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ALGERIA
30/05/2015 Algerian party leader fears changes at advertising agency undermine free press

Text of report entitled "Hanoune remarks on a plan to undermine the freedom of the press following the appointment of a former employee of the Haddad conglomerate as director of ANEP agency" published by privately-owned Algerian newspaper El-Khabar website on 30 May

The Workers' Party yesterday expressed its concern about the change that included the National Agency for Publishing and Advertising [ANEP] after the dismissal of its former director-general Ahmed Bousina and appointment of his successor Djamel Kaouane who comes from a newspaper owned by the conglomerate owned by Ali Haddad, the president of the Forum of Chiefs of Companies.

The secretary-general [of the Workers' Party, Louisa Hanoune] has not hidden her fear that the change at the ANEP was a planned step to "dominate the advertising market and use it to stifle the freedom of the media and political opposition".

In that context, Hanoune, who was speaking at the opening of a meeting in Algiers, which was attended by party officials from the southern regions and highlands, said: "We fear for the freedom of the press from further restrictions after the change that has taken place at the top of the ANEP." She added: "The change carries a message which says that the free press and the political class would be targeted."

She said: "We are not opposed to the new director or the newspaper from which he came but we are aware, as many Algerians are, that advertising is a weapon in the hands of governments to control the opening line of the media channels and influence what is written by journalists and also in the way they deal with the activities of political parties and players."

In that context, the leader of the Workers' Party criticized the way the Algerian public television dealt with the 10th congress of the National Liberation Front [FLN]. She pointed out that "twenty five
minutes in the main news bulletin were allocated to the opening session of the congress". She said that "those are the practices of the one-party era, which is a serious deviation". She posed the question: "Would the other parties benefit from such a treatment?"

In another development, Louisa Hanoune did not miss the opportunity to warn the new finance minister, Abderrahman Benkhlafa, whom she described as a "right-wing expert and proponent of opening up the capitals of public banks and insurance companies in line with the conditions made by the IMF". She added: "This minister also wants to cut down social benefit costs which has been his stance since he was an official at the Association of Banks and Financial Institutions." She also said that "she would postpone an assessment of his performance until she examined the road map he planned to follow".

Regarding the austerity policy which the government has decided to apply, which would include cutting down imports and the money allocated for development projects as well as cutting the number of civil servants by at least two thirds in the coming period, Louisa Hanoune said "that could break up the fundamental basis of the state and open the appetite of predators who would consume everything in their way in collusion with officials at all levels".

Source: El-Khabar website, Algiers, in Arabic 30 May 15

30/05/2015 Algerian Islamist party urges "uprising" against regime

Text of report by Farouk Djaouadi entitled: "Mokri calls for an uprising against the political regime," published by privately-owned Algerian newspaper El Watan website on 30 May

The president of the MSP [Movement of Society for Peace], Abderrazak Mokri predicted a catastrophic scenario for Algeria. The confrontation between the Algerian people and the political system would take place, according to him, before the end of 2016.

"We call upon all patriots, including those affiliated to the parties in power and institutions, to shoulder their responsibilities and (...) [ellipsis as published] to stage an uprising" against the current situation in order to impose "change and the reform of the political system," Mokri said, this Saturday [30 May] in Algiers, during a meeting with the leading figures of his party.
The crisis is not going to wait until 2019 when the hard currency reserves will drop down to 9 billion dollars, he said quoting the recent declarations by Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal. According to Mokri, "the real problems will start to emerge by the second half of 2016" and the expected confrontation will pit "the Algerian people against the political system." These "real difficulties" will happen because "the political system has accustomed people to dependency."

The MSP president called for "an uprising" against the status quo, but he did not use words that call for violence.

Moreover, the speaker replied to Sellal who had urged the people to show solidarity in order to overcome the crisis related to the drop in oil prices: "He has just said to the Algerians: Show solidarity! Solidarity with who! Is it with a corrupt system that has betrayed people's trust? How long are we going to listen to you for? Are there people that can wait for more than half a century? People that have been patient for 50 years, including 15 years of squandering, corruption and mismanagement," the MSP leader wondered, before saying: "In the MSP, we are saying that we can no longer wait."

Source: El Watan website, Algiers, in French 30 May 15

EGYPT
31/05/2015 Egyptian prosecution inspects Arish pipeline blast

Text of report by Egyptian state-run news agency MENA

Arish, 31 May: The public prosecution on Sunday [31 May] decided to delegate experts to inspect the scene of a blast that hit a gas pipeline in south-western Arish earlier in the day.

The prosecution also decided to form a panel to determine the damage of the pipeline.

Unidentified gunmen placed explosive devices under the pipeline feeding Arish steam power plant and the industrial zone.

Source: MENA news agency, Cairo, in English 2250gmt 31 May 15

IRAN
01/06/2015 Iran preparing to export 400,000 bpd of oil to Europe
Iran's media said on Sunday [31 May] that the country is preparing to export 400,000 barrels per day of crude oil to Europe once the sanctions against the country are lifted.

Mohsen Qamsari, the director for international affairs of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), has been quoted by the media as saying that Iran expects to retain at least 50 per cent of its previous share in the European market.

He said this will be one of the most important plans for increasing Iranian oil exports in a post sanctions era.

Iran and P5+1 are currently working on the draft of a final agreement over the Iranian nuclear energy programme that has a deadline of 30 June. The agreement - if reached - envisages the removal of certain economic sanctions against the country including a ban on sales of crude oil to the global markets beyond a ceiling of about one million barrels per day.

Qamsari has added that creating a sustainable security in demand for the Iranian oil is crucial for the country.

"Creating security for the demand of Iran's oil in international markets will be carried out through foreign investments," he has been quoted as saying by the Persian-language newspaper Jahan-e San'at.

In other words, Qamsari added, foreign investors will be compensated for their investments in Iran's oil sector projects from the output of the same projects in which they invest.

The official further emphasized that Iran expects a surge to exports of oil to its old Asian clients such as India and China. This, he said, is because the two countries have made major investments in Iran compared to the past two years.

Source: Press TV website, Tehran, in English 0630 gmt 1 Jun 15

31/05/2015 (Corr) Iran preparing to export 400,000 bpd of oil to Europe

(Correcting the broadcast time and date to "1830 gmt" and "31 May 15". A corrected version of the item follows.)
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Pirate attacks targeting commercial shipping, including oil cargo, have sharply increased, Managing Director of National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) Ali Akbar Shafa’iyeh has said.

"Between 2007 and 2008 when maritime piracy began in the Gulf of Aden, our NITC fleet came under more than 70 attacks but they escalated very much in 2014 and the beginning of 2015," he told the Labour News Agency ILNA.

However, none of the attacks on the Iranian cargo was successful, Shafa’iyeh said.

"Thanks to the potency of military and security forces on board and measures taken in line with IMO (International Maritime Organization) requirements and navigational readiness, none of the pirate attacks were successful and our fleet of tankers is safely transiting in international waters."

Shafa’iyeh said low freeboard vessels are more susceptible to pirate attacks but generally all sorts of ships including oil cargoes are targeted.

"Most of the pirate attacks in the Strait of Malacca, around Sri Lanka, the Indian Ocean and some African coasts are traditional robberies but the Somalia phenomenon which started in the Gulf of Aden in 2008 has an intensity never seen before."

Piracy has become a thriving business in Somalia where pirates use lawlessness and lack of government to keep vessels on the shore for months on end and demand ransom.

The Iranian navy is keeping a fleet of its warships constantly deployed near critical oil shipping lanes in order to protect the country’s tankers from pirates.

*Source: Press TV website, Tehran, in English 0545 gmt 1 Jun 15*

**01/06/2015 Iran, China agree on new oil payments**

*Text of report in English by Iranian news channel Press TV website on 1 June*

Iran and China have agreed on a new arrangement for crude oil payments under which Beijing will reimburse part of the money owed to Tehran in cash, a leading Iranian trader said on Monday [1 June].
China is the biggest buyer of Iran's crude oil, purchasing more than 440,000 barrels each day, but Tehran imports goods instead of hard currency for its oil sales.

Asadollah Asgarowladi, chairman of Iran-China Chamber of Commerce, said the two countries have now agreed on making the payments partly in cash or transferring the money to a third country for imports.

"We wanted to transfer part of the money from our exports to other countries such as South Korea and Japan for imports or receive it in cash. Hence, consultations were made and an agreement was reached in this regard.

"Under the new agreement with Chinese authorities, it was decided that after a commission rebate, the balance of the money from oil and gas exports is returned to Iran," Asgarowladi said.

Iran can sell around 1m barrels per day of oil under a preliminary nuclear agreement but the country has to use a maze of routes to receive its money.

Asgarowladi however said there is no problem for repatriation of the oil money from China.

Source: Press TV website, Tehran, in English 0746 gmt 1 Jun 15

01/06/2015 Construction of Russian-designed nuclear plant in Iran to begin in autumn 2015

Text of report by RIA Novosti (part of the state-owned International News Agency Rossiya Segodnya)

Moscow, 1 June: Large-scale work to build generating units 2 and 3 at Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant [NPP] (the Bushehr-2 project) will begin in the autumn of this year, director-general of the Rosatom state corporation Sergey Kiriyenko told journalists at a plenary meeting of the Atomexpo 2015 forum.

"The work will begin in the autumn of this year," he said.

Russia and Iran signed a number of documents in Moscow on 11 November last year, expanding the two sides' cooperation in the peaceful use of atomic energy and opening the opportunity for the construction of eight nuclear power plant generating units in Iran based on Russian technology. Furthermore, a contract for the
The construction of two new units of the Bushehr NPP based on Russian design was signed at the same time.

Two upgraded generating units with VVER-type [pressurized water] reactors and 1,000 MW rated power output, generation 3+, which have all the required safety systems, will be built at the station.

Source: RIA Novosti (MIA Rossiya Segodnya), Moscow, in Russian 1142 gmt 1 Jun 15

01/06/2015 Iran has sharpest decrease in fertility rate in Asia

Text of report in English by Iranian official government news agency IRNA website

Birjand, 1 June: Iranian society is currently witnessing sharpest decrease in fertility rate among Asian countries, deputy head of Supreme Cultural Revolution Council said here on Monday [1 June]. Mohammad Eshaqi who was addressing a conference to adopt general policies for population growth based on mother and child's health in Birjand said that Iran's fertility rate is also the lowest among the Islamic countries.

'The factors behind such a decrease in fertility rate include increased urban life of Iranian citizens, elevated educational level of the nation, mothers' employments, changing social attitudes, and the government' programmes,' he added.

Eshaqi said that in accordance with the 2011 national census about 71 per cent of Iranians are living in cities, which plays a role in decreased fertility rate.

The deputy head of Supreme Cultural Revolution Council said that the Iranian population growth rate is currently 1.3 per cent which is decreasing and the average population is getting old.

'The legal plan on population growth and ways to implement it is now in the Parliament and the MPs are trying to remove the obstacles in the way of is implementation,' he said.

Source: Islamic Republic News Agency website, Tehran, in English 1340 gmt 1 Jun 15
01/06/2015 **Iran, India Sign MoU on capital market cooperation**

*Text of report in English by Iranian conservative, privately-owned Fars News Agency website*

Tehran, 1 June: The Central Securities Depository of Iran (CSDI) and the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) of India signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on cooperation between the two countries' capital markets on Monday [1 June]. The MoU, signed during a ceremony on the sidelines of the World Forum of Central Securities Depositories (WFC) in Mexico City on Monday, covers mutual cooperation in vast areas such as training, manpower development, consultation and exchange of information.

CSDI has already signed MoUs with South Korea, Turkey, Pakistan and Indonesia on stock exchange cooperation.

National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) is an Indian central securities depository based in Mumbai. It was established in 1996.

Iran and India which have deep historical and cultural relations are now seeking to further expand ties in various domains.

India, the world's fourth-largest petroleum consumer, is Iran's second largest oil customer after China and purchases around 12bln dollars worth of Iranian crude every year, about 12 per cent of its consumption.

Iran is a rich country in terms of natural resources, and India enjoys advanced agriculture and computer industry.

Combination of Iran and India capabilities and capacities can flourish both sides' economies.

*Source: Fars News Agency website, Tehran, in English 1340 gmt 1 Jun 15*

01/06/2015 **China hopes for progress in Iran nuclear talks**

*Text of report in English by official Chinese news agency Xinhua (New China News Agency)*

Beijing, 1 June: China hopes that all parties involved in the most recent round of Iranian nuclear talks will push for progress, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Monday [1 June].
U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif held a six-hour talk in Geneva on Saturday to address the remaining differences of the Iran nuclear issue.

Some enduring differences between Iran and the West over the nuclear program of the country have hindered the progress in preparing the draft for a possible nuclear agreement, Iran's senior nuclear negotiator Abbas Araqchi said in Geneva on Saturday.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said the overall tendency of negotiations of the comprehensive deal is positive and all parties have expressed strong political willingness to reach an agreement as early as possible.

China hopes all parties can values the achievements they have made so far and make wise political decisions, Hua said.

China is willing to make joint efforts with all parties involved to contribute to the progress in the upcoming negotiations, Hua said.

According to a source from the Iranian delegation, the talks will be resumed next week in Vienna with deputies and experts.

Source: Xinhua news agency, Beijing, in English 0902gmt 01 Jun 15

27/05/2015 Expert says Iran's fuel price rise to lead to inflation, affect exchange rates

Text of Interview with "economic expert" Hoseyn Raghfar: "After Gas, It Will Be the Dollar's Turn" by website of Iranian moderate, pro-reform daily Arman-e Emruz on 27 May

The sharp rise in the price of fuel, be it gas, natural gas, or diesel, and the elimination of gas quotas due to various reasons will lead to a reduction in the government’s budget deficit. Yearly, the government incurs heavy costs so that the price of gas and other fuels is lowered for consumers. But, the other consequences of a rise in the fuel prices, as an important commodity whose price is key, can have various effects on other prices and rates in the market. Considering the experiences gained during the previous government, one cannot be totally optimistic about this plan and it cannot be considered to be in line with the tenets of the science of economics. On this issue, Hoseyn Raghfar, economist and member of the scientific panel of Al Zahra University, believes that the same...
challenges that occurred during the previous government following the rise in the price of energy carriers will repeat once again and will leave their mark on the future of Iran's economy.

[Arman-e Emruz] Considering the recent debate about the increase in the prices of energy carriers, some economists have claimed that the increase in gas prices have so far led to an increase of less than 2 per cent in the rate of inflation and that the changes in those prices do not have much of an impact on the relationship with the rise in prices and inflation. How do you assess this claim?

[Raghfar] There are many varied accounting methods in Iran's economy. It can be said that which results an individual will get out of his calculations depends on which tendency or reading he has towards economic issues or about ideological economic goals. It could be that the effect of the growth in the prices of energy carriers will be 30 per cent in one set of calculations and 1 to 2 per cent in another just as you said. But even if we accept that that same 2 per cent inflation will occur in the Iranian economy, then that means that we have reduced the total purchasing power of Iranian households by 2 per cent. This is if the effect of this rise in prices in an economy such as Iran's is calculated at only 2 per cent. Low income groups will suffer as a result of the proposed policies. What is certain is the harm that this plan will inflict on manufacturing. Our question, as economists, is how long is the trend of increasing prices for key commodities going to continue? This is not a current issue. Those who favoured making prices logical claimed that the market will reach an equilibrium; but we never achieved that equilibrium and suffered from an inflation spiral. This means that the costs of energy carriers led to the creation of a negative effect on manufacturing and manufacturing costs increased. The wages of the work force will be reduced in terms of real value and that leads to a demand for a rise in wages. This rise in wages itself once again leads to an increase in prices of goods and that increase will become an excuse for the government to order the Central Bank to raise the foreign currency exchange rate once again in order to keep commodities producers competitive. In my opinion, this is a faulty cycle which is called an inflation spiral. When the foreign currency exchange rate increases, the government again says that the price of imported gas, which is currently too expensive for the government, is not logical and, as a result, it increases fuel prices and this cycle continues this way and continues to strike blows on the country's economy and primary manufacturing. Due to the faulty mechanisms of Iran's economy, the three-fold increase in the foreign currency exchange rate never resulted in an increase in exports despite what some claimed. What happens as a result is that the livelihood of the middle class is
harmed and the livelihood of vulnerable classes is destroyed. This policy is contrary to the government’s slogan of controlling inflation. The failure of the targeting [of subsidies] plan and the rise in prices during the previous government were linked to the economic sanctions.

[Arman-e Emruz] It is said that most income groups who have the highest fuel consumptions are made up of high income groups and that this rise in prices will be more to their detriment and to the benefit of society’s weaker sectors ... [ellipses as received].

