INTERNATIONAL

US not hunting Laden on its turf, says Pakistan

AP, New York

Pakistan's top diplomat said Saturday there are no US or other foreign military personnel on the hunt for Osama bin Laden in his in the region. nation, and none will be allowed in to search for the al-Qaeda leader.

Associated Press, Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said his nation's new government has ruled out such military operations, covert or otherwise, to catch militants along the Afghan border in militants.

"Our government's policy is that our troops, paramilitary forces and our regular forces are deployed in sufficient numbers. They are capable of taking action there. And any foreign intrusion would be counterproductive," he said Saturday. of sovereignty come in."

increasingly frustrated as al-Qaeda, the Taliban and other militants thrive in Pakistan's remote areas and in neighbouring Afghanistan,

at terror networks. Critics in Washington also have expressed frustration with the new Pakistani government's pursuit of peace deals

Bin Laden is believed to be hiding somewhere along the rugged In an interview with The and lawless Afghan-Pakistan border

> Pakistan's newly elected civilian government is negotiating with tribal elders to secure peace with hopes of curbing a surge in violence. It is a step back from the heavyhanded tactics pursued by the previous government led by supporters of President Pervez Musharraf.

Tension between the US and Pakistan have been high after are some infiltrations" still occur-"People will not accept it. Questions Pakistan said US aircraft killed 11 of ring, but there are no covert US its soldiers at a border post in June. The United States has grown 'US officials have said coalition aircraft dropped bombs during a clash with militants.

> Despite Pakistan's previous statements that it does not allow US create such an anti-US feeling in

and has offered US troops to strike forces on its territory, villagers in the border region that is a haven for al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters have reported seeing US drones fire missiles at suspected militant targets on several occasions in recent approach.

> Qureshi said he tried to reassure Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at their meeting Friday that his government was doing everything it can to combat militants in lawless tribal areas bordering Afghanistan.

Pakistan and Afghanistan regularly exchange criticism about not doing more to fight extremists operating along their long, remote, mountainous border that is seen by the US as crucial to stopping terror-

Qureshi acknowledged "there military operations trying to catch al-Qaeda figures and its chief, Taliban members or any other suspected militants.

"There are none," he said. "It will

Pakistan that I would say would mar the atmosphere of cooperation that exists between us."

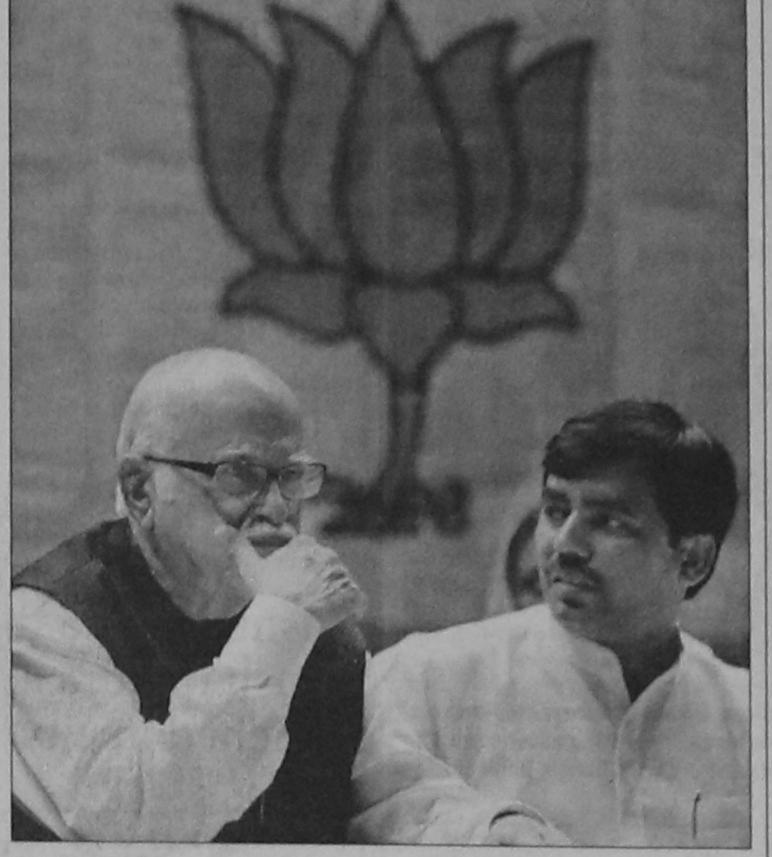
Qureshi described Pakistan's counterterrorism as a "grassroots'

