion of art and culture, it should forcefully snub pro-Taliban elements and their backers in the ranks of the MMA.

"They have committed blasphemy against the Islamic junction," Razia Aziz, a female parliamentarian told the National Assembly.

She said the Ajoka condemned the "irresponsible and provocative" remarks by MMA parliamentarians in the National Assembly, and said she was disappointed from the knee-jerk reaction by the government.

"We will challenge ban in the court of law," she said.

According to Ms Gauhar, *Burqavaganza* does not ridicule Hijab, Islamic teachings, burqa-wearing women or Pakistani culture.

"What is ridiculed in the play is terrorism, exploitation of religion, double standards, politicians' double-talk, discrimination against girls and police incompetence."

She said it was not the Ajoka ridiculing burqa but Jamia Hafsa students who were harassing shopkeepers in Islamabad.

Ms Gauhar said the play used burqa a metaphor for a certain mindset and value system, which tended to hide the truth and beauty.

"We appeal to civil society organisations, human rights groups, artists and writers to condemn culture minister's announcement of banning the play," she said. — *DAWN 28/04/2007*

Pakistani media comes of age

LAHORE: There has been a major escalation in the incidents of attacks on media in general, including government attempts to muzzle the media, in Pakistan during May 3, 2006, to May 3, 2007, but the broadcast media in particular wrote a chapter in defiance by asserting itself despite the rising intimidation it faced, according to the Annual State of Pakistan Media Report 2006-07 released by Intermedia.

The report says that at least five journalists were killed, 17 were arrested or detained, 61 injured in physical attacks or tortured and 27 harassed while 11 cases of attacks on media property and 16 cases of official restrictions imposed on media to censor coverage or gag orders were reported during 2006-07.

The report says the nature of attacks and those of attackers continues to spread. It shows that there has been a dramatic increase in the level of violence and intimidation against journalists and media organisations in 2006-07 and the government

authorities emerged as their greatest adversary being involved in arresting dozens of journalists and attacking and beating up many others. There has also been a discernable rise in the numbers of attempts by the government to stop and interrupt TV transmissions and even official written directives to TV channels to stop airing certain current affairs programmes and influencing content of others.

Others instances of influencing media content include banning publications, websites, shutting down radio stations, raiding presses, instituting cases against journalists, restricting media from going about their duties including aggressively keeping journalists out of large swathes of territories, particularly the tribal areas in the northwest bordering Afghanistan.

One of Musharraf regime's consistent self-praises has been its policy of opening up the media space to private TV channels, the report says, adding that many argue that it was not a favor to the citizens but a right that had been denied for too many decades.

In the interim, leading to the judicial crisis in the spring of 2007, the Musharraf government has dealt with the private media, especially TV channels and radio stations, in the way the state always has - intimidation, coercion and violence, says the report. It, however, says that lessons from Pakistan's media pluralisms are stark. In the global context of television media's impact this is the most dramatic confrontation between a free media and an autocratic state since the Georgian "Rose Revolution" and is already defining a turning point in Pakistan's future.

Citizens are finally getting information in real time on a mass scale with the result that every citizen is discussing and speaking in homes, offices and in streets about the judicial crisis. The broadcast media has assumed a critical conscience about its emergence as a major power wielder in Pakistan by its open on-air defiance of state coercion and by standing its ground and forcing an official retreat in the face of live finger-pointing. — *DAILY TIMES 08/05/2007*

Aaj TV offices attacked

Staff Report

KARACHI: Gunmen attacked the Aaj TV building here on Business Recorder Road, near Guru Mandir, on Saturday, forcing staff to remain indoors. The firing started at 1:30pm, shortly after the station aired footage of fighting between MQM supporters and Baloch and Pashtun groups. Heavy ammunition, including repeaters, was used in the attack. Cars filled with ammunition sent a steady supply of bullets to gunmen stationed in nearby buildings, as the firing continued for five hours. Bullets were embedded in the walls of the channel's newsroom and windows were shattered.

The attackers also set fire to cars in the building parking lot. No one was hurt. "We are under attack," Aaj TV Director of News Talat Hussain said on air as he sheltered behind a wall. "No one has come to help us." Journalists were also beaten up at Karachi airport. Security personnel broke camera equipment belonging to Fareed Farooqui (Daily Times), Shahzad (CNBC), and Aftab Baig (Jang). Sadruddin Sheikh (Rang TV) was hit by a bullet. Anwar Abbasi (NNI) was injured and Ashraf Memon (Express) was hit by a shard of glass. — *DAILY TIMES 13/05/2007*

A TT to my forehead and a press pass in my pocket

By Urooj Zia

KARACHI: A gun-toting political activist placed a TT pistol's barrel between my eyes Saturday afternoon when I refused to tell him where I had come from or where I was going.

I was at one of the party "check posts" that had been set up all over the city. Roads had been blocked, forcing people to walk. I had to walk from Kashmir Road to the Quaid-e-Azam's mausoleum, because I



had been assigned to report on events there.

On the way, I was stopped by one of the "post-keepers." My press card was tucked away in my pocket, and for men who stopped me, I appeared to be an ordinary citizen walking alone on the road, devoid of any party flags, badges or banners. Questions were asked. But when I didn't answer the TT pistol came out. It was at that point that I decided

it was a good time to use the immunity that a press card is supposed to provide. "I'm a journalist," I said, but was asked to prove it. Only after my press card was thoroughly scrutinized was I allowed to go ahead.

All of this happened while a police mobile until stood by, with policemen leaning against it, watching the entire scene, looking thoroughly bored. The policemen laughed if they were asked for help. A friend and I were trapped in a street near Guru Mandir. We could hear shots being fired from the direction of Business Recorder House, and had to get out to the Quaid's mausoleum. All of a sudden we heard shots from all around us. Unless we wanted to be caught in what might escalate into a crossfire in the next couple of minutes, the only option left was to climb walls and jump into one of the surrounding houses (this was a residential area).

A police mobile came along, however, and we stopped it to ask the policemen for directions. "Take any street at all. Most of them lead to the mausoleum," we were told. When reminded that we knew that most of the surrounding streets eventually led to the mausoleum, and that, we had asked them for the "safest" route out, one of the policemen said: "You can

get killed whichever route you go on. Take your pick." All of the men in the police mobile apparently found this funny enough to break into laughter.

While Aaj TV was under attack, a number of reporters on duty in the area went up to the Rangers personnel posted nearby and pleaded with them to help those trapped inside Business Recorder House. "We're helpless. We can't do anything unless we have orders from above," the Rangers personnel kept saying, hours after the shooting had initially begun.

Other journalists reported sordid stories from around the airport. Young men toting flags and banners had set up camp outside the airport departure lounge. They hid, however, when policemen came by. Reporters in the vicinity were asked whether they had seen any political activists around. Munawar Pirzada (from Daily Times) said that he had seen some nearby. After the policemen had left, the activists came up to the reporter, dragged him by the hair and took him aside. They then proceeded to threaten him with dire consequences if he said anything the next time the policemen came around.

On M. A Jinnah Road, activists of the same party accosted myself and two other journalists with me and tried to bully us into giving our names, numbers and office addresses. — *DAILY TIMES 14/05/2007*

Newsman beaten by unidentified men

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Unidentified assailants, allegedly members of intelligence agencies, beat up SANA News Agency Editor-in-Chief Shakeel Ahmad Turabi on Friday. The injured journalist was initially taken to KRL Hospital before being shifted to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, where he is under observation. In a complaint registered to the Margalla Police Station, Turabi said that he was driving to G-10 from Blue Area when a Land Cruiser registration No CH 4931 intercepted his car. Two men then came out

of the car and dragged him out to a few yards off the main road. They then proceeded to beat him up. Turabi claimed that the assailants shouted at him for releasing news reports in favour of Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry and warned him against doing so in the future. He alleged that the assailants belonged to an intelligence agency. He claimed that he had previously been picked up an intelligence agency on March 13 and had been tortured for five hours at an unidentified location before being released. He said he had taken up the issue with Information Minister Muhammad Ali Durrani and other senior government officials who had all assured him of justice. — *DAILY TIMES 19/05/2007*

Media feel the heat as General Musharraf digs in

ISLAMABAD: The increasing vulnerability of President General Pervez Musharraf has been matched by a sudden rise in pressure put on the media in Pakistan, television and press organisations say.

TV stations and newspaper offices have been attacked and journalists assaulted since Musharraf's suspension of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry in March sparked a political crisis marked by violent protests.

In the latest incident, a news agency editor was severely beaten on Friday evening, reportedly for criticising General Musharraf's action against Justice Chaudhry.

Shakil Turabi, editor of the South Asian News Agency, said he was driving home when a gang forced him from his car, physically attacked him and abused him over the agency's coverage of the judicial crisis. Turabi was reported to have accused the Pakistani intelligence services of the attack.

The Committee to Protect Journalists condemned the assault, saying that "Pakistani media organisations and individual journalists have come under legal and economic pressure as well outright assault" in recent weeks.

The premises of private TV station Aaj and the Business Recorder newspaper were attacked during the May 12 riots in Karachi that left 40 dead.

Paris-based Reporters Without Borders blamed the assault on activists from the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), a political party that supports Musharraf.

One of Aaj's young news presenters broke down as she saw footage of her own car being torched in the violence. Nadia Mirza exclaimed "I can't do it, I can't do it" during the live broadcast, said Talat Hussain, head of Aaj TV news. Hussain earlier said this channel was told not to make a hero of Justice Chaudhry.

In March, police were filmed breaking windows and smashing equipment inside the studios of private Geo Television during protests over the suspension of Chaudhry. The incident came a day after the channel said regulators had ordered it to stop airing its flagship news programme. A contrite-sounding Musharraf later apologised for the raid in a surprise telephone interview with the channel.

The offices of The News, an English language-daily, and the Urdu-language Jang, which are part of the same media group as Geo, were also damaged.

"We are working under tremendous pressure and have to now learn the art of dealing with such pressure," Nasir Baig Chughtai, Geo's director of news, told AFP. But the "attacks have also brought channels as well as journalists closer to each other and a strong unity has emerged," he said.

"Intense attacks from the government as well as from various pressure groups, political parties and vested interests have increased" since the CJP's suspension, said Shamimur Rehman of the Karachi Union of Journalists.

He said journalists had also been beaten up at rallies in Lahore and Islamabad as the threat to Musharraf's rule has grown.

Hameed Haroon, publisher of the Dawn newspaper, wrote an open letter asking the

government of Pakistan to desist from "abducting and arresting journalists" and "physically attacking newspaper offices". Musharraf had previously been credited with relaxing press restrictions, accepting media criticism, and awarding licences to a booming number of private satellite channels.

State Minister for Information Tariq Azeem told AFP that the government had not imposed any restrictions on the media and is "committed to freedom of the press". The assault on Aaj TV was deplorable, he said, adding that government would offer compensation.

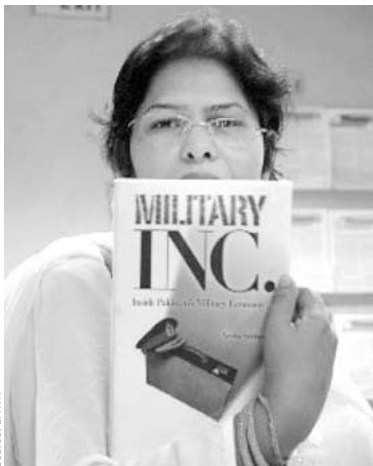
Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz were concerned over the violent incidents against the press, Azeem said. "We have assured protection to TV channels and will do everything to ensure safety of journalists," he said. — *AFP / DAILY TIMES 25/05/2007*

Book launch at Islamabad Club disallowed

By Sajjad Malik

ISLAMABAD: Dr Ayesha Siddiqi launched her book "Military Inc Inside Pakistan's Military Economy" on Thursday after she said she was forced to change the venue at the last minute due to government pressure.

The book was initially scheduled to be launched at Islamabad Club, but the venue was changed after the club refused to allow the function at the last moment, the author said. Dr Siddiqi said the government had asked all hotels not to allow the book-launch. "When asked for



Source: DAWN

a function to launch the book, the hotel managers replied that their halls were only for marriage functions," she told the launch ceremony at an NGO's office. Dr Siddiqi said her book was not about the military, but about the people who had every right to question the military's economic empire.

She called the military a "dinosaur" that cared only for itself and its "civilian cronies". She said the military's welfare organisations were "just a myth". Separately, Information Minister Muhammad Ali Durrani said only the Islamabad deputy commissioner could say why he denied permission for Dr Siddiqi's book launch at Islamabad Club. —

DAILY TIMES 01/06/2007

Durrani warns electronic media

By Asim Yasin

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Muhammad Ali Durrani on Thursday warned the electronic media to refrain from airing any 'derogatory comment or slogans' against the armed forces and the judiciary.

"The media should observe the rules of Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) and the government will also strictly implement these rules and will not allow anyone to malign the armed forces, the judiciary or any other constitutional institutions," he said, while addressing a press conference here on Thursday.

He came down hard on the electronic media for airing speeches and slogans during the live coverage of the Supreme Court Bar Association seminar, saying that it was felt that some people 'misused' the freedom, while attempting to malign or defame institution of armed forces. "This cannot and shall not be allowed by the government as the Constitution and the laws made under that constitution are clear on the subject and every patriotic citizen has to abide by these laws," he added.

He said all steps would be taken to ensure that the

instructions and the code of ethics issued by the Supreme Court are abided by all. "But for the last three months derogatory remarks are being used against these institutions at different levels. The government condemns this irresponsible attitude and no one would be allowed to do so, he said.

Responding to a question regarding the Pemra, the minister said that it was an autonomous body working under the Cabinet Division. But after the passage of Cross Media Rights Act, the Pemra was transferred under the administrative control of the Ministry of Information, which was already looking after the matters of the rest of the media.

He said that the electronic media should observe the Pemra rules. He said that from now on, the electronic media talk shows, live programmes and other programmes would have to observe the sanctity of the judiciary. "Those societies turn into jungle where the supremacy of the rule of law is not observed," he said. Responding to another query, the minister said the Pemra laws are clear and no one has the right to exceed them.

"The government is investigating the threats hurled at some journalists in Karachi," he added. Durrani said this was much shocking to note that the national media, for which President Musharraf had taken revolutionary steps to ensure its independence, also toed this irresponsible approach. "President Musharraf, since 1999, has taken unprecedented steps for the freedom of press. Now Pakistan is the only country in the entire Muslim World and the South Asia that has totally free and independent media," he said...

Durrani said the armed forces have always offered sacrifices for the sanctity and security of the country but the media also aired such a derogatory and humiliating remarks, slogans and speeches against the armed forces, which were not only regrettable but objectionable as well.

He said no sovereign country could allow such an irresponsible attitude towards its constitutional institutions and no individual or groups could be allowed to do so. "The national interest should be kept supreme and no political party or group should be

allowed to adopt negative attitude. He said that this negative propaganda would also affect the direct foreign investment in the country and thus it would harm the national institutions.

The minister said that the people of the country are concerned about this negative development and they are asking the government what was happening in the country. Durrani was accompanied by Secretary Information Syed Anwar Mehmood and PIO Chaudhry Rasheed. — *THE NEWS 01/06/2007*

Private television channels blocked

By Ali Waqar



LAHORE: The government allegedly suspended the transmission of two private television channels in major parts of the country on Sunday, because of their "anti-government" programmes.

The transmissions of Geo and Aaj TV were blocked in the country's major cities, including Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad, after 10pm. Channel authorities alleged that the government had forced cable operators into suspending their transmissions. A Geo TV newsroom official from Karachi told Daily Times that the government had imposed a ban on Geo. He alleged that the Cable Operators Association of Pakistan (CAP) had told Geo that the Pakistan

Electronic Media Regulatory Authority and the federal government had instructed them to suspend transmission.

Meanwhile, Aaj TV News Controller Masoom Osmani said a "technical" fault could be responsible for the interruption, adding he was contacting the government to confirm the actual situation. He did not rule out a government attempt to block the private media's coverage of the judicial crisis, saying a PEMRA notice had instructed them to stop airing live debates and shows.

Federal Information Minister Muhammad Ali Durrani said, "I am not aware of any official suspension." He said he should be contacted after 30 minutes, but was not available for comment despite repeated tries following the prescribed time period.

Meanwhile, CAP Chairman Khalid Sheikh said the organisation would not allow any transmission of coverage against the military and judiciary. He said benches would be established to monitor the channels' transmissions. On condition of anonymity, a CAP official said the Information Ministry was controlling the organisation. He said they had to comply or risk losing their livelihood. — *DAILY TIMES 04/06/2007*

Amended ordinance empowers Pemra to seal premises, seize equipment

ISLAMABAD, June 4: President Pervez Musharraf on Monday imposed fresh curbs on the electronic media in the second such move within three days, sparking protests from journalists, politicians and lawyers.

The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Ordinance (2007), issued just two days before the commencement of a National Assembly session, empowers the Pemra to take action on its own against television channels which violated rules.

The move virtually undoes some of the major provisions of a law passed by parliament three months

ago after a two-year debate and consultations with the stakeholders.

The ordinance authorises the Pemra to confiscate the equipment of broadcasters and seal the premises without consulting a council of complaints.

The council was envisaged in the amendments passed in February. The amendment increased the fine for violators to Rs10 million from the existing Rs1 million.

Soon after the promulgation of the ordinance, journalists took to streets in Islamabad and demonstrated outside the prime minister's secretariat after a meeting of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ). They were later joined by torch-bearing sympathisers from political parties and non-governmental organisations.

Organisations representing politicians and lawyers condemned the move while the parliamentary opposition announced plans to requisition a special session of the National Assembly's standing committee on information.

It would also move a resolution of disapproval in the Senate.

The decree followed controversial directives issued by the Pemra on Saturday, barring television networks from airing talk shows and carrying out live coverage of events relating to the judicial crisis.