[Raghfar] This claim is absolutely not correct. This is because those individuals who bear more of the cost can themselves increase the prices of other items and commodities due to the economic positions that they have and to make up for the increased costs that way. But those who earn steady wages and are from low income groups absolutely have no such opportunity. Even those who work for government institutions may raise the price of their goods and services for this very reason. It is for this reason that the increase in this key price will disseminate and will increase overall prices. Even the previous president used to say that this issue will be more to the detriment of the wealthy. But we saw that those who, as Ahmadinezhad used to say, have three cars and have no right to use subsidies, turned their three cars into five luxury cars following the rise in gas prices at the end of his presidency and the rate of their fuel consumption did not change either. Therefore, you can clearly see where that plan has led to today. Corruption also will spread in such conditions. This is because when a worker, who earns a steady wage, cannot bear the inflationary pressures resulting from such policies, he will think about generating unofficial revenue sources and it is for this reason that our country is facing such levels of corruption in these conditions. And then automobile manufacturers announce that productions costs have increased and will raise the prices for consumers. Even the price of potatoes will increase as a result of such policies. The fact that a large majority of the country’s population cannot send their kids to school is as a result of the execution of these very policies. Currently there are 100,000 children and teens in Sistan va Baluchestan [Province] who must be in school but do not continue their education. This issue will not end here and we will soon face the issue of a rise in the foreign currency exchange rate and the dollar.

[Arman-e Emruz] But on the other side of the issue it is also being said that the only way to make up for the government's budget deficit in order to pay cash subsidies during the current times of crisis and in the short term is this elimination of energy subsidies and rise in fuel prices. Do you see this as being accurate?
This is also incorrect. During the sixth and tenth governments when it was the height of these policies, we were in fact facing the significant increase in the volume of the government. Budget deficits and government expenses also increased during those two terms. This is because the government itself is the biggest consumer of energy carriers and uses those same resources in the production of its goods and services and their transfer to the people. As a result, it is the first group that is harmed due to a rise in key prices and is forced to increase its budget deficit. This is that same budget deficit that itself leads to further inflation and increases the pace of the inflation spiral.

*Source: Arman-e Emruz, Tehran, in Persian 27 May 15*

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**01/06/2015 Iran MP says OPEC may decide to cut production ceiling**

*Excerpt from report in English by Iranian official government news agency IRNA website*

Tehran, 1 June: Head of Majlis Energy Commission Ali Marvi believes that within less than one week of the OPEC meeting, price of OPEC crude is sold for 60.47 dollars per barrel on the markets, while the highest price for the OPEC basket of crude in the past one year was recorded at 110.26 dollars in June 2014.

Regarding sharp decline in the prices in the past one year, many have pinned hopes on the OPEC session on 5 June in Vienna and its likely decisions. Will OPEC vote to minimize the producing ceiling? Will the next session like the previous session decide not to cut the output level?

On the issue, Marvi says if the OPEC members decide based on the market realities and free from any politics, they will vote to cut in the production ceiling but considering ongoing political conditions in the region, it will be unlikely that such a decision will be approved with the majority of votes.

In his opinion, the cut in the production ceiling of the OPEC will, while minimizing the oversupply, help promotion of prices.

Meanwhile, Iran’s Minister of Oil Bizhan Zanganeh said recently that OPEC is unlikely to change its production ceiling when the group meets in June.
Zanganeh said that getting consensus from all members would be difficult.

"Lowering OPEC's production ceiling requires consensus between all members ... under current conditions it seems unlikely that the OPEC production ceiling will change," said Zanganeh.

Zanganeh has been one of the more outspoken critics of OPEC's unchanged ceiling and last month said the oil producing group should cut its target daily crude production by at least 5 per cent.

He said that oil production should be cut by approximately 1.5mn barrels per day in order to support a recovery of the oil price.

At its last meeting in November, OPEC decided against cutting output.

[Passage omitted: Background report]

Source: Islamic Republic News Agency website, Tehran, in English 1345 gmt 1 Jun 15

01/06/2015 Iran to fly newly-purchased plane despite US blockade threat

The first of the eight newly-purchased Airbus planes will start flying to Istanbul and Dubai in the next two days, Fars News Agency reported on 1 June.

The eight planes purchased by Iranian Mahan Air in May arrived in Tehran's Mehrabad and Imam Khomeyni and Mashhad's Shahid Hasheminezhad airports.

"Considering sanctions on Iran, the arrival of eight Airbus airplanes, which are fairly young, is seen as a very positive move", Fars said.

The agency added: "After the arrival of these Airbus planes to Iran, the West - which always seeks sanctions against Iran's airline industry - announced that it will possibly seize these airplanes in certain countries. However Mahan Air intends to fly the first of these planes."

The plane is going to fly from Tehran to Istanbul and Dubai first and then it will be used for long-haul flights. The remaining seven planes are being painted and Mahan Air's logo will be installed on them, the report said.
Iran on 24 May criticized the United States for a planned blockade of the air travels of its newly-purchased planes, saying the move will be against international laws.

The US Treasury Department in reaction to this said in a statement that it has sanctioned parties involved in the reported plane purchase scheme.

The Treasury Department also said the purchased aircraft by Mahan Air which it has sanctioned three times since 2011 have been designated as "blockable" interests, making it risky for the airline to fly them on international routes.

Source: Fars News Agency website, Tehran, in Persian 1032 gmt 1 Jun 15

01/06/2015 Chinese delegation in Iran to study investment opportunities

Text of report in English by Iranian official government news agency IRNA website

Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province, 1 June: A group of economic and administrative directors from Guangdong Province of China arrived in Bandar Abbas on Monday to consider investment opportunities.

In a welcoming ceremony, deputy governor general for developing affairs said that 90 per cent of Iran's portal trade is carried out from Bandar Abbas and the largest ship building company is working in the province.

Babak Trakemeh said that two free trade zones and one special economic region as well as possibility to use railway network, naval, aerial and roads are among advantages of the province.

Deputy Governor General of Guangdong Zhigeng Liu, for his part, said that the aim of the visit is to consider opportunities for joint investments.

He said that negotiation with state directors and public sector in naval and land transportation, visit to Shahid Raja'i Port and railway transportation network are among the two-day visit.
He expressed hope that at the end of visit, a Memorandum of Understanding in different fields of cooperation could be signed between the Chinese delegation and Hormozgan provincial officials.

Guangdong province in south of China and adjacent to Hong Kong has more than 110 million populations and is among the richest provinces of China.

Some 25 per cent of total foreign investment in China is in this province and its GDP is around 1,003.800 bn dollars and GNP per head in the province is 9,453 dollars.

Among important cities of the province are Guangzhou (Canton), China trade pole, Shenzhen, the largest free trade-industry region and centre of China's IT which are adjacent to Hong Kong and Macau.

One of reasons for foreign businessmen and traders' attention to the province is holding several exhibitions in the province, including two international fairs in spring and autumn in Guangzhou (Import and Export Exhibition) with global fame.

Considering its high GNP per head, the province has the most statistics for dispatching tourists to abroad.

Source: Islamic Republic News Agency website, Tehran, in English 1550 gmt 1 Jun 15

31/05/2015 Iran daily urges officials to boost capacities to counter sanctions

Text of commentary by Abbas Hajinajjari entitled: "The knots that must be untied with prudence", published by hardline Iranian online daily Javan on 31 May

Yesterday [29 May 2015] and on the eve of the negotiations between Iranian and US foreign ministers in Geneva, Iran's Foreign Minister Mr [Mohammad-Javad] Zarif noted that "we will review the latest status of the negotiations in Geneva and will make decisions based on that." Mr [Abbas] Araqchi, senior member of the Iran negotiating team, had also said the previous day that the issue of access to Iran's nuclear scientists and visits of Iran's military sites have been completely eliminated and by are not on the agenda of the negotiations in any way. This is while at the same time, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius had claimed that his country will not
support the nuclear agreement with Iran in any way unless that agreement provides the possibility of access to all of Iran's nuclear facilities, including military sites.

A review of the nuclear negotiations over the past two years indicates that despite apparent advances which have been achieved on the path of the negotiations between Iran and the P5+1, the trend of excessive demands by the West and especially Americans has increased compared to the Geneva agreement and the subsequent Lausanne statement and they try to somehow turn their unjust demands into a part of the procedure in the negotiations and demand its realization based on their assessment of Iran's internal environment. This is done in such a way that some of the key issues in this area such as inspection of military sites, interrogation of the country’s current nuclear scientists, the process of the removal or suspension of the sanctions, and the process of research in Fordo, and ... [ellipses as received] have turned into knots in the process of the negotiations. The resolving of those knots requires more deliberation and prudence on the part of the negotiating team and the executive officials of the country regarding political knots which have been linked with the mentioned technical knots. Some of the political knots of the nuclear negotiations process are as follows:

1. In his remarks in the gathering of governors, while pointing out the government's tolerance towards the criticisms that are raised in society regarding the process of the negotiations, the honourable president says: "This tolerance is due to the fact that the success or failure of the nuclear negotiations depends on people's lives, the market, money, and value of the national currency and everything must be considered." If we consider the arena of the nuclear negotiations as the focal point of the conflict between the dominant political system and the Islamic Revolution, then protecting the background and fortifications is a part of a smart confrontation; therefore there can be no doubt that the nature of our stances have a serious impact on the strategy of pressure by the enemy during the negotiations. It is for this reason that over the past two years, commensurate with our stances, the opposite side has increased its pressures in such a way that after that following the announcement of the Lausanne statement, their excessive demands have become completely tangible.

2. Proportionate with the assessments about Iran's internal environment, the Western media apparatus tries to turn the different positions regarding the negotiations process into a schism inside Iran. Aside from a few inappropriate criticisms about the performance of the nuclear negotiating team, the most important concern of the friends of the revolution regarding the negotiations
process is to ignore the valuable achievements of nuclear scientists as well as Iran's political and international achievements in this regard and unfortunately over the past two years, no effort has been made to use those criticisms as a bargaining opportunity in the negotiations. This is while the Americans were able to correctly turn the process of criticisms of the Republicans in the US Congress regarding the negotiations process into an opportunity and, by approving the law that Obama also signed, they have effectively solidified their role as a factor for pressure in the negotiations process.

3. The nuclear issue has not yet been finalized and the Americans have already tied in the nuclear agreement to other issues, even the freedom of American spies in Iran. In an interview with Al-Arabiya Television a few days after signing the Lausanne statement, US President Barack Obama says: "Even if we reach an agreement over the nuclear issue, we will still remain concerned about the actions taken not only by Iran, the Qods Army, and IRGC, but also by proxies such as the Lebanese Hezbollah." This is while regarding the specific issue of Iran, claims such as human rights, missile capability, and relations with the Zionist regime are raised as considerations for the final agreement.

4. During the process of the nuclear negotiations, the Americans are trying to turn the nuclear agreement into a tool to reduce Iran's regional capacities and it is for this reason that, despite the Lausanne statement, they have spoken many times before and after that statement about the direct military threat against Iran and the fact that this agreement will control Iran forever and ... [ellipses as received]. This is while what the Americans need instead is to take advantage of Iran's opportunities and ability in order to resolve regional problems.

In a meeting with the Majlis deputies, while pointing to the process of the nuclear negotiations and the fact that the nuclear issue has become a knot, the supreme leader considers the solution to be the result of the internal strengthening of the country and mentions that if this strengthening happens internally, then that task will become easy. He then points out that apart from the nuclear issue, other set of issues are awaiting us. It is not that all of our issues with the West, the Americans, the Zionists, and the world's economic bullies is solely the nuclear issue. This is not our only issue. Other various issues such as human rights and so on will follow. Solving all of these issues will become easy; I do not say by themselves and an effort is needed.

Source: Javan, Tehran, in Persian 0000 gmt 31 May 15
01/06/2015 **Iran's deputy oil minister to attend World Gas Conference**

An Iranian delegation is to travel to Paris to take part in World Gas Conference, Mehr news agency reported on 1 June.

According to Mehr, the delegation is headed by Hamid Reza Araqi, Iran's deputy oil minister and the managing director of National Iranian Gas Company.

*Source: Mehr news agency, Tehran, in Persian 1206 gmt 1 Jun 15*

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01/06/2015 **Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant untouched by earthquake, says Russian rep**

The Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran was unaffected by a light earthquake that struck the southwest of the country early in the morning local time on 1 June, Russian state-owned TASS news agency reported on the same day, quoting a representative of Russian state nuclear energy corporation Rosatom.

"The power unit is working normally," the representative was quoted as saying.

The epicentre of the magnitude-4.4 earthquake was a sparsely populated area 110 km northwest of Bushehr, the report said, citing the Iranian seismological service. There were no reports of any casualties or destruction.

The power plant is built to withstand a magnitude-8 earthquake. In 2013, a magnitude-6 earthquake struck the same region, leaving around 40 people dead. The power station was undamaged, the report said.

*Source: TASS news agency, Moscow, in Russian 1630 gmt 1 Jun 15*

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30/05/2015 **Media focus on nuclear inspections undermines removal of sanctions - Iran expert**
The issue of inspections and its possible military dimensions has given rise to many comments by Western officials and will probably continue to be a topic of discussion during the next four weeks left from the deadline to the end of the nuclear talks.

Certain phrases such as "there will be no agreement without inspections" have been repeatedly used during the past few weeks, especially by some foreign ministers of the [P]5+1, as well as by the director general of the [International Atomic Energy] Agency. On the other hand, this issue has also attracted a great deal of attention of a large section of our domestic opposition [to the government] and naturally to the nuclear negotiating team.

Of course from a technical and legal point of view, the issue of inspections is very important and a great deal of attention should be paid to this issue in a final agreement. However, the main question is to decide what is behind the veils of the media maneuvers by the other side, including America's excessive demands regarding the issue of inspections.

One can think of various scenarios behind the goals of American officials. One of their aims in repeatedly mentioning the issue of inspections is to humiliate Iran's proud nation. Their other aim is to collect some information about Iran's military capabilities. There are a number of other correct assumptions [about the aims of the West behind the inspections]. However, it seems that there are two main goals behind all the media ballyhoo by the West. One is to divert the attention of the people in Iran and in the world from the issue of the lifting of the sanctions, and the second one is to blame Iran for a possible failure of the talks.

**Diverting public attention from demanding the complete lifting of sanctions**

After the letter by 47 senators to Iranian officials, and a short time after the Lausanne agreement, various concerns about how the sanctions will be lifted were placed at the top of the debates regarding the nuclear issue. This issue became so prominent that, in addition to numerous debates, Iranian experts wrote scores of articles and took part in many interviews, some of which contained some important proposals regarding the methods for the lifting of the sanctions.
The involvement of Congress during the past two weeks in the process of the talks had a direct impact on the issue of the sanctions too. However, by raising certain other issues such as the inspections and stressing their importance, Western officials have in practice given greater prominence to these issues and have turned them into the main topics of discussion. The repeated raising of the issue of the inspections and interrogations [of Iranian nuclear scientists], as issues that concern Iran's national security, have forced the people to pay less attention to the activities of Congress, which have already put a serious question mark in front of any possible agreement and its chances of success.

In view of yesterday’s remarks by [Abbas] Araqchi [Iran's deputy foreign minister and a member of the Iranian nuclear negotiating team] about Iran's firm response regarding the issue of inspections, it seems that while maintaining our concerns about how the Additional Protocol will be implemented, it is necessary to once again turn our attention to the issue of the lifting of sanctions as the main topic of discussion. This would prevent the rival [the West] from making some miscalculations and would stop it imagining that Iran has come to terms with the Congressional resolutions about the way that the sanctions will be lifted.

**Trying to advance the project of portraying [Iran as] the guilty party**

"We will reach an agreement by 10 Tir [30 June] if Iran takes the necessary steps." We have often heard this and similar statements by Western officials during the past few weeks. The last time was during yesterday's [May 29, 2015] White House press conference. It is clear that the Western side wishes to put the blame for the probable failure of the talks on Iran's shoulders. Therefore, one can regard the above-mentioned sentence and the excessive stress that they put on the issue of the inspections as an attempt to portray Iran as the guilty party [in case the talks fail].

It is important to bear in mind that during the past two years Iran has been able to clearly disprove the baseless allegation that she has not been serious in the talks. Even the Agency in at least eight reports, and [President Barack] Obama and [Secretary of State] John Kerry and other Western officials have repeatedly confirmed that Iran has carried out her commitments in the Geneva agreement. Therefore, America's recent excessive demands in the talks, and certain demands that go well beyond the Lausanne agreement, which some people have described as "America going back on her words", have in practice made the prospects for the successful outcome of the talks rather doubtful.
In this context, in case the talks do not succeed, the finger of accusation would have been pointed towards America and the West. However, by putting forward excessive and discriminatory interpretations of the Additional Protocol (which in the Lausanne statement Iran has implicitly agreed to voluntarily adhere to) the West has made new demands that go well beyond the customary supervision. They have even demanded the inspection of military sites. By putting forward a long list of demands, including the interrogation [questioning] of certain individuals [nuclear scientists], the West has tried to use Iran’s opposition to that process and the methods used for inspections as a sign of Iran's responsibility for the possible failure of the talks.

In view of what has been pointed out, everybody, including those who are opposed to the way that the talks are proceeding, should bear in mind that they should not help the enemy to complete her jigsaw puzzle, namely blaming Iran for the possible failure of the talks or polarizing the domestic scene.

