



PHOTO: AFP

Pakistani anti-government lawyers hold posters of Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari in army uniform during a protest in Lahore yesterday. Zardari, whose popularity ratings are at rock bottom, is locked in a stand-off with the main opposition leader Nawaz Sharif over demands that he reinstate judges sacked by former military ruler Pervez Musharraf.

## No split between Zardari and Gilani, says Malik

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Islamabad

Cautioning that Pakistan's unity was at stake, Interior Minister Rehman Malik Saturday sought to dispel reports of differences between President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani, even as he urged the agitating lawyers to come to the negotiating table rather than marching on Islamabad to enforce their demands.

"There are no differences between the president and the prime minister," he said at a press conference here, adding: "This is disinformation being spread by our enemies."

"Let us not head toward another East Pakistan," he said, while appealing to the protesting lawyers to abandon their "long march" and sit for talks with the government.

The reference was to the agitation in the erstwhile East Pakistan after the 1971 elections

that eventually led to the creation of an independent Bangladesh. The agitation began after then military dictator Gen. Yahya Khan refused to accept the electoral verdict that saw the Awami League of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman emerge as the largest party in the National Assembly, the lower house of parliament.

"I appeal to you to come for talks. Please postpone your agitation. Your march is against the unity of the nation," Rehman maintained.

"If at all there has to be a march, let us march to Swat, to FATA. Let us march for the country," he stated.

"I again appeal to you. Please consider the interests of the country. Don't march to Islamabad. Let's talk and resolve our issues," the interior minister said, adding: "The long march cannot be against the interest of Pakistan."



PHOTO: AFP

Activists from the Burmese Kuki Students' Democratic Front shout slogans during a protest in New Delhi yesterday against the Tamanthi Dam and Multipurpose Project on the International Day of Action for River, Water and Life.

## Pakistan should follow its commitment with tangible action: Pranab

PTI, AFP, New Delhi

A day after India handed over to Pakistan more evidence regarding the Mumbai terror attacks, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee today said he expected Islamabad to follow up its commitment with "tangible action."

"Words and commitments should be followed by tangible action," he told a press conference here when asked whether he was satisfied with

## US looking to retool Pakistan relationship

AFP, Washington

Former president George W Bush recast the US relationship with India, forging closer ties. Could President Barack Obama do the same for US policy towards its nuclear-armed rival Pakistan?

Upon taking office January 20, Obama ordered a sweeping review of the US strategy for fighting the war in Afghanistan, and US military and diplomatic officials say the road to victory there runs through neighbour Pakistan.

Obama is set to unveil his new approach before a major international summit on Afghanistan on March 31 in The Hague -- but already the US Congress is looking

ing to shape US military and development aid to steady Pakistan's democracy and bolster its fight against Islamist extremists.

Lawmakers are trying to learn from past efforts and convince Pakistan's people that Washington has a heartfelt stake in their political and economic fortunes, and is not merely looking out for US interests, experts say.

The result is an approach likely to vastly expand US economic aid, while tying military help to pledges from the country's armed forces to do more against extremists as well as promises to stay out of the country's political and judicial life, lawmakers and aides say.



PHOTO: AFP  
Policemen are deployed at container barricades erected by the authorities in front of President House in Islamabad yesterday. Pakistan sealed off city exits to activists trying to march on the capital and stopped a key lawyer from boarding a flight, widening a crackdown on protests that have sparked turmoil.

## Afghan father, 4 sons killed in US raid

AFP, Kabul

A Nato soldier was killed yesterday in Afghanistan, where police said a father and four of his adult sons died in a separate US-led raid.

The International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) did not give the nationality of the soldier, who became the 55th foreign troop to die in Afghanistan this year.

## Sheikh Helal

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Representation of the People Order, the contenders whose applications were rejected during scrutiny could have also filed appeal against acceptance of nomination of Helal along with application against the rejection.

Sheikh Helal, who was elected MP in seventh and eighth parliaments, did not contest the December parliamentary elections since he was convicted under the emergency power rules and went into hiding.

On January 12, the High

Court granted bail to the former AL lawmaker who was sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment in a corruption case and seven years' in an extortion case during the rule of immediate past caretaker government.

Sheikh Helal is the son of Sheikh Naser Rahman, younger brother of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Both Bangabandhu and Naser were killed on Aug 15, 1975, along with other members of the family.

Meanwhile, three appeals were filed with the EC against rejection of applications during

## Build your Career as Head/Team Leader, Sales & Marketing

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XENOVALLEY MODEL TOWN (PVT) LTD (The PINK CITY) one of the most successful enterprises of ICS Business Group, has already become the leading real estate and township development company in Bangladesh by virtue of its innovative concepts and by establishing newer trends in the housing sector for the home-dreamers of this metropolitan city. By introducing simplex/duplex/triplex private homes and bungalows of semi or full detached categories in its user-defined township compound with fully planned landscape and greenery, The Pink City has already earned a significant level of confidence from the home buyers. To uphold that achievement level more profoundly in the global perspectives, the organization is now seeking a team leader for sales and marketing of its new versions of beautifully-designed homes and shop-lots.

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2. To ensure targeted monthly net collection from new sales of homes, shop-lots and other products by maintaining separate sales office/entity.
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4. To lead the team members for achieving excellent sales outcome from home and abroad by organizing/attending Housing Fairs, Road-shows and other promotional activities.
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N.B: Only short-listed candidates will be intimated for the recruitment process.

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Gaza offensive is a 'holocaust': Laden

AP, Cairo

al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden has called Israel's offensive on Gaza a "holocaust" and blamed Arab leaders for not doing enough to stop the fighting in his latest audio recording aired on Al-Jazeera.

Bin Laden accused some Arab countries of "collaborating" with Israel on the offensive earlier this year that killed about 1,300 Palestinians in Gaza. He did not name any specific Arab countries in the brief audio recording played on Al-Jazeera Saturday.

The Arabic satellite network did not say how it obtained the recording, and the authenticity of the tape could not be verified.

## Says US military commander

AFP, INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Washington/Brussels

The top US military commander has expressed confidence that his Pakistani counterpart, General Ashfaq Kiyani, is committed to civilian rule and is not plotting a military takeover.

"He is committed to a civilian government, he is committed to the democracy that's there," Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Mike Mullen told PBS television Friday.

"And in my view, the last thing in the

world he wants to do is take over as President Musharraf did."

The US and European Union are "extremely concerned" by the political crisis in Pakistan but doesn't believe there is a "high probability right now" of the military intervening.

The situation "continues to deteriorate very, very slowly under a political leadership which is very challenged because of the totality of the crisis," Admiral Michael Mullen, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Mullen, said in an interview with PBS, the public broadcaster.

But the Pakistan army chief, General Ashfaq Kiyani, is "committed to a civilian government" and doesn't want to take over as his predecessor Pervez Musharraf did in 1999, he said.

"Pakistan is a country with nuclear weapons," Mullen said. "It's 165 million people and should we move to a point where somehow there is a theocratic government there with nuclear weapons... that's something that keeps me up."

The US is obviously watching the unfolding crisis "very carefully", he said.

PHOTO: AFP

AP, Cairo

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Project Manager  
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