Some 10 amendments were made in the Pemra (Amendment) Act passed in February this year. An amended sub-section (5) of Section 29 reads: "Provided further that the Authority or the chairman may seize a broadcast or distribution service equipment or seal the premises which is operating illegally or (in) contravention of orders passed under Section 30."

A new provision -- Section 39 (A) -- even authorised the Pemra to make rules and regulations on its own from time to time by simply issuing notifications. It says: "The Authority may, by

notification in the official gazette, make regulations, not inconsistent with the ordinance and the rules made thereunder, to provide for all matters for which provision is necessary or expedient for carrying out the purposes of this ordinance."

Sub-section (4) in Section 30 of the law says: "Licence of a broadcast media may be suspended on any or the grounds specified in sub-section (1), by a duly constituted committee comprising members of the Authority."

President Musharraf had issued the original Pemra Ordinance on March 1, 2002, to establish a body to regulate the electronic media. The National Assembly passed the law on May 17, 2005, with some amendments in the form of a bill (the Pemra Amendment Bill).

Journalists and opposition members deplored the rules as a 'black law'. — *DAWN 05/06/2007*

'TV channels to avoid aspersions on judiciary, army'

By Our Reporter

ISLAMABAD, June 5: Government and private channels have reiterated their resolve to uphold the integrity of the country and its armed forces, judiciary, religions, and social and cultural values.

A meeting between the Ministry for Information and Broadcasting and the Private Broadcast Channels discussed recent developments in government-media relations. The meeting agreed that all broadcasts and programmes would avoid aspersions on the judiciary and the armed forces.

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad Ali Durrani said the freedom enjoyed by the media would continue and no attempt was being made to curb the freedom of expression.

He emphasised that the government took pride in having pioneered the establishment of private TV and radio channels in Pakistan and considered it a source of strength for both democracy and accountability.

Owners of TV channels demanded necessary amendments to Pemra laws to make them in consonance with the principle of natural justice that nobody should be condemned unheard, which was a basic fundamental and constitutional right of every citizen.

They also emphasised that broadcasting of any TV, cable and radio network should not be suspended or prescribed abruptly and their licenses and transmission should not be suspended or revoked without prior show-cause notice to them and providing them opportunity of hearing and defence.

They pointed out that curbs on media were against the right of freedom of expression and access to information and should be done away with.

The TV channel owners said they had the constitutional right to seek amendments to certain existing Pemra laws which they said were inimical to the freedom of expression.

It was agreed at the meeting that journalists would be provided with facilities and security in the discharge of their professional responsibilities. — *DAWN 06/06/2007*

Lal Masjid declares media struggle a 'jihad'

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD, June 5: Lal Masjid clerics on Tuesday declared media struggle against the government a 'jihad' and supported the journalist community in its protest against the government's curb on electronic media.

Lal Masjid deputy in-charge Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi said: "Criticising wrong polices of the

government and speaking truth before a cruel ruler is also a jihad."

He said curbing restrictions on private TV channels was not only a violation of human rights but also a violation of international laws. "The government has no courage to bear a mere criticism of the media," he added.

Maulana Ghazi said the Lal Masjid administration has extended full support to the media in its struggle against government's restrictions on the freedom of press.

Responding to a recent remark of President Gen Pervez Musharraf that Lal Masjid in-charge Maulana Abdul Aziz was an employee of Auqaf, Maulana Ghazi said the president had declared his elder brother as an employee of Auqaf department, but in fact he (the President) too was a government servant in uniform.

"Those who have declared construction of mosques as illegal occupation of land have also illegally occupied the whole country instead of safeguarding the borders," he added. — *DAWN 06/06/07*

Journalists come out in force to protest new PEMRA ordinance

Staff Report

LAHORE: Journalists of the print and electronic media came out in force on the Mall on Thursday to protest the amended Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Ordinance.

The protest began from Diyal Singh Mansion and ended at Governor's House.

The protest was to end in front of the Punjab Assembly, but the participants, which also included Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal leader Liaqat Baloch,



Source: DAWN

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Zaem Qadri, Punjab Pakistan People's Party secretary Ghulam Abbas, Lahore High Court Bar Association secretary general Sarfaraz Cheema, lawyers, workers of the Khaksaar Tehrik and Joint Action Committee members, set aside the barricades put up in front of the assembly and walked to Governor's House.

However, police did not intervene and let the protestors march to Governor's House. — *DAILY TIMES 08/06/2007*

PM halts enforcement of PEMRA Ordinance

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Thursday ordered an immediate halt to implementation of the recently amended Pakistan Electronic Media Regulation Authority (PEMRA) Ordinance and formed a six-member committee to review the amendments.



Source: DAILY TIMES

The committee will consist of three members from media organisations - one each from the Pakistan

Broadcasters Association (PBA), All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) and Council of Pakistani Newspaper Editors - and three government officials, from PEMRA and the information and law ministries...

The committee will submit its report on the amendments to the prime minister in "the shortest possible time". Meanwhile, proceedings under the amended PEMRA Ordinance will not be initiated against any television news channel. The final report of the committee "will explore all options, including a modified PEMRA Ordinance 2007 with attendant rules and regulations".

APNS and PBA representatives demanded the withdrawal of the amended PEMRA Ordinance, promulgated on June 4. Mr Aziz ordered a halt to implementation of the ordinance and announced the formation of a six-member committee to review the amendments. — *DAILY TIMES 08/06/2007*

Attack on journalists in Islamabad

By Our Correspondents

ISLAMABAD: The journalist community took out rallies and observed black day across the country on Sunday to protest the thrashing of their colleagues at the Constitution Avenue by security forces personnel in full glare of local and foreign media.

Speakers at these rallies condemned state repression against journalists and lawyers and demanded stern action against those behind these violent incidents. The rallies and processions were staged on the call of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists against the unprovoked and uncalled for police baton-charge on peaceful journalists on Saturday who were covering proceedings of the Election Commission scrutinizing the nomination papers of aspirants of the presidential election.

In Islamabad, hundreds of journalists staged a rally from Rawalpindi-Islamabad Press Club Camp



Office, which marched to the D-Chowk in front of the Parliament House at the juncture of the Constitution Avenue and the Jinnah Avenue....

Leading lawyers, including Munir A Malik, Justice (Retd) Tariq Mehmood and Ali Ahmad Kurd were part of the large rally, taken out in Islamabad. Pakistan People's Party, Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, Awami National Party and Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf leaders and activists also took part in the rally from Rawalpindi/ Islamabad Press Club Camp Office to the Parliament House.

Carrying banners and placards, the journalists chanted slogans against the police excesses and expressed their resolve to continue their mission of access to information, come what may.

The call for the black day rallies was given by the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) on Saturday after the security forces resorted to baton-charge, stone-pelting and tear-gas shelling on them, as they gathered there to cover the Election Commission's coverage of scrutiny of presidential hopefuls' nomination papers...

Peshawar Bureau adds: Journalists in the nook and corner of the Frontier province staged protest demonstrations to press the government to take stern action against those involved in the violence on journalists in Islamabad and Peshawar.

The journalists rally in Peshawar was also joined by leaders and workers of various political parties,

including PML-N, Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, Jamiatul Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl, lawyers and members of the civil society besides NWFP Minister for Auqaf and Religious Affairs Maulana Amanullah Haqqani.

Among the cities and towns where the protest rallies were organised Sunday included Mardan, Charsadda, Swabi, Mingora, Timergara, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan, Landi Kotal and Bara in Khyber Agency, Miranshah in North Waziristan, and Ghalanai in Mohmand Agency.

Agencies add: In Lahore, journalists observed a black day and took out a protest rally on Sunday to condemn the police torture over journalists and lawyers in Islamabad.

The rally started from Lahore Press Club and terminated in front of the Punjab Assembly peacefully. All the participants of the rally had tied black ribbons on their arms to register their protest.

In Kasur, the journalist community staged a

protest rally to condemn the police crackdown on peaceful journalists.

In Hyderabad also, a black day was observed and a rally staged to condemn the police excesses.

The protest rally led by President of the Hyderabad Press Club Khalid Khokhar and Secretary Muhammad Irfan Arain began from the Press Club and terminated in front of the Radio Station.

Protest rallies were also staged and demonstrations held in Karachi, Multan, Larkana, Jacobabad, Sahiwal, AJK and other cities and towns in far and wide of the country on Sunday. — *THE NEWS 01/10/2007*



Source: INTERNET



Source: THE NEWS

Tough new media policy introduced

By Rauf Klasra

ISLAMABAD: The government issued tough new changes in the media policy on Saturday stopping the media from criticizing the head of the state, military or judiciary or showing bodies of the suicide bombers or their victims.

In separate ordinances issued after the imposition of the emergency, government issued guidelines for anchor persons and hosts of television channels.

Anyone who is issued a broadcast media license or a landing rights permission under this Ordinance shall not enter into an agreement with any foreign broadcaster to sell its air time or otherwise provide its air time to another foreign broadcaster without prior written permission of the Authority.

The ordinance says, that private channels would not be able to broadcast video footage of suicide bombers, terrorists, bodies of victims of terrorism, statements and pronouncements of militants and extremist elements and any other act which may, in any way, promote, aid or abet terrorists activities or terrorism.

Likewise, no anchor person, moderator or host propagates any opinion or acts in any manner prejudicial to the ideology of Pakistan or sovereignty, integrity or security of Pakistan.

Under the new powers to PEMRA, channels would not broadcast any programme inciting violence or hatred or any action prejudicial to maintenance of law and order.

Likewise, channels would not be allowed to broadcast anything which defames or brings into ridicule the Head of State, or members of the armed forces, or executive, legislative or judicial organs of the state. Channels would not be allowed to broadcast any program or discussion on a matter which is sub-judice in a court of law . — *THE NEWS 04/11/2007*

Government slammed for self-censorship criteria

Staff Report

PESHAWAR: International media watchdog Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF) has slammed the government for making self-censorship a criterion to lift a ban on private TV news channels that will drop talk-show programmes critical of President Gen Pervez Musharraf.

"The government's blackmailing of Pakistan's TV stations, banned since November 3, is unacceptable," the Paris-based watchdog said in a statement on Friday after Aaj TV and Dawn News channels were back on the cable network on Thursday.

"The authorities have asked TV executives to eliminate outspoken programmes, sideline the most independent journalists and sign a code of conduct requiring self-censorship," the statement said.

"We are pleased for Pakistani viewers, who were desperate for news information, but we continue to demand the unconditional return of all TV stations. We also condemn yesterday's arrests of three journalists, two in Quetta and one near Peshawar," the statement said. Despite some conditional relaxation in ban on private news channels, the government was still holding the ban on Geo News and ARY TV because the two channels were resisting government pressures.

Govt pressuring: A senior journalist at Geo News said the government was "insisting to fire" some senior journalists of the channel but the top management were refusing to "bow down".

"We are still off air and don't know for how long we will remain so," the journalist told Daily Times, wishing not to be named.

Aaj TV's news editor told RSF on Friday that the government had told cable operators that they could resume the channel broadcast after it had

dropped two talk shows - Live With Talat and Bolta Pakistan.

ARY TV journalists said the government was demanding the dropping of talk shows presented by Kashif Abbasi and Asma Shirazi as a precondition to allow the station to be back on air.

Executives and editors back censored Pakistani TV: TV news executives and editors around the world in a joint statement said, "We, executives and editors of TV stations in Europe, Asia and the Americas, call on President Pervez Musharraf to immediately rescind this decision, which is contrary to free enterprise and the freedom to report the news, and we express our solidarity with the Pakistani TV stations and their staff," they said.

The signatories include Mark Wood, the chief executive of Britain's ITN, Chuck Lustig, the foreign news director of ABC News in the United States, Torsten Rossmann, the head of the executive board of Germany's N24, Jörg Harzem, N24's chief editor, Nik Niethammer, the chief editor of Germany's Sat1 and Guillaume Dubois, the deputy director-general of France's BFMTV.

They also include Peter Kloeppe, the news editor of Germany's RTL, Yves Bigot, the regional service director of Belgium's RTBF, Saad Mohseni, the chairman of Afghanistan's Moby Media Group, which operates Tolo TV, Stéphane Rosenblatt, the head of the Belgian station RTL-TVI, and Gilles Marchant, the head of the Swiss TV station TSR.

— *DAILY TIMES* 17/11/2007

News channels of Geo, ARY shut down

By Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD, Nov 16: The Geo television network said on Friday that it had been ordered to shut down its news channel. The channel beams its signals from Dubai. Late on Friday night, a spokesman

for the ARY network called Dawn's Karachi and Lahore offices, saying that the group had been told to shut down its news channel.

An announcement on the Geo News said the authorities in Dubai had asked the network's administration to close down its operations by Friday midnight.

The network said no reason had been given for the move. However, a senior member of the network, Dr Shahid Masood, came on air to say that it had apparently been done on pressure from Islamabad.

Shortly before the declaration of the state of emergency on Nov 3, the government had used its influence over local cable operators to pull the plug on all domestic and foreign news channels. These included Dawn News, Aaj, Geo, Ary One World, as well as BBC World, CNN and Al-Jazeera.

This was perhaps the biggest news blackout in the history of Pakistan as for nearly two weeks viewers were deprived of all independent news on private television channels, with only the state-run Pakistan Television being allowed to beam news.

Despite the ban, the television channels that beam programmes from ground stations based in Dubai had continued with their transmissions. Although the channels were not available on cable in Pakistan, they could be viewed either through satellite dish, or outside Pakistan.

Over the last couple of days, however, cable operators had been allowed to air a number of domestic and foreign news channels. But in an unprecedented move on Friday night, the authorities in Dubai asked Geo News to shut down its transmission.

It was not clear for how long the network will have to keep its transmission suspended, but one of the most senior anchors at Geo, Kamran Khan, came on air around midnight to express hope that such a situation would not last long.

Our Correspondent adds from Washington: The

United States said on Friday that Islamabad's decision to ban certain private television channels has troubled it.

"We are troubled by this expansion of restrictions on the media despite our calls to ease the restrictions," a State Department official said while commenting on the decision. — *DAWN 17/11/2007*

Geo challenges ban

Staff Report

KARACHI: Television channels were banned from beaming into Pakistan as they were involved in a tirade against the armed forces of Pakistan and were jeopardizing national interests and assets while sitting in Dubai, submitted Deputy Attorney General Rizwan Ahmed Siddiqui before a division bench of the Sindh High Court Friday.

Appearing for the federal government and PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority), he was responding to a contention by Mahmood Ali Mazhar advocate, counsel for petitioners Independent Media Corporation and Birds (Pvt) Ltd owning and operating GEO News, GEO Super, Geo Entertainment and AAG television channels. The counsel for the petitioner alleged that the government was discriminating against IMC as twenty other channels have been allowed to telecast their programmes in the country.

The ban on Geo channels is costing a revenue loss of Rs 8 million daily, the counsel was quoted as submitting before the SHC bench. DAG Rizwan Ahmed Siddiqui assured that no discrimination will prevail and the law will be adhered to, but he also stated that when all institutions were being ridiculed for ulterior motives and national interests were being compromised, such actions became necessary. He sought ample time to seek instruction and to call comments from the authorities (Ministry of Information) at which the bench put off till Tuesday, Nov 20. — *DAILY TIMES 17/11/2007*

Five arrested as journalists protest closure of TV channels

Staff Report

KARACHI/ISLAMABAD/ QUETTA: Five Geo TV journalists were arrested for protesting in Quetta on Saturday, as journalists throughout the country condemned the government's orders to shut down Geo News and ARY.

Geo TV's Quetta bureau confirmed the arrests of their journalists, adding that they were not aware of the staffers' whereabouts. Meanwhile, another journalist was badly beaten when he was exiting his newspaper office. Similarly, staff members of Geo and ARY in Karachi also protested the closure.

"Worst communication blackout": According to a press release issued by ARY, the closure of its international broadcast was the "worst communication blackout" in Pakistan's history. Over 400 journalists in Islamabad warned the government that they could go to any lengths to get their due rights. — *DAILY TIMES 18/11/2007*

APNS, CPNE demand restoration of channels

KARACHI: The All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) and Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE) have noted with alarm the rapidly deteriorating environment of the freedom of expression and freedom of press in Pakistan as the 15th day of the emergency draws to a close. APNS President Hameed Haroon and CPNE President Syed Faseeh Iqbal in a joint statement have stated that the single most important step that needs to be taken today by the government is the urgent restoration of all television news channels in Pakistan, "We believe it is essential to chalk an immediate way out of this major national crisis." — *NNI / DAILY TIMES 18/11/2007*

Protests against media restrictions continue

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: The journalists of the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad continued their protest on Sunday against media curbs and the imposition of emergency rule in the country.

The journalists staged a peaceful protest demonstration in front of the offices of a private TV channel shut down by the government at midnight on Friday.

Civil society members and politicians also joined the protest demonstration to express solidarity with the journalists. The protesters condemned the government's measures against the freedom of electronic and print media.

They chanted slogans against the government and demanded an end to media curbs and emergency rule in the country.

They also expressed their concern over the abduction of Shoaib Bhutta, editor of a local newspaper.

They demanded that the administration provide his family and the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists access to Bhutta. They also condemned the arrest of five journalists in Quetta, and asked the government to release the journalists within 24 hours.

They said the government was encouraging security forces to humiliate and detain journalists to threaten the rest of the media.

However, they said the government could not deter them from their struggle for independence and freedom of media in the country.

— DAILY TIMES 19/11/2007

Police baton-charge journalists rally in Karachi

By Shamim Bano

KARACHI: Police on Tuesday baton-charged a rally of journalists to prevent them from reaching the Governor House to protest against curbs on the media.

The brute use of force by the police led to the arrest of 180 journalists, including women, many of whom courted arrest outside the Karachi Press Club (KPC). The rally was organised by the Karachi Union of Journalists as part of the ongoing countrywide protests called by the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) against the curbs on the media and the ban on Geo and ARYone world TV channels.

Barricades had been erected by the police all around the Press Club building to prevent protesters from proceeding to the Governor House. The media people took to the streets chanting "Hum Chheen Key Lengay Azadi" (we will snatch freedom), "Hum Nahi Mantey Zulm Key Zabtey" (we do not accept the rule of tyranny).