In the words of the esteemed leader [Ayatollah Ali Khamene'i] delivered on the anniversary of the birthday of Her Holiness Zahra [the Prophet's daughter and Imam Ali's wife] (peace be upon her): "Iran is prepared to accept traditional supervisions that are customary everywhere else in the world." However, the current discriminatory and special arrangements for inspecting both the nuclear and the non-nuclear sites in Iran will be definitely seen as the red lines [of the government]. Of course, other important concerns such as the issue of national dignity and national security should also be taken into consideration.

There is also a way for protecting those important concerns. One can accept the Additional Protocol with certain conditions. In the document [final agreement], while accepting to adhere by the Protocol, it should be clearly stated that whenever it contradicts our national security it would be invalid as far as we are concerned.

Therefore, it seems that during the last four weeks left to the end of the deadline for nuclear talks, in addition to the fact that it is necessary for the negotiating team to observe the red lines [set by Ayatollah Khamene'i], as well as allowing the public to pass judgment on the outcome of the talks, in order to reach a good agreement we should not forget our main goals. Our main goals include, firstly, the lifting of the sanctions, the rescinding of the Security Council resolutions, protecting the right to enrichment at an industrial scale, and the continuation of the program of research and development. Secondly, in order to follow those goals we should not fall in the trap of a blame game [presumably blaming some Iranian officials or organizations].
These are some of the projects that the Western side, and especially the Americans, have prepared in order to remove the blame from their actions, such as making excessive demands, going back on their words, and involving the Congress in the talks, as having been responsible for the possible failure of the talks.

Source: Khorasan, Mashhad, in Persian 30 May 15

17/05/2015 Iran analyst urges probe into "forged" signatures on Majlis nuclear bill

Text of editorial by Mansur Farzami headlined: "Unprincipled behaviour" published by Iranian reformist paper Mardom Salari website on 17 May 2015

One should frankly say that what has happened over the past week in the People's House [Majlis] regarding the "forged signatures" [punctuation as received] is unjustifiable by any convention, measure, or norm! That a representative should get signatures from the representatives of the noble nation of Iran for the purpose of preparing some statement or admonition, and then cause a "conniption" [punctuation as received] is surely an action that is alien to principles, contrary to legal standards, and contrary to codes of conduct.

The perpetration of such an act is also not to be expected on the part of an everyday person, let alone a representative who has been chosen by the people, who has been sent to his People's House, whom they have trusted, and whom they have seated upon the chair of honesty, especially if this elected person in the People's House also claims to espouse principle-ism and is committed to Islamic morals and obeying the guardianship [of the supreme jurisconsult].

Of course truth, honesty, and righteous action and good behaviour are the duty of every faithful Muslim, but representatives -- who go to the People's House and hold the vote of their constituents, and in whom trust has been placed -- should be trustworthy, should defend the rights of the people, should safeguard honour, nobility, and dignity, and should protect national values, people's traditions, and the country's national interests. Furthermore, in my personal view, representatives at such a level as theirs should also be paragons of character, civility, and temperance in words and in actions, and be defenders of that which they have sworn in the
presence of other elected and appointed representatives and before the holy word of God.

Therefore, personal hysterics, individual characteristics, and partisan attachments have no place in this station and seat of responsibility. The essence of a representative of the people -- especially in his office of legislating and overseeing the execution of the law -- should never be brimming with hatred, self-interest, short-sightedness, and unbecoming personal attachments.

[As regards] the action of a representative whose co-workers sign the bottom of a document on a particular matter out of trueness of heart, for the interests of the political system, and out of trust, and in a school of thought whose holy prophet (may God's blessings and peace be upon him) declared that you should not even tell a lie as a joke, why should another text and issue be attached to the signatures in their [the co-workers'] absence and without their consent? At this point, putting aside the misconduct and the actions of the representative who abused his co-workers' good faith, these esteemed representatives must be asked they are signing and ratifying an item when they have not read it and gotten to the heart of the matter, and when the issue was not clear and definite for them. The Majlis is not a private home.

The fate of the country and of the major figures of the political system is written here. This is a place where if there is a mistake regarding the economy, its result is the poverty of the nation, and if there is a mistake in policy, [its result] is a betrayal and abuse of the people who have been dubbed "the nation." It is for that same reason and due to that same importance that that great man [Imam Khomeyni] stipulated that the Majlis is in charge of affairs, and if some have allowed themselves to depart from and override that sensible motto under the excuse of unilateral and self-interested actions, they are like this dear representative of the people, for their needles have been skipping [as on a broken record] on a certain issue since the beginning of the 11th government, and there is no end to their worry.

You should believe that our noble people's long-term and short-term memories have not been inattentive to their words and actions for a single minute. When an issue is one-dimensional, it is for that reason that the neglect of other sensitive issues becomes relevant, and there is no dignity or mindfulness in domestic and foreign affairs such that they may be attended to. Otherwise, how is it possible for one to swim against the current and do anything and everything to satisfy personal whims on the basis of "heroic flexibility," consideration for honour and expediency, and all the
suffering and hardship approved of by the political system and the government?

At this point, the author's question is whether that same selective viewpoint led to the issuing of those scholarships in the past and those diplomas today. The status of two institutions that produce thought and learning and create informed and committed people today has been so cast into doubt that among 76 countries that are successful in terms of science, unfortunately and unhappily, it has settled to rank 51! Though in the past jokes were not made about learning and the learned, it is not that way today, and if our eyes are not open, we will be witness to an even more deplorable tomorrow.

At this point the representative must be asked whether this "Triple-Urgency Nuclear Deal Plan" [punctuation as received] is in line with the slogan of empathy between the government and the people, and whether it is not emotional mimicry of the US Congress. Do they not believe that they can quickly irritate us and affect our emotions and intellect? Do people such as the author not have the right to request that legal oversight apparatuses verify that people be confirmed as having the rationality and knowledge specific to the office of representation, that they live in an exemplary manner, that they think, that they do not neglect the people's interests for a single moment, and also that they do not sacrifice their own and the people's hereafter to their own world? And the final remark is that based on its legal duty, the Representatives' Conduct Oversight Board must investigate the conduct of the representative who perpetrated this unforgiveable mistake and has cast the credibility of the Majlis and of Iran into doubt.

Source: Mardom-Salari website, Tehran, in Persian 17 May 15

JORDAN
31/05/2015 Al-Jazeera TV program discusses repercussions of Jordan-Syria border closure

Doha Al-Jazeera Satellite Channel Television in Arabic at 1730 GMT on 31 May discusses the closure of the main Jordan-Syria border crossing in a new 25-minute episode of the daily live talk show "Arab Reality." Talk show host Khadijah Bin-Qinnah begins the programme by noting that this episode of the programme sheds light on the repercussions of the continued closure of the Jordan-Syria border crossing, which is called Jabir from the Jordanian side and Nasib from the Syrian side. Bin-Qinnah further notes that the Jordanian authorities closed the crossing in April after the Syrian
armed opposition controlled the Syrian side of the crossing and that Jordan attributed its decision to the deteriorating security situation on the border.

To discuss this topic, the talk show hosts Jumanah Ghunaymat, chief editor of the Jordanian newspaper Al-Ghadd, via satellite in Amman, and Jihad al-Masalimah, head of the committee entrusted by Syrian armed opposition groups with managing the Syrian Nasib border crossing with Jordan, via satellite in Dar'a.

Jumanah Ghunaymat, chief editor of the Jordanian daily Al-Ghadd

Asked about the reason behind Jordan's "insistence on closing the crossings with Syria despite the losses that decision is causing to the Jordanian economy," Ghunaymat says: "It is true, the Jordanian position has not changed regarding what is needed to reopen the crossings with Syria. It seems that the decision up to now has more to do with security than the economy, for the security situation and caution in this regard seem more important for the Jordanian state than the economic factor." She adds that according to available information, the Syrian side of the border is under the control of Al-Nusrah Front, which has been classified by Jordan as a terrorist group.

Asked whether the crossing is logistically ready to resume traffic if a relevant political decision is made, Al-Masalimah says: "The crossing is largely ready, which is sufficient for the beginning of administrative work in it. We do not say that it is fully or ideally ready, but it is acceptable. Regarding the free zone, as everybody knows, it is an investment area. Thus, there can be no investment in the absence of security. As you said in your report, the efforts were focused on the security challenge and the ability of the factions and the committee to control the security situation. Administratively, we used to have an administrative issue represented by the fact that the Syrian regime had demanded all employees not to go to work in the free zone, in an attempt to create a state of administrative chaos and vacuum. The committee invited people with relevant experience to apply and now a team has been employed. A customs office has been set up. I would not say that it is doing its work ideally, but well and acceptably."

Asked what prevents Jordan from coordinating with the other side of the crossing if "matters from the other side were organized and well arranged," Ghunaymat says: "What prevents is Jordan's classification of these groups. Frankly speaking, if Al-Nusrah Front is in control of the other side of the border, Al-Nusrah Front is banned and listed as a terrorist group in Jordan. Consequently, I think that it is difficult to deal with it within this definition at present. In
addition to the classification, the security issue and the principle of preserving the security and preventing border violations by any terrorist groups or classified as terrorist groups takes precedence over the economic interests."

Told that Jordan's position on which groups it supports and which groups it does not support is "unclear," Ghunaymat says: "It is true. There are transformations and continuous changes. The Syrian scene and the events in Syria are accelerating at a high pace. The weakness of Bashar al-Asad's regime today is an issue that is taken into consideration. In addition, the gains achieved by the opposition on the ground are also taken into consideration. I am speaking about the situation today. Perhaps if the Syrian crisis continues for more years to come, then the situation might change and perhaps Jordan might reconsider this decision. The situation is fluid. The forces on the ground are imposing their tempo and they will be part of future decisions. I am not talking about a decision in the near future, but perhaps the Jordanian position might change in the medium term so that Jordan's eastern and northern border would not remain closed. Even on the border with Saudi Arabia, the Saudi authorities are being unusually tight on the crossing with Jordan for fear of smuggling or similar operations. Therefore, we are talking about a case in which Jordan is in a state of undeclared economic siege. All the borders are closed. However, will there be an imminent decision to reopen the crossings? I do not think so. All that is being talked about in Amman is to look for alternatives. Such alternatives include maritime or even air shipment to reach the markets by air rather than by land."

Jihad al-Masalimah, head of the committee entrusted with managing the Syrian Nasib border crossing with Jordan

Asking whether the measures taken by the Syrian armed factions on the Syrian side of the border with Jordan are enough to convince Jordan to reopen the crossing, Al-Masalimah says: "We cannot say the measures are 100 per cent sufficient. However, the brothers in Jordan might observe that there is a daily development in these measures and that a major effort is being exerted in this context. A great deal is being said about the legitimacy of the side with which Jordan would deal, the presence of armed factions, etcetera. We think that the Syrian regime has lost every legitimacy to have control anywhere in Syria, not to mention the border areas and sovereign crossings."

Interrupted by the anchor to be reminded that Jordan is committed according to international agreements to coordinate with a government rather than factions, militias, or opposition, Al-Masalimah says: "Yes, that is right. What you have said is accurate,
but this regime is now in control of perhaps less than one-fourth of the area of Syria. It is in the interest of Jordan, the brothers in Jordan, and in the interest of the two peoples to deal with the opposition, even partially. For example, Hawran alone is expected to produce an estimated amount of 80,000-90,000 tonnes of wheat. It is a large quantity. Resuming trade through crossing, whether with Jordan or with the brother Arabs will produce positive results for all parties. In addition, there are tens or hundreds of thousands of tonnes of vegetables, fruits, and olive oil. If trade is allowed, then there will be a state of balanced prices among countries. This can be beneficial not just for the Syrian or Jordanian sides, but for all countries of the region. The same applies to cattle trade and other products. Therefore, we think that dealing with the opposition is a matter of time only. We are exerting every effort to prove that we are capable of representing a convincing legitimate party for the neighbours in this context." However, Al-Masalimah speaks of shortages and warns that unless the crossing is opened, there will be "catastrophic effects in the liberated areas inside Syria."

In conclusion, the anchor asks Ghunaymat what alternatives Jordan has. Ghunaymat says: "The options currently available are limited and do not make up for the losses that are suffered by the economy, which are big losses. However, in the future, perhaps if the opposition becomes stronger and organizes itself well amid the growing weakness of the Al-Asad regime, then this would eventually necessitate the presence of a certain side with which Jordan will deal. This might take time. We say that change in Syria is inevitable, but nobody knows when. Perhaps the issue might take years. However, there must be some parties with which Jordan will have to deal and arrange its matters accordingly. Keeping the borders closed this way from the east and the north and to some extent from the Saudi side will increase the insoluble problems of the Jordanian economy. We are talking a chronic deficit and a major deficit in the trade balance. We are talking about high unemployment and poverty rates."

Source: Al-Jazeera TV, Doha, in Arabic 1730 gmt 31 May 15

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**MIDDLE EAST**

01/06/2015 **Russian tourism board to open office in China, three in Europe**

*Text of report by Russian state-owned TASS news agency*

Moscow, 1 June: Four national tourism offices of the Russian Federation will open abroad over the next four months, Rosturizm
The Russian Federal Tourism Agency head Oleg Safonov told journalists today.

"The plan is to open a mission in Helsinki, funded from outside the budget, as early as 10 July. Offices are also due to open this summer in Germany and China, these ones funded from the budget: in Berlin on 11 June and in Beijing on 26-28 June. And an office in Italy, in the capital, will open on 29 September," he added.

Safonov reiterated that one such office had opened in Dubai on 17 May, financed from extrabudgetary funds.

"The flow of tourists to Russia from Middle East countries is small so far, but we still find this area interesting and promising, even though it will not become a mass market. We would like to expand cooperation with Muslim countries: their people may be interested in visiting Muslim areas of multi-ethnic Russia," the head of the agency said.

He said Rosturizm offices abroad should be another step in the promotion of Russia on the global tourism market.

Source: TASS news agency, Moscow, in Russian 1252 gmt 1 Jun 15

SAUDI ARABIA
01/06/2015 Police disperse protest, arrest four in southern Mauritania

Mauritanian security forces have arrested at least four people when they dispersed a protest held against Al-Rajhi agricultural project in the southwestern Brakna region, Mauritanian independent news agency Al-Akhbar reported on its website on 1 June.

The report quoted Al-Akhbar correspondent as saying that dozens were protesting in conjunction with the arrival of Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz to Dar al-Baraka area in the region.

According to the report, the president is due to meet with some of the farmers who objected to the Al-Rajhi project during his visit to the area.

The Saudi-owned Al-Rajhi group had announced earlier that it was going to invest around 400m dollars in the agricultural sector in southern Mauritania, the report added.
BBC Monitoring International Report - Pakistan
2 June 2015

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AFGHANISTAN
31/05/2015 MPs doubt Afghan leader’s call on Pakistan to fight Taleban to produce result

Excerpt from report by privately-owned Noor TV on 31 May

[Presenter] Some MPs say a letter sent by the Afghan presidential palace to Pakistani officials recently will not prove effective. They argue that the Pakistanis have never been honest to Afghanistan in the fight against terrorism. They say the Afghan government must find other options if Islamabad does not take any practical steps in the fight against terrorism. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has asked Pakistan to stop supporting the Afghan Taleban in a letter. Munib Shahin reports on the details,

[Passage omitted: Text of the letter, which in part gives Pakistan a three-week deadline to take action against Taleban]

[MP Zakaria Suda, captioned] Setting a deadline means Afghanistan should also have an alternative option. If the Afghan government fails to agree with the Pakistanis on an agreement that could benefit both sides, I do not know what other alternatives the government
will have to work with. Thus, I hope such ultimatums and agreements are aimed at serving the national interests of the people of Afghanistan.

[Correspondent] The government of Pakistan has repeatedly said that it will help Afghanistan achieve peace, but it has apparently not taken any practical step. This is the reason why some MPs do not believe that the fact that president sent a letter to Pakistan will yield any result.

[MP Ahmad Shah Ramazan, captioned] Do you think the Pakistanis will care about Mr Ghani’s letter? Pakistan, Da'ish and the Taleban have no authority and major countries of the world are the ones that make Pakistan do whatever they want. Pakistan is merely implementing the projects of super powers. Such letters do not benefit. The Afghan president held dozens of meetings with the Pakistani president or prime minister and yet he has achieved nothing. So, the president will never achieve anything by sending a letter.

[Correspondent] It has been seen that the Afghan government tried hard to improve Kabul-Islamabad ties in the past seven months, but the efforts have not produced any result.

Source: Noor TV, Kabul, in Dari 1300 gmt 31 May 15

01/06/2015 Afghan supporters of Islamic State say jihad knows no borders

Excerpt from report by private Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press news agency

Kabul, 31 May: Our Jihad accepts no limitations.

The Islamic Caliphate [self-declared Islamic State, IS], led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi led has announced that Afghanistan is a part of Khorasan province and following this announcement a number of armed people declared their loyalty to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and members of Da’ish [IS] in Afghanistan appeared in a recent video and said their jihad knew no borders and was not restricted to Afghanistan or the region.

