



Pakistani anti-Musharraf lawyers and political activists march during a protest rally in Lahore yesterday. Lawyers have led opposition to President Pervez Musharraf since he fired judges, including Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, under emergency rule in November last year.

# Sonia says no to nuke deal compromise

## India to brief IAEA Board in Vienna today

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, PTI, Nellore/Mumbai

The India-US nuclear deal was in the interest of the nation and the government would not compromise on it, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi said in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh on Thursday in her first public remarks after the Left parties withdrew support to the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government.

"We will not compromise on the nuclear deal because it is in the national interest. We need latest nuclear technology and fuel power from other countries," Gandhi said

at a crowded rally in this Andhra Pradesh town, about 500 km from the state capital Hyderabad.

Gandhi also asserted that the government "was not compromising on our foreign policy".

In comments that come just five days before the trust vote in parliament, Gandhi said: "We don't need a certificate (on the deal) from any party."

She was launching the Rajiv Arogyashri, the second phase of a health insurance scheme for the poor named after her late husband.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government was reduced to a minority last week after the Left

parties pulled out. The government faces a trust vote in parliament July 22.

Meanwhile, India will brief the IAEA board of Governors on the safeguards agreement and other aspects of Indo-US nuclear deal on Friday in Vienna ahead of the board's scheduled meeting on August one to reach a consensus on giving a waiver to India to do civilian nuclear trade.

"There is a briefing scheduled on Friday afternoon at a location outside the IAEA. The invitation was distributed by India to Board members," IAEA spokesperson Melissa Fleming said.

# More US troops may go to Afghanistan this year

AP, Washington

Pentagon leaders on Wednesday signalled a surge in US forces in Afghanistan "sooner rather than later," a shift that could send some units there within weeks, as officials prepare to cut troop levels in Iraq.

Senior military officials are looking across the services to identify smaller units and other equipment that could be sent to Afghanistan, according to a defence official.

Although there are no brigade-sized units that can be deployed quickly into Afghanistan, military leaders believe they can find a

number of smaller units such as aviation, engineering and surveillance troops that can be moved more swiftly, said the official, who requested anonymity because the discussions are private.

The moves are expected to happen within weeks rather than months, the official said.

The decisions are being made against the backdrop of shifting priorities for the US military, and were discussed during a meeting Wednesday of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Military leaders are weighing requests from commanders in Afghanistan for more troops, aircraft and other assistance. And they are trying to determine the

right balance between the needs of the force in Iraq, versus troops in Afghanistan who are facing a Taliban resurgence.

To date, the fight in Afghanistan has taken a back seat to Iraq, which has been the strategic priority. While Iraq will remain the top goal, it now appears the military believes there should be a more urgent emphasis on Afghanistan than there has been.

Faced with an increasingly sophisticated insurgency, particularly along Afghanistan's border with Pakistan, Defence Secretary Robert Gates said Wednesday that sending more troops would have a significant impact on the violence.



Indian medical staff use a stretcher to carry a patient through floodwaters in Patna yesterday after the evacuation of a hospital due to severe water-logging. Patients were evacuated from the city's Magadh Hospital after incessant rains in the capital of the eastern Indian state of Bihar caused widespread disruption to life and the closure of civic amenities.

## Career Opportunities with UNDP

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# US joins key Iran nuclear talks tomorrow

## Washington to unveil plans to open diplomatic outpost in Tehran

AFP, Brussels/London

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana and Iran's top nuclear negotiator hold a key meeting tomorrow, with the presence of a senior US official for the first time adding a new dimension to the talks.

The US State Department has confirmed that William Burns -- the third ranked official there -- will join Solana and envoys from the five permanent UN Security Council nations plus Germany in Geneva for the new nuclear talks.

It will be the first time that Washington, which broke off relations with the Iran in 1980 after the Islamic revolution, has participated in the tractations aimed at convincing Tehran to suspend uranium enrichment.

Even if, in the words of another

senior US official, Burns "is there to listen, not to negotiate," his presence at the table meets a long-standing demand from Iran to have the United States involved.

The Europeans have been running these "talks about talks" since 2006, when Solana made a first offer to Tehran on behalf of the major powers of political and economic incentives in exchange for an end to enrichment.

Enrichment is a process used in powering a nuclear reactor, but at highly refined levels the uranium can be used to build the core of an atom bomb, which many countries fear the Islamic Republic is trying to covertly develop.

Iran says its nuclear aims are only peaceful and has refused to sit down at the negotiating table if it has to suspend uranium enrichment

even before the talks begin.