As they marched towards the Governor House to register their protest against the government's curbs against the media, the police officials tried to forcibly prevent them and a clash between journalists and police personnel started. Police arrested about 25 senior journalists, including KPC President Sabihuddin Ghousi, KUJ President Shamim-ur-Rahman, KUJ Secretary Javed Chaudhry, KPC Treasurer Amir Latif, Ahfaz-ur-Rahman, Shakil Salawat, Moosa Kaleem, and others. Following the detention of their senior colleagues, around 200 journalists, including women, courted arrest.

Those who courted arrest included Editor Reporting The News Kamal Siddiqi and Director News Geo English Owais Tauhid, Secretary Association of TV Journalists Faisal Aziz and many

others including Raja Tariq, Najeeb, Afzal Nadeem, Sabina Agha, AH Khanzada, Xari Jalil, Rahma Mohammad, Asra Pasha, Shehzad Anwer, Tariq Abul Hasan, Faheem Siddiqi, Zarar Khan, Nizam Siddiqi, Dodo Chandio, Arbab Chandio, Huma Imtiaz and Asif Mehmood.

The police brutally beat up President Association of Television Journalists (ATJ) Javed Saba, when he tried to pacify the journalists. The police shifted the journalists to five police stations: Docks, Frere, Darakhshan, Clifton and Civil Lines.

City Police Chief Azhar Farooqui, when contacted on phone, did not give the exact number of arrested journalists. Some police officials said all the protesters were taken into custody for violating section 144 of CrPc in force in the city.

Police pushed the reporters back into the Press Club after breaking up their rally with batons. When the police forcibly tried to enter the club premises, journalists in a spontaneous reaction hurled stones and both sides were involved in a battle-like situation.

Cameraman of Geo TV Javed Umrani and a reporter of ARY were injured as police beat them with batons, while one NGO activist received a head injury. Tension mounted when police and paramilitary troops confined several protesters to the press club. The police officials deployed around the KPC said they had orders not to let journalists near the Governor House, nor should those from outside be allowed to reach the KPC.

They said they had orders to use force if anyone tried to break the barriers. The journalists, strongly protesting against the arrests, announced to launch a "Jail Bharo Tehreek" and courted arrests.

Salis bin Perwaiz adds: On the directives of Sindh Governor Dr Ishratul Ebad all the journalists were released after six hours of detention. Cases were registered at the Frere police station for rioting and violation of section 144 against around 150 people, five of whom were nominated.

— *THE NEWS* 21/11/2007

How many in the line of duty?

By **Rahimullah Yusufzai**

THE death of Hayatullah's widow in the bomb blast has revived memories of his brutal murder

More than one year after her 35-year old journalist husband

Hayatullah was brutally killed by unknown people in North Waziristan, school teacher Mehrunnisa died in a mysterious night-time bomb explosion at her home in Hormuz village near Mir Ali town on November 17.

As happened in her husband's case, the killers remain unidentified and at large. Hayatullah's younger brother Ehsanullah said his family wasn't suspecting anyone at the moment and needed time to reflect as to who may have planted the bomb.

Mehrunnisa taught at the government-run girls' school in her village. She continued to teach even after her husband's death in June 2006.

The brave lady was bold enough to grant an interview to the BBC radio after Hayatullah's death and publicly blame the intelligence agencies for his murder. It was something rare in a conservative tribal area such as North Waziristan for a young, purdah-observing woman to give an interview and have her voice heard outside her home. It was an effort on her part to seek justice and keep alive the story of her husband's disappearance in December 2005 and his subsequent murder six months later. She also used to send two of her five children to Peshawar and elsewhere along with their uncle Ehsanullah to take part in demonstrations by journalists to highlight the





Source: INTERNET

issue of Hayatullah's murder. It seems her death would put an end to the campaign to seek out and punish Hayatullah's killers.

Hayatullah's three sons and two daughters were orphaned the day he died. Still they had a loving mother who being a teacher could ensure that they are properly educated and looked after. She seemed to have admirably performed that duty for more than a year on her own following her husband's death. But her death has once again orphaned her young children, the oldest of whom is a 10-year old girl and the youngest a son aged two and a half years.

The circumstances of Mehrunnisa's death are intriguing. According to her family members, she was sleeping alone that night in one of the two upper-storey rooms. Her five children were sleeping in the adjacent room. The blast took place at 3 am and blew up a portion of the building, more so the room in which she was asleep. She was killed on the spot as her left arm and leg was blown-up and her face was badly damaged. All her children survived the explosion.

Mehrunnisa had returned home the same day after spending five days with her parents in the nearby Mosaki village. It is obvious that those who planted the bomb at her home and then triggered the blast with a remote-control device were keeping track of her movements. They knew that she had returned home and were thus able to strike the same night.

In the tribal set-up in North Waziristan, her inlaws

and parents would have to consider the consequences before blaming someone for the bomb explosion. The moment they accuse someone of the murder a new blood-feud would start and they would be then under compulsion to take revenge. It is a hard world out there and fighting for honour is something cherished and done even if it causes more suffering on the family.

It is, in fact, the third tragedy to have struck the ill-fated family. One of his younger brothers, a teenager studying in school, was killed after Hayatullah's murder. He was kidnapped while returning home from school and shot dead. His murder was blamed on a rival family, which was distantly related to Hayatullah's, and was considered part of their ongoing blood-feud. Earlier, a member of that family had been murdered and Hayatullah's family was accused of the murder.

Hayatullah's father and a brother are working in the UAE. They have rush to Pakistan every time a tragedy occurs in the family. His father patched up with the rival family after Hayatullah's younger brother was killed. The reconciliation became possible because each family had lost a member and scores had thus already been settled.

Government officials in Peshawar and North Waziristan have been telling journalists that Hayatullah was murdered due to a monetary dispute. A federal government report released in March 2007 gave the same reason for his murder. The judicial inquiry conducted by a judge of the Peshawar High Court was inconclusive even though it termed the role of the intelligence agencies in Hayatullah's murder suspicious. Another story that was being told and retold by government officials was that he was killed due to a dispute with some Uzbeks hiding in the area.

However, Hayatullah's brother Ehsanullah and his wife had steadfastly maintained that he was kidnapped and killed at the behest of secret agencies to punish him for taking pictures of debris of a US-made missile that had been apparently fired by a pilotless Predator spy plane to kill suspected al-Qaeda fighter Hamza Rabia in Hormuz village. His photographs proved the Pakistan Army's claim to be incorrect that Rabia and

four Pakistani villagers were killed in an accidental ammunitions explosion. The army has been denying reports that US military was undertaking missile strikes in Pakistani territory and it even claimed responsibility for one such attack that killed 83 students of a madrasa in Bajaur Agency.

Hayatullah posthumously was hailed as a brave journalist who laid down his life while seeking the truth. He was given awards at home and abroad for showing courage in journalism. That surely would have brought some solace to his widow and his aggrieved family. But the death of his widow in the bomb blast has revived memories of Hayatullah's brutal murder and shocked everyone. There is now this aching concern for the unfortunate couple's five small children.

The government and organisations representing media owners and working journalists have a duty to do something to look after the needs of these children. It would be a tribute to the late journalist and his wife. — *THE NEWS ON SUNDAY 25/11/2007*

No written order for Geo ban: DAG

News Desk

KARACHI: Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Rizwan Ahmed Siddiqui said on Tuesday that no written order was issued for the suspension of Geo TV channels.

Responding to the arguments filed by Geo TV counsel Muhammad Ali Mazhar advocate, the DAG stated this before the Sindh High Court during the hearing of two constitutional petitions filed by Geo TV Network.

The Sindh High Court heard on Tuesday two constitutional petitions filed by Independent Media Corporation (Pvt) Ltd and Birds (Pvt) Ltd against the unlawful ban and suspension of four TV channels of the petitioners, namely "Geo News", "Geo

Entertainment", "Geo Super" and "Aag TV".

The bench comprised Justice Munib Ahmed Khan and Justice Dr Rana Muhammad Shamim. On the last date of hearing, the DAG was specially directed to file comments failing which the matter will be finally heard on Nov 27.

When the matter was taken up at 1:00 pm, the DAG did not file any comments and produced a news clipping of a newspaper in which he attempted to argue that Geo News transmission was suspended from Dubai and the matter of Geo's restoration is pending as the dialogues are continuing between the Geo management and Dubai Media City. On this ground he again sought 10 days' time to submit comments.

Petitioner's counsel Ali Mazhar vehemently opposed the request of adjournment and seeking further time by the deputy attorney general on the ground that the court has already given more than 13 days time earlier to him for filing comments but he failed to do so. He then argued that this is a very serious matter, as at least the jobs of 4,500 employees are at stake and 4,500 employees mean 4,500 families. This is the 26th day of suspension and if the suspended channels are not restored immediately then the petitioners will not be able to pay their salaries and for the payment of salary approximately Rs 6 crore are required...

Ali Mazhar argued that the respondents have suspended the transmission of channels verbally without issuing any written order or show-cause notice and this fact is already mentioned in the memo of the petition...

The petitioners' advocate also argued that on the last date of hearing a list of 21 channels was produced which have been restored and two or three days earlier, two more channels of ARY were also restored and now only Geo TV Network channels are under suspension which is highly discriminatory.

The petitioner's counsel further argued that the respondents have nothing to do with any suspension of Geo News from Dubai as the petitioners are valid

licence holder in Pakistan with valid licence, so their case may only be adjudged under Pakistani laws.

After hearing the argument, the court inquired from the deputy attorney general why Geo TV channels are not allowed to be on air when Pemra has charged huge licence fee from them. Answering this query, Deputy Attorney General Rizwan Siddiqui vehemently stated that there is no written order issued for suspension and the respondents have not imposed any ban or suspension on Geo TV Network.

On this statement, Ali Mazhar requested the court to record the statement of the deputy attorney general. The deputy attorney general also made a submission that instead of him, the attorney general for Pakistan will himself argue this matter.

The court said the deputy attorney general has already taken much time for filing the comments. Later, the court adjourned the matter for hearing on Nov 29, 2007 when the matter will be heard for a final decision regarding the restoration of Geo TV channels' transmission. — *THE NEWS 28/11/2007*

Petition filed in SC against media curbs

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD, Nov 28: A private petition was filed in the post-PCO Supreme Court on Wednesday praying that amendments made to the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 2002, on Nov 3 which put curbs on the electronic media be scrapped and the closure of private television channels be declared illegal.

A similar petition is being heard by the Sindh High Court in Karachi...

Moved by Advocate Chaudhry Naseer Ahmed on behalf of Qazi Sheharryar Iqbal, the petition requested the court to strike down sections 20 and 33 of the Pemra ordinance which had put

'unreasonable' restrictions on the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19 of the Constitution....

The petition prayed the court to declare unlawful the 'uncalled for and illegal' restrictions on television channels and that the closed TV channels be allowed to operate. Restrictions and fiscal imposition on the manufacture or import of electronic media equipment were also without lawful authority and of no legal effect, the petition maintained.

"For its deleterious and damaging character and being not in conformity with the present-day values, the amendments have invoked deep resentment, protest and condemnation from media bodies and other organisations both inside and outside the country," the petition stated.

By putting private television channels off air, it said, the government had subverted the freedom of speech, expression and free media choice of a large number of people.

"Pakistan is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948," it said. — *DAWN 29/11/2007*

SHC disposes of Geo TV petitions

By AR Qureshi

KARACHI: The courtroom of Justices Munib Ahmed Khan and Rana M Shamim echoed with the cries 'Shame, Shame!' after the judges dismissed two identical petitions challenging the ban on Geo TV's channels on Tuesday.

The judges retired to their chambers after announcing the order on Tuesday after the detailed hearing.

Earlier, Sindh Acting Advocate General Masood

Noorani, appearing on a notice served by the court, submitted that the petitions filed by Independent Media Corporation and Birds (Pvt) Limited were not maintainable. He argued that fundamental rights had been suspended and the court could not entertain these petitions under Article 199 of the Constitution.

AG Noorani also drew the attention of the court towards a mutual agreement and terms of license issued by the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), saying that the petitioners were among the signatories and had, thus, accepted that in case of a State of Emergency, the government could stop their transmission.

Counsel for the petitioners Mahmud Ali Mazhar, rebutting Noorani's arguments, said that Articles 18 (the right to do business), 4 and 2-A of the Constitution of Pakistan have not been suspended.

He argued that while all other channels had been allowed to telecast their programmes, only Geo's channels had been singled out and banned. He submitted that the PEMRA Ordinance was basically for Indian channels, not local Pakistani ones.

Mazhar also contended that the petitioners had not challenged the State of Emergency, the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) or the terms of the license, but in fact were adhering to the terms of the contract. "There are no written orders but cable operators have been told not to transmit Geo News, Geo Super, Geo Entertainment and Aag TV verbally."

He submitted that 19 days have gone by but no comments had been filed by the respondents, the federal government and the ministry of information. "The federal government is not even ready to admit that Geo channels have been taken off air.

This bench is authorized to hear these petitions, has the jurisdiction and my clients are aggrieved as they have directly been affected by the verbal orders. They have obtained a license for the transmission of programmes after paying a handsome fee." Mazhar said the petitioners had not been informed of where they had gone wrong, had not been treated according

to the law and an outright drastic action was taken against them.

The bench posed some questions to Mazhar about Article 184 (3), the fate of the petition moved by them before the Supreme Court and then, through a short order, dismissed the two petitions.

According to some witness lawyers, this was supposedly the first time in the history of the SHC that a judge had passed an order while at the door of his chambers, with the junior member announcing the session "dismissed" as he went. Geo employees shouted slogans against judges who took oath under the PCO 2007. — *DAILY TIMES 05/12/2007*

Hundreds march to PA against media curbs

Staff Report

LAHORE: Around 300 journalists, students and other civil society activists took part in a march - organised by the Punjab Union of Journalists (PUJ) against restrictions on the media and for the restoration of democracy - from the Lahore Press Club to the Punjab Assembly (PA) on Friday.

The participants of the rally were carrying banners and placards inscribed with slogans for the





Source: DAILY TIMES

freedom of press. They were wearing black armbands and headbands in protest. Some journalists also pulled down the barricades installed by the police near and around the Punjab Assembly building. The protestors raised slogans against the government, the PEMRA and President Pervez Musharraf. They also demanded implementation of the Wage Board Award.

A large number of journalists from Geo TV also joined in the rally, as they marked their network's 45th day of censorship from cable. Khaksar Tehreek activists holding red flags with their party emblems - led by Allama Hameeduddin Al-Mashriqi - took part in the rally along with the members of the Tehreek-e-Istaqlal. — *DAILY TIMES 15/12/2007*

PEMRA stops live coverage of public meetings

Staff Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Chairman Iftikhar Rasheed said on Monday that the authority had barred television channels from live broadcasting of political rallies.

He told a meeting of the Pakistan Broadcasters' Association (PBA) that the authority had barred TV channels from the live telecast of political rallies because of the possibility of inappropriate remarks made in these rallies against opponents being aired.

The meeting agreed to follow a media code for the general elections.

Time delay: Later, he told a press conference at PEMRA's regional headquarters that there was no ban on the live coverage except that "a time delay mechanism would be used to maintain editorial control". The PEMRA chief, however, said that he believed in a self-regulating media.

The time delay mechanism means that live transmissions reach viewers after a gap of few seconds during which any unwanted remark or scene is filtered out.

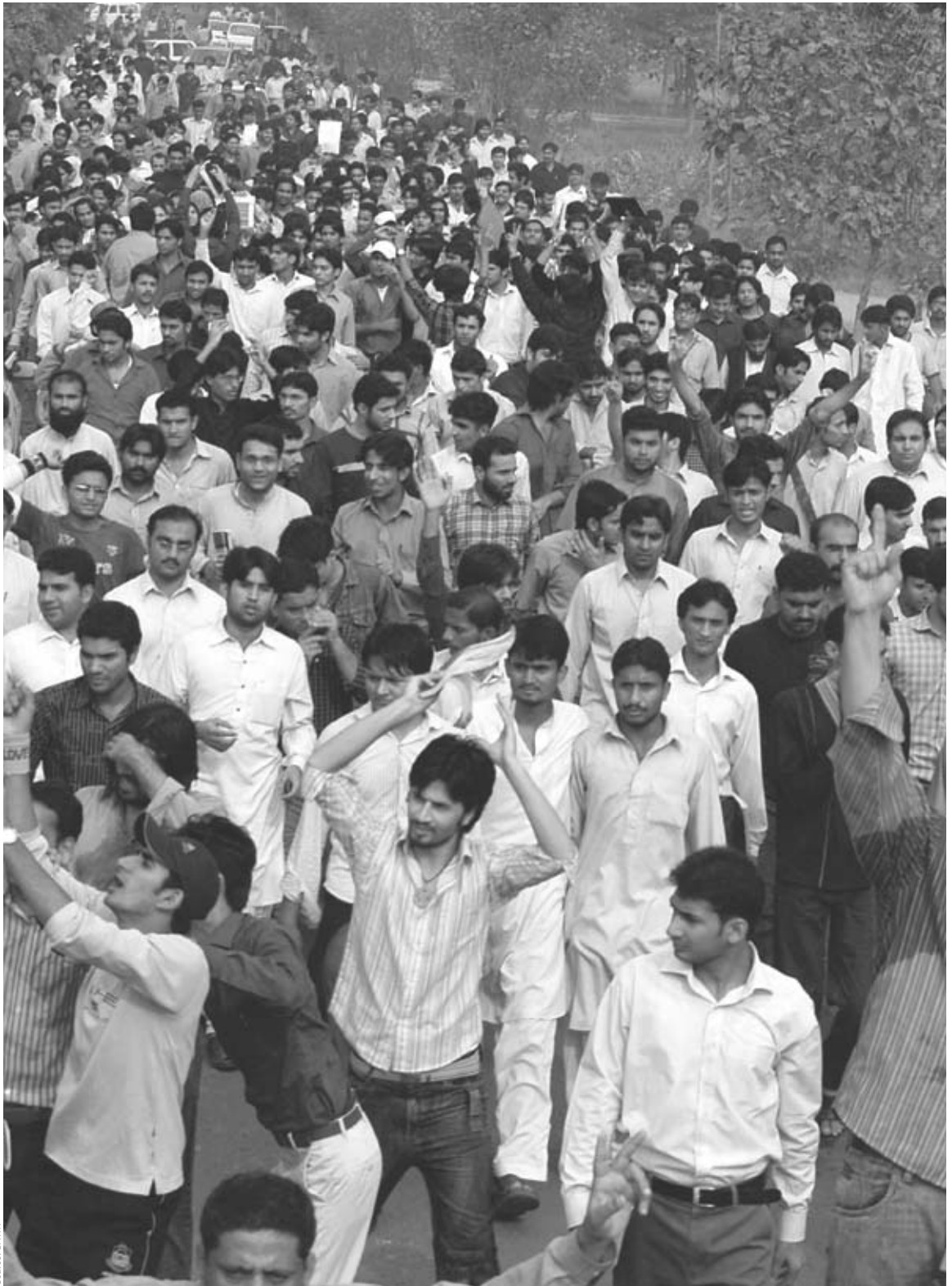
He said it was important to clearly distinguish between official and unofficial election results. Only those results would be considered official that would be announced by returning officers, he added. He said that occasional slips were okay but the media should not try to manufacture public opinion, adding that he was satisfied with the post-emergency rule media.