The video, which published on the internet yesterday, starts with text saying that with the help of the ISI [Pakistani military intelligence], some Afghan Taleban had started to fight against IS in
Kot District of Nangarhar Province but that they fled as could not resist the mojahedins of the Islamic Caliphate.

Men equipped with various kinds of weapons could be seen in the video with IS black flags on their vehicles and songs in Arabic were playing in the background. The video showed those people travelling on un-asphalted road among trees in mountainous remote areas in Afghanistan. The video also showed armed groups chanting pro-IS slogans. The video is entitled: "Yumaiz Yafrah Almominun-1".

[Passage omitted: Man in video talked about jihad in Afghanistan and said jihad knew no borders] The man said that they will raise voice for the independence of Baitul Muqaddis [house of holiness, holy places in Jerusalem] and added: "This black flag will be hoisted at the Baitul Muqaddis and the White House". He invited other people to join them and added that that the leader or Caliph must be one and the Caliph must be according to Islamic law. [Passage omitted: He condemns killing of IS supporters in Kot District and pledges to take revenge].

This video is posted at a time when clashes have been reported between Taleban and supporters of Da'ish in some areas of Afghanistan, though the Taleban have never confirmed these reports.

Earlier, Da'ish had posted two videos - one in which they pledged their loyalty to the Caliph and another expressing grief over the killing of Mullah Abdorrauf, the IS deputy governor.

Source: Afghan Islamic Press news agency, Peshawar, in Pashto 0520 gmt 1 Jun 15

01/06/2015 BBC Monitoring quotes from Afghan press 1 Jun 15

The following is a selection of quotes from editorials published in the 1 June editions of Dari and Pashto-language Afghan newspapers.

**Ghani sends letter to Pakistan**

President Ashraf Ghani has reportedly sent a letter to Pakistani officials urging them to stop supporting the Afghan Taleban and to put their leaders under house arrest in Peshawar and Quetta.
Hasht-e Sobh (independent, www.8am.af): "Political efforts will fail to end the war unless restrictions are imposed on the Taleban leaders... The Taleban spring offensive is seriously under way and the Pakistani army has not imposed any restrictions on them. If Pakistan really wants to end the war, it should not miss this opportunity and with practical measures it should prove to the Afghan people that its policy on Afghanistan has changed... In addition, the policy of supporting the Taleban has not ensured Pakistan's security interests and the continuation of this policy will intensify the war of Pakistani Taleban as well. "[ http://8am.af/end-the-war-depends-meet-the-legitimate-aspirations-of-afghanistan/]

**Taleban in Qatar**

The house arrest period of five key Taleban leaders, who have been swapped for an American soldier, ended yesterday in Qatar. Reports suggest that talks are under way between the US and Qatari officials to return the five Taleban leaders to Afghanistan. According to an agreement between Washington and Doha, these five people should be freed on 1 June 2015.

Arman-e Melli (private, http://www.armanili.af/): "If these murderers are allowed to return to Pakistan, certainly similar to other released Taleban prisoners they will prefer to fight against the Islamic government of Afghanistan... Taking into account the bloody background of these five individuals, the Afghan people expect America and Qatar, as the friends of the Afghan government, not to allow them to leave Qatar and to watch them so that they cannot collect money in regional countries and from pro-terror circles among the rich Arab sheikhs to fund the Taleban. "[ http://www.armanemili.af/detail.php?pid=7257]

**Afghan peace process**

Weesa (private, online version not available): "Today this question needs a proper answer why war has continued in Afghanistan despite the heavy presence of America and NATO? The only proper answer is that the policy on fighting terrorism has failed... The only possible way is that the process for bringing peace in Afghanistan should not be confined only to talks with the Taleban, America and
Pakistan, but Russia, China, India and Iran should be officially involved in this process."

**Source:** Quotes package from BBC Monitoring, in Dari and Pashto 1 Jun 15

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01/06/2015 **No agreements with neighbours threaten nation - Afghan chief executive**

**Text of report by Afghan independent Tolo TV on 1 June**

[Presenter] The chief executive of the national unity government, Abdollah Abdollah, has said that Afghanistan wants to improve its relations with the neighbouring countries, but will never sign any agreement with any country that goes against Afghanistan's national interests. With regard to signing an agreement with Pakistan on exchanging intelligence information, Abdollah said that Afghanistan wanted to have calculated relations with its neighbours. He also said that the Afghan government needed the international community's contributions, but that these were dependent on the Afghan government's performance. Tareq Majidi has more details:

[Correspondent] Abdollah said at a Council of Ministers' session that the signing of an agreement between the National Directorate of Security and Inter-Service-intelligence of Pakistan had met with a wave of public reaction and raised several questions, but that the Afghan government gives priority to the country's national interests when it signs agreements with a country.

[Abdollah Abdollah, chief executive, captioned, speaking at a session] We once again assure the Afghan people that we will not sign any agreement with anyone that affects the country's national interests and security. However, we want to have good relations with all, but our relations have to be calculated and clear.

[Correspondent] The chief executive also welcomed the 100-day programme of the cabinet members and said that fighting corruption and ensuring transparency in performance can lead to more international donor contributions.

[Abdollah] Afghanistan will rely on the international community's financial assistance in coming years and continued assistance depends on good performance by the national unity government.
The chief executive also reported that he will visit Tajikistan along with some cabinet members next week to hold talks with Tajik officials on economic, political, security and cultural issues.

Source: Tolo TV, Kabul, in Dari 1330 gmt 1 Jun 15

31/05/2015 Neither surrender nor war solution to Afghan-Pakistani relations, paper

Text of an editorial in Dari entitled: "The third option" by privately-owned Afghan daily newspaper Mandegar on 31 May

Many doors have recently opened for the Taleban to negotiate. Turkey, China, UAE, Qatar, Iran and recently Turkmenistan have each opened their doors for the Taleban to witness [facilitate] peace talks on Afghanistan. Although the Islamic Republic of Iran has not officially opened its doors for the Taleban, reports on Iranian websites say that a number of Taleban have been invited to that country to discuss a number of issues with Iranian authorities.

The Taleban have built themselves a base in Qatar for many years and are trying to take maximum advantage of that location. The [Afghan] President, however, refused to travel to Qatar and is apparently trying to further the negotiation process through Pakistan. Efforts aimed at signing a pact with Pakistan is a priority of the President of the national unity government. The pact will open a new chapter in the relations between the two countries and transform Afghanistan as a result. When the President himself tells the parliament that there is no way but to build trust and relations between the Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) and the National Security Directorate (NDS) and this must happen, it means that peace in Afghanistan depends on Pakistan's pleasure and that Afghanistan should expect peace from Pakistan. Although many countries are interested in paving the way for peace talks, the President has taken no steps in this regard and has not exploited these opportunities.

It is clear that no country can restore peace in Afghanistan no matter what they do unless Pakistan wills it. But this does not mean that representatives of the Afghan people [MPs] should ignore the intelligence deal with Pakistan and surrender without resistance.

It is not wise to chant slogans of enmity with Pakistan instead of negotiating with it. Pakistan has a right to feel safe and not
threatened by Afghanistan. This will create trust between Afghanistan and Pakistan. We are aware that Pakistan's policies and regional hegemonic tendencies will not end even if the Afghan government recognises the Durand Line as the international border between the two countries.

Anyway, the presidential palace must not cast policy options between two choices of total surrender or war with Pakistan. The sensible way would be for Afghanistan to be recognised as an independent country friendly towards Pakistan and India. Afghanistan should make a policy to achieve this objective. We should speak with the Pakistanis as trusted friends. We should also urge all regional countries allied with Pakistan or with close ties to Pakistan to persuade Pakistan to change its policy and position on Afghanistan. This will not be possible unless we use the necessary tools in international games. Pakistan is trying to provoke [win over] China or other countries such as Turkey, Qatar and UAE. Afghanistan also has the capability to encourage regional countries to increase their pressures on Pakistan. It should also ask the UN Security Council to put pressure on Pakistan to stop supporting the Taleban, not to send Islamic State fighters to Afghanistan and to genuinely cooperate for stability in Afghanistan. The Afghan presidents have failed to take these steps so far.

Anyway, now that many doors are open for peace talks, we should show maximum political courage to use all opportunities for the country and to put pressure on Pakistan.

Source: Mandegar in Dari 31 May 15, p 2

02/06/2015 Lawmaker urges Islamabad to handover detained Afghan Taleban militants to Kabul

Text of report published by Pakistani newspaper The Express Tribune website on 2 Jun

Islamabad: Pakistan should handover members of the Afghan Taleban and Haqqani network to Kabul in an effort to help strike a peace deal in the war-ravaged country, the chairman of National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs upheld on Monday [1 Jun].

"We should not have any problem in handing over the Afghan Taleban or members of Haqqani network to Afghanistan if this helps
the reconciliation process," Awais Ahmed Khan Laghari told reporters.

However, Laghari clarified he had no information whether any Afghan Taleban commanders were in Pakistan's custody.

"If they are in Pakistan, we must hand them over to Kabul because the objective of both the countries is to bring peace," the chairman emphasised.

Laghari's statement comes a day after Afghan President Ashraf Ghani sought a tough action from Pakistan against the insurgent group, which in recent weeks intensified its spring offensive in the war-torn country.

In a letter written to the Pakistani leadership, Ghani urged Islamabad to place Taleban leaders in Quetta and Peshawar under house arrest and detain members of Taleban-allied Haqqani network.

Read: Afghan president urges Pakistan to take action against militants

Pakistan has always denied it is sheltering any Taleban commanders.

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have shown improvement since unity government formed in Kabul.

However, the committee's chairman cautioned that a lot still needs to be done to bridge the trust gap between the two countries.

'Condemns double standards of the west'

Further, the chairman of the foreign relations committee strongly condemned a recent statement given by the Indian defence minister that his country would neutralise terrorists through terrorists.

"Had this statement been made by any Pakistani official, the international community particularly the west would have already moved the UN Security Council," he said, criticising the role of powerful countries for condoning such anti-Pakistan remarks by Indian ministers.

Read: PM Nawaz takes aim at Indian leadership, vows to control any anti-Pakistan act
Further, the chairman admitted that there were little prospects of peace with India during the tenure of Narendra Modi.

*Source: Express Tribune website, Karachi, in English 02 Jun 15*

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**CHINA**

01/06/2015 *Pakistan Air Force chief leaves for China*

*Text of report by Pakistani newspaper The News website on 1 June*

Islamabad Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, left for China on an official visit Sunday [31 May], says a press release.

During his visit to China, he will hold meetings with high ranking civil and defence officials of China, including Commander People's Liberation Army and Air Force (PLAAF), President AVIC (Aviation Industry of China), President CATIC (China National Aero-Technology import and Export Corporation) and President CEIEC (China National Electronics Import and Export Corporation).

During the visit, the Air Chief will also visit the manufacturing facilities of JF-17 Thunder which is jointly co-developed by (PAF & CATIC), and co-produced by PAC (Pakistan Aeronautical Complex) and CATIC (China Aero-technology Import Export Corporation). The visit will primarily focus on JF-17 Thunder programme and enhancing its capabilities to make it at par with the latest lethal and sophisticated aircraft of the world.

The visit would not only strengthen the existing friendly relations between the two air forces but also take it to further heights between the two countries.

*Source: The News website, Islamabad, in English 01 Jun 15*

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01/06/2015 *Stapled visa issue with China "unresolved" - Indian minister*

*Text of report by Smriti Kak Ramachandran headlined "Stapled visa issue with China still unresolved" published by Indian newspaper The Hindu website on 1 June; subheading as published*

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj on Sunday [31 May] admitted that the issue of China granting stapled visas to
Indians from Arunachal Pradesh [northeastern state disputed with China] remains "unresolved".

She said this issue, along with the pending ones of the land border agreement, the recognition of the Line of Actual Control [cease-fire line] and of sharing hydrological data, had been taken up by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his recent visit to Beijing.

Asked whether China had offered any clarification, when India had extended the facility of e-visas for Chinese tourists, she said: "The two issues cannot be correlated. E-visa is not a concession, it has been done to promote tourism and it is only allowed for 30 days after proper verification."

Much to India's chagrin, China continued to grant stapled visas to residents of Arunachal Pradesh, claiming it to be a part of its territory. The issue continued to hang fire despite successive governments taking up the matter with the Chinese and registering their protest.

In 2012, during the UPA [United Progressive Alliance] government's tenure, China agreed to stop stapling visas of Jammu and Kashmir residents.

For its part, India announced the decision to grant e-visa to Chinese tourists during Mr. Modi's recent visit to China. Ms. Swaraj said the Prime Minister had in no uncertain terms told the Chinese government that for the 21st Century to belong to Asia, all pending issues would have to be resolved.

**India's objection**

The Minister also said India had objections to the Pakistan-China economic corridor only if it involved activities in Pakistan-occupied [Pakistan-administered] Kashmir.

Asked whether India had taken up the issue of China putting a technical hold on its effort to seek the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) sanctions against Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin, Ms. Swaraj said New Delhi had conveyed to Beijing that terrorism was an issue that concerned them as well and that should be borne in mind when they vote [at the UN Security Council].

India had also told China that there should be freedom of navigation and trade in the South China Sea and use of threat was not good.

*Source: The Hindu website, Chennai, in English 01 Jun 15*
01/06/2015 **Pakistan air chief visits Chinese air force headquarters**

*Text of report by Pakistani news agency APP*

Islamabad, 1 Jun: Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force (PAF), Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman visited the Headquarters of People's Liberation Army Air Force, (PLAAF) China on Monday [1 June].

On his arrival at PLAAF Headquarters, a smartly turned out contingent presented him the Guard of Honour. The Air Chief was given a comprehensive brief on the working of PLAAF. The Air Chief also called on General Ma Xiaotian, Commander People's Liberation Army Air Force.

Both the dignitaries remained together for sometimes and discussed various matters of professional interest and mutual cooperation, said a press release issued here.

The Air Chief also had meetings with President China Electronic Technology Corporation (CETC) and Qu Huimin, President China National Electronics Import & Export Corporation (CEIEC). He also met Ji Yanshu, President China Precision Machinery Import Export Corporation (CPMIEC), Zhi Yulin, President China North Industries Corporation (NORINCO), President Aerospace Long March International Trade Co Ltd (ALIT), Zhang Zhen Gao, Chairman Polytech Inc and Xu Zhanbin Administrator of State Administration for Science, Technology and Industry for National Defence (SASTIND). The Air Chief assured Chinese officials of strengthening military as well as civilian cooperation between the two countries in general and the two Air Forces in particular. The Air Chief is on a five days official visit to China.

*Source: Associated Press of Pakistan news agency, Islamabad, in English 1523gmt 01 Jun 15*

02/06/2015 **Indian PM reportedly opposed to Pakistan-China trade corridor**

*Text of report published by Pakistani newspaper The Express Tribune website on 2 Jun*
Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said on Sunday [31 May] that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi “very strongly” raised the issue regarding China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) during his recent visit to Beijing, and termed the project "unacceptable".

"Prime minister during his visit took up the issue very firmly and spoke very strongly that the CPEC going through PoK (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir) is unacceptable," Swaraj said at a press conference.

Further, Swaraj communicated Modi’s concerns regarding the 46bn-dollar project, and said that the Indian government had summoned a Chinese envoy to apprise over the corridor that is to run through Pakistani Kashmir.

The external affairs minister added that an Indian envoy in Beijing had also raised the same issue.

During Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Pakistan in April, the 3,000 kilometre-long CPEC was announced.

**Source: Express Tribune website, Karachi, in English 02 Jun 15**

**INDIA**

01/06/2015 **India to jam mobile signals from Pakistan-administered Kashmir - sources**

Text of report by Rajnish Sharma headlined "Jammers to block Pakistan signals on J&K border" published by Indian newspaper The Asian Age website on 1 June

New Delhi: Security and intelligence agencies are planning to install high-powered jammers close to the Line of Control [cease-fire line] in the Kashmir Valley to block mobile network of telecom firms operating in Pakistan-occupied [Pakistan-administered] Kashmir.

Sources said the PoK [Pakistan-administered Kashmir] telecom operators had recently strengthened their networks so that militants crossing into India could stay in touch with PoK handlers as their networks was functional in India’s border areas.

Intelligence sources said even though earlier Pakistani networks were operational across the border, their range was limited to areas close to the border. In the last few weeks, however, Pakistani mobile signals have been strengthened to cover a larger part of
Indian territory. Intelligence officials said this was done deliberately to help in the infiltration of a large number of militants waiting close to the border and the Line of Control.

"The advantage of Pakistan mobile numbers for militants is that it is difficult for our agencies to monitor them and intercept their conversations as we don't have numbers and other relevant data. So these militants operate on the Pakistani number till a particular range even after crossing over into the Indian side. We suspect the same is being done by some sympathisers of militant groups who live close to the border," a senior security official said.