Solana returned to Iran last month with a revamped offer, with the major powers offering to help the Islamic republic end its international isolation and acquire more modern civilian nuclear technologies.

But while Tehran's reaction since then has been more positive, the presence of Burns -- which strengthens the hand of the six powers -- does not necessarily mean that any breakthrough will come in Geneva.

And after two years of virtually fruitless dialogue, the six are extremely cautious about whether progress will be made this time, even after hitting Iran with three sets of UN sanctions in a carrot and stick approach.

"I have talked for a long time

with the Iranians, many hours," French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the United States will announce in the next month plans to establish a diplomatic presence in Iran for the first time in 30 years, London's Guardian newspaper said yesterday.

The administration of President George W. Bush plans to establish an interests section staffed with diplomats similar to its outpost in Cuba, the newspaper said without identifying any sources.

The White House and the US State Department declined to comment.

But a State Department official acknowledged last month that US officials have discussed the possibility of opening an interests section in Tehran.



Malaysia opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim speaks during a press conference at his residence in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

# Anwar released after arrest on sodomy charges

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim said yesterday he was the victim of a "vendetta" after spending a night in custody over sodomy allegations that threaten to destroy his ambitions of seizing power.

Anwar, a former deputy premier who has mounted a comeback after being sacked and jailed on sodomy and corruption charges a decade ago, said he was treated like a "major criminal" and subjected to an examination of his genitals.

After being freed on police bail, he said he needed medical attention for an old back injury that flared up during a night in a bare cell at Kuala Lumpur police headquarters.

"Dumped in a cell to sleep on a cold cement floor with nothing... that has exacerbated the pain," he told a press conference. "I don't deserve this -- no Malaysian deserves this. Why treat me like a major criminal?"

# Cong mobilising convicted MPs to save govt: CPM

PTI, New Delhi

As the numbers game is in full swing ahead of the July 22 trust vote, CPM on Thursday stepped up attack on the Congress on the issue of 'taking recourse' to convicted Lok Sabha MPs to save the government.

The CPM said there were reports that some of the Lok Sabha MPs who have been convicted for "serious crimes" and who are in jail are being mobilised to support the government in confidence vote.

While legally the convicted MPs may get the right to attend Parliament and vote, "there is a question of political morality involved," the party said in a statement.

"The Congress leadership will be seen by the entire country as taking recourse to convicted criminals for sustaining their government," it said.

# Most Pakistanis support dialogue with militants

AFP, Islamabad

More than 70 percent of Pakistanis support dialogue with pro-Taliban militants in tribal areas bordering Afghanistan over military intervention, according to a survey published yesterday.

Some 71 percent of respondents favoured talks, according to the June survey by the International Republican Institute, a US group with links to the Republican party.

When asked what was the most effective way to deal with terrorism, 61 percent cited economic development and education, 29 percent said military force, and 24 percent said both.

"IRI's poll reveals that the Pakistani people are unambiguous, preferring negotiation and development to military options," the group said.

# Nato claims Taliban commander killed

## Airstrike kills 10 insurgents

AP, AFP, Kabul

Nato reported yesterday that a senior Taliban commander has been killed and Afghan officials said an airstrike left at least 10 insurgents dead and four civilians wounded.

The military alliance said that Bismullah Akhund, an insurgent leader in the southern province of Helmand, was killed on Saturday in Naw Zad district. It did not say how Akhund died.

Nato accused Akhund of supplying weapons and roadside bombs that have killed Afghan and foreign forces in the area a hub of the insurgency wracking Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi, a defence ministry spokesman, said "tens of enemy" were killed during a joint Nato-Afghan army operation in the western province of Herat.

Nato confirmed it launched an airstrike against insurgents that "was effective." It provided no other details.

There were varying accounts of the death toll.

The head of Herat's provincial council, Humayun Azizi, said 10 to

12 militants were killed and that there were also reports of civilian casualties from the airstrikes.

Nato had no immediate comment on the operation.