"Our strategy is that the military option alone is not enough," he said. "This war has to be fought besides the armies, with the help of the people, by winning hearts and

Does he believe bin Laden is in Pakistan?

"I don't think so. I'm not sure," he said. "Nobody's aware of that. Nobody can speak with certainty. But our policy's very clear. We are allies in this war. And if Pakistan has actionable information vis-a-vis Osama bin laden or any other high value target, Pakistan will immediately take action."

Qureshi also met Thursday with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki moon, who agreed to Pakistan's request to establish an independent commission that will investigate former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's killing.



India's Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) Minority Morcha President Syed Shahnawaz Hussein (R) gestures, while listening to leader of opposition LK Advani (L) during a convention of Muslim women in New Delhi yesterday. The ruling coalition braced itself towards a trust vote in the Parliament in the wake of withdrawal of support by Left parties.

US, Iraq abandon efforts to reach long-term troop accord

AFP, Washington/ Baghdad

The United States and Iraq have abandoned efforts to conclude a deal governing the long-term status of US troops in Iraq before the end of the presidency of George W Bush, The Washington Post reported yesterday.

Citing unnamed senior US officials, the newspaper said the decision effectively leaves talks over an extended US military presence Iraq to the next US adminis-

In place of the formal status-offorces agreement negotiators had hoped to complete by July 31, the two governments are now working on a "bridge" document that would allow basic US military operations to continue beyond the expiration of a UN mandate at the end of the year, the report said.

the complexity of the task, the said. papernoted.

rejected calls for a troop with-

about dates," acknowledged one US official close to the negotiations, according to The Post.

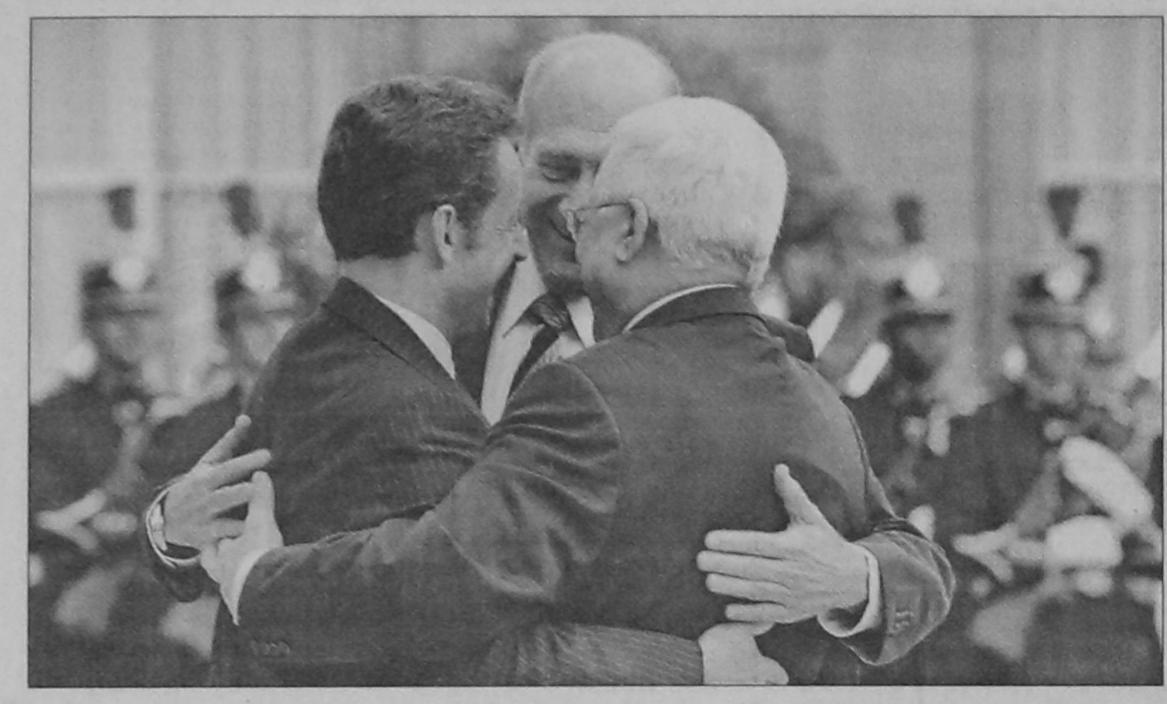
Iraqi political leaders "are all telling us the same thing.... Iraqis want to know that foreign troops are not going to be here forever," the official was quoted as saying.