Airtime: The code asks the media to give additional airtime to political parties on the basis of their performance in the 2002 elections or their status.

An independent body to be notified by the government will monitor the allocation of airtime, it says. The code also bars channels from broadcasting political advertisements immediately before, after or during news broadcasts. It also prohibits the broadcast of any kind of opinion poll or survey regarding the elections. Violators of the code will be punished with fines, suspension of licences or seizure of equipment. President Pervez Musharraf promulgated an ordinance on November 3 to amend the PEMRA Ordinance, 2002.

The amendment ensures that no anchorperson, moderator or host propagates any opinion or acts in any manner prejudicial to the ideology or sovereignty of Pakistan. It also bars television channels from broadcasting anything that defames or brings into ridicule the head of state, or members of the armed forces, or executive, legislative or judicial organs of the state. — *DAILY TIMES 25/12/2007*

The students' movement



Source: DAWN

The end of a long slumber?

By Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

The lawyer-led movement that erupted following the sacking of the chief justice on March 9, 2007 is an historic one for many reasons. It stands out as arguably the longest running popular agitation in Pakistan's history. It has been spearheaded by a legal fraternity that has never enjoyed a particularly good reputation amongst working people, yet it has become enormously popular. And the list could go on.

Between March 9 and the imposition of emergency on November 3, the involvement of other professional groups and social classes was limited, with only political activists joining the lawyers during their repeated forays into the streets. After November 3 however, there was an outpouring of dissent across society, and mobilisation became much more broad-based (even if numbers remained limited).

Perhaps the most significant of the new entrants into the movement in the post-emergency period was the student community. Until the Zia period, students were amongst the most mobilised political forces in the country, having been at the forefront of the popular movement that topped Ayub Khan in 1969 and one of the most active constituencies during the populist rule of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the 1970s.

It has been a full three decades since students constituted a meaningful political force in Pakistan,

and thus the re-emergence of student activism over the past few months demands a detailed investigation of the breadth of the current mobilisation and potentialities for expansion in days to come.

Skimming the surface

As such the student mobilisation against Musharraf's crackdown garnered both media coverage and captured the public imagination in urban centres because it was spearheaded by elite youth studying in private universities and schools. The most high-profile mobilisation took place on the campus of the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), a bonafide gathering place of the children of the rich and famous. With their ability to circulate information around the world, LUMS students' actions were greatly magnified given the clampdown on the media. Other elite students followed suit and the attendant embarrassment suffered by the regime should not be understated.

The only public sector university of note to mobilise was Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad, where protests took place on a daily basis for at least a month after the imposition of emergency. Indeed the mobilisation of students took place primarily in Lahore and Islamabad, no other city or town experienced anything similar. The Student Action Committee (SAC) that has emerged as the platform upon which students have come together has been created only in these two cities.

Because many of the students involved in the agitations have been from private universities, there has been non-negligible participation of women. On most public university campuses, women and men do not intermingle beyond the immediate classroom environment while women's involvement in any kind of 'political' activity is even more taboo than for men. The QAU campus is an exception, although one would be advised against overstating women's participation which remains relatively low.

On the whole then, the mobilisation has only but skimmed the surface of the student community in Pakistan. This reflects the fact that the majority of students remain quite alienated from politics, and that, in contrast to the past, the present mobilisation has not started from student-specific issues and then extended to larger political themes, but is instead a reaction to the events of November 3.

More specifically, the mobilisation of students from relatively privileged backgrounds reflects a certain moral disaffection with the ruling regime, rather than a well formed political critique. This is reflected in rhetorical debates amongst students about who would replace Musharraf if he went, and particularly the dislike amongst many students of 'tried and tested' politicians. Deeper analyses of the ruling regime's record might uncover many students' belief that the Musharraf regime's economic policies have been good for the country and their major gripe with the government is its 'political' strategies, and in particular the muffling of the media and judiciary.

The point being made here is that this is far from a mobilisation guided by very clear and well-formulated political ideas, and more by general principles around which the entire movement has coalesced. This is not unusual for a movement of this nature, particularly when one accounts for the larger context of student inactivity over the past three decades. Nevertheless clearer medium and long run objectives will have to be articulated in due course if the fledgling organising effort is to be consolidated.

Potentialities

To some extent such objectives are being outlined by more politicised students. In particular efforts are being made by the SAC (both chapters of which are in close coordination) to incorporate broader structural and student-specific demands into the SAC agenda to both induce the participation of students in public-sector institutions and to ensure the longevity of the SAC itself.

The demands included have been for a restoration of student unions¹ (while ensuring the autonomy of student unions from political parties); an end to the policy of privatising educational institutions; establishment of a unified system of education in the country in contrast to the classist educational system that currently prevails; provision of employment to educated youth; and an end to discrimination of oppressed nationalities. The larger political demands of the movement have also been refined in the form of a demand for the complete withdrawal of the army from national political life, the separation of the state from religion and the articulation of an independent foreign policy that guarantees the sovereignty of the state and resists imperialist intervention of any kind.

The most urgent imperative is to regenerate a culture of student politics. For almost three decades young people have been made to believe that 'politics' is a dirty game which they should stay away from; even the SAC initiative was initially described by students themselves as 'apolitical', even though it was more accurately described as 'non-partisan'. Thus reviving young people's faith in a people-centred, or even more specifically, student-centred, politics, is indubitably the need of the hour.

In this regard the SAC has distinguished itself from student wings of mainstream political parties such as the Muslim Student Federation (MSF), People's Student Federation (PSF), and most of all the Islami Jamia't Tulba (IJT) which are active on many public university and college campuses. These organisations have not been able to garner the support of a majority of students and effectively remain wings of their parent parties, the Muslim League, the Pakistan People's Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami. As a general rule student politics has been associated with these organisations, and the relative lack of popularity of these organisations explains in large part the disaffection of the majority of students for 'politics'.

On the campus of Punjab University in Lahore, the long-standing terror of the IJT has been significantly weakened in the past four months, in part because of the mobilisation of students (with SAC and otherwise) and also because of its highly dubious role during the emergency and particularly

The most urgent imperative is to regenerate a culture of student politics. For almost three decades young people have been made to believe that 'politics' is a dirty game which they should stay away from; even the SAC initiative was initially described by students themselves as 'apolitical', even though it was more accurately described as 'non-partisan'.

1- Student unions were restored on March 29, 2008

in the arrest of Imran Khan on November 14. Nonetheless, the IJT continues to wield considerable influence and it will take time to create a credible alternative that can win students over on the basis of a consistent engagement with students' myriad concerns.

The larger context

Notwithstanding the ongoing efforts of students themselves to build upon the post-emergency mobilisation, the extent to which student activism reemerges in Pakistan will depend greatly on the initiatives taken by the new coalition government in the country. As was proved repeatedly during the 1988-99 period, substantive democratisation means much more than the holding of provincial and national level elections and requires the revival of organic political organisations at the lowest level, including but not limited to student unions, trade unions, intellectual fora and professional organisations. Only the legal fraternity has proved itself capable of playing a meaningful political role in the present conjuncture and facilitating the reemergence of a similar role for students (and other groups) would greatly deepen democracy.

In this regard, the students' demand that student unions be restored has been accepted by the new government. It is important that students engage the new regime to test its commitment to democratisation both within the country at large and on the campuses of educational institutions. However it is also clear that students' distinctive quality is their ability to mobilise and force the powers-that-be to meet their demands. One hopes that in years to come students will once again come to play the role that they once did in the country's politics. If so, November 3 will prove to be a watershed in a new history of student politics in Pakistan.

LUMS hosts teach-in on judiciary

Staff Report

LAHORE: The LUMS Law and Policy faculty is scheduling a teach-in consisting of lectures and speakers on constitutional history and judicial independence on Wednesday between 1 and 2 pm. A signature campaign to protest the removal of the Chief Justice of Pakistan will also be launched. The events will take place at LUMS, and are open to be attended by the varsity's students, alumni, faculty and staff. The department's head, Osama Siddique, said the teach-in will help explore issues surrounding

the abdication of the Chief Justice's position that are purely legal (relating to Article 209 of the constitution), as well as the mode and manner in which the CJ has been placed under house arrest.

The department head said the importance of this teach-in has risen since the government has responded violently to civil assembly.

"Two of our adjunct faculty, one of them a female, were beaten by the police for assembling civilly to protest what's been going on. Is this the face of a democratic society?"

Osama Siddique concluded, "The purpose of this teach-in is to galvanise the academic community, because their research and dialogue will impact our legal discourse, and this discourse informs public policy."

Muhammad Ali Durani, the minister of information, in an interview televised yesterday attributed the CJ's abdication and unrest thereafter to forces outside the country. Moeen Hayat Cheema, a member of the Law and Policy faculty responded to the comments:

"He lives in a fictional place where the government is good", he said. — *DAILY TIMES* 14/03/2007



Source: DAILY TIMES

LUMS faculty and students start campaign against military regime

By Ali Waqar

LAHORE: Faculty and students of the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) on Wednesday started a campaign against the military dictatorship in Pakistan, and against the suspension of Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry by President Pervez Musharraf.

The campaign aims to activate students and the youth to play a role in generating opinion on important political and social issues. The campaign started on the LUMS campus with students and faculty signing a petition against the CJ's suspension.

The Law and Policy Department, headed by Osama Siddique, arranged the campaign, which was attended by several hundred students, faculty and staff.

The participants seemed enthusiastic about mobilising people against the military dictatorship and its implications for Pakistan. The campaign was called 'Bol Key Lab Azad Hein Teray' (speak up-you are free to speak). The petition signing campaign against the CJ's removal will continue today (Thursday).

Osama Siddique; Rasul Bukhsh Raees of the Political Science Department; Waleed Iqbal of the School of Business; Roger Normand and Moeen Cheema of the Law and Policy Department and a few students addressed the demonstration held on campus. Staff and students also wore black armbands to protest the CJ's suspension.

Osama said, "This campaign is designed to define the role and activate the academia in generating public opinion. We thank the LUMS administration and management for supported the campaign. According to Article 209 of the 1973 Constitution the CJ's suspension is completely unlawful. This article

provides security to judges, but has been used against them instead. This is basically highhandedness by the military regime to put down the people."

He said, "Is this enlightened moderation? Even the formation of the Supreme Judicial Council, which has been set up against the CJ, is illegal because one of the senior most judges of Pakistan is not on it."

He denounced the government for stopping the media from discussing the situation. He urged students to speak to the foreign media on the Internet against the CJ's suspension.

Waleed Iqbal said, "This is not a real democracy. This is a sham. This is a country where every strongman takes law as his own. This manipulation must be stopped." He also quoted several contradictions of the present rulers including that of the president and prime minister. Roger Normand said, "This is the time when students need to step forward to fill this gap of injustice and frustration in society. The role of the academia and universities in every political crisis is to make people aware of the real issues and their implications."

He urged the students to speak out and tell others to do the same. "The way the president asked the CJ to suspend himself is totally illegal and unconstitutional," he added.

The speakers also highlighted the legal, political and social implications of the president's step. The meeting also denounced federal law minister Wasi Zafar's attitude and statements. — *DAILY TIMES 15/03/2007*

LUMS students censure govt

LAHORE: The Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) has denounced the violence in Karachi on May 12 and has drafted a resolution urging the government to launch an investigation into the matter.

According to a press release issued on Sunday, 923 students of LUMS signed a resolution asking the

government to accept its failure in preventing the Karachi violence and find the culprits responsible.

The resolution, drafted by the varsity's Law and Politics Society's (LPS) executive council LPS President Wazir Khan Virk, Vice-President Basil Nabi Malik and General Secretary Muhammad Haider Imtiaz states that it was the government's responsibility to protect the citizens from harm, and demands an investigation into the lapse of coordination of law enforcement agencies. It censures the ruling party for holding a celebratory rally when people in Karachi were being gunned down. The students demanded that the government serve its citizens, protect their rights and safeguard their lives.

— *DAILY TIMES* 04/06/2007

The ambitious Imran and the bluffing mullahs

By Ali Waqar

LAHORE: The Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing, Islami Jamiat Talaba (IJT), in collaboration with the Punjab University, turned in Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief Imran Khan, in what appears to be a planned move to counter Khan's popularity in the varsity.

IJT has shown its strength in the varsity, insiders say, and also helped muster support for university administration officials that are known to be IJT sympathisers. They say the arrival of a political leader at the varsity during the current administration's tenure would have damaged their credentials.

The IJT betrayed Khan, sources say, because his presence would have weakened their position in the university. The university administration took a backseat, they say, and Khan was detained and handed over to the police by the IJT.

They said JI central information secretary Ameerul Azeem and central leaders Fareed Paracha and Hafiz Salman Butt were also present in the

university at the time of Khan's arrival, but their presence had gone unnoticed because of Khan's strong influence on the students.

Khan had earlier visited the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) to muster support. Now he asked JI chief Qazi Hussain Ahmad for support from the IJT. Qazi had apparently agreed, sources say. Meanwhile, they say, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz chief Nawaz Sharif also contacted Qazi and asked him to let Imran lead his party's student workers. Qazi and Khan met several days ago, a source said, after which the rally was announced.



Source: *DAILY TIMES*

The IJT revolted against Qazi's decision, they say, and JI withdrew its support for Khan after discussions. A dejected Khan announced he would delay the rally, but after assurance from the All Parties Democratic Movement that the JI would support him, Khan decided to go on with the rally.

Just one day before the rally, the IJT announced that it would not support the PTI chief and "will not allow political activism on the PU campus because it is illegal".

The PUASA had, in its meeting held a few days ago, formed a committee that decided to cooperate with Khan. But after, the IJT's withdrawal of its support for Khan, the PUASA, which is a pro-IJT body, disbanded the committee. The PU administration, the JI and the IJT, while talking to the



Source: DAWN

media, have denied that the act was pre-planned. On the contrary, they claim to have 'saved' Khan from intelligence agencies. — *DAILY TIMES 15/11/2007*

IJT detains Imran, hands him to police

Staff Report

LAHORE: The Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT), the student wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), on Wednesday detained and manhandled Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan at the Punjab University, and then handed him over to police, who charged him under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Imran was to begin a students march from the Punjab University New Campus against emergency rule. Police cordoned off the campus earlier in the day, but Imran managed to get in.

He was then taken from the midst of cheering students by baton-wielding IJT activists and locked up in the Centre of High Energy Physics building. A university vehicle then whisked him away - fairly roughed up in the process - into the waiting hands of police, who took him to Iqbal Town Police Station. He was later moved to Civil Lines Police Station, police said.

ANTI-TERRORISM ACT: "A case has been

registered against Imran Khan. He has been charged under the Anti-Terrorism Act," local police officer Naveed Arshad told AFP.

"I came to the university to lead a rally of students against the dictator and his illegal actions," Imran said from police custody. "I have achieved my purpose by starting the student movement," he added.

IJT denies: PU IJT Nazim Muhammad Ayub told reporters that Imran was taken to the CHEP building for his own safety and denied allegations of manhandling. The PTI told reporters that the IJT's actions showed it had clandestine links with the government. — *DAILY TIMES 15/11/2007*

Thousands march against IJT at PU

By Adnan Lodhi

LAHORE: About 3,000 Punjab University (PU) students rallied against Islami Jamiat Talaba's (IJT) for manhandling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan and handing him over to the police.

Students of Law College, Hailey College, Institute of Administrative Sciences (IAS), Political Science Department, Institute of Communication Studies (ICS) and Institute of Business Administration (IBA) gathered in the law college premises. They shouted



Source: DAILY TIMES

slogans against Jamiat as they marched all over the New Campus. They were holding banners, one of which read Go Jamiat Go.

Several of them rampaged the Jamiat offices calling them "torture cells". They students accused the PU administration of nurturing Jamiat. "We will protest till the complete removal of Jamiat from the campus," a student said.

Several Jamiat activists resigned in protest of the IJT's "hypocrisy".

Hira, an ICS student, said the IJT misbehaved with women on Wednesday. Irfan from the Law College said the college had become "the hub of IJT's hooliganism".

PU registrar Dr Nacem said, "A new PU is emerging with the falling leaves of autumn. Students' rally against IJT shows that values like human rights and freedom of expression are on the rise in the PU."

PU students' advisor Nazeer Ahmed said, "Students rally is a reaction of IJT's hypocrisy." PU resident officer Dr Asmatullah said it was the first anti-IJT rally in the PU's history. PU hall council vice-chairman said, "Students' rally is a revolution in making." IAS director Dr Zafar Ali Jadoon denounced the IJT workers for manhandling Imran Khan.