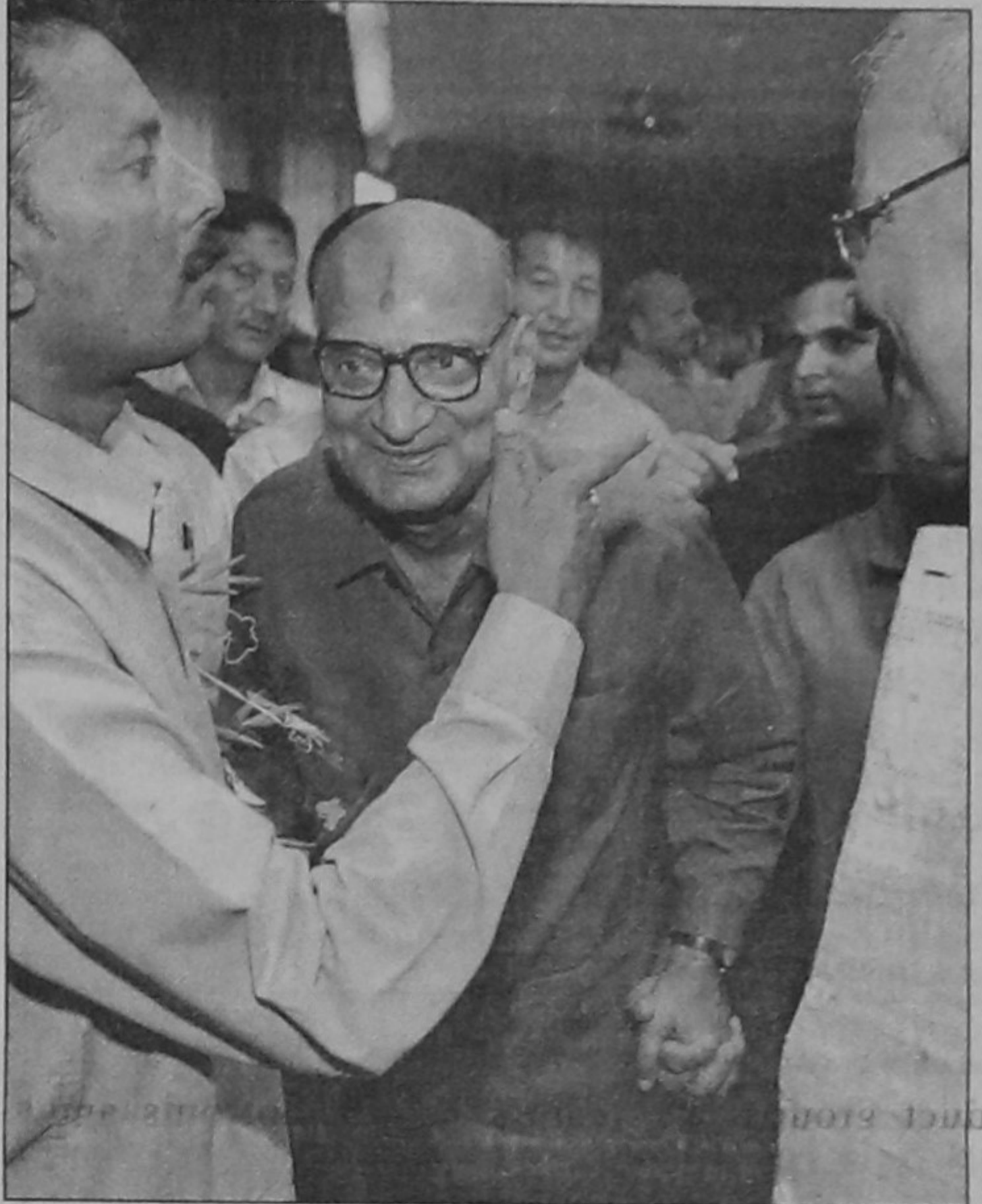
Abdul Shukur, the Shindand police chief, said three houses were destroyed during the clashes. He said two local militant commanders and their two sons were among the dead.

Four wounded civilians two children, one man and one woman were brought to Herat hospital for treatment, Azizi said. Azizi said the raid targeted a militant cell.

He said they were also suspected in kidnappings and said they were holding at least 15 people hostage. It was not clear if any of those allegedly held were killed during the raid.

On Wednesday, the US-led coalition said eight civilians died in airstrikes called in after one of its patrols came under attack in neighbouring Farah province.

The issue of civilian casualties has caused friction between the Afghan government and US and Nato troops, and has undermined the standing of Western-backed President Hamid Karzai.



Nepalese presidential candidate nominated by the Maoists Ramraja Prasad Singh (C) leaves the constituent assembly office after filing papers of his candidacy for the presidency in Kathmandu yesterday. The list of potential candidates for Nepal's first elected head of state was narrowed down to three with the country's warring political parties each putting a name forward.

# EU to toughen Zimbabwe sanctions next week

AFP, Brussels

The European Union will toughen sanctions against Zimbabwe next week, hitting businessmen backing President Robert Mugabe's regime for the first time, EU diplomats said yesterday.