Unlike the status-of-forces agreements with South Korea and Japan, where large numbers of US troops have been based for decades, the document now under discussion with Iraq is likely to cover only 2009, the report said.

Negotiators expect it to include a "time horizon," with specific goals for US troop withdrawal from Baghdad and other cities and installations such as the former Saddam Hussein palace that now houses the US Embassy, The Post said.

Meanwhile, roadside bomb attacks in Iraq on Sunday killed at The failure of months of negoti- least five people, including three ations is being blamed on both the policemen in the former Sunni Iraqi refusal to accept US terms and rebel bastion of Fallujah, police

The policemen were killed Although Bush has repeatedly when two bombs exploded outside the home of a local police captain drawal timeline, "we are talking in Fallujah, a police officer said.



French President Nicolas Sarkozy (L) welcomes Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas (foreground) and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert at the Elysee palace yesterday in Paris, prior to the founding summit of the Union for the Mediterranean.

than ever: Olmert

AP, Paris

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Sunday that Israel and the Palestinians have never been closer to a peace deal than now.

Abbas, standing with Olmert at the French presidential palace, said both sides are "serious and want to achieve peace."

Sunday that Israel hopes to have armslinked. direct contacts with Syria soon. The rival neighbors have been holding indirect talks mediated by Turkey.

Sunday with French President corruption investigation against Nicolas Sarkozy ahead of a sweeping olmert. The ongoing investigations summit launching the Union for the threaten his political survival and Mediterranean, bringing together will make it more difficult at least in leaders of some 40 nations in Europe. the short term to make major steps the Middle East and Africa. toward peace.

"We have never been as close to a possible (peace) agreement as today," Olmert told reporters.

Repeated rounds of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks since a peace conference in Annapolis, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Maryland, last year have produced little movement.

But the atmosphere was friendly when Olmert and Abbas posed on the steps of the Elysee Meanwhile, Olmert also said Palace with Sarkozy in the center,

Olmert's domestic troubles, meanwhile, have clouded peace efforts. Law enforcement officials Olmert and Abbas held talks announced the widening of the

ME peace deal closer Left launches campaign to vote out UPA

PTI, New Delhi

Determined to see the ruling UPA coalition crumbles after pulling the rug, Left parties will launch a to the Common Minimum "vigorous" nationwide campaign here from today against the government detailing its "unkept launch a "vigorous attack" on the to meet energy requirements for promises" and "obsession" with government for its "refusal" to the nuclear deal.

CPI, RSP and Forward Bloc -- will "back-breaking" price rise. explain to the people what prompted them to withdraw reasons for withdrawing our support to the UPA and why they oppose the nuclear deal, the bone of contention between them and people policies which are result-

meeting at Mavlankar Hall ground Prakash Karat said. here where they will cite the UPA's He said the Left will rally with on July 22.

"drawbacks and failures, including rising prices and inflation, surrendering of national interest, and unkept promises with regard Programme (CMP)".

take appropriate steps to tackle The four Left parties -- CPI-M, the "runaway" inflation and are "harmful to farmers, rural

"We will explain to people the tions" support. We will also explain the UPA's pro-American and antiing in price rise and other prob-Top Left leaders will address a lems," CPI-M General Secretary move to take on the Government

other democratic and secular forces "who do not want either Congress or BJP to be the only alternative".