— *DAILY TIMES* 16/11/2007

Campus protests spreading like wildfire

LAHORE: The steady rumbling of dissent on university campuses across Pakistan is an ominous development for the country's military regime. Student activists in Pakistan have a history of effecting dramatic political change, according to a report in *The Christian Science Monitor* on Thursday.

What began last week as a protest against the arrests of academics at a university in Lahore has quickly spread across larger campuses, energising new movements and inciting old student political groups from near two-

decade slumber. But, when opposition leader Imran Khan, a perceived hero of the student movement, arrived on Wednesday to address students in Lahore, members of a powerful and established Islamist student group quickly handed him over to the police. For Khan and others, targeting university campuses is a shrewd move. But his arrest reveals the scattered nature of the students' potent political power. Unless the opposition can arrive at consensus, observers say, the movement will remain incoherent. At the core of this confused effort lies the clashing visions of the old student political groups with a new wave of activists who hope to effect a more profound shift in Pakistani politics.

‘VERY SIGNIFICANT, NON-ALIGNED’:

"This 'new student movement' is very significant," says Rasul Baksh Rais, a professor at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) who is a liaison between the administration and student leaders on campus. Rais added that students even snubbed former prime minister Benazir Bhutto when she invited them for a meeting. The students' lack of interest in Pakistan's premier opposition figure, Rais says, indicates that "until all parties are able to come on one platform it is unlikely these students will want to support one party over another."

Whether Bhutto will eventually be able to seize the reins of such a unified movement remains a question, observers say. Security officials said she will likely remain under house arrest until Thursday, at least. On Tuesday, Bhutto called on the president to resign. Her spokeswoman told reporters on Wednesday that she is attempting to rally the political opposition, including former premier Nawaz Sharif, to present a more unified opposition to General Pervez Musharraf's authority.

Musharraf said on Wednesday he expects to step down as army chief by the end of November, and begin a new presidential term as a civilian, warning that Pakistan risked chaos if he gave into opposition demands to resign. In an interview with the *Associated Press*, he accused Bhutto of fueling political turmoil and rejected Western pressure to quickly lift emergency rule, which he indicated was likely to continue through the January elections. "I take decisions in Pakistan's interest and I don't take ultimatums from anyone," he said at his army office. Khan was one of the only

prominent political leaders to have avoided arrest by going into hiding, and had sparked student activism by speaking at a university campus on the eve of the emergency. Through underground messages from hiding, Khan had called for a "youth army" to take to the streets. "My goal was to set in motion a student movement," he said after his arrest.

Students became the latest ingredient in the urban street caldron - along with political party workers, lawyers, and civil society groups - after President Musharraf extended his sweeping security crackdown to academics. The arrests of two professors from LUMS, after the declaration of emergency last week, sparked immediate protests and the arrival of riot police at the campus gates. The agitation spread like wildfire to other smaller, private universities. Within a week, Khan visited Punjab University, the historic core of student activism, to try to harness the unwieldy power of the students. Shortly after his arrest, Khan told reporters that student "collaborators" had betrayed him to security officials. His surprising detention indicates that the youth movement is united only by its opposition to the current regime - and little else. "There is no greater ideology at work here that I can describe," says Hashim bin Rashid, a LUMS student leader, dressed in all black and topped off by a black headband. The students at his campus, he says, are more inspired by larger concepts of social justice.

"It's easy to turn a blind eye to everything going around you when you have a silver spoon stuck in your mouth," he says. "But we are here because we have a stake in saving this country."

Centre of historical narrative: This sentiment, admits Rashid, might not be what is driving students in older, more established student groups, which have been the breeding grounds for many of Pakistan's old guard politicians. But, in a country that places student activism at the centre of its historical narrative of independence, student politics in any form has often been essential to carving the country's political power dynamic.

In the 1960s, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto toppled military ruler Gen Ayub Khan on the back of a seething student street movement. The early 1980s saw student groups target Gen Zia ul Haq's regime, prompting

him to ban student unions as part of an effort to depoliticise the schools. But, some of the newer institutions have no experience with political activism. Their opposition to the military regime is defined by "a liberal ethos, a modernist structure of values," that focuses on "constitutionalism, rule of law, and the independence of the judiciary, rather than identifying with any prevailing political party," says Rais.

This new movement has awaked student activism after two-decades of depoliticalisation. While it remains germinal and incoherent, the students have the potential to help decide Musharraf's fate - as other movements have done in the past. As the new non-aligned movement spreads to the traditional centres of student power, it's likely to become more complicated - both for the students and the government they oppose.

Nadeem Farooq Paracha, a journalist who was active in student politics during the military rule of General Zia and was arrested several times for "anti-state" activities, sees this as a very different movement than that of the 1980s, when large state owned universities, not elite colleges, were the centre of activity. — *DAILY TIMES 16/11/2007*

IJT says it has kicked out 17 for beating Imran

Staff Report

LAHORE: The Islami Jamiat Talaba (IJT) on Friday issued a list of 17 students who it said, had manhandled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan. Most of the people named in the list had either graduated or been expelled from the university. The IJT has cancelled their memberships. Addressing an IJT meeting, Pakistan IJT chief Attiqur Rehman said it had taken the IJT 60 years to establish its hold on the PU. He said the IJT's domination on the university could not be overridden easily. IJT sources told Daily Times that Rehman had advised the Jamiat activists to remain calm for three days. He said the student body would launch an 'operation' after three days to deal with its opponents. Sources quoted him as saying that

the IJT workers had shed blood for the 'sacred cause' and advised the workers not to hesitate in shedding blood again. Rehman advised IJT opponents "not to conspire against the body". — *DAILY TIMES 17/11/2007*

‘Go Jamiat Go’

Staff Report

LAHORE: Around 3,500 students of the Punjab University (PU) protested for the second day in a row on Friday against the hooliganism of the Islami Jamiat Talaba (IJT).

About 3,000 students had protested against the IJT on Thursday. Later, on Thursday night, around 50 IJT activists had marched through several hostels shouting that they intended to stay in the university and would make sure that their rules were being followed.

On Friday, the students shouted slogans some of which are Go Jamiat Go; nikal do nikal do, Jamiat ko nikal do (out with Jamiat); Jamiat ko bhagana hai, university ko bachana hai (we have to get rid of Jamiat and save the university) and Jamiat ka jo yar hai, ghaddar hai, ghaddar hai (Traitor is the friend of Jamiat). The students also chanted slogans against General Pervez Musharraf and the imposition of emergency in the country.

The rally went around several departments of the university. The protesters also criticised the PU administration, accusing it of nurturing the IJT. They said the IJT had no right to enforce its rules in the varsity.



Source: DAILY TIMES

Haroon Rasheed, a student, said the PU administration and several teachers were trying to mar the anti-IJT protests. He said many teachers were sympathetic towards the IJT and were supporting it.

Amber Sajjad, a student at the Institute of Communication Studies, said she had no interest in politics, but was protesting because she did not approve of the IJT's policies. She also condemned the IJT's manhandling of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan.

PU registrar Dr Naeem Ahmed Khan said the students' agitation against the IJT was increasing. He said the protests would yield a fruitful result. He said the PU administration wanted to provide the students all their rights and was expecting a favourable result for their freedom.

A strong police contingent was deployed outside the university, but no policeman entered the university because the rally remained peaceful.

IJT thrashes journalist: IJT workers thrashed Aoun Zahoor, reporter of a local newspaper, Daily Jurat, for covering the anti-IJT rally. Zahoor said the IJT workers had dragged him to a hostel where they beat him up. Reporters of many other newspapers have also complained that IJT workers had manhandled or misbehaved with them. — *DAILY TIMES 17/11/2007*

PU to act against illegal residents

By Adnan Lodhi

LAHORE: The Punjab University is going to start an action against illegal residents in PU hostels. A PU teacher told Daily Times on Friday that a meeting of the PU Deans' Committee was held on Friday. He said the wardens of all PU hostels and acting PU vice chancellor Dr Arif Butt had attended the meeting. The meeting decided to send the record of all illegal residents, which include a large number of Islami Jamiat Talaba (IJT) activists, to the city government

and all police stations of the city. PU registrar Dr Naeem Ahmed Khan confirmed that meeting of the Deans' Committee was held. He said the meeting discussed the university's academic environment and security. He said it decided that the issue of illegal residents needed to be solved soon. He said the PU had also formed a committee of teachers who would try to calm students down and end their ongoing protests. — *DAILY TIMES 17-11-2007*

Journalists, students protest media curbs and emergency

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD/KARACHI: Journalists and students on Monday protested in the capital against the emergency rule, curbs on the media and suspension of judges, while former premier Benazir Bhutto and American ambassador to Pakistan Anne W Patterson visited the offices of banned television channels in Karachi to express solidarity with the electronic media.

...[Students] of a local college along with civil society members staged a protest at Aabpara market against curbs on the media. Around 100 protesters were carrying banners and placards inscribed with slogans against the media curbs, emergency rule and the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO).

The students of the Quaid-e-Azam University (QAU) also staged a demonstration in the university premises. — *DAILY TIMES 20/11/2007*

IJT not to enforce ideology on students

By Ali Waqar

LAHORE: Following the publishing in the Urdu press of an article called 'Tragedy of Punjab University' written by Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) chief Qazi

Hussain Ahmed, a debate has started over the attitude of the Islami Jamiat Talaba (IJT) in Punjab University.

People are debating whether the article is a warning to the IJT by Qazi or a 'face saving' attempt by him to improve his party's image. The IJT is JI's students wing.

The article, which was printed on Tuesday, discloses that the IJT had pre-planned the manhandling and detaining of Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan in Punjab University on November 14.

The article reveals how Imran contacted JI bigwigs to appear on campus and discuss with students the emergency and call for the restoration of democracy. The article states that the JI and IJT disallowed Imran to go it alone, as the university is JI and IJT turf, and urged him to have a joint show with the IJT led by JI Punjab chief Liaqat Baloch.

The article reveals the emotional attachment Qazi has with the IJT and states that the IJT's violent attitude has become a source of disgrace for it, as it gives the media fodder to defame JI's student wing.

The article also states the complaints of several elements within the IJT about violence being perpetrated by the IJT on campus. Qazi urges the IJT not to be violent and not to force its strategy and ideology on campuses and advises it to apologise to Imran and to refrain from such acts in the future.

PU sources told Daily Times on Tuesday that the article had sparked widespread debate on and off campus over whether the IJT would follow Qazi's advice or not.

Some circles believe that the article was a face saving attempt by Qazi, as it did not mention the action taken by the JI over the IJT's violations and hooliganism. They assumed that it looked as if some elements within the IJT were not in the control of JI bigwigs.

Others believe that Qazi truly meant what he wrote. They believe that the JI chief wants the IJT end

its hooliganism and let students decide whether to join or not to join the IJT.

PU IJT nazim Attiqur Rehman, who replaced Muhammad Ayub after the Imran episode, said Qazi wrote the article as advice to the IJT. He denied the presence of violent elements in the IJT, saying, "We live in the hearts of the students. There are bigger examples of violence by the state. The real issue here is lifting the ban on student unions to allow students to act freely and democratically. Till the ban is not lifted students will take part in violence."

He alleged that certain elements were trying to break the unity between PU teachers and students and the IJT with the aim to allow the regime to enforce "anti-people policies like such as the Model University Ordinance".

However, the IJT would not allow anyone to break the student-teacher alliance, he added.

— *DAILY TIMES* 28/11/2007

LUMS students' protest continues

Staff Report

LAHORE: Students of the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) continued their protest and organised a sit-in on Wednesday.

A LUMS student told Daily Times that several students addressed the protestors and condemned the first information reports (FIRs) registered against faculty members. He said the speakers condemned the forcible eviction of Justice (deposed) Shahid Siddiqui from his official residence. "They denounced the disgraceful treatment meted out to US activists Medea Benjamin and Tighe Barry," he said. He said LUMS activists were present at Justice Siddiqui's residence from Tuesday night onwards forming a human shield to prevent the police from entering the premises.

Another LUMS student said LUMS Action Committee members along with human rights



activists, lawyers, students and civil society members attended a debate at Lahore Press Club on Wednesday. She said the LUMS Student Action Committee had organised a protest to be held on Thursday (today).

— *DAILY TIMES* 06/12/2007

Students protest curbs on media

By Adnan Lodhi

LAHORE: About 150 students demonstrated on Monday in front of Nasser Bagh against the curbs on the judiciary and the media. The Students Action Committee (SAC) had called for the protest.

Human rights activists and legal fraternity members also participated in the protest. The protesters wore black armbands and shouted pro-Chief Justice of Pakistan (deposed) Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry and anti-Musharraf slogans.

The police officials and officers kept on urging students not to march on the road, but to no avail. The protesters stayed at the Anarkali Chowk, The Mall, for 20 minutes.

The SAC members told Daily Times they were protesting for the restoration of the judiciary. They



said students would not sit idle till the restoration of judiciary, human rights and the constitution.

A protester said President Musharraf had made a mockery of the constitution by making amendments for his (Musharraf's) personal benefits. He said, "Due to Musharraf's policies the country was fallen into chaos."

Superintendent of police Ahsan said the police had the right to employ any means to tackle the protesters.

Students returned to the Istanbul Chowk and stayed there for half-an-hour. They also made speeches on the megaphone. Passers-by waved at the students and flashed victory signs. The protesters dispersed peacefully at 2:45pm.

Students were carrying placards inscribed with slogans Emergency Lifted, Nothing Changed and Restore the Judiciary. They also shouted Go Musharraf Go on megaphones.

They also distributed fliers among the people urging them to protest against the present regime. Ali, a protester, said, "The protest is an eye opener against the mockery of the constitution, sacking of judges and curbs on the media."

"Students will continue to work for the restoration of the judiciary, which is a true mechanism for a free and enlightened nation," said a female participant.

The protesters later marched back to Nasser Bagh. They gathered near the National College of Arts (NCA) and shouted slogans for about 20 minutes. They also formed a human chain outside NCA. They demanded the restoration of the judiciary to pre-November 3 state.

A student sang parody of a famous national song along with other participants - Tera Pakistan Hai Na Mera Pakistan Hai; Yea Us Ka Pakistan Hai Jo Sadr-e-Pakistan Hai. At the end of the protest the students sang the national anthem.

— *DAILY TIMES* 18/12/2006

Talibanisation and violence against women



Source: AZHAR JAFRI

'Justice', Taliban-style

By Beena Sarwar

Being a woman and a teacher cost Khatoon Bibi her life. On Saturday, September 29, 2007 four masked men on two motorcycles shot her dead with AK-47 assault rifles as she waited at a bus stop to return home from school in Pakistan's Mohmand Agency, part of the tribal belt adjacent to the North West Frontier Province.

Militants in the area have launched 'anti-vice campaigns' along the lines of the fallen Taliban government in Afghanistan. They attack drug dens, besides video and music shops, internet cafes, hair dressing salons, and girls' schools. They send letters warning against women venturing out to work (even teach) and demand that girls' schools be shut down.

In the tribal area of Waziristan, bordering Afghanistan, most of the girls' schools, including 180 community schools set up with the assistance of the Norwegian government, have been closed, according to a report in The Telegraph, London ('Taliban campaign targets girls' schools', Feb 4, 2007). The report noted that in Afghanistan, at least 61 teachers were murdered in the past 18 months and 183 schools razed.

Intimidated by the violence and threats of violence, most teachers have stopped going to schools in the tribal areas. Others defy or ignore these warnings because they simply cannot afford to sit at

home. Khatoon Bibi, reportedly the sole breadwinner of a poor family, made the daily trek from her home in a settled area -- Utmanzai village, Charsadda district, NWFP -- to teach in remote tribal villages.

Given the dearth of local teachers, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) government, an alliance of several religious parties, inducted a large number of non-local women to teach in the mountainous areas. But they also dismissed, suspended or transferred to sideline positions women from government offices where they were visible and could effect change, like additional advocate general of NWFP, Musarrat Hilali.

Talking to this writer, Ms Hilali related how chief minister Akram Durrani of the Jamiat-Ulema Islam (F) told her that her only disqualification was being a woman. "He said that his party had no great objection but the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) was not allowing it." She initially contested the decision, but eventually withdrew her claim.

The few female civil judges in the NWFP, including the senior civil judge Kulsoom Azam Khan, are used to receiving what the legal community sarcastically refers to as 'love letters', warning them to leave their jobs. There is strict security at the Peshawar courts due to the ongoing threat of suicide bombers.

Such protection is no guarantee of safety but it can be a deterrent. With no such protection, working women like teachers, are particularly careful about dress and behaviour, mindful of tribal customs and militant threats. Khatoon Bibi herself wore a burqa for her job interview, and was in fact wearing it when she was shot, according to witnesses (Mushtaq Yusufzai, 'Threat unveiled,' The News on Sunday, Oct 14, 2007).

On the first working day after Khatoon Bibi's murder, October 1, 2007, hundreds of non-local teachers braved militant threats and demonstrated in Ghalanai, the headquarters of Mohmand Agency. They protested Khatoon Bibi's murder and demanded security in order to do their jobs. The administration's lack of response led to the closure of over a hundred girls' schools in Mohmand Agency.

The increase in terrorist activities in general overshadows the issue of violence against women which is on the rise. "Women are given in swara," says Musrrat Hilali, referring to the illegal tradition of giving away a woman or a girl to another family in order to end a conflict. "There are stove burnings and women's noses being cut off. Basically, the militancy is just strengthening male domination."

Among the first casualties of 'religious militancy' tend to be women's rights. Extremists in Pakistan have received a tremendous boost since 1979. As mujahideen or holy warriors they participated in the jihad, holy war against Communist Russia, with more than a little help from America and its front-line ally Pakistan who, along with other allies, provided them with money, weapons and military training against the occupying Soviets. Pakistan's tribal areas were the launching pad for the mujahideen's incursions across the porous Afghan border.

In Pakistan, weapons and drugs became easily available and contributed to growing lawlessness. Sectarian violence escalated sharply after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan as the chickens of the jihad came home to roost.