Indian security agencies are now planning to install high-frequency jammers to ensure Pakistan mobile networks are completely blocked on the Indian side. Indian mobile operators are also helping to track suspicious numbers and intercepts. The security agencies are investigating if there is any possible link between the sudden increase in powerful signals of Pakistani telecom operators in PoK and recent attacks on assets of telecom companies in the Kashmir Valley that virtually crippled telecom services, particularly in North Kashmir.

Source: The Asian Age website, Delhi, in English 01 Jun 15

01/06/2015 Pakistan to discuss India agency's alleged role in terror with US - source

Text of report by Kamran Yousaf headlined "Washington trip: Islamabad to share RAW terror link proof with US" published by Pakistani newspaper The Express Tribune website on 1 June

Islamabad: Amidst an uptick in terrorist attacks and a growing chorus of accusations against India's top spy agency for aiding and abetting such violence, Pakistan has decided to raise the issue at the international level.

While Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's top aide said Islamabad would name and shame New Delhi, Pakistan's top diplomat, who left for Washington on Sunday [31 May], is expected to share with US officials evidence of RAW's increasing involvement in stoking terrorism in Pakistan.

Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry will lead a Pakistani delegation at an important meeting of the working group under the Pakistan-US Strategic Dialogue. Foreign Office spokesperson Qazi
Khalilullah confirmed to The Express Tribune that the meeting would take place on June 2 in Washington. The meeting is a part of the ongoing Strategic Dialogue between the two countries, he added without giving details.

But an official familiar with the development said that the talks would focus on bilateral relations, as well as issues related to arms control, nuclear non-proliferation and international security. The top diplomat is also scheduled to meet senior US officials during his stay in Washington.

The official, who didn't wish to be named in the report, disclosed that Chaudhry was given a ‘brief’ by the government to inform the Obama administration about the alleged involvement of India in fomenting unrest in Pakistan.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who along with army chief General Raheel Sharif, visited the headquarters of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) on Saturday, alleged that foreign intelligence agencies were destabilising the country. It is understood that he was referring to RAW.

The official said Foreign Secretary Chaudhry would share ‘fresh evidence’ with US officials about the increased involvement of RAW in creating trouble in Pakistan. He is also expected to raise the issue of recent statements given by India’s defence and interior ministers in which they called for "neutralising terrorists through terrorists".

Islamabad says such controversial statements confirmed its fears that Indian secret agencies were involved in terrorist activities in Pakistan.

Prime Minister's Adviser on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz also indicated on Sunday that Pakistan would expose India at the international level for 'stoking unrest in the country'.

Speaking at a function organised by Nazria Pakistan Council, Aziz made it clear that Pakistan would not allow its enemies to undermine the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor.

He also insisted that the Indian ambition for hegemony in the region would not be allowed to succeed. Aziz maintained that Pakistan's nuclear explosions in 1998 had 'shattered India's dream' to establish its hegemony in the South Asian region.

Source: Express Tribune website, Karachi, in English 01 Jun 15
PAKISTAN
29/05/2015 Pakistani analyst slams TV channel's pro-India stance

Express News in Urdu at 1705 GMT on 29 May carries regularly scheduled program, "@ Q With Ahmed Qureshi" hosted by Ahmed Qureshi. The program brings in-depth analysis by senior political leaders and social analysts of the burning issues faced by Pakistan.

Segment I

Qureshi began the program saying that it was regrettable a Pakistani television channel Geo News excluded Kashmir from Pakistan's map whereas the Chinese media showed the area as part of Pakistan. He said it was an excess when "valiant Kashmiri people wave Pakistani flag and chant long live Pakistan in Srinagar in front of the Indian occupied forces." He said it was a fourth consecutive Friday when Pakistan's flag was hoisted in Srinagar. He said Syed Ali Gilani, leader of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), had started hoisting Pakistani flag in the India-administered Kashmir. He said Masarrat Alam, another Kashmiri leader, after completing six-year long detention chanted "long live Pakistan" and waved Pakistani flag in Srinagar; and resultantly, the Indian forces rearrested him and put him behind the bars. Qureshi said Yasin Malik, the chief of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), had announced to launch a "10-day fill the jail" movement against Alam's arrest. He said: "About 30 to 35 British parliamentarians, at a meeting of All Parties Kashmir Committee (APKC) held yesterday in London, stressed the need for resolving the Kashmir issue in the light of UN resolutions and giving the right to self-determination to the people of Kashmir."

Qureshi said the entire world was supporting the "unmatched freedom struggle of the people of Kashmir," while Geo News deleted not only Pakistan-administered Kashmir but also Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) from the map of Pakistan, which was regrettable. He said Geo News had been committing such mistakes again and again. He said the Pakistani media group was vociferously and unilaterally pursuing a so-called advocacy campaign "the desire for peace" in collaboration with its Indian newspaper The Times of India. He said The Times of India was not very active in the campaign. He said "the desire for peace" initiative portrayed Pakistan as faulty and wrong in the past, and that now the country needed to correct the past mistakes, whereas the Indians were innocent. Qureshi regretted the Geo News approach. He said the "Indian occupying forces" were using brutal force against the innocent people of
Kashmir, and the Pakistani media should highlight the "valiant resistance" of the people of Kashmir.

Khanzada quoted US journalist Seymour Hersh's report, which said: "A former senior Pakistani intelligence officer had given the information of Usama Bin Ladin's whereabouts to Americans to win prize money of $25 million. Now the officer is living in the United States with his prize money of $25 million." He said Pakistan's Foreign Office rejected the report, but The News International, the sister organization of Geo News, published a follow up story, which said: "It was brigadier, retired, Usman Khalid who passed on the information to the US Administration, and he is now living in the United States." He said The Telegraph censured the story appeared in The News International, and said: "Khalid was not the person who provided the information as he had been living in the United Kingdom for 35 years." Qureshi said he had been in contact with Khalid for the last many years, and worked jointly for the cause of Kashmir. Qureshi said it was believed that Khalid was targeted for raising voice for the freedom of Kashmir, and it was shameful that a Pakistani media group was spreading unfounded stories about Khalid.

**Segment II**

Qureshi said that a "contempt of court notice" had been served on the secretary defense and the commander of Bannu cantonment for stopping a car of the judge of Peshawar High Court, who was going to his court situated in the cantonment area. He said the security officials were not aware of the judge's arrival, and that was why, they stopped his car for checking, but upon knowing the identity of the judge, they let him go. Qureshi said the judge took it as his insult and issued notices to various government and military authorities. Qureshi said: "Pakistan has been in a grip of terrorism and it has become necessary for the common people to have patience at different check posts as security officials are performing their duties under standard operating procedure (SOP)."

**Segment III**

Qureshi said yesterday was the anniversary of Pakistan's emergence as a nuclear power in the world. He said a news story was floated in the international media some days back that "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) can steal Pakistan's nuclear bomb." He said actually a negative propaganda had always been launched on the eve of every anniversary that Pakistan could not have the nuclear weapons for being unstable. He said: "The United States has been trying hard to sabotage Pakistan's nuclear program since 1979, but it could not succeed in its designs." He questioned
how ISIL could steal nuclear bomb of Pakistan. He said: "In 1979, the United States had recruited two French diplomats to have penetration into Pakistan's nuclear assets," but it failed. Qureshi said Pakistan detonated nuclear bombs in response to India's nuclear explosions. He said Pakistan had always shown "big heart" towards India, but the latter always demonstrated acrimonious approach towards Pakistan. He said: "Pakistan always remained confined to Kashmir issue, but New Delhi expanded the acrimony with Pakistan by invading East Pakistan in 1971." He said: "Later in 1974, India conducted nuclear test though it was not facing any foreign threat." He said India was still facing intense poverty, disease, and health issues that about 1,500 poor people had so far died of "heat stroke," but Indian Government was busy in anti-Pakistan activities instead of saving lives of its people from heat stroke.

Qureshi said: "It was India, which brought proxy war to this region in 1956." He said: "A number of India's nuclear scientists died mysteriously." He added: "India had sent its scientists to Iran and Iraq for nuclear proliferation."

**Segment IV**

Qureshi said India claimed to have caught a "spy pigeon of Pakistan" and some social media activists commented on it in words: "Which kind of big enemy is this [India], which frightens an innocent bird." He said Pakistan had also arrested an Indian agent in Karachi and recovered four Light Machine Guns (LMGs), rocket launchers, Kalashnikov, and thousands of ammunition rounds from him." He said Pakistan arrested real Indian terrorists instead of innocent pigeons.

Qureshi concluded the program.

*Source: Geo News TV, Karachi, in Urdu 1705gmt 29 May 15*

**31/05/2015 Pakistani forces destroy houses of eight militants in Bajaur Agency**

*Text of report by Pakistani newspaper Dawn website on 31 May*

Khar: Houses of eight militant commanders were razed in different areas of Bajaur Agency on Saturday [30 May].
According to officials, a joint search and clearance operation was launched in Mamond, Khar and Salarzai tehsils.

They said that personnel of security forces, levies and volunteers of peace committees participated in the operation.

The officials said the six houses of Taliban commanders were demolished in Malangai and Zakai areas, while one house each in Mulla Said and Bai Cheena areas.

They said such action would continue to purge the tribal agency of militant threat.

Source: Dawn website, Karachi, in English 31 May 15

01/06/2015 Imran Khan's party leads in northwest Pakistan local polls

Text of report by Pakistani newspaper The Nation website on 1 June

Peshawar: Ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf took the lead in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa local bodies' elections by securing 255 seats, followed by independents who pocketed 133 slots. PTI's key rival Awami National Party (ANP) secured third position with 101 seats of district and tehsil councillors, as per the unofficial results.

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal (JUI-F), another main player, was on fourth position with 94 seats, while Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), a partner in PTI-led government, was on fifth position with 80 seats. Pakistan Peoples Party with its 37 seats stood sixth while Qaumi Watan Party and Awami Jamhoori Ittehad were on seventh and eight positions till filing of this report.

The ANP clinched first position in districts of Buner, Swabi, Mardan and Charsadda. In Buner ANP got eight seats against PTI's seven while in Swabi the opposition party secured 23 seats against PTI's just six seats. In Mardan also ANP emerged victorious by securing 17 seats out of 32. In Charsadda, ANP led polls by getting 14 seats while PTI got 11 seats.

In Upper Dir district, JI led the polls by getting 21 seats; independents secured four seats and PTI two seats. In Lower Dir district, JI secured 23 seats, ANP five, PTI four and PPP three seats. In Malakand district ANP secured eight seats, PPP eight seats, PTI seven and JUI-F got two seats while independents took five seats there.
In 67 union councils of Swat district Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) got 22 seats, PTI was on second place with 21 seats, ANP secured nine seats, independent 11, JUI-F two, while PPP and JI got one seat each. In Mansehra district, independents won 17 out of 20 seats while JUI-F secured two seats. In Shangla, PML-N was on the top with 13 seats, ANP secured five seats and PTI only three seats.

In Torghar district neck to neck contest was expected where ANP and PTI both got three seats; however, counting for 10 other seats was still continuing. In Hango, JUI-F got six seats, ANP two, PTI two and independents four seats. In Tank district PTI secured six seats, JUI-F five and PPP one seat.

Results in some districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa so far were incomplete due to allegations of rigging by rival candidates against each other while clashes and aerial firing at some polling stations added to the chaos and confusion. PTI chief Imran Khan has asked Election Commission of Pakistan to make a powerful election tribunal to deal with the ragging allegations.

Source: The Nation website, Islamabad, in English 01 Jun 15

25/05/2015 **Pakistan analyst says IS wants to create sectarian divide in Saudi Arabia**

Dunya News TV in Urdu at 1405 GMT on 25 May carries live regularly scheduled programme "Nuqta-e-Nazar" hosted by Ajmal Jami and Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Shami. The programme brings in-depth analysis on burning issues faced by Pakistan. Words within double slantlines are in English.

Jami began the programme saying that two lawyers were killed in clashes with police in Daska Tehsil of Sialkot District today. Jami said he and Shami would also follow-up legal course of action against Axact on charges of dealing in fake degrees online. Jami said 21 Shi'ite Muslims were killed in a suicide attack on a mosque in Qatif, Saudi Arabia on 22 May. Jami said the other stories to be covered in today's programme were attack on the convoy of President Mamnoon Hussain's son in Balochistan and former prime minister Yousaf Raza Gilani's telephonic contact with his abducted son.

**Segment I**
Jami said two lawyers were killed when police opened fire on crowd during clashes with lawyers in Daska today. Jami said killing of lawyers was followed by shutter down strike and violent demonstrations in Daska city. Jami revealed that enraged members of the lawyers' community a few government offices and vandalized public property in reaction to the killing of their colleagues. Jami said Punjab Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif has ordered a "judicial inquiry" into the unfortunate incident. Jami said Station House Officer (SHO) Shahzad Warraich was reportedly responsible for gunfire that killed the two lawyers.

Jami invited Shami’s views on killing of two lawyers in Daska. Shami expressed surprise over the incident saying that the incident happened when lawyers used abusive and provocative language against the police officers. Shami said one of the two lawyers killed by the police was president of Daska Bar Association. Shami said today's unfortunate incident reminded him of Model Town incident in which more than a dozen workers of Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) had been killed. Shami further said that the incidents took place because police officials lacked "training."

Shami established audio link with Dunya News correspondent Raja Majid, and asked him to update viewers on today's incident. Majid said Rana Khalid Abbas, the president of Daska Bar Association, and one of his colleagues became victims of the police gunfire at the office of Union Council Model Town in Daska Tehsil after a quarrel over attestation of a legal document. He added that when the quarrel prolonged, SHO Warraich lost temper and opened fire on Abbas and his colleague. Majid further said that the killing of the lawyers led to eruption of violent protests across Punjab.

In reply to a question, Majid said first information report (FIR) had been filed against Warraich and four other policemen on charges of murder of two lawyers. He added that Warraich had been arrested by police. Majid further said that enraged protestors torched a few government offices and residences and continued their protest despite Warraich's arrest.

Segment II

Jami said Shoaib Sheikh, the chief executive of Axact company, appeared in Sindh High Court (SHC) today. Jami said Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) contacted Interpol and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and sought their assistance for further inquiry into the scandal.

Shami said Sheikh had submitted a petition for pre-arrest bail in SHC, adding that SHC did not rejected the petition because the
court believed there was no need for Sheikh to request this facility as he did not have any case opened against him yet. Shami further said that the government should thoroughly investigate the case. Shami said that a number of senior employees had resigned from Axact since The New York Times broke the story of the scam. He added that Axact's owners should be given a chance to defend themselves in a court of law.

Segment III

Jami said 21 Shi'ite Muslims were killed in a suicide attack on a mosque during Friday prayers in Qatif, Saudi Arabia, on 22 May. Shami said Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) had claimed responsibility for the attack. He added that around 10-15 percent of population in Qatif consisted of Shi'ites. Shami said: "ISIL is trying to create sectarian divide to destabilize Saudi Arabia." Shami said clerics of Saudi Arabia and Iran were supposed to control the situation and prevent further deterioration. Shami urged Saudi Arabian authorities to deal with terrorists with an iron hand and save the country from sectarian conflict. He added that some forces wanted to destabilize Saudi Arabia. Shami further said that Saudi Arabian security agencies were capable of dealing with the situation.

Segment IV

Jami said President Mamnoon Hussain's son escaped unhurt when a powerful roadside bomb planted by Baloch separatists targeted his convoy killing at least three persons and injuring 15 others in Balochistan. Shami said the good news was that Salman Mamnoon, son of President Hussain, remained safe in the attack. Shami further said that former prime minister Yousaf Raza Gilani talked to his son Ali Haider Gilani, who had been abducted by Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) and taken to Kabul two years ago.

Jami reminded viewers that Ali Haider Gilani was abducted by the Taliban from Multan, South Punjab, in May 2013. Shami said the kidnappers had laid down a few demands before Yousaf Raza Gilani, including swap of prisoners.

Jami said to Shami that security agencies were in contact with the kidnappers of Ali Haider Gilani and the two sides had reportedly reached an agreement.

Jami said to Shami that Shahbaz Taseer, son of former Punjab governor Salman Taseer, was also abducted by the Taliban four years ago.
Jami said to Shami that Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for attack on convoy of Salman Mamnoon.

Segment V

Jami invited calls from viewers. A caller from Karachi asked Shami why the government lacked mechanism to conduct inquiry about academic qualification of madrassa clerics. Shami said the government should examine and scrutinize academic qualifications of madrassa clerics and appoint qualified clerics in madrassas.

Jami concluded the programme.

Reception: Good

Duration of Broadcast: 51 minutes

Source: Dunya News TV, Lahore, in Urdu 1405gmt 25 May 15

01/06/2015 Pakistani PM, president concerned over politician’s arrest

Text of report by Pakistani newspaper The Nation website on 1 June

Islamabad: Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and former President and Co-Chairman of PPP Asif Ali Zardari have expressed concern over the arrest and alleged manhandling of Mian Iftikhar Hussain in Pabbi on Saturday night.

Nawaz Sharif has sought report from IG KP, Intelligence Bureau as well as other intelligence agencies about this incident.