In the course of the campaign, he said the Left will also place The leaders are expected to before the people the alternative development and for putting an end to economic policies which poor, workers and other sec-

> Meanwhile, CPI-M General Secretary Prakash Karat and BSP supremo Mayawati, two staunch opponents of the Indo-US nuclear deal, met today in an apparent during the trust vote in Lok Sabha

Lebanon, Syria to set up diplomatic ties

possible.

former premier Rafiq Hariri.

killing but denies involvement.

Lebanon announced a 30-

ment on Friday tasked with resolv-

Thani, whose country brokered the

power-sharing deal that led to

Assad, who is among 43 leaders

who will launch a new Union for

the Mediterranean at a summit in

Paris on Sunday, was marking the

end of years of isolation in the

landmark visit to France, his first

His visit comes during France's

presidency of the 27-nation

European Union, and as France

seeks to step up its Middle East

diplomacy on the sidelines of the

Executive Director

Mongla Cement Factory

Sleiman's election.

MONGLA CEMENT FACTORY

(A project of Sena Kalyan Sangstha)

MONGLA, BAGERHAT

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Document will not be sold on the tender opening day. Tender is to

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BST and will be opened on the same day at 12:30 hours in

presence of tenderers, (if there be any). Sena Kalyan Sangstha /

Mongla Cement Factory reserves the right to accept or reject any

or all tenders offer without assigning any reason whatsoever.

AFP, Paris

Lebanon and Syria said on Saturday that they had agreed to establish diplomatic relations, opening embassies in each others' capitals for the first time since their independence from colonial rule.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy announced the landmark decision following talks with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Lebanese President Michel Sleiman, whose election in May ended a drawn-out political crisis Syria. in Lebanon.

"For France, this is historic member national unity governprogress," Sarkozy told a press conference.

"Of course there are a number of legal questions that have to be settled... but for us... this announcement is absolutely historic. It is great news for all those who love Lebanon and are concerned by developments there," he said.

Presidents Assad and Sleiman confirmed the news at a joint press conference later on Saturday.

"Our position is that there is no problem for the opening of embassies between Syria and Lebanon," said Assad.

"If Lebanon is willing to since 2001. exchange embassies, we have no objections to doing it," he added.

For Lebanon, Sleiman confirmed that the two governments were going to "work together to put everything in motion as soon as Mediterranean summit. Nepal riot police revolt over bad food

AP, Katmandu

Relations between Syria and Lebanon have been tense since the About 500 riot policemen took senior officers hostage in a revolt in forced withdrawal of Syria's troops from the country in April 2005 after western Nepal over ill treatment the assassination of billionaire and poor food, officials said yester-

Syria was widely blamed for the The policemen seized the riot police camp at Nepalgunj, about Assad last month said 310 miles west of Katmandu, on Damascus was ready to open an Saturday and were holding seven embassy in Lebanon once a unity senior police officials hostage, said government was formed and had Krishna Acharya, a government developed good relations with administrator in the area.

Armed rebel policemen were guarding the camp's entrances and there had been some shooting but no one was injured, Acharya said. ing the country's worst political Other police surrounded the

crisis since a 1975-1990 civil war. camp and the area has been cor-The Syrian and Lebanese leaddoned off while negotiations with ers met at the French presidential the rebel officers continue, he said. palace in the presence of Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-

The rebelling policemen told reporters they were protesting ill treatment of lower-ranking officers by their supervisors, low-quality food they are given and other police force issues.

Sharif's party sounds veiled ultimatum to PPP over judges

PTI, Islamabad

Talking tough, former Pakistani premier Nawaz Sharif's PML-N party has warned that it will have to rethink its support to the ruling PPP if the judges sacked by President Pervez Musharraf last year are not reinstated by the end of next month.