A decade later, following September 11, 2001, Pakistan was again a front-line state for America - this time against the Taliban who mutated from the mujahideen into a monster that threatens world peace and security. The tribal areas that nurtured them are now sanctuaries for their successors who

are fighting the Pakistan army in the tribal belt and Western troops in Afghanistan. The weapons and drugs of the 1980s look like child's play compared to the new 'imports'.

Hitherto unheard of in Pakistan, these practices go against the traditional notions of honour here: suicide bombings, executing prisoners and mutilating the bodies, and 'punishing' women outside the family. Some families would kill female relatives who transgressed - a prominent case being the cold-blooded murder of Samia Sarwar, supervised by her mother, in her advocate Hina Jillani's office in Lahore, in 1999. Now, the militants have taken such punishments upon themselves, in the guise of 'justice'.

As Peshawar-based lawyer Kamran Arif notes, those who want to establish their writ over a particular area must first enforce their version of criminal law. This is what the militants running amok in Pakistan are doing, given impetus by Islamabad's military aggression. They not only carry out these punishments but videotape and upload them onto the internet for the world to see.

Those who want to establish their writ over a particular area must first enforce their version of criminal law. This is what the militants running amok in Pakistan are doing, given impetus by Islamabad's military aggression.

On March 14, 2007, militants of the Lashkar-e-Islami stoned to death two men and a woman on charges of adultery, in Bara, Khyber Agency, an area popular for its smuggled goods and proximity to the NWFP capital Peshawar. Women carry bundles of cloth on buses and sell the material from house to house, often operating on credit. Taslima, the woman who was killed, hailed from a settled area. According to her family who approached the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), was trying to settle accounts in a house in Bara when local militants raided it. They claimed to have found her in a 'compromising position' with two tribesmen, Allah Noor and Shehzad. The Lashkar men publicly stoned and then shot them. They made a video of the shooting and circulated it.

Less than three months later, on June 3, the 'Sipah Islahi Committee' publicly executed another woman and three men in Landi Kotal, also in Khyber Agency on similar charges. One of the men, Said Ras of Mardan told the jirga (tribal council) that he had got the woman, who was a relative, "into the business" to pay off his debt. The woman reportedly confessed to this and pleaded for mercy, which the jirga denied. All four were shot dead with Kalashnikovs in an open area near Speray Dam.

The vigilante-style executions of two women accused of "immoral activities" speaks of the further distortion of such 'justice'. Their beheaded bodies were found in Bannu on September 7, 2007, a day after armed men kidnapped them as they got into a rickshaw. A note in Pashto near the bodies warned that any women "involved in immoral activities" would meet the same fate. This was the first time that women were kidnapped brutally and their bodies disfigured and killed in this manner, countering the Pashtun code of honour.

Militants are attempting to establish their writ beyond the tribal areas. In September, weeks before Khatoon Bibi was killed, the principal of a government girls' school in Taxila, once a repository of Buddhist learning, near the capital Islamabad, reported that an unidentified man had threatened to bomb the school if the students and teachers did not wear burqas. In October, militants bombed a girls' school in Kabal city, Swat, a settled area.

Instead of taking a stand against the militants or providing security to the schools, local officials advise teachers and students to wear burqas, advocating the cover-all white 'shuttlecock' rather than the 'fashionable' black burqa which can leave the face visible.

Pakistan's long standing policy of appeasement on the one hand and disproportionate use of force on the other clearly needs a major overhaul.

Veil threat to girls' school in Mardan

MARDAN: A school for girls in Mardan has been warned that its building will be bombed if teachers and students do not start wearing veils and burkas. According to a private TV channel's report, the principal of Mardan Government High School received a letter from an unidentified man, who had written that the school would be bombed within seven days if students and teachers did not start wearing veils. The school administration told the area's ADI and DCO about this, following which security personnel in uniform and plainclothes were deployed around girls' schools. It is believed that the letters are being sent by associates of Al Qaeda leader Abu Farah, who was arrested from the same area. Similar letters were also sent to some schools in Peshawar, and as a result, two schools were closed down and security for others was increased. — *ONLINE / DAILY TIMES 23/02/2007*

Wear veil or face bombs, students warned

Mohammad Ashfaq

PESHAWAR: Many English-medium schools of Peshawar remained closed for another day on Thursday after receiving continued threats of being targeted by the terrorists.

SHOs of the police stations visited the public and private sector schools in their respective areas and asked the principals and watchmen to keep vigil on the suspected elements, as secret agencies had reported that terrorists' next target would be educational institutions, a school teacher informed.

The terror reports spread panic and fear among the students, parents and teachers of the schools, particularly the Beacon House and City Schools, which remained closed for the last two days. The four branches of Beacon House, located in Hayatabad Township, and one at Bara Road, and a branch of Bloomfield in the University Town remained closed, the sources said. Principal City School Naheed Kamran told *The Nation* that they have not received any threat. However, telephone calls to the Beacon House admin caused panic among the teachers and students. — *THE NATION 23/02/2007*

More colleges, schools close in Peshawar

Our Staff Reporter

PESHAWAR: Most of the city's English medium schools and historical Edward College remained closed on Friday also after receiving anonymous calls and letters demanding their closure.

Some more educational institutions received

similar calls demanding closure for imparting anti-Islamic education.

The Edward College also received an anonymous letter asking the management to shut down the college or face the consequences, well placed sources confirmed to *The Nation*.

The sources said that the letter received by the College administration stated that the institution was producing English-minded people and could face suicide attack if it remained open. Rumours gripped the provincial metropolis about the closure of private schools after receiving these letters circulated anonymously.

The schools being run by the Beacon House and City Schools chains across the province reportedly remained closed for the third day on Friday. Peshawar Grammar School (PGS) and Frontier Education Foundation (FEF) in the Hayatabad area also remained closed. The FEF Girls School in Hayatabad was immediately shut down after it received a bomb hoax call. The call created panic among the students and parents, who reportedly took children back home.

The police high ups categorically rejected receipt of such letters by private or public sector schools. No threat of suicide attacks was received by any school, Capital Police Chief Abdul Majeed Marwat told *The Nation*.

Marwat said that he had talked to the office-bearers of private schools association as well as owners of Beacon House and other institutions and asked them not to close the schools. Security has been tightened and police have been deployed around these English medium schools, he added. He said these rumours are aimed at creating unrest. The government has ordered a probe into the matter, said Provincial Education Minister Fazli Ali Haqqani while talking to *The Nation* here.

"We would approach these schools which had either received the letters or phone calls so as to investigate this issue," he said during his visit to some schools in the city. — *THE NATION 24/02/2007*

How do they become suicide bombers?

By Behroz Khan

Peshawar: Jihadi organisations have confronted people with dangerous consequences in the remote Buner district of NWFP, as their school-going sons are silently taken away from them and trained in military facilities to be come suicide bombers and 'holy warriors'.

The ordeal of the families of Muhammad Abdullah and Pir Bakhsh of Gadezai area of the remote district started in mid-February when Muhammad Bakhtiar, 17, and his class fellow in 10th grade in a local private school, Miraj Khan, also of the same age, went missing without leaving any clue. The two youngsters were put in the hostel of Hera Public School so that they could prepare for their Secondary School Certificate exams, fathers of both the boys told this reporter.

The school administration, which allowed outsiders to visit the school and stay in the hostel to preach jihad to the students, denied they had any suspicion that the warden of the hostel was a jihadi and the visitors were from Jamaat-ud-Dawa, formerly known as Lashkar-e-Tayyaba. The name was changed following a ban imposed by President General Pervez Musharaf after the US declared the outfit a terrorist organization in January 2002.

Jamaat-ud-Dawa, however, has been praised for its humanitarian assistance in the earthquake-hit areas of NWFP and Azad Kashmir despite the hue and cry by Western media and governments regarding the clandestine activities of the organisation in the guise of helping poor and homeless survivors of the October 8, 2005 earthquake. Jamaat-ud-Dawa has allegedly enrolled thousands of orphans and homeless kids in its seminaries in Battagram, Mansehra, Azad Kashmir and some of them have been shifted to Muridke, the headquarters of the organization.

The link between the future jihadis - Bakhtiar and

Miraj and Jammat-ud-Dawa was established through Samiul Haq, a resident of Rustam area of Mardan district who was a friend of Muhammad Ghalib, the warden of the hostel. Ghalib and Sami are in hiding after the recovery of the youngsters and termination of services of Ghalib from the school, the administrator of the school, Abdur Rehman, said.

"We believe that our school has been brought to disrepute and we reserve the right to file an FIR against Muhammad Ghalib and Samiul Haq," remarked Ibrannullah, principal of the school.

However, no FIR has been lodged with local police despite the lapse of three weeks and insistence from the affected parents to report the issue to police.

"Samiul Haq used to visit us in the hostel and three or four times he spent the night to teach us about jihad. He once addressed the school assembly in the morning on the importance of jihad," Bakhtiar confessed before the principal in front of his uncle, Dr. Yaseen and other family members.

But the administration of the school refuses to admit that outsiders like Samiul Haq have been invited to deliver speeches. An effort to reach Samiul Haq through his cell phone failed, as the person receiving the call identified himself as Murad instead of Samiul Haq and said that Samiul Haq is not in contact for quite sometime now and the cell number was now in his (Murad's) use.

How parents found the two boys is interesting, and worrisome, too. After the principal informed them that Bakhtiar and Miraj were not attending the school for about a week, the clueless parents contacted relatives in Karachi, hoping they might be with them.

"We would not have found them had my younger nephew not mentioned Muridke," said Dr. Yaseen adding that names and home addresses of the boys had been changed in Muridke and it was almost impossible for the parents to find them. One of the cousins of Bakhtiar managed to enter the seminary run under the supervision of Jamaat-ud-Dawa, to identify the two boys learning Islamic teachings at the

facility and later informed the waiting parents and relatives about their presence in the seminary. After identification of the boys, the incharge of the seminary allowed Bakhtiar and Miraj to accompany their elders and go home.

However, Samiul Haq had convinced the youngsters that going for jihad would not require any permission of consent from parents, as according to his interpretation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an the permission from parents becomes irrelevant when there is a call for jihad.

"Youngsters like them look for excuses to run away from exams or are brainwashed by extremist elements to become jihadis," remarked Muhammad Anwar, who also visited the principal's office for some personal work.

The two boys spent four to five days at the training facility in Muridke, but had not been imparted any military training during their stay, Bakhtiar and Miraj confessed. "We were told by Samiul Haq that after becoming suicide bombers, their prime target would be Gen Pervez Musharaf", Bakhtiar and Miraj confided to their classmates and later to some of the close relatives.

Bakhtiar has been influenced by the jihadis and he has told his parents that after taking the exam, he plans to go back to Muridke and join the jihad against infidels to please Allah...

Dr. Yaseen demanded that the school administration file a report with the police and ban entry of Samiul Haq to Buner till legal action is taken against him. — *THE NEWS 12/03/2007*

Mardan girl students being forced to wear burqas

Staff Report

PESHAWAR: Girl students in Mardan have started wearing burqas (veils) after schools received

anonymous letters warning that acid would be thrown on girls without burqas and schools would be bombed if the directions were not taken seriously. "I did not attend school on Saturday because I did not have a burqa and our teachers have also announced that girls without burqas will not be allowed to sit in the classroom," Hajira, a student of class 10 at the Government Girls High School in Katlang village, 15 kilometres north of Mardan city, told Daily Times on Monday. She added that her school's administration had warned the girls that they would be fined for not wearing burqas.

A principal confirmed to Daily Times that some schools had received the threatening letters, but said that the managements had decided not to close the schools. Mardan DPO Akhtar Hayat Gandapur told Daily Times that the Katlang Girls High School and the Mardan Shah Dand Girls School had received threatening letters. He said that policemen and policewomen had been deployed at the two schools for security. Various government and private girls' schools in Mardan district and Takht Bhai tehsil have been receiving threatening letters for the last two months. — *DAILY TIMES 13/03/2007*

Woman, two men stoned, publicly executed

By Our Correspondent

LANDI KOTAL (Khyber Agency), March 14: A woman and two men were publicly executed in Bara on Wednesday on charges of adultery, official sources said. The sources said that a local council of elders, including activists of the Lashkar-i-Islam, accused Allah Noor and Shahzada of the Kukikhel tribe of having illicit relations with a divorced woman, Taslima, in Akkakhel area.

Announcements were made on loudspeakers from mosques and the three 'accused' were brought to an open place after they had been 'caught'. A large number of people gathered to witness the execution, said a witness.

The council of elders stoned the three before two masked activists of Lashkar-i-Islam shot them with Kalashnikov rifles. Lashkar-i-Islam Amir Mangal Bagh was reported to have been present during the execution.

The local administration has registered a case. — *DAWN 15/03/2007*

Three 'adulterers' stoned to death

By Qazi Rauf

BARA: The Lashkar-e-Islami (LI) on Wednesday stoned to death two men and a woman on charges of adultery. Two days ago, the LI men were informed that two men were committing adultery at Watan Shah's house in Meelot village of Akakhel in Bara, Khyber Agency, locals said, adding that the LI men raided the house and found a girl, Taslim, with tribesmen Allah Noor and Shahzad in a "compromising position". Locals said the two men "confessed" and the LI men took them and the girl to Meelot stream where hundreds of tribesmen stoned them to death.

They said the LI men also fired bullets at their bodies. The men reportedly belonged to Kokikhel tribe of Khyber Agency, while the girl was said to be from a settled area. In the past, tribal families shot dead people found involved in adultery, but this was the first case in which "adulterers" were first stoned to death and then fired at publicly. — *DAILY TIMES 15/03/2007*

Woman among three executed publicly in Bara

By Sher Khan Afridi

BARA (Khyber Agency) - On the directives of a controversial religious group, three persons including a woman were executed publicly on adultery charges

at Meelot Khawar in Bara Tehsil of Khyber Agency on Wednesday.

First three persons were stoned and later all of them were shot dead in the presence of hundreds of people.

According to details, members of Lashkar-i-Islami raided a house in Meelot area the other day and apprehended two persons namely Allah Noor and Shehzad resident of Kokikhel along with a woman Tasleem wife of Watan Shah resident of Peshawar.

Tasleem was first apprehended by personnel of the security forces at border town of Torkham on April 21 last. She was later on released after promulgation of the Presidential ordinance. However, her case was pending before Political Agent Khyber Agency.

The arrested men and women on Wednesday morning brought into Meelot Khawar by volunteers of the Lashkar Islami. Hundreds of people present on the occasion have first stoned all the three persons and later some armed persons opened fire at them. Later bodies were handed over to their relatives.

— *THE NATION* 15/03/2007

Radicals targeting girls' schools in NWFP

By Khalid Hasan

WASHINGTON: There is a province-wide onslaught on girls' schools, video stores and barber shops in the NWFP by the resurgent radicals, their supporters and sympathisers, according to a report in the Christian Science Monitor on Thursday.

These three, viewed as "symbols of Western-oriented life" are being destroyed by religious extremists in a growing wave of violence. Islamist militants have a new target, and if they are successful, it could be disastrous for Pakistan's future. Four girls' schools have been bombed and violent threats have

been circulated that girls should stay home. While no girls or school staff have been killed, girls in some areas have stopped attending classes, marking a direct blow to Pakistan's national enterprise of "enlightened moderation," which posits female education as a central pillar, the report points out.

According to the Monitor correspondent, "Pakistan finds itself at a precarious tipping point: tremendous gains have been made in female education in recent years, but a considerable gender gap remains. Extremists' efforts to undermine education for women, who are historically one of Pakistan's most potent forces of moderation, could further empower Pakistan's growing ranks of Islamist militants." The continuing wave of attacks could tilt Pakistan's sensitive political balance and hurt crucial economic development efforts. As female education improves, infant mortality rates tend to decrease, family health improves, national incomes rise, and female citizens become more politically active and aware of their rights, say development experts.

The report notes that entrenched tribal, religious, and economic imperatives in conservative areas regard the schooling of girls as either improper, since girls should not venture outside the purview of the family home, or unnecessary, since girls are often needed for work.

As a result, Pakistan has one of the highest rates of female illiteracy in South Asia, at about 60 percent, and the lowest rate of primary school enrolment for girls, at somewhere between 42 and 48 percent. Those shortcomings are particularly pronounced in the NWFP, which, as of 2004, had the lowest ratio of female enrolment of any province in Pakistan, according to the International Crisis Group (ICG). In areas like FATA, only 1 percent of women and girls are literate. The issue has become even more of a battleground in recent years, as resurgent Islamic extremism bumps heads with the government's recent efforts to expand girls' education.

The Monitor report notes that in 2002, the NWFP provincial government allocated 70 percent of its entire education development budget to girls' schools and created more than 300 primary and middle

schools for girls between 2002 and 2005. Local authorities also gave parents small stipends and free clothing to encourage them to enroll their girls. It is these new schools that extremists like Maulana Fazlullah from Swat tend to target. For months, using a pirated radio channel, Fazlullah had warned locals against sending their girls to school, calling it un-Islamic and a violation of purdah, "A woman has been asked to remain behind the four walls of the house. Men have been given preference by God," Fazlullah told the American correspondent. Under a deal with the government, he has stopped fulminating against girls' schools but has been allowed to retain his illegal radio station.

The report says that if Fazlullah and others are against female education, it is probably because girls are pouring into schools. In Swat valley alone, primary school enrolment for girls has increased by nearly 31,000 since 2002, or 77 percent. And even though Fazlullah started preaching two years ago, girls' enrolment in Swat last year grew by more than 12,000, according to government statistics. As a result, female illiteracy has gone down by 9 percentage points in less than a decade. And national statistics suggest that female enrolment at the primary level has climbed by 12 percentage points between 1998 and 2005, according to the World Bank.

"We have no problem," says Ghulam Akbar, the executive district officer of education in Swat. "The girls are still going. Very (few) have stopped."
— *DAILY TIMES 01/06/2007*

Woman and three men publicly executed

By Ibrahim Shinwari

LANDI KOTAL (Khyber Agency), June 4: A woman and three men were publicly executed in Bara on Monday after a jirga found them 'guilty of adultery'. Haji Jan Gul, a member of Sipah Eslahee Committee, told Dawn that acting on a tip, members

of his committee had caught the four in a house in Alamgudar village.