He directed that political personalities be treated with respect within the parameters of law.

Meanwhile, Co-Chairman PPP Asif Ali Zardari has said that nation has witnessed massive rigging in KPK elections the other day. He also demanded Election Commission to take action against PTI Chairman Imran Khan and KPK Chief Minister Pervaiz Khattak for presiding over such rigged elections in KPK. He also condemned the arrest of ANP General Secretary Mian Iftikhar Hussain and former PPP Minister Liaquat Shabab.

In a statement, he said that rigging was apparent in several areas in KPK Local Government elections.
He said that PTI led Government in KPK resorted to pre-poll rigging and two days before elections former PPP Minister Liaquat Shabab was arrested which is an example of pre-poll rigging.

He said that not in history of KPK province such incidents of violence have taken place on election day.

He said that how these elections can be called fair and free when violence marred polls across KPK in which according to news reports 8 people lost their lives and over 80 have been reported injured. Media has shown incidents of massive rigging all over KPK, he added.

Zardari strongly condemned arrest of senior politicians and General Secretary Awami National Party Mian Iftikhar Hussain on fake charges.

He said that this arrest shows the PTI Government is bent upon victimising political opponents.

He demanded immediate release of Mian Iftikhar Hussain, former provincial Minister Liaquat Shabab and immediate withdrawal of cases against them.

Source: The Nation website, Islamabad, in English 01 Jun 15

01/06/2015 Hackers deface website of Pakistani channel Geo News

Text of report by Pakistani newspaper The News website on 1 June

Karachi: The official website of Geo News was hacked on Sunday [31 May] evening. The IT experts of Geo, however, managed to get the website restored within one hour. The incident was brought to the notice of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Cyber Crime Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), which have started a probe.

Unknown hackers attacked the official website of Geo News at 7.30 in the evening and hacked it. The hackers removed the home page of Geo News from the site and issued their message. The hackers displayed on the whole page their message in favour of Axact, the company facing court proceedings for fraudulently selling fake degrees. The hackers' page was headed "HACKED" and a message on the whole page that the law-enforcement agencies reacted against Axact on the report of a foreign newspaper. Investigations
had been initiated soon after the report, raids were conducted and the owners (of Axact) were arrested without any delay. While appreciating the efficiency shown in this case, the hacker mocked the agencies arguing that they do not do so in other matters.

In their message, the hackers have written the names of Nawaz Sharif, Asif Ali Zardari, Altaf Hussain and other political leaders pointing out how the system was run wrongly during their governments yet action was never taken against their wrongdoings. There is no coverage of how these leaders have looted the people, it said.

Referring to Axact, the hackers said that the crime of Axact has not even been proved so far. "We also want to know why Pakistani media always spreads hate and negative effects and our real successes and achievements are seldom brought to limelight." The cyber crime wing has initiated an inquiry to trace the hackers.

Source: The News website, Islamabad, in English 01 Jun 15
He also invited all political opponents and said, "We will help in conducting investigations and no PTI candidate will get stay orders."

Source: The Nation website, Islamabad, in English 01 Jun 15

01/06/2015 **Pakistani Islamist party protests against workers' killing**

Text of report by Pakistani newspaper The News website on 1 June

Charsadda The activists of Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) on Sunday [31 May] took out protest rally against the killing of party workers by the security officials and arrest of a leader in Farooq Azam Chowk.

Led by JUI-F leader Maulana Muhammad Hashim Khan, Maulana Liaqat Ali and others, the protesters were carrying banners and placards and chanted slogans against the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI)-led provincial government for mismanagement in the local government poll.

Criticising the killing of the party workers Hazir Khan and Sohaib in Sherpao union council, they said that protests would be staged until the arrest of the killers and the release of the Mufti Gohar Ali.

Meanwhile, the party leadership including Member National Assembly (MNA) Maulana Said Gohar Shah and former parliamentarian Maulana Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq denounced brutality of the police in a meeting held in the Central Jamia Masjid in tehsil bazaar.

Source: The News website, Islamabad, in English 01 Jun 15

01/06/2015 **Pakistani provincial lawmaker, son shot dead**

Text of report by Pakistani newspaper The News website on 1 June

Gujranwala: A Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) MPA, Rana Shamshad Ahmad, his son Shahbaz Ahmed and a friend Mahmood Shakir were shot dead and the MPA's nephew Ali and gunman Aamer were wounded in a sudden attack by unidentified armed men in village Raja Bhullavi here at 8:30pm. The prime minister and
chief minister Punjab have condemned the assassination of the MPA and his son.

Shamshad Ahmed was on his way home from his farmhouse when some unidentified armed men riding in a car opened fire on his car, killing Shamshad, Shahbaz and Shakir on the spot while his nephew and gunman were badly injured.

The injured nephew of the MPA, Ali, and gunman Aamer were armed men riding in a car opened fire on MPA's car and fired volley of bullets, killing Shamshad, Shahbaz and Shakir at the spot while his nephew and gunman were badly injured.

Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif has taken notice of the incident and called for report from IG Punjab. The deceased MPA had returned to assembly for four consecutive terms. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has strongly condemned the killing of member of Punjab Assembly belonging to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Chaudhry Shamshad Ahmad, his son and a friend in the incident of firing in Kamoke on Sunday.

The prime minister asked authorities to thoroughly inquire the incident and bring the culprits to justice. He prayed that Allah Almighty may bless the departed souls with eternal bliss and give courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude. The prime minister also paid rich tribute to the services of late Chaudhry Shamshad Ahmad for the country and party.

Source: The News website, Islamabad, in English 01 Jun 15

01/06/2015 Pakistani Taleban admit killing of provincial lawmaker

Text of report by leading English-language Pakistani daily Dawn website

Peshawar: The Tehreek-i-Taleban Pakistan (TTP) on Monday [1 June] claimed responsibility for the killing of Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) member of Punjab Assembly (MPA) Rana Shamshad who was shot dead along with his son and a party worker in Gujranwala's Kamoki area on Sunday evening.

Taleban spokesman Mohammad Khorasani told DawnNews that the attack on the legislator was carried out by militants belonging to the proscribed group.
The Punjab legislator was on his way home from his farmhouse in Kot Raja - accompanied by his son, nephew and a party worker - when armed assailants who were travelling in a black car opened heavy fire at the MPA's vehicle.

Eye witnesses said the attackers had covered their faces with cloth and fled the scene right after the attack.

Police reached the site of the incident immediately and transferred all four injured to the nearest district hospital.

Police sources said Shamshad and his son, Ahmed, were pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

Chaudhary Shamshad was elected to the Punjab Assembly from Gujranwala's constituency PP-100 on a Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) ticket. He had served as the provincial transport minister during the Pakistan Muslim League - Quaid (PML-Q) government in Punjab.

*Source: Dawn website, Karachi, in English 01 Jun 15*

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01/06/2015 **Pakistani man Shafqat Hussain to be hanged 9 Jun**

*Text of report by leading English-language Pakistani daily Dawn website*


Superintendent Central Jail Karachi wrote a letter to the judge of ATC III, saying that the stay period of Shafqat's execution is over, and therefore a black warrant be issued for the hanging of the death row prisoner.

ATC III judge issued a death warrant for the condemned prisoner with directives to hang him till death on June 9 at 4:30 am under the supervision of a judicial magistrate, and submit a compliance report after executing him.

Shafqat was arrested and sentenced to death in 2004 for the kidnapping and involuntary murder of a seven-year-old boy, who lived in a Karachi apartment building where he worked as a security guard.
All courts in the land had turned down his appeals and the Supreme Court threw out a review petition that was the first to raise the matter of Shafqat's juvenility at the time of arrest, maintaining that this line of defence should have been introduced at the trial court level.

Previously Shafqat's legal team, insisted that Shafqat's earlier defence attorneys did not plead his case competently, which was why this aspect was overlooked in the past. Just over two month ago, before Shafqat was scheduled to be executed, he was granted a last-minute reprieve and Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan had ordered an inquiry into the matter, which was tasked with establishing the veracity of the lawyers' contention that Shafqat was a minor at the time of sentencing.

The case also garnered a lot of attention on social and mainstream media and became a bone of contention between supporters and opponents of the death penalty.

Last month, an executive inquiry to determine whether Shafqat was a juvenile at the time of his sentencing concluded that he was 23 years old when the punishment was handed down.

Take a look: FIA inquiry concludes Shafqat 'wasn't a minor'

According to the text of the report, seen by Dawn, a three-member Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) inquiry team, led by Deputy Director Gulfam Nasir Warraich, had found "absolutely no contradiction in the record (which includes his pictures at the time of arrest) that Shafqat Hussain was 23 years of age at the time of arrest".

Shafqat had been due to face the noose on January 14 but the government halted the execution amid protests about his age, and ordered an investigation.

Explore: Shafqat's execution stayed for 30 days, jail authorities tell ATC

He was then set to be executed on March 19 but a day before the sentencing civil society representatives gathered in front of the presidency against the order. The hanging was subsequently postponed for 72 hours and then for 30 days.

Death warrants for Shafqat Hussain were issued for the third time on April 24 after an executive inquiry by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) concluded that he was 23 years of age when the punishment was handed down.
27/05/2015 **Pakistan analysts welcome judicial commission order over electoral rigging claim**

PTV World News in English at 1505 GMT on 27 May carries regularly scheduled programme, "World Tonight" hosted by Gulmeenay Sethi. The programme brings in-depth analysis by senior political leaders and prominent political and social analysts of the burning issues faced by Pakistan.

Reception: Good

Duration of Broadcast: 46 minutes

Guests: Jan Achakzai, the spokesperson of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F); Sadaqat Abbasi, leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI); Salman Akram Raja, lawyer of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP); Rubina Khalid, leader of Pakistan People's Party (PPP), who participated in the programme through audio link.

Sethi began the programme saying that today they would discuss with the panelists the verdict of the judicial commission to open vote bags and retrieve Form 15, and local bodies' elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

**Segment I**

Sethi said the judicial commission ordered to open white, khaki, and blue vote bags, retrieve Form 15 out of each box. She added that PTI had been demanding of the judicial commission to open the vote bags and check Form 15 for investigating rigging. She added that the judicial commission mentioned in its verdict that if any bag was found with broken seal, it should be "noted and reported."

Sethi asked Abbasi to discuss the verdict of the commission. Abbasi said the situation was heading towards disclosing facts about electoral rigging, holding of reelection, and establishment of real democracy in Pakistan. He added: "New elections are very near and the nation should be ready for it." He further said that opening bags and retrieving Form 15 would prove that PTI's mandate was stolen and now, it was a "happy moment" for PTI and its supporters.

Sethi asked Achakzai whether checking Form 15 would complicate the issue of electoral rigging. Achakzai said it was a victory for the government because it would prove that the government was not
involved in systematic rigging; however, it would disclose some irregularities, but "larger picture will remain the same." He added that PTI protested against alleged electoral rigging and introduced protest as an "instrument of instability" in Pakistan because the parties, which would lose elections in the future, would claim that the elections were rigged and they would not accept the results. He further said that the PML-N government would be the "ultimate beneficiary" because it would not be found involved in any conspiracy to rig elections. Achakzai said checking Form 15 was a method to investigate irregularities, and it might also go against PTI if the party was found to be a beneficiary of electoral rigging.

Sethi asked Abbasi whether checking a large number of Form 15 would further complicate the issue. Abbasi said it would help the commission to decide whether the electoral rigging was systematic or not. He added that extra ballot papers were sent to some constituencies of Punjab as compared to constituencies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Sethi asked Raja what implications of opening vote bags and checking Form 15 would be. Raja said the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) welcomed the demand of PTI to open vote bags, and "it is a great day for Pakistani democracy" because it would take the investigation closer to the truth. To a question about printing extra ballot papers, Raja said extra ballot papers were printed by ECP to meet the needs on the demand of returning officers and it had nothing to do with rigging. He added that Form 15 contained the official number of ballot papers given to each returning officer and it must reconcile with records of ECP and the number of polled votes.

Sethi asked Raja whether the commission would also investigate the electoral process through Form 14 or Form 16. Raja said the commission would use Form 15 for investigation because Form 16 showed the results, and it was already in people's knowledge.

Sethi asked Raja whether the commission could complete its investigation within 90 days when it could not accomplish the process in the designated 45 days. Raja said it would be able to complete the investigation within the next 45 days because the presidential ordinance to form the judicial commission was valid for 120 days.

Sethi asked Raja whether the political parties provided any substantial evidence to the commission. Raja said the probe was heading in the "right direction," and the nation must wait for its findings.
Sethi asked Raja whether the outcome of the electoral probe would be helpful to improve the electoral system. Raja said: "I am certain that our future elections will be nearer to acceptable standards."

Sethi asked Abbasi to comment on performance of electoral reforms committee. Abbasi said PTI raised voice against electoral rigging in order to improve the existing electoral system. He added that PTI leaders believed that they achieved a milestone in the democratic history of Pakistan. He further said that Form 15 would show how many ballot papers were sent and how many of them were actually used, which would resolve the issue of rigging once and for all.

Achakzai said PTI made electoral reforms as an agenda to destabilize the system. He added that political parties should not threaten the system on the basis of electoral discrepancies. He further said that PTI did not let Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) perform through its protests. Achakzai said irregularities would continue to remain despite electoral reforms and now, the political parties could make any election controversial in the future.

Achakzai said PTI Chairman Imran Khan had no right to sabotage the democratic struggle, which was carried out to restore democracy during the political history of Pakistan.

To a question, Abbasi said it was wrong to say that fixing the electoral system would derail or affect the political system. He added that JUI-F stayed in power for a long time, but it never tried to create a free and fair electoral system because it needed flawed system for its own benefit.

**Segment II**

To a question about participation of women in local bodies' elections in KP, Abbasi said the elections should be considered null and void if reasonable number women did not participate, but it was also a fact that KP Government could not force the women to use their voting right. He added that the people of KP did not allow their women to participate in any activity, including casting of votes. He further said that women should be given their voting right and KP Government would take action against anyone who tried to keep the women away from the electoral process. He further said that the PTI government in KP formed village councils at grass-roots level and allocated seats to women in the councils.

Differing with Abbasi, Achakzai said PTI promoted anti-feminine system of village councils, which were non-political entities because they worked like councils of elders. He added that the village councils should not be authorized to decide about participation of
women in electoral process. He further said that the PTI government should have made efforts against the archaic and undesirable traditional system.

Sethi asked Achakzai whether the elections should be declared null and void without at least 10 percent women participation. Achakzai said KP Government should encourage women to use their voting right and for this purpose, it should utilize different methods.

Sethi asked Khalid whether declaring elections null and void without participation of women at certain percentage would help resolve the issue. Khalid said it would be helpful in increasing women's participation in the electoral process. She added that it would be a "positive move" and it would urge men to allow the women to vote. Khalid said the ordinance for holding the local bodies' elections was a "welcome move." Khalid said the elections would be non-party based and people would vote for individuals irrespective of their party affiliations.

To a question about possible alliance between JUI-F and PTI in the local bodies' elections, Abbasi said both the parties were strong opponents. He added that PPP and JUI-F never organized the local bodies' elections. He further said that PTI introduced village councils, which would manage funds at grass-roots level in KP. Abbasi said that the PML-N government had received money for two times for holding local bodies' elections in Punjab, but it did not hold elections and PTI deserved credit for holding them.

Achakzai said PTI leaders wanted to "bulldoze" the system by implementing their crazy ideas like village councils. He added that it was the Supreme Court, which ordered KP Government to hold elections and PTI deserved no credit for it.

In her concluding remarks, Sethi said the outcome of the upcoming local bodies' elections would be interesting.

Sethi concluded the programme.

Source: PTV News, Islamabad, in English 1505gmt 27 May 15
Wana, 1 June: Three persons including a political moharrar [official] was killed when his vehicle was attacked with remote control bomb blast in South Waziristan Agency's headquarter Wana here on Monday [1 June] morning.

According to political administration, the vehicle of Political Moharrar was ambushed near Khamarang area in South Waziristan Agency when he was coming to duty from home. As result, political moharrar Farooq Wazir, Nazir Muhammad and Zargai were killed on the spot.

Source: Associated Press of Pakistan news agency, Islamabad, in English 0714gmt 01 Jun 15

01/06/2015 Pakistan PM condemns bomb blast in South Waziristan tribal area

Text of report by official news agency Associated Press of Pakistan (APP)

Islamabad, 1 June: Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Monday [1 June] strongly condemned the bomb blast in South Waziristan on loss of precious lives. The prime minister in a message extended condolences to the bereaved families and expressed the government's resolve to eliminate terrorism and extremism from the country.