"It will be difficult to continue the (judges') issue to be resolved in four to six weeks, either this way or leader Ahsan Iqbal, whose party withdrew its ministers from the imposed deadlines to reinstate the steer Pakistan out of crisis, Iqbal said.

deposed judges. led by the Pakistan People's Party return to the council of ministers.

but it is getting difficult to continue to support the government without the reinstatement of the deposed

The PML-N is under pressure to take a clear stand on the issue and a meeting of the party's leadership to decide its future course of action is likely to be held after Sharif returns from a visit to London, he said.

Sharif is currently in London on this path indefinitely. We want with his wife, who is recuperating

after a surgery. Despite the fact that the PPP is that way," said senior PML(N) taking major decisions on key national issues without consulting its coalition partners, the PML-N cabinet in May after the govern- wants the government to succeed as ment failed to meet two self- it believes that no single party can

His comments came close on Igbal told the influential Dawn the heels of a decision by the PPP to newspaper that the PML-N is keen go for a cabinet expansion after to keep intact the ruling coalition failing to persuade the PML-N to

India defends safeguards accord with IAEA

AFP, New Delhi

India defended Saturday a safeguards agreement with the UN atomic energy agency for a sensitive deal on its nuclear reactors, saying it guaranteed uninter-

rupted fuel supplies for its plants. Government officials said the safeguards agreement -- submitted to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) this week -ensured there would be no abrupt

disruption of fuel supplies for its

civilian nuclear power plants.

of a reactor cannot happen suddenly," Anil Kakodkar, the chief of Commission told reporters.

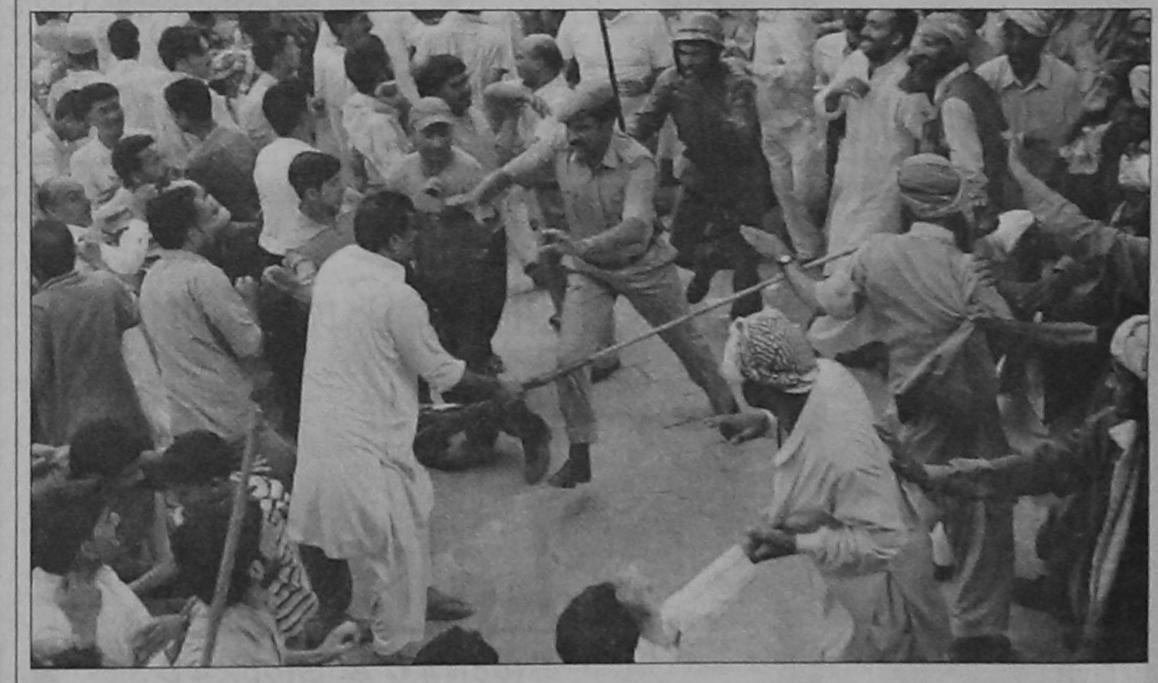
Under the agreement, India will tinued strong economic growth. open its civilian nuclear facilities to international inspection, a condition it must meet to help seal a ruling coalition over the pact, controversial pact to share nuclear technology with the United States.

confidence vote in parliament on aligned status.