He said the four had been interrogated by the jirga before the verdict for their execution was issued.

He said one of the men, Said Ras of Mardan, had told the jirga that he got the woman, who was his relative, into the business to pay off his debt. The woman admitted that the statement was correct and pleaded for mercy.

Mr Gul said the jirga had unanimously decided to punish the woman, Said Ras, Afghan citizen Ziauddin and Sheikho of Landi Kotal.

They were shot dead with Kalashnikovs in an open area near Speray Dam. Sources said a large number of people witnessed the execution. The bodies were handed over to the relatives of the deceased.

Bara political administration confirmed the incident but did not register a case.

This was the second incident of public execution in the Khyber Agency in three months. Two men and a woman were stoned and later gunned down in Akakhel area of Bara tehsil on March 14.
— *DAWN 05/06/2007*

Militants behead two women for 'prostitution' in Bannu

Our Staff Reporter

PESHAWAR: Militants, commonly known as Taliban, beheaded two women for their alleged involvement in prostitution, in Bannu, the home city of NWFP Chief Minister, Akram Khan Durrani.

This was the first-ever incident when two women were beheaded on the charge of prostitution by alleged Taliban, who claim working for enforcement of the Islamic Sharia. Incidents of shooting alleged

prostitutes to death were, however, reported earlier in Bara area, Khyber Agency.

The police officials said the bodies of two women were found dumped in an unpopulated area outside Bannu city Friday morning. They were mysteriously abducted on Thursday by unknown militants, claimed a police officer.

According to the police, a note left with the bodies charged the women of being involved in prostitution with the connivance of local officials.

The militants warned the call those involved in such crimes would meet the same fate the note read. The officials at Bannu Cantonment Police Station informed that both the women belonged to Sokari Jabbar, a village in outskirts of Bannu, from where they were abducted on Thursday noon.

The bodies of the slain women, identified as Maino and Malaki have been handed over to their relatives, the officials added.

Dar Ali Khattak, District Police Officer in his brief chat with media said, "it is the first-ever case of its nature where two women were beheaded by suspected militants.

"The police registered a case and started investigation. However, high-ups believe that local militants who are blamed for a string of violent attacks on pro-government tribal elders and alleged spies of the US forces in Afghanistan are responsible for the barbaric act.

For the last couple of years, the pro-Taliban militants in different parts of Frontier Province and adjacent tribal areas bordering with Afghanistan are involved not only in militant actions against the armed forces but also waging a violent campaign for enforcement of what they call, Islamic laws.

It may be mentioned here that in March 2006, tribesmen stoned and shot two men and a woman to death in Bara, Khyber Agency in front of crowd for their alleged involvement in adultery.

— *THE NATION* 08/09/2007

Extremists threaten to bomb girls' school

By Amjad Iqbal

TAXILA, Sept 19: Religious extremists have warned the administration of a girls' school in Taxila that they would bomb its building if the teachers and students did not wear a veil and Burqa.

It has been learnt that the principal of a local government high school received a letter from an unidentified man who threatened to bomb the school if the girl students and teachers did not wear veils.

The unidentified man has warned that he should not be taken lightly and would carry out his threat if the school administration did not meet his demand.

After receiving the threat, the school administration immediately brought the matter into the notice of the police high-ups who put the girls school on high alert and deployed armed policemen at the gate of the school to avert any untoward incident. Security personnel in plainclothes have also been deployed at the school.

On a visit to the school, it was observed that some girls of the age of nine and 10 were wearing veils.

"Yes we have received a threatening letter from a religious fanatic and we are scared," Ms Shakeela, acting principal of girls' high school Taxila, told this reporter on Wednesday.

She said the school management did not keep the threat call a secret and took all students into confidence. We have told the students that nothing would happen if they wear a veil, she added.

Responding to a question, the acting principal said the morale of the students was high and the threat had not affected the daily attendance at the school. They feel secure as armed policemen have been deployed outside the school.

She said it was for the first time that they had received such a letter from anyone, however, no suspicious activity had been observed. But we have still adopted all precautionary measures to protect the lives of innocent students, she added.

"This letter could either be a hoax or work of a fanatic. Personally I believe that it is a hoax, but we cannot take it lightly," Sub-Divisional Police Officer Taxila/Wah Cantonment circle Syed Akbar Abbas said while talking to this correspondent.

He said: "As soon as we were informed by the school management we not only deployed security men around this school, but also adopted precautionary measures around all girl schools in the area.

He said a police guard would be deployed at the entry gate during the school hours while security personnel in plain clothes would remain vigilant and monitor activities of any suspicious person.

— *DAWN 20/09/2007*

Militants bomb girls' school in Swat

Staff Report

MINGORA: Militants on Sunday blew up a girls' school in Kabal, Swat. A nearby mosque was also damaged in the explosion that took place at 2:00am. Last week, unidentified people had warned the administration of the Kabal Higher Secondary School of "dire consequences" if the students did not wear burqas. Two people sustained injuries when militants blew up the offices of two NGOs in Orakzai Agency on Sunday, police said.

The first blast occurred at around 10.50am at the Women Welfare Centre office, which destroyed the office building, damaged three vehicles and injured two people in the nearby houses. The second blast in the Sarhad Rural Support Programme office damaged the building, but no casualties were reported. Hangu

DPO Ghulam Mohammad said bomb disposal squads should check all NGO offices to ensure security. — *DAILY TIMES 01/10/2007*

Burqa bomber kills 16

PESHAWAR: A suicide bomber disguised in a woman's burqa blew himself up at a busy police checkpoint in Bannu, NWFP on Monday, killing at least 16 people including four policemen, officials said.

"A man disguised in a burqa got out of an auto-rickshaw when police stopped the vehicle for a search at a checkpoint. He then blew himself up," police officer Asar Islam told AFP.

Examination of the remains "confirmed that it was a male suicide bomber" wearing women's clothing, while initial reports of a possible female attacker had been discounted, Bannu police chief Ameer Hamza Mahsud said.

29 people injured: Interior Ministry spokesman Brig Javed Cheema said 16 people were killed and 29 were wounded and that authorities were investigating the blast.

Officials said four women were among those killed. Chief military spokesman Maj Gen Waheed Arshad confirmed that it was a suicide blast

NWFP Chief Minister Akram Khan Durrani announced compensation of Rs 100,000 for heirs of each deceased and Rs 50,000 for each injured in the suicide blast.

Separately, Islamic militants shot dead a paramilitary soldier before dawn in North Waziristan, security officials said.

The militants raided a checkpoint in the border town of Datta Khel and fled after shooting the trooper, an official said.

35 troops feared missing: Meanwhile, 35 troops

went missing on Tuesday in Bakka Khail area of Bannu, feared kidnapped by militants after a gunfight.

Abdul Nawaz Khan, district officer of the Bannu frontier force, said more than 100 militants had surrounded a post, and communication with the troops had then been lost. — *AFP / DAILY TIMES 02/10/2007*

Women teachers protest against insecurity in Mohmand Agency

By Mukarram Khan

GHALANAI: Hundreds of women staged a protest in front of the agency education office in Mohmand Agency headquarters Ghalanai on Monday against the threats received by female teachers in the area.

The female teachers said that two days ago, unidentified people killed one of their colleagues when she was returning home after school on Saturday.

The protestors asked the administration to protect the female workers, especially teachers, and said they would not attend school till they were assured of security. The boycott of women teachers meant many schools in

Safi, Haleemzai, and Khuvezai tehsils were closed.

The political administration arrested four members of the Gazi Baig tribe in addition to confiscating the tribe's seven vehicles in the teacher's killing case. The tribal authorities also banned the incentives received by the Gazi Baig and Ibrahim Kor tribes.

Meanwhile, participants at a jirga of Haleemzai elders held in Ghalanai decided to hold a grand jirga of Safi and Haleemzai tribesmen on October 4 to discuss security issues.

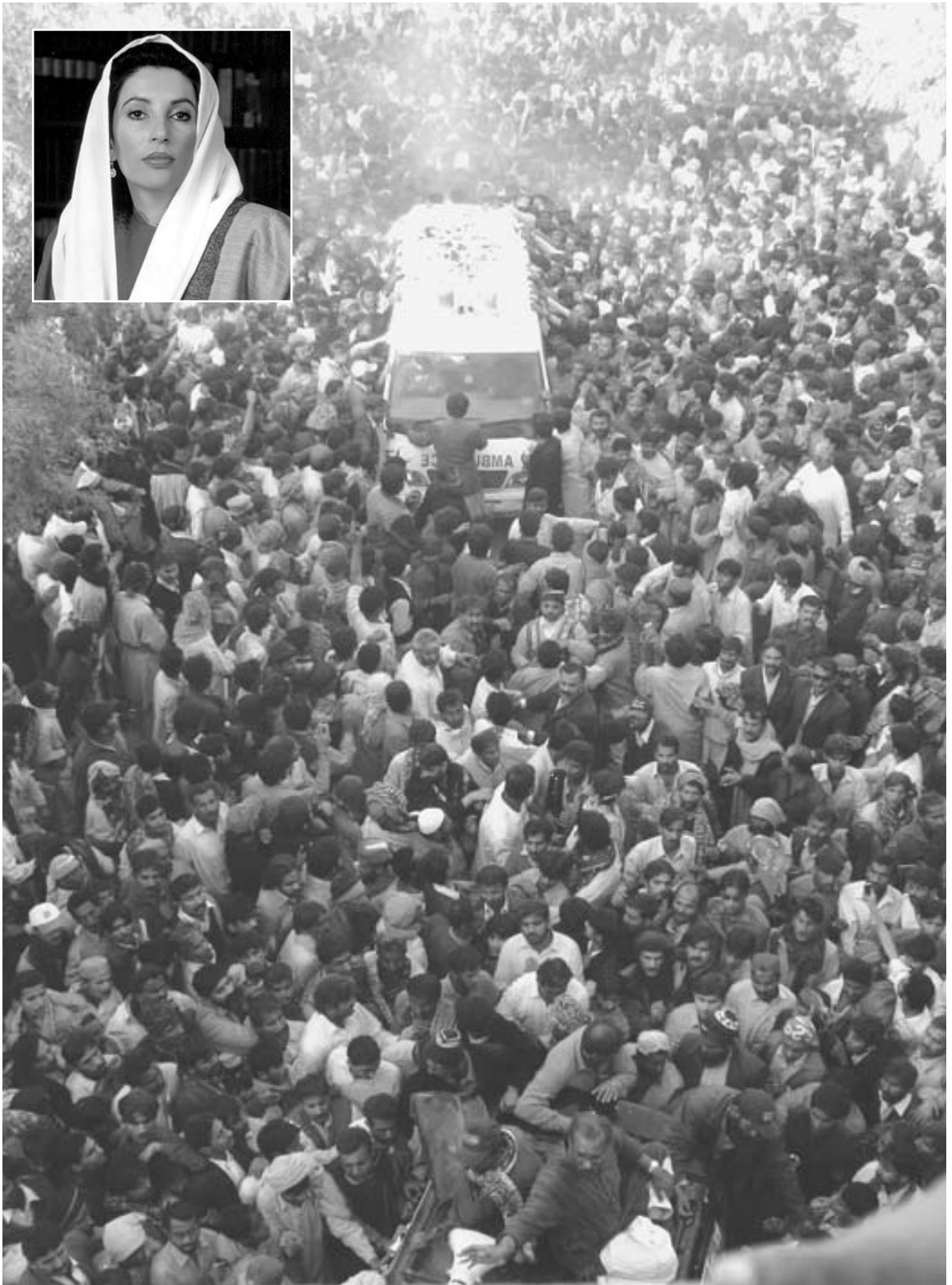
GIRLS' SCHOOLS CLOSED: The administrations of eight schools in Aka Maroof and Sartilgram union councils have closed their schools for an indefinite period following a bomb attack on a girls' higher secondary school in the Kabal area of Swat.

The school administrations verbally told girl students not to come to school.

Education Department officials expressed ignorance about the schools' closure, saying the department had issued no such orders and would inquire into the matter.

Separately, around 100 people carrying weapons marched in Kabal bazaar and forcibly entered houses to bar residents from playing music. They warned the residents not to play music or they would break their television sets, radios and music players. They asked the residents to cooperate in rooting out "obscenity" from the area. — *DAILY TIMES 02/10/2007*

Violence against women politicians



Source: DAWN

Targets of lawlessness

By Shahzada Irfan Ahmed

The year 2007 has left memories of deplorable incidents of violence against women legislators. These ranged from physical assaults to death threats and restraints against playing their due role in the assemblies and national politics.

All this happened amidst claims made by the Musharraf government that it had empowered women and promoted a culture of tolerance and moderation. In support of this claim the government cited the increased number of women legislators in the national and provincial assemblies. This, it was argued, would do much to improve the lot of women in the long run. But ironically enough, the women legislators who were supposed to bring about this sea-change have themselves in many cases become victims of violence and extremist mindsets.

The most shocking case of violence targeting women legislators was the murder of ex-Punjab Minister for Social Welfare Zille Huma Usman by a religious extremist, Maulvi Sarwar, while she was holding open court in Gujranwala on February 20, 2007. In his confessional statement the murderer said he was opposed to women holding public office and had done what he thought was correct. In Maulvi Sarwar's words, her other 'crimes' were violating the Muslim dress code and instigating the women of Gujranwala to participate in a mini-marathon race arranged by the Punjab government.

Maulvi Sarwar approached her with a pistol and pumped bullets into her head from point-blank range. A PML-worker caught Maulvi Sarwar and handed him over to the police. The victim was rushed to the hospital but she succumbed to injuries during surgery at Lahore's General Hospital the same day. Zille Huma was 36 and a mother of two children.

Later on it was learnt that Zille Huma was not Sarwar's first victim. At a press conference arranged by the police in 2002 he had openly confessed to have killed at least six more 'sinful' women in that year for the sake of Islam and that he was proud of what he had done. Despite his confession, he was acquitted within two years for want of sufficient evidence.

Commenting on the murder, Mian Tariq, a town nazim in Gujranwala, said the unprecedented public support that Maulvi Sarwar had won after killing some 'call girls' had given him a false sense of conviction that whatever he was doing was enough to win him a place in heaven. Had his sympathisers also been implicated in the case he would not have been able to kill a woman legislator who was working hard for the betterment of the people of her city.

Hardly a week before this incident Pakistan People's Party (PPP) ex-MNA and central information secretary Sherry Rehman survived an attempt at her life. She was present at a rally staged to protest rigging in the by-elections held in Sindh. In footage of the rally shown to journalists later, the culprit was identified as a woman standing behind Sherry Rehman. This woman had identified herself as Ulfat Bhatti, the managing editor of daily Qaumi Adalat. Sherry narrowly escaped when this woman hit her with a blunt instrument. Ulfat was also seen at the hospital where Sherry was taken for treatment. PPP leaders alleged that the attempt was made on the behest of some political leaders whose party was in power in Sindh. The point was that had the attacker been taken into custody immediately after she had attacked Sherry she could not have reached the hospital.

Ex-PPP MNA Dr Azra Fazal, who is the sister of PPP co-chairperson Asif Ali Zardari, also moved a privileged motion against alleged firing by Sindh minister Altaf Unnar at her car, and that of Sherry Rehman, Fozia Wahab and Naheed Khan on the day by-elections were held.

This was followed by the ordeal of ex-Federal Minister of Tourism Nilofar Bakhtiar. The clerics of Lal Masjid issued a decree against her and called for her removal from office after the local media carried photos of Nilofar Bakhtiar being helped by a male instructor during a charity parachute jump in France in April 2008 to raise money for victims of the devastating October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. Another picture shows her hugging the instructor after successfully reaching the ground.

Nilofar Bakhtiar called the edict baseless and accused Pakistani newspapers of publishing distorted captions with the pictures. She said she had jumped without any previous training and her French instructor had just given her a pat. But her defiance could not help her for long, as she had to resign from her post in PML as well as the ministry. According to sources she could not garner the support of her party. It was also learnt that Chaudhry Shujaat had expressed his extreme displeasure over her conduct.

Apart from these individual cases, there are scores of incidents where women legislators are being stopped from performing their functions mainly due to cultural barriers, a feudal mindset and the belief that man is superior to woman, whose real place is her home. Even women elected to various levels of local government to fill women seats under quota are represented by men in meetings and functions they are supposed to attend as part of their official responsibilities.

Similarly, most women parliamentarians have repeatedly complained that women have usually been ignored during debates on important national issues, saying that they were allowed to speak only at the end of debate only for two to three minutes, with repeated interruptions to wind up from the chair.

An interesting example that can be quoted here is that of ex-MNA Ayla Malik who got married to States and Frontier Regions Federal Minister Yar Muhammad Rind. Rind refused to take his wife Ayla Malik to the House in the presence of other MNAs to cast her vote in the presidential elections. He stuck to his point and did not accompany her to the House until the National Assembly was completely empty. A PTV cameraman was who was also there was barred from filming Ayla Malik. The worst part of the story is that she was coming to the house after almost three years, obviously for the reason that her husband no longer wanted her to sit among male MNAs. There are critics who say she should have resigned and vacated her seat in the assembly and allowed some other woman to take it.

Most women parliamentarians have repeatedly complained that women have usually been ignored during debates on important national issues, saying that they were allowed to speak only at the end of debate only for two to three minutes, with repeated interruptions to wind up from the chair.

Last but not least, the murder of two-time prime minister of Pakistan, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, dealt a severe blow to the nation. No doubt she was a role model for most of the women legislators who have made it to the national and provincial assemblies. She was regularly receiving death threats but despite all this did not discontinue her mass contact drive and kept on holding and addressing public gatherings and rallies. Her tragic death shook the nation to the core but at the same time brought the once-warring factions close to each other. Now they seem set to shun their personal differences and launch a joint struggle against extremist forces that want to disintegrate Pakistan.