Source: Associated Press of Pakistan news agency, Islamabad, in English 0533gmt 01 Jun 15

29/05/2015 Highlights from Pakistani Ummat newspaper 29 May 15

Page 1: National, International Reports

Lead Story: All political parties approve China-Pakistan economic corridor. Government announces to start work on Western route this year. (pp 1, 7; 700 words)

Law-enforcement agencies round up 15 accused. (pp 1, 7; 100 words)
Iran patronizes Pakistani Shi'ite militants fighting in Syria. (pp 1, 7; 300 words)

Two terrorists killed in police encounter in Karachi. (pp 1, 7; 50 words)

Government writes to Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority to stop Axact's television channel from going on air. (pp 1, 7; 100 words)

Sindh Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah says Governor Ishrat-ul Ibad enjoys Prime Minister Sharif's support. (pp 1, 7; 200 words)

Speakers at functions marking anniversary of nuclear tests, say Pakistan going nuclear shattered Indian dreams. (pp 1, 7; 50 words)

Two Jamaat-e Islami workers gunned down in Swabi. (p 1; 50 words)

Former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Gen (ret) Ihsan asks government to ignore RAW's activities, focus on economic corridor project. (p 1; 50 words)

Corps Commander Lt Gen Naveed Mukhtar says Karachi will be turned into haven of peace. (pp 1, 7; 100 words)

Three hijackers executed in Karachi, Hyderabad prisons. (pp 1, 7; 200 words)

Page 2: Continuation of Reports From Pages 1, 8

Page 3: Feature Reports

Feature report by Wajih Ahmed Siddiqui quotes sources as saying government decided to keep PAT Chief Tahir-ul Qadri's protest within limits. (pp 3, 4; 1,000 words)

Feature report by Mansur Asghar Raja says lawyers to observe strike on every Monday against Daska incident. (pp 3, 4; 1,000 words)

Feature report by Saifullah Khalid claims Prime Minister Sharif ordered to conclude Karachi operation as early as possible. (pp 3, 4; 1,000 words)
Feature report by Mirza Abdul Quddus discusses efforts of Milli Yekjehti Council to resolve sectarian differences. (pp 3, 4; 1,000 words)

Page 4: Editorial, Lead Articles

Editorial hails political leadership for consensus approval of China-Pakistan economic corridor. (p 4; 800 words)

Article by Saud Sahir discusses chronology of campaign for finality of Prophet Mohammad. (pp 4, 5; 1,000 words)

Pages 5: Continuation of Reports From Other Pages

Page 6: Comes Towards Success

Page 6 has articles on Islamic teachings, principles.

Page 7: Continuation of Reports From Pages 1, 8

Page 8: National, International Reports

Pakistan, Belarus agree to expand cooperation in many sectors including defense. (pp 8, 2; 200 words)

Japanese Ambassador discusses matters of bilateral interest with army chief. (pp 8, 2; 50 words)

Accused of Daska incident shifted to Lahore for interrogation by JIT. (pp 8, 2; 50 words)

PTI Chief Imran Khan says local government elections to bring revolution in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. (pp 8, 2; 200 words)

Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali says Indian defense minister's statement sufficient to open eyes. (pp 8, 2; 50 words)

Foreign Office Spokesman Qazi Khalillah says India's involvement in terrorism established. (pp 8, 2; 200 words)

Jamaat-e Islami announces to hold protest against water shortage. (pp 8, 2; 100 words)

Supreme Court rejects reports submitted by four provinces about prisoners. (pp 8, 2; 50 words)

Source: Ummat, Karachi, in Urdu 29 May 15
Lead story: Twenty-one passengers killed, 25 kidnapped as 15-20 terrorists in FC uniforms attacks two Karachi-bound buses in Mastung. Seventy suspects apprehended in Quetta. (pp 1, 7; 400 words)

RAW may be involved in Mastung incident. (pp 1, 7; 50 words)

Attempt to prevent raid by customs intelligence at BOL media group offices in Karachi foiled. (pp 1, 7; 200 words)

Two PPP workers fall victims to target killings in Karachi. (pp 1, 7; 50 words)

General Officer Commanding Maj Gen Nadir Khan directs security agencies to ensure peace during local government elections. (pp 1, 7; 50 words)

Local government elections will be held in Khyber Pakhtunkhway today [30 May] amidst strict security. (pp 1, 7; 300 words)

Junior police officer killed in abortive suicide attack in Lahore. (pp 1, 7; 100 words)

Pakistan, Belarus execute agreements on cooperation in 20 sectors. (pp 1, 7; 100 words)

Feature report by Saifullah Khalid cites sources as saying India provided huge funds to Dr Allah Nazar to sabotage China-Pakistan economic corridor project. (pp 3, 4; 1,000 words)

Feature report by Wajih Ahmed Siddiqui predicts reshuffle of MQM leadership after Karachi operation. (pp 3, 4; 1,000 words)

Feature report by Mansur Asghar Raja analyzes en bloc resignations by Sialkot police officers. (pp 3, 4; 1,000 words)
Page 4: Editorial, Lead Articles

Editorial on suicide explosion at mosque in Damam city, urges government to play mediatory role between Saudi Arabia, Iran. (p 4; 600 words)

Editorial advises Indian government to avoid violence against Muslims, other minorities particularly in Kashmir. (p 4; 1,000 words)

Article by Saud Sahir on anniversary of Pakistan's nuclear tests, regrets conspiracies being hatched to pit Muslims under label of Islam. (p 4; 1,500 words)

Article by Prof Tariq Siddique pays homage to late MP Mohammad Aslam Mujahid. (pp 4, 5; 1,000 words)

Pages 5: Continuation of Reports From Other Pages

Page 6: Comes Towards Success

Page 6 has articles on Islamic teachings, principles.

Page 7: Continuation of Reports From Pages 1, 8

Page 8: National, International Reports

Rana Sanaullah appointed as Punjab law minister, Ayesha Ghaus as finance minister. (pp 8, 2; 50 words)

Canadian High Commissioner meets Secretary Defense Lt Gen (ret) Mohammad Alam Khattak; stresses expansion of bilateral defense cooperation. (pp 8, 2; 50 words)

Karachi anti-terrorism court expresses displeasure over delaying tricks of counsels of MQM terrorists. (pp 8, 2; 300 words)

Demonstrations held in Karachi against water shortage, worst power outages. (pp 8, 2; 100 words)

Prime Minister Sharif announces to launch low cost housing schemes. (pp 8, 2; 100 words)

Judicial commission on poll rigging summons former Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Najam Sethi, Anchor Hamid Mir as witnesses. (pp 8, 2; 200 words)
Police holds protest in Daska against violence by lawyers. (pp 8, 2; 100 words)

Naval Chief Admiral Zakaullah says oppressive mindset stabilizing in neighborhood. (pp8, 2; 200 words)

National Assembly's standing committee on defense calls for raising issue of Indian Defense Minister Manohar Parrikar's irresponsible statement in UN. (pp 8, 2; 50 words)

Source: Ummat, Karachi, in Urdu 30 May 15

30/06/2015 Programme summary of Pakistan's AVT Khyber News 1600 gmt 30 May 15

The following is a summary of the 1600 gmt bulletin consisting of news from Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), aired by Islamabad-based private Pakistani television news channel AVT Khyber News on 30 May 2015

A. News headlines

B. News in details

01. 0450 Voting for the local bodies' elections have finished amid tight security in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to reports, mismanagement was reported in most polling stations; thousands of citizens remained deprived of casting their votes; results of the elections will be officially announced on 7 June. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of polling stations.

02. 0612 The voting process for the local bodies' elections has ended in Peshawar. Live telephonic interview with Khyber News correspondent in Peshawar, Gul Hayan, he said Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf (PTI) won the election on 10 seats; Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won five seats; Awami National Party (ANP) won three seats. He added that 51 persons were injured when clashes erupted between political parties' workers during the election; mismanagement was reported. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of Hayan talking to Khyber News.

03. 1010 Commercials

04. 1340 At least 19 persons were killed and 50 injured in firing incidents during election in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of polling stations and hospitals.
05. 1558 Mismanagement was reported in the election due to lack of security. Live telephonic interview with Controller Khyber News, Ayaz Khan, he said that districts administrations failed to complete arrangements for the elections; incidents occurred due to lack of security; political interference was also reported. Live telephonic interview on still photo of Khan.

06. 2218 Commercials

07. 2605 Live telephonic interview over Khyber Pakhtunkhwa local bodies' election; Inayat Ullah said that holding local bodies' election was their first experience and will hold re-election where rigging or mismanagement was reported; government will take notice. Live telephonic interview on still photo of Ullah.

08. 2940 Rigging was reported in women's polling stations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Report of Khyber News correspondent in Peshawar Wadud; a woman who was interviewed said votes were purchased in polling stations; rigging was reported. Report on video showing footage of a woman talking to media.

09. 3238 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Pervez Khattak said that he is not satisfied with the performance of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). He added that ECP is responsible for the mismanagement during the election. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of the minister talking to Khyber News.

10. 3345 The process of voting has been completed in Swat; counting of votes is underway; according to unofficial reports; PML-N won the district and Tehsil seats. Video showing footage of polling stations.

11. 3731 Awami National Party (ANP) followed by PTI and JUI won most of the seats in the election in Mardan; counting of votes is underway. Live telephonic interview with Khyber News correspondent in Mardan.

12. 4230 Several persons were injured during election in Charsadda due to lack of security. Live phone-in with Khyber News correspondent in Charsadda, Alif Khan Sherpao.

13. 4508 Commercials

14. 5032 Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif expressed concern over the kidnapping and killing of bus passengers in Mastung, Balochistan Province. The PM called an all-party meeting over the incident. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of Sharif.
15. 5726 Sharif met Chief of Army Staff Raheel Sharif and discussed the internal and external security situation in the country. Sharif expressed determination to collectively defeat all designs of the enemies and make Pakistan a secure and affluent country. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of the meeting.

[End of bulletin]

Duration: 59 minutes

Source: AVT Khyber TV, Islamabad, in Pashto 1600gmt 30 Jun 15

31/05/2015 Programme summary of Pakistan's AVT Khyber News 1200 gmt 31 May 15

The following is a summary of the 1200 gmt bulletin consisting of news from Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), aired by Islamabad-based private Pakistani television news channel AVT Khyber News on 31 May 2015

A. News headlines

B. News in details

01. 3330 The Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) of North Waziristan have asked the government to repatriate them before the month of Ramadan. Live phone-in with Khyber News correspondent in North Waziristan, Noor Behram; he said that IDPs face multiple problems in camps; the government has stopped providing them food for the last three months; the Pakistan Army had cleared the region from terrorists; government should immediately repatriate the IDPs. Live interview on still photo of Behram.

02. 4014 Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) chief Sirajul Haj held a gathering in Jamrud area of Khyber Agency. Live phone-in with Khyber News correspondent in Jamrud, Yaqoob Afridi; addressing a gathering, Sirajul Haq said the tribesmen were badly affected due to militancy for the last decade; they are deprived of their basic rights; tribesmen should unite and raise voice for their rights; government should repatriate the IDPs and provide them health and education facilities. Live phone-in on still photo of Afridi.

03. 4713 Female students face problems in Khalimzai Middle School in Mohmand Agency. Live phone-in with Khyber News correspondent in Mohmand Agency, Fakhre-e-Alam; he said that
four posts of teachers remained vacant in the school; no other basic facilities such as electricity and proper places for sitting in the school were available. Alam added that at least 130 schools have been destroyed due to militancy in the region; no reconstruction work has yet been started on it. Live interview on still photo of Alam.

04. 5426 Tribal elders of Lower Orakzai Agency have urged the government to hold local bodies’ election in FATA. They said it is the only way to solve problems of poor people of FATA. Report on video showing footage of tribesmen.

[End of bulletin]

Duration: 57 minutes

Source: AVT Khyber TV, Islamabad, in Pashto 1200gmt 31 May 15

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01/06/2015 **Polish company explores gas in Pakistan**

*Text of report by official news agency Associated Press of Pakistan (APP)*

Islamabad, 1 June: Polish Oil and Gas Company Pakistan (PGNiG) has discovered gas in Kirthar block located 52 km from Dadu city while drilling and testing of Rizq-1 Exploratory Well. According to a statement issued here on Monday [1 June], besides PGNiG, Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) is also having thirty percent working interest in the block.

Rizq-1 well was spudded on 10 October 2014 and drilled up to total depth of 3173 metres. On the basis of evaluation made through electric logs, geological and drilling data, the production testing was undertaken on 12 May 2015. During initial testing Rizq-1 well could not produce commercial volume of gas, however it delivered up to 10.7 MMSCFD Gas from Pab formation of Cretaceous age. Kirthar block Joint Venture will shortly commence the process of preparing evaluation work programme which would be implemented for the purpose of declaring commercial discovery over the Rizq discovery area.

The joint venture intends to fast track the development of this discovery which besides providing cash flow to the joint venture would also result in substantial payments to the government by way of statutory payments including royalty and taxes.
It is worth mentioning here that this is the second discovery in the block, first being Rehman discovery made in year 2012.

Additional, PGNiG has been active in Pakistan since 1997 and Kirthar JV has so far invested approximately 108m dollars in Pakistan which includes Rehman-1 and Rizq-1 exploratory wells and seismic acquisition in Kirthar Concession.

The present success in Kirthar block would trigger more investment in petroleum exploration and development in Pakistan.

Source: Associated Press of Pakistan news agency, Islamabad, in English 1057gmt 01 Jun 15

01/06/2015 **Pakistan union to hold sit-ins in support of Bol TV journalists**

*Text of report by Pakistani newspaper Dawn website on 1 June*

Lahore: The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists headed by Rana Azeem has decided to hold protest rallies and sit-ins from Monday [1 June] to demand withdrawal of restrictions on Bol TV channel.

It also demanded withdrawal of a letter issued by Information Minister Senator Pervaiz Rashid to the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority for the cancellation of Bol channel's licence.

It also decided to play an effective role for protecting jobs of journalists employed by the channel.

Source: *Dawn website, Karachi, in English 01 Jun 15*

01/06/2015 **Pakistan probe official says evidence collected in Axact fake degree scam**

*Text of report by Pakistani newspaper Dawn website on 1 June*

Karachi: Shahid Hayat Khan, the Federal Investigation Agency's Sindh Director, claimed on Sunday [31 May] that sufficient evidence had been collected against an information technology firm involved in a fake degree scam.
"We have got sufficient evidence to prove the wrongdoings of software company Axact in a court," he said at a press conference at his office and later talking to Dawn.

"With the help of forensic team and internal email system of Axact, we have collected proofs," he said.

The official revealed that some people associated with the company had also provided evidence to the investigators.

He said that investigators had got information about the whole system of the software company, such as how a university was conceived, its name, approval, domain, picture and website were prepared and how degrees were issued to students.

Mr Hayat said record of directives issued by the company to the people concerned had also been seized along with degrees.

He said the degrees were being printed in rented places and the rent agreement between Axact and the building's owner had been acquired. He said the printing press had also been seized along with directives of the company for printing the degrees.

The FIA's director said that investigation would likely be completed within the 17 days given by a court.

Source: Dawn website, Karachi, in English 01 Jun 15
Battagram, Haripur, Swat, Kohat and Malakand. The party has also won 18 seats in the Abbottabad district council against 20 bagged by the PML-N and seven by independents.

The PTI is leading in Swat but it also faced some reverses. Of the total 67 seats, it won 24, followed by the PML-N 21 and the ANP eight.

ANP regains some of its lost ground, dominates in Swabi, Toorghar and Charsadda During the last general elections, the PTI had won five of the seven provincial assembly seats, with one seat each bagged by the PML-N and the ANP.

Observers believe that former federal minister Amir Muqam's vigorous campaigning in Swat and his native Shangla district where PML-N is leading in 13 of the 28 seats is a factor behind the party's improved performance there.

In Peshawar, the PTI which had won 10 of the 11 provincial seats is leading with 32 of the 92 seats and officials said its tally might increase to around 45 because it was leading in so far undecided councils.

Jamaat-i-Islami, an ally of the PTI in the KP government, has won 11 seats in the provincial capital.

In Haripur, where the PML-N was once quite strong, the PTI secured 17 of the 45 seats. Twenty independent candidates were elected.

The ANP, considered an underdog after its defeat in the 2013 general elections, improved its position in its former strongholds of Swabi, Charsadda and Mardan. In Swabi, the party moved ahead of the ruling PTI and its ally Awami Jamhori Ittehad Pakistan (AJIP) by bagging 23 of the 56 district council seats. The PTI and AJIP secured six seats each.

The ANP had not won a single seat in Swabi in the 2013 elections.

Interestingly, KP's senior minister Shehram Tarakai of the AJIP was embarrassed by the defeat of his uncle Iqbal Biland by an ANP candidate in his native union council/ward.

Similarly, in Charsadda where the ANP had suffered a humiliating defeat in the 2013 general elections, it secured 13 of the 49 seats, trailed by the PTI and Qaumi Watan Party of Aftab Sherpao with nine seats each. Maulana Fazlur Rehman's JUI-F won seven seats in the district.
In Mardan district, the ANP won 22 of the 75 seats and the PTI 23. The result is embarrassing for the PTI because it has at present six of the eight MPAs from Mardan.