July 22 following a political crisis "Discontinuity in the operation sparked by its decision to push

ahead with the deal. Prime Minister Manmohan India's Atomic Energy Singh argues the pact is crucial for India's energy security and con-

But left-wing parties, who withdrew crucial support for the insist the deal would bind India too closely to the United States The Indian government faces a and runs counter to India's non-



Police intervene as supporters of Kashmiri separatists clash with pro-India activists following a ceremony at a graveyard in Srinagar yesterday to honour 23 Muslims slain in 1931 by the forces of the Himalayan states former ruler Hari Singh.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources

> Power Division Power Cell Bidyut Bhaban (10th Floor) 1, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000.

Invitation to Investors for Developing RAPSS Projects

CORRIGENDUM

The deadline for submission of Pre-qualification Statements for the right to tender for Licences for the development and operation of the Remote Area Power Supply Systems ("RAPSS") in Hatiya Island on a Build, Own and Operate ("BOO") basis shall be at or before 1400 Hours BST (Bangladesh Standard Time) on or before Thursday 07 August, 2008 instead of 15 July, 2008. All other terms and conditions of the Notice shall remain unchanged.

Director General

Power Cell Bidyut Bhaban (10th Floor) I Abdul Ghani Road Ramna, Dhaka-1000 Telephone: (88) (02) 9551261, 9566099, 9555962 Fax: (88) (02) 9554664, 9572097

NEWS ANALYSIS

Iran missile path uncertain despite tests

AFP, Washington

as a dramatic illustration of the need bases in the region. for a proposed extension of the US missile defence system into Europe.

rest Russia's doubts that it would be 10 to 20 years before Iran would missile programmes. have longer-range missiles.

range," he said Wednesday. "We've been saying, as we've capabilities," said Geoff Morrell, a talked about missile defence in Pentagonspokesman. Europe, that there is a real threat. And it seems to me that the test this morningunderscores that," he said.

But Pentagon officials acknowl- siles. edge that the missile defence system proposed for Europe is not configured to intercept even Iran's longestrange missile, the Shahab-3.

Instead, it is designed to go against intermediate range and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) with ranges of more than 3.000 kilometres.

With an advertised range of 2,000 kilometres (1,350 miles), the crash programme to do that right

Shahab-3 can reach parts of south- away. Basically they are taking the ern Europe but poses the greatest steps that are needed to develop The United States used Iran's threat to points in the Middle East their medium range and intermedi-Moreover, officials and analysts

US Defence Secretary Robert the Shahab-3 and other shorter Gates told reporters it should put to range missiles were launched revealed no new strides in Iran's States. It also must develop re-entry "The fact is they've just tested a tested before. This appears to be atmosphere. missile that has pretty extended much more for impact on the public

> the tests are a reminder of the longer term threat posed by Iranian mis-

The Defence Intelligence Agency bility. estimates that Iran will likely be capable of producing intercontinental ballistic missiles by 2015.

steps they need to take in order to get there," said Peter Crail, an analyst with the Arms Control had solid fuel propellant, rather Association. "There is no evidence they have a Shahab-3, which allows a missile to

display of missile power this week including Israel and US military atecapabilities in order to get to that stage," he said. He said Iran needs to develop the say the exercises this week in which ability to build missiles in stages to

get longer ranges needed to threaten Europe or the United vehicles capable of surviving the "All these capabilities had been plunge back through the Earth's There are some signs Iran is

than it was an attempt to test these moving in that direction. In February, it fired a probe into

space on the back of a Shahab-3 But Pentagon officials argue that missile, a development that prompted even Russia to say it raised "suspicions" that Iran was seeking a nuclear weapons capa-

In November, Iran said it tested a new missile, the Ashura, with the same 2,000-kilometer (1,250 mile) But there are "still quite a few range as the Shahab-3 but with two stages instead of one. Iranian officials also claimed it

than the liquid fuel used by the be readied more quickly.