Sherry beaten, hospitalised

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Sherry Rehman was reportedly attacked and rendered unconscious during a PPP rally at Pakistan Chowk on Wednesday. "She suffered from a concussion of the spine due to several hits on the back of her neck," Rehman's mother Sabiha Hasan told Daily



Source: DAILY TIMES

Times at Clifton's Ziauddin Hospital. The unidentified attacker, who escaped from the scene, was a tall, dark woman who climbed onto a truck Rehman was in, Hasan said. "This person managed to climb inside the truck and even managed to get close to my daughter.

She then attacked her with a blunt object, hitting her twice on the back of the neck. Sherry fainted, and the attacker managed to escape," she said. She said that her daughter had undergone a CT Scan and x-rays. "They have given her steroids and she is sleeping at the moment," she said. The party has yet to register an FIR. staff report — *DAILY TIMES 15/2/2007*

'Mysterious woman again seen around Sherry's hospital room'

By Faheem Raza

KARACHI: Sherry Rehman, the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians Central Information Secretary, who was attacked by an unknown woman during a protest rally on Wednesday, said that the same woman had tried again to enter her room at the ICU on Thursday. Sherry said that the woman had been seen roaming outside the hospital also on Friday.

Talking to The Nation at the hospital on Friday, Sherry said the same woman had attacked her twice, during the rally and when she was being shifted to the hospital. This correspondent also saw the video of the incident in which the suspected woman, who was wearing a black dress, was standing near Sherry. According to the PPPP central leader, the same woman had twice attacked her in the truck where PPPP central leaders were addressing the rally organised by the PPPP to protest against the alleged rigging in Sindh by-elections.

Sherry said that the video of the incident proved that the same woman was trying to enter her room in the hospital's ICU, which made it clear that the mysterious woman was still chasing her. Sherry said that video, which was also telecast on a local private

TV channel, was solid proof of her claim of attack and it exposed Sindh CM Arbab Rahim who was claiming that "I fainted due to heat and nobody attacked me".

According to medical report, Sherry had suffered two blows on her neck from behind. It also stated that weakness was found in her left leg and right hand.

The report also stated that the base of the neck felt raw and tender and CT scan does not show any fracture in the cervical spine.

The medical report also pointed out that pressure resulting from one or more strongly administrated blows to the base of her neck had resulted in fluid build-up (Edema) and the acute whiplash injury. She was administrated a strong dose of steroids to recover her condition, which she is currently undergoing. At present her weakness in the right hand has improved but she is still feeling pain in her left leg.

Moreover, PPP Parliamentarians President Makhdoom Amin Fahim has condemned the attack on Sherry and demanded the government take immediate action against the culprits.

In a statement issued here on Friday, the ARD chairman said that this was the fourth attack on PPP leaders and workers within a short span of a week.

He recalled that six party workers were killed a day before the February 10 by-elections in Attock.

Fahim said that on February 10, Dr Azra Pechooho, a sitting MNA and the sister-in-law of party chairperson Benazir Bhutto, was attacked in Jamshoro in the presence of provincial ministers and she narrowly escaped a gunfire. "And now, one of the most important and vocal members of our party has been attacked openly in public," he added.

He said that the February 14 rally was part of the same campaign organised to protest against, what he said, the most rigged elections in the history of the country.

"We are not too surprised that Sherry was their

next target as she had been very active during the by-election campaign. She was in the media spotlight on the election day as she kept updating the media on the massive rigging in progress," he added.

PPPP Chairperson Benazir Bhutto and her spouse Asif Ali Zardari rang Sherry.

Benazir inquired about her health and prayed for her speedy health recovery.

Nawaz Sharif, the PML-N leader, also sent bouquet and expressed his best wishes for her.

Justice (r) Fakhiruddin G Ebrahim also visited the hospital to see her.

He regretted over murder attempt on Sherry and termed it political victimization. — *THE NATION* 17/02/07

'Fanatic' kills Punjab woman minister

By Ali Waqar

LAHORE: An Islamist "fanatic" shot and killed Punjab Social Welfare Minister Zille Huma Usman in an open court in her hometown of Gujranwala on Tuesday.

Police said M u h a m m a d Sarwar shot the minister in the head and shoulder during a brief power cut during the open court at Pakistan Muslim League House. A helicopter airlifted her for surgery to Lahore General Hospital, where she died of her



wounds. Police arrested Sarwar immediately after the shooting and lodged a murder case against him. They said he was a religious fanatic opposed to women being independent, and had been implicated in four murders and two attempted murders in Gujranwala.

"He considers it contrary to the teachings of Allah for a woman to become a minister or a ruler. That's why he committed this action," the police said in a statement.

Speaking to Daily Times, Punjab Law Minister Raja Basharat vowed an "effective and immediate prosecution" after a thorough probe. He said the government had ordered the police to complete the challan of the case within 14 days. "He (Sarwar) is basically a fanatic," Basharat said.

Huma, 37, was married with two sons. Her husband is a doctor. She also ran a small fashion design business in Gujranwala. She was a popular figure in the Punjab government. She became an MPA on a reserved seat and had close family ties with Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi. She was also a supporter of Gen Pervez Musharraf and his policy of "enlightened moderation". The chief minister and his cabinet expressed shock and grief at the killing. Her funeral will be held at Rahwali Cantt at 2:00 pm.

Qamar Jabbar adds: The minister had been the target of several death threats since she had tried to organise a "mini-marathon" for men and women in Gujranwala in 2005. The race was attacked by extremists who consider it un-Islamic for men and women to run together.

She was also reportedly trying to organise another marathon in Gujranwala in late March, and had again received death threats.

Officials said Huma was known for promoting women's rights. "He killed her because she was not observing the Islamic code of dress. She was also campaigning for emancipation of women," local police officer Nazir Ahmad told AFP.

Sources told Daily Times that her visit to the open

court was part of her campaign this time to get elected to the Punjab Assembly on a general seat instead of a seat reserved for women. — *DAILY TIMES 21/02/2007*

Female ministers call for foolproof security

Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Female federal ministers, condemning the murder of Punjab's Minister for Social Welfare Zille Huma, have demanded foolproof security measures for the protection of female parliamentarians and workingwomen across the country.

Terming Zille Huma's murder an unbearable loss, Minister for Social Welfare and Special Education Zobiaida Jalal said such gory incidents are occurring at different places in different shapes and "We will have to be alert."

However, she said that it was for the first time that a female minister had been murdered and it did not augur well for the development of the society and progress of women.

She said that the heinous act would not deter the government from its commitment and resolve to improve the lot of women.

Zobiaida Jalal said women engaged in public welfare can't keep away from people and excessive security has also negative effects so the necessary security steps are essential.

"I think, the government should take measures in this regards," she added.

Zobiaida Jalal was of the view that when women came in the political field, they have to keep in touch with people.

This kind of tragic incident may happen in different shapes, she feared.

Commenting on the murder of Punjab's minister Zille Huma, the Federal Minister for Tourism Nilofar Bakhtiyar said that the tragic incident created panic and fear among the country's women.

"Because of these incidents women working in political field will definitely feel sense of insecurity," she said, adding that law enforcement agencies should take necessary steps in this regard.

Strongly condemning the incident she said society will have to bring change in its attitudes towards women.

She criticized the law enforcement agencies, saying that murderer of Zille Huma was already facing different charges and he should not have been set free.

Federal Minister for Women Development, in her message, said it was a cowardly and heinous act, which would not deter the government's commitment for women uplift and emancipation.

She also expressed the government's resolve to bring the culprits to book soon.

Condemning the incident she said that late Zille Huma was a devoted social worker and a committed political activist who worked hard for the uplift of the poor and fought courageously for the rights of women.

Minister of State for Health Begum Shahnaz Sheikh said she was not afraid of any threats from those who believe in extremism. She said she would face whatever difficulty comes her way boldly and courageously.

"We can't keep away from public life and I will fully participate in election campaign," she said adding that women should take care but such kind of incidents can't stop their determination.

Strongly condemning the incident she said society will have to bring change in its attitudes towards women. Keeping in view the social norms, women should play their role in everyday life, she added.

— THE NATION 21/02/07

Investigators probing 'serial killer's' links to extremist groups

ISLAMABAD: Investigators are probing whether a "serial killer" cleric who assassinated a female minister this week - having previously confessed to four other murders - had links to Islamist groups.

In a case that shocked Pakistan, extremist Mohammad Sarwar shot Punjab social welfare minister Zill-e-Huma Usman in the head at a public meeting in central Gujranwala city on Tuesday.

Police have said that Sarwar objected to the involvement of women in politics and disapproved of the clothes worn by Ms Usman.

"I killed her out of conviction that she was leading an un-Islamic life and spreading an evil influence on other women," he told interrogators, according to a police source.

Police say that in 2003 Sarwar had escaped justice despite publicly admitting that he had killed four prostitutes and injured another four as they waited by roadsides for clients. "He is a serial killer," said Saud Aziz, the police chief of Gujranwala at the time of the earlier shootings.

Punjab Law Minister Raja Basharat hit out at the Pakistani justice system, saying "fanatic" Sarwar was still on the streets mainly due to "defective police investigation and poor quality of the prosecution". "We are investigating and there is a possibility that he may have support from some religious group," he said, without elaborating or naming the organisation.

Pakistan has dozens of militant outfits, most of which have been banned by President Pervez Musharraf. The prostitute murders - three in conservative Gujranwala and one in the eastern city of Lahore between September 2002 and January 2003 - puzzled police and caused a public outcry.

Former police inspector Mohammad Naveed finally arrested Sarwar in early 2003 on the basis of

information from local religious leaders and witness reports that a cleric was spotted near the scene of the killings.

He said Sarwar's usual method of attack was to fire two or three bullets just above the crotch of his victims. One woman who survived was paralysed.

"In no time after his arrest (in 2003) he confessed to the murders and provided all the details," Naveed said. "He was produced before the media and he made a confessional statement."

Yet the case collapsed during the trial. Police said the victims' families took compensation money raised by religious leaders instead of testifying because of the shame of their daughters' "immoral" profession.

A rickshaw driver who used to drive the prostitutes around initially told police he saw Sarwar shooting one of the women, "but backed down, apparently under pressure from local clergy in Gujranwala who supported Sarwar".

Eventually Sarwar - a father of nine who had been educated at a madrassa in Gujranwala and later taught local children the holy Quran - withdrew his confession. His lawyer, Liaqat Sindhu, said he "knew that Sarwar was guilty of the killings" but that he was acquitted because there was no firm evidence and the case was mishandled.

Psychiatric tests on Sarwar in 2003 showed that he was "not deranged", said Saud Aziz, who is now police chief of Rawalpindi, near Islamabad. "He said he killed the girls after he got divine revelations," he said.

Four years later, the murder of Zill-e-Huma Usman shows how extremism has corrupted Pakistani society, said Iqbal Haider, secretary general of the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). "There is no writ of the government, which results in barbaric tragedies like this," said Haider, a former law minister under Benazir Bhutto, the country's first female prime minister. "Our prosecution and our administration is shamelessly incompetent, corrupt and religiously biased."

— AFP / DAILY TIMES 23/02/07

Zill-e-Huma's murderer's fate causes rift in Punjab Assembly

By Qamar Jabbar

LAHORE: The man accused of murdering Zill-e-Huma Usman will be tried by an anti-terrorism court, Punjab law minister Basharat Raja told the Punjab Assembly on Friday.

The minister alleged that religious groups supported terrorists like Ghulam Sarwar, the man accused of the woman minister's murder. He said Shabab-e-Milli, the youth wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, had warmly received Ghulam Sarwar on his release from jail last year. Such groups treated him like a hero. — DAILY TIMES 03/03/07

Police asked to register case against minister

By Amir Wasim

ISLAMABAD, March 8: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges on Thursday directed the Sindh police to get a case registered against a provincial minister for allegedly attempting to murder a woman MNA of People's Party Parliamentarians (PPP) during the by-polls held on a provincial assembly seat in Jamshoro last month.

The committee chairman, Sardar Nasrullah Dreshak, issued the directives on the recommendations of all the members when the police officials concerned failed to justify their act of refusing registration of an FIR (first information report) against provincial minister Altaf Unnar and others on the complaint of PPP MNA Dr Azra Fazal, sources told Dawn.

Dr Azra Fazal had moved a privilege motion in the National Assembly in its last session stating that the

officials at Budhapur police station, Jamshoro, were not ready to register the FIR on her complaint against the sitting provincial minister. She had alleged that Mr Unar and some of his accomplices had directly opened fire on her vehicle when she was visiting the area during the by-polls.

Dr Azra, who is the sister of Asif Zardari (husband of PPP chairperson Benazir Bhutto), apprised the committee members about the details of the incident. She told committee members that despite her repeated requests, the police officials concerned refused to register the case forcing her to file a petition before the additional session judge, Jamshoro, at Kotri.

The district police officer (DPO) of Jamshoro and senior officials of the Sindh police told committee members that the court had verbally instructed them to carry out investigations into the incident and register a case, if it was proved.

They said that the police did not register the case as it failed to find any evidence to prove the involvement of Altaf Unnar in it.

The sources said the police officials confirmed that the PPP MNA was attacked and they had found empty shells of bullets from the crime scene. — *DAWN 09/03/07*

Grenade hurled at lady MNA's house

By Ashraf Javed

LAHORE: Terrorists hurled a grenade at the residence of a lady MNA of the ruling party in Johar Town area on Monday.

The explosion damaged the building and created panic in the entire residential locality, eyewitness said on Monday.

Husband of the MNA, an officer in the FIA Asif Ali Mian, told The Nation at the crime scene that the racket of an international mafia dealing in the business

of smuggled medicines was behind the attack. The blast took place at 2:15 am inside the house of the MNA Tahira Asif.

Asif Ali Mian, husband of the MNA, said that two unidentified motorcyclists threw a hand grenade at his house situated in Wafaqi Colony.

"It was a powerful blast that damaged the car and injured a pet dog. It also smashed the windowpanes and damaged the main gates," police investigators said.

Asif presently serving as Assistant Director in the FIA in Lahore believed that the mafia backing the smugglers of medicines was threatening him of dire consequences since he launched crackdown and arrested the smugglers.

"We have been receiving life threats on telephone for the last 14 hours. Some unidentified gangsters were demanding bail of their accomplice Malik Bilal Rafaqat who was to be produced before a local court on Monday," the officer said.

He said that in the recent past, the FIA carried out an armed raid in the Karkhana Bazaar of Peshawar to nab a notorious smuggler, Parkash, after securing his non-bailable warrant.

"We had sealed the Bilal Medicine Company and its godowns situated in the walled city after recovering the medicines smuggled from India and arrested the owner Bilal Rafaqat," he added.

He said that Parkash was smuggling banned drugs to the company from India. Ali Asif also said that Bilal was sent to jail therefore, the mafia wanted to get him released on bail.

"I received an anonymous phone call late on Sunday night. Someone gave me life threats and demanded release of the accused on bail. I flatly refused to do so and exchanged hot words with him," the officer of investigation agency said.

Heavy contingents of the police including the senior officers rushed to the spot and cordoned off the entire locality. — *THE NATION 25/05/07*

Empty the House, Ayla is coming

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and all treasury members were stunned when States and Frontier Regions Federal Minister Yar Muhammad Rind refused to take his third wife Ayla Malik, a member of the National Assembly (MNA), in the house in the presence of other MNAs. Rind and Ayla Malik didn't enter the house to vote in the presidential election until the National Assembly was completely empty. A Pakistan Television cameraman was barred from filming Ayla Malik, though an NA photographer took several pictures of the couple. — *ONLINE / DAILY TIMES 10/07/2007*

Female suicide bombers threaten Benazir

KARACHI: Former prime minister Benazir Bhutto has received a threat that she would be targeted by female suicide bombers, one of her close aides said on Tuesday

Senator Farooq Naik, Ms Bhutto's lawyer, said he has received a two-page handwritten letter in the Urdu Language from an unidentified person threatening to kill Ms Bhutto "by any means". The writer claimed to be a friend of al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden and extremists in Pakistan.

The authenticity of the letter could not be confirmed, but Sen Naik said the party was taking it seriously. He said he asked the chief Justice of Pakistan to get the government to investigate the threat and protect her. — *THE POST 24/10/07*

Benazir Bhutto assassinated

By Muhammad Bilal and Amir Yasin

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairwoman Benazir Bhutto was assassinated on

Thursday in a suicide attack as she drove away from a campaign rally just minutes after addressing thousands of supporters at Liaquat Bagh.

Another 30 people were killed and 48 injured when a suicide attacker riding on a motorbike blew himself up after firing at Benazir who was waving to her supporters from her vehicle's sun roof.

PPP spokesman Farhatullah Babar told Daily Times that Benazir fell inside the vehicle after receiving bullets in her head and neck.

Witnesses said three gun shots were heard before the suicide blast near her Black Lexus bulletproof vehicle.

DIES IN HOSPITAL: She was driven to Rawalpindi General Hospital (RGH) where doctors struggled to save her life, but failed. However, RGH sources said that she had died on her way to the hospital, two kilometers away from Liaquat Bagh.

"The blast happened at around 5:10pm and the doctors pronounced her dead at 5:25pm," Babar said.

The witnesses said that body parts and blood was scattered on the blast site.

Police said the suicide bomber first opened fire at Benazir Bhutto and then blew himself up. "The man first fired at Benazir. She ducked and then he blew himself up," said police officer Mohammad Shahid.

Angry workers: Around one thousand PPP leaders



and workers reached the RGH after the word spread about her death. Some angry workers smashed hospital windowpanes, burnt tyres and blocked the Murree Road.

People cried and hugged each other outside the hospital. Some shouted anti-Musharraf slogans. A state of emergency was declared in all city hospitals where the injured had been shifted.

"I put my life in danger and came here because I feel this country is in danger. People are worried. We will bring the country out of this crisis," she had told the rally before being shot at. — *AFP / DAILY TIMES 28/12/07*



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