"An in-principle agreement" on the move was reached overnight between EU ambassadors, the diplomats confirmed, with the new sanctions to be endorsed at a meeting of the bloc's foreign ministers in Brussels on Tuesday.

The EU currently targets more than 130 individuals with visa bans and an asset freeze.

The idea now, one diplomat said, would be to add "around 40 people" to that list, some "from the security apparatus" of the regime identified as being involved in the

# Thai Muslim group claims ceasefire

AP, Bangkok

An organisation claiming to represent groups involved in southern Thailand's Muslim insurgency announced Thursday it will end all violence in the region.

"We have come to an agreement to have a cease-fire from July 14 onward," a spokesman for the previously unknown group, the United Southern Underground, said in a videotape broadcast simultaneously on many Thai television stations. "We want to see peace and stability in the region."

The announcement was greeted with widespread doubts that the killings, widely believed to be perpetrated by a number of allied groups, would end. Several bombings have occurred in the region since July 14.

Former army commander and Defence Minister Chetta Thanajaro, who now heads a small political party, said the agreement was the result of informal talks he held with leaders of the insurgency. He said the organisation that made the announcement represented 11 different underground groups operating in southern Thailand, but did not identify them or their leaders.

Calls to the government spokesman went unanswered Thursday, a national holiday. Thai army spokeswoman Col. Sirichan Ngathong declined to comment.

Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej earlier said his government was not holding talks with any separatists, but that at least two insurgent groups were in discussions with mediators in Geneva.

The insurgency flared in early 2004 in Thailand's three southern-most provinces, Narathiwat, Yala and Pattani, the only Muslim-majority areas in the predominantly Buddhist country. Since then, drive-by shootings and bombings have become an almost daily occurrence, killing more than 3,300 people.

"We want all our military and political units and other groups to stop their activities immediately," said the group's spokesman, who was not identified by name. He said anyone who continued violent activities in the region was a "criminal."

The videotape of the statement was provided by army-run Channel 5 to other TV stations.

# Pressure on Obama in Europe-ME tour

AFP, Washington

Barack Obama will flash Kennedy-style charisma but face a stern test as a novice on the world stage in the Middle East and Europe next week, on a trip rich in both risk and potential rewards.

The presumptive Democratic nominee is expected to meet King Abdullah II in Jordan, tread the frontlines in Jerusalem and the West Bank, and engage leaders of European powers Germany, France and Britain.

His addition as US commander-in-chief is also expected to take in Iraq and Afghanistan soon, though details have been withheld for security reasons.

"This is one of those things that is high risk, but he has no choice," said Julian Zelizer, professor of history and public affairs at Princeton University, noting polls that show voter disquiet over Obama's inexperience.

"If he pulls this kind of trip off, it is a huge payoff because this is his only real weakness at this point."

Obama will get a receptive audience, in Europe at least, where his prospects are feverishly followed and he boasts approval ratings that are the envy of some of his battered hosts, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, for example.

His stands on combating global warming and early opposition to the Iraq war are appreciated, as is his electric rhetoric in a region thirsty for some political glitz.

But his main audience is back home. Travelling network television anchors and a press pack in search of a slip-up will shadow Obama's every step.

To dispel doubts, Obama must look at ease at the top table of global diplomacy, show he can wrestle with foreign policy minutiae and add bite to his vow to repair the US image abroad.

But a glaring policy error would spur huge media coverage, and could validate claims by his more experienced Republican rival John McCain that Obama, 46, is a risky choice in a time of war.

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The successful candidate should have thorough knowledge of not-for-profit accounting principles, and best practices in the profession. In addition, the candidate should have good knowledge of ECHO, DFID etc and UN policy, procedural and reporting requirements, as well as knowledge of IFRS, GAAP and local accounting practices and relevant laws.

What we are looking for: Full qualified CA, ACCA or a master's in business administration from an accredited university and a minimum of 5 years of experience in project administration is required.

**Salary range:** Gross Tk 80K to 100K depending on experience. Candidates earning less than Tk. 60,000/= need not apply

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Job descriptions may be obtained by email from [hrd@muslimaidbd.org](mailto:hrd@muslimaidbd.org). Applicants must submit a complete CV with 2 copies of PP size photographs, names and addresses of two professional referees on or before 28th July 2008 to the Human Resource Department, Muslim Aid-UK Bangladesh Field Office, House 23, Road 03, Sector 03, Uttara, Dhaka - 1230 or email: [hrd@muslimaidbd.org](mailto:hrd@muslimaidbd.org)

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