The JUI-F is leading in Hangu, Lakki Marwat, Chitral and Bannu districts, whereas in its strongholds of D.I. Khan and Tank, it is trailing the PTI. The JUI-F has secured seven of the 24 seats in Chitral, where the All Pakistan Muslim League of Gen Pervez Musharraf has won two seats. The PTI and JI have bagged five and six seats, respectively.

Source: Dawn website, Karachi, in English 01 Jun 15

31/05/2015 **Programme summary of Pakistan’s AVT Khyber News 1600 gmt 31 May 15**

The following is a summary of the 1600 gmt bulletin consisting of news from Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), aired by Islamabad-based private Pakistani television news channel AVT Khyber News on 31 May 2015

A. News headlines

B. News in details

01. 0450 Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf (PTI) won most of the district and subdivision seats in the local government elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Successful candidates are celebrating their victory; official results of the election will be announced on 7 June. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of celebrations.

02. 0626 Unknown militants opened fire on a PTI rally in Nowshera when they were celebrating their victory after the elections. Report of Khyber News correspondent in Nowshera, Pervez Khan; he said the incident was occurred in Pabbi; a police complaint was lodged against Awami National Party (ANP) NP senior leader Iftikhar Hussain; the court handed over Iftikhar on a one-day physical remand to the police. Hussain who was interviewed said the PTI lodged a police complaint against him without any reason; he termed it a political revenge. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of police and Hussain.

03. 1008 Commercials

04. 1058 Live telephonic interview with ANP senior leader Asfandyar Wali Khan; he said Iftikhar Hussain was arrested without any proof
against him; he also termed it a political revenge. Khan also alleged that rigging was reported in local bodies' elections in the province. Live telephonic interview on still photo of Hussain.

05. 1645 PTI chief Imran Khan said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial government had no role in the arrest of Hussain. Addressing a press conference, he added that neither had the government ordered his arrest nor had the police been asked to withdraw a case against Hussain. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of Khan talking to media.

06. 1808 Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan's People Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari, Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam Fazl-ur Rahman group (JUI-F) chief Fazl-ur Rahman and Information Minister Pervez Rashid expressed concern over arrest of ANP leader Iftikhar Hussain. Presenter-read report on video showing archive footage of the political leaders.

07. 2236 Commercials

08. 2335 Zardari and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) Chief Altaf Hussain expressed reservations over local body elections held in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They said rigging was reported in the election; women were barred from casting their votes; government should declare the election results null and void. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of Zardari and Hussain.

09. 2635 The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) took notice of the mismanagement in the local bodies' election in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The ECP said it received complaints that women were barred from casting their votes; strict action will be taken against those involved. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of the ECP.

10. 2738 According to reports, more clashes during the election were reported in Peshawar and Bannu; several polling stations remained closed; women were barred from casting their votes. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of polling stations.

11. 2828 Peshawar police claimed to have arrested 200 persons for violating code of conduct during the election; weapons were also recovered from their possessions. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of police.

12. 2945 A strike is being observed in Quetta against Mastung incident, which left as many as 22 passengers killed in Khadkocha area by gunmen. The Balochistan provincial chief called an all-party
meeting over the incident. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of closed markets.

13. 3109 A trade association has staged a protest demonstration against Mastung incident in Quetta; raised anti-government slogans; demanded the government to arrest the militants involved in the attack and punish them. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of protesters.

14. 3326 The government has announced a 3 rupee-per-litre increase in prices of petroleum products. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of petrol pumps.

15. 3446 Commercials

16. 3541 The federal government has approved special development funds for different projects in different parts of the country. It approved one billion rupees for Katchi Canal Phase-1 project and two billion rupees for Greenline Bus project in Karachi. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of Finance Minister Ishaq Dar talking to media.

17. 3716 Foreign Secretary Aizaz Chaudhry left Islamabad for Washington to lead a high-level Pakistani delegation at a Pak-US strategic dialogue commencing from 2 June in the United States. The third round of strategic dialogue will review progress made in various areas of cooperation including arms control, international security, defence, science and technology. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesperson talking to media.

18. 3823 Adviser to Prime Minister on National Affairs Sartaj Aziz said that Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear power "smashed India's dreams". These views were expressed while addressing a gathering of Nazria Pakistan Council in Islamabad; he added that India is creating hurdles to sabotage the Pak-China Economic Corridor; Pakistan's enemies would not succeed in its designs. Presenter-read report on video showing footage of Aziz addressing a gathering.

19. 4325 PTI won most of the district and subdivision seats in Swat. Video shows footage of polling stations

20. 4723 Commercials

21. 4804 PTI won most of the district and subdivision seats in Peshawar. Video shows footage of polling stations.
22. 5248 A third one-day cricket match between Pakistan and Zimbabwe was delayed due to rain in Qaddafi Stadium, Lahore. Presenter-read report.

[End of bulletin]

Duration: 58 minutes

Source: AVT Khyber TV, Islamabad, in Pashto 1600gmt 31 May 15

02/06/2015 **US drone strikes kill four suspected militants in Pakistan's North Waziristan**

*Text of report published by Pakistani newspaper Dawn website on 2 Jun*

Peshawar: At least four suspected militants were killed when a US drone targeted a vehicle in Shawal Tehsil of North Waziristan Agency, near the Afghan border, late on Monday [1 June].

According to intelligence sources two missiles were fired by the unmanned aircraft which hit the vehicle, destroying it completely. They further said that several drones were reportedly flying over the border of North and South Waziristan Agency in Shawal valley since evening.

About the possible targets hit in the strike, the sources said that information is being collected but the identity of suspected militants is yet to be ascertained.

Dattakhel and Shawal are by far the two major areas where the military is concentrating on air power to soften up the area infested by local and foreign militants.

North Waziristan is among Pakistan's seven tribal districts near the Afghan border which are rife with insurgents and are alleged to be strongholds of Taliban and Al-Qa'idah operatives, among others.

Drone attacks are widely unpopular across Pakistan and according to survey conducted in June last year, 66 per cent of the country's citizens oppose these strikes.

*Source: Dawn website, Karachi, in English 02 Jun 15*
01/06/2015 Programme summary of Pakistan's AVT Khyber News 1200 gmt 1 Jun 15

The following is a summary of the 1200 gmt bulletin consisting of news from Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), aired by Islamabad-based private Pakistani television news channel AVT Khyber News on 1 June 2015

A. News Headlines

B. News in details

1. 3722 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) of North Waziristan are facing multiple problems in camps. Live telephonic interview with Khyber News correspondent in North Waziristan, Gohar Wazir; he said the IDPs are deprived of electricity and water; diseases breaking out in children; hot weather adding to their miseries; no government assistance; lack of facilities. IDPs have asked the government to repatriate them immediately. Live telephonic interview on still photo of Wazir.

2. 4249 Three persons killed and two injured in Wanna area of South Waziristan. Live telephonic interview with Khyber News correspondent in South Waiziristan, Dilawar Wazir, who said a roadside bomb targeted a vehicle of the political administration; three government employees were killed and two injured; soon after the incident, security forces cordoned off the area and started a search operation. Live telephonic interview on still photo of Wazir.

3. 4859 A sports event was held in Lower Orakzai Agency; 1,600 players of FATA participated in cricket, football and volleyball. Video showing footage of sports event.

4. 5408 National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) mobile teams reached Barkamber Khel area of Khyber Agency. Live telephonic interview with Khyber News correspondent in Khyber Agency, Farooq Afridi; he said that after the Khyber News report, the NADRA mobile teams reached the area; the teams issued National Identity Cards (NIC) to locals; residents expressed happiness; thanked Khyber News for raising the issue.

[End of bulletin]

Duration: 29 minutes

Source: AVT Khyber TV, Islamabad, in Pashto 1200gmt 01 Jun 15
CENTRAL AFRICA ROUNDUP

30 APRIL – 7 MAY 2015
Future of Central African Republic at stake as long-awaited peace forum opens

HIGHLIGHTS

- Bangui forum opens in CAR
- Outrage over French abuse claims in CAR
- Beheadings raise fears of ethnic violence in DR Congo
- Congo bans Muslim face veil over security fears
- Donors offer Chad financial aid for Boko Haram fight

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

“Last chance” peace forum opens in Bangui

The long-awaited national peace forum opened in Bangui on 4 May with hopes of finding a deal to restore stability to the shattered country, but overshadowed by the decision of some militias to boycott it.

Some 600 delegates are attending the week-long forum aimed at discussing and agreeing on the disarmament and demobilization of combatants, as well as the organization of elections later this year.

CAR’s conflict has been mainly between Muslim ex-Seleka and Christian Anti-Balaka militias, but is now complicated by further factionalisation. Some factions have committed to a ceasefire, but violence persists in parts of the country.

At the last minute, the National Convergence party of former President Francois Bozize announced on 4 May that it was boycotting the talks, despite earlier stating it would attend.

“It is a sham dialogue,” party official Bea Bertin said. “No reconciliation can be achieved by sidelining the main players in this crisis.”

An ex-Seleka faction, the Popular Front for the Renaissance of CAR, also said it was boycotting the meeting after its second deputy chairman Mahamat Ousman was arrested. In a statement issued on 2 May, the group accused transitional President Catherine Samba-Panza of lacking the
political will to facilitate a national inclusive peace forum.

A group of 22 parties attending the meeting has called on Samba-Panza to step down at the end of the transitional period in August. The transitional leader has been accused in some quarters of wanting to hang on to power. The peace forum is seen as a last chance for peace in the country.

Meanwhile, UNICEF announced on 5 May that leaders of eight armed groups in the country had agreed to release between 6,000 and 10,000 child soldiers, a significant milestone towards ending the war in which thousands of children played a central role.

**Outrage against French abuse claims**

Local media have echoed national outrage against allegations that French troops in the Central African Republic sexually abused children in exchange for food.

A confidential report leaked by a UN official and covered widely by French media said French Sangaris troops sexually abused children, some as young as nine, at a camp for displaced people in the capital Bangui.

The abuses reportedly took place between December 2013 and June 2014 at the height of the violence in the CAR when France intervened militarily. Three Chadian and two Equatorial Guinean soldiers who are part of the UN mission in the country are also accused.

The private Hirondelle newspaper on 4 May criticised French society. In an editorial entitled, "The Oversized Libido of French Soldiers", the newspaper said the allegations "perhaps explain why thousands of French youths are joining jihadist groups".

Another private newspaper, Centrafic Matin, said French troops had "gone below moral standards and carried out serial rape in the CAR". It called for the trial and execution of the soldiers, thought to number 14.

Local media have echoed national outrage at allegations that French troops in the Central African Republic sexually abused children.

Mpoko airport camp, where the alleged abuses took place, still hosts tens of thousands of displaced people.

The allegations are deeply damaging to France which has maintained close ties with its former African colonies, with recent military interventions in Cote d’Ivoire and Mali.

France has pledged transparency in the investigation, but the case will refocus the spotlight on cases of international soldiers abusing local people instead of helping to restore order.
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Beheadings threaten to spark ethnic violence

The beheading of five farmers in eastern DR Congo has sparked riots that threaten to escalate into ethnic violence.

The five, killed on the night of 28 April in the Rutshuru area of Nord Kivu province, are said to be from the Nande ethnic group. The murders have been blamed on Nyatura, a Hutu rebel group operating in the area.

Residents demonstrated and torched the house of a suspected Hutu commander on 29 April. Three people were killed in the ensuing violence.

UN-run Radio Okapi said on 30 April that the farmers’ deaths pushed to over 30 the number of people killed in their farms with machetes, firearms or axes since the beginning of this year.

Eastern DR Congo shares a similar ethnic makeup with Rwanda and Burundi. With strong protests underway in neighbouring Burundi against the third term bid of President Nkurunziza, there are fears the Great Lakes region could once again be plunged into destabilising unrest.

MONUSCO promises offensive after rebel attack

The UN mission in DR Congo (MONUSCO) has promised a “robust offensive operation” against Islamist rebels who killed two peacekeepers and injured 13 in an ambush on 5 May.

The Tanzanian soldiers were killed in Beni, Nord-Kivu in an ambush by suspected Allied Democratic Forces-National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU) rebels.

“Along with the documented 15 casualties, another four ‘blue helmets’ – all from the United Republic of Tanzania – are reported missing,” the UN said in a statement.
**REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

**Government bans Muslim face veil over security fears**

The Congolese authorities have banned Muslim women from wearing the full face veil in public, citing security reasons.

The order came as some of the country's neighbours, particularly the Central African Republic, continued to be affected by religiously motivated violence which has forced the flight of Muslim populations.

The order was communicated to Bopaka on 23 April by Congolese Interior Minister Zephirin Mboulou.

The government has also vowed to “reinforce control” in mosques and prohibited sleeping in the buildings. The ban appears aimed at refugees, mainly from the CAR.

Officially Congo is a secular state, but Christians – mainly Catholics – form the majority. Muslims account for about 800,000 of the country's five million population.

**Parties consolidate opposition to president's third-term bid**

Congolese opposition parties have formed an umbrella group to officially oppose moves by allies of President Denis Sassou-Nguesso to amend the constitution which would allow him to stand for a third term next year.

Known as the Republican Front for the Respect of Constitutional Order and Democratic Change (FROCAD), the organization brings together political parties and associations whose leaders have rejected the amendment.

The president is serving his second and final term, but supporters – led by his Congolese Labour Party (PCT) - want to extend his mandate, a development that has sparked protests from the political opposition and civil society organisations.

FROCAD has demanded the organization of “free and fair” elections. One of its officials Clement Mierassa noted on 3 May that as "Sassou-Nguesso exercises his second and final
term, we have an obligation to prepare his exit through the front door on 12 August 2016”.

**CHAD**

**Donors pledge financial aid for Boko Haram fight**

The EU has pledged to support Chad in the fight against the Nigerian Islamist group Boko Haram.

The assistance was promised by Nick Westcott, the director-general for Africa in the European External Action Service, during a meeting with President Idriss Deby on 30 April.

“‘We have an agreement on financial assistance to the Chadian government to address the difficult current situation. We have also planned to support the multinational force [fighting Boko Haram],’” Westcott said in remarks published by the Chadian Alwihdainfo website.

Since January, Chad has become the main player in the fight against the Nigerian militants. The creation of the regional alliance has shrunk the territories held by Boko Haram. Chad is also a key ally of the West in other counter-terrorism campaigns in the Sahel, especially in Mali.

The pledge by the EU came two days after the IMF said that Chad had completed the necessary steps for relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, paving the way for US$1.1 billion worth of aid.

The West remains a strong supporter of Chadian President Idriss Deby

The financial support to Deby by Western institutions comes at a time when local media are reporting the purchase of dozens of anti-riot vehicles and equipment by the Chadian authorities.

According to Alwihdainfo, the police acquired 50 vehicles for transport and water cannon and “a considerable amount” of other anti-riot gear which has “stepped up” the operational capacity of the force.

Political tensions continue to rise in the country after the president delayed this year’s legislative elections and extended parliament’s mandate.

There are also concerns over the health of Deby who has ruled Chad since November 1990.
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BBC Monitoring Marketing
marketing@mon.bbc.co.uk

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BBC Monitoring
Caversham Park
Reading RG4 8TZ
+44 (0) 1189 486 289
bbc.co.uk/monitoring
Media Guide - Morocco
Key Findings

- The state dominates the domestic TV sector
- Pan-Arab and foreign TVs are widely watched
- There is a lively private radio scene
- State-funded newspapers compete with dozens of privately-owned titles
- Despite press freedom guarantees, media do not cross red lines regarding taboo subjects
- Around 60 per cent of Moroccans are online
- Facebook is the top social network
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8. **Media in Western Sahara**
1. Introduction

The Moroccan media did not undergo the dramatic changes precipitated in some other North African countries by the 2011 Arab Spring.

After sporadic pro-democracy protests, King Mohammed VI announced constitutional reforms which were approved by a public referendum in July 2011.

The reforms guarantee press freedom. But legislation remains in place which restricts freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and association.

Self-censorship is commonplace. The monarchy and Islam are taboo subjects for the media, as are challenges to Morocco’s claim over the disputed Western Sahara (see Section 8 of this guide for an overview of the territory’s media).

Morocco has a large number of privately-owned radio stations and newspapers.

The state remains the main player in the TV sector. There are no restrictions on watching pan-Arab and other foreign-based networks.

Morocco has one of the highest internet penetration rates on the African continent. More than half the population has access.
2. Media overview

2.1 REGULATION

The High Authority of Audiovisual Communication (HACA - Haute Autorite de la Communication Audiovisuelle, www.haca.ma) regulates the audiovisual media, issues broadcasting licences and ensures compliance with the laws and "values" of the kingdom.

The 2002 establishment of the HACA was part of reforms that ended the state’s monopoly of broadcasting.

The HACA is composed of two complementary structures:

1. The Higher Council of Audiovisual Communication (CSCA - Conseil Supérieur de la Communication Audiovisuelle), a decision-making body.

2. The General Directorate of Audiovisual Communication (DGCA - Direction Générale de la Communication Audiovisuelle), responsible for day-to-day monitoring of broadcasting services and implementing the CSCA’s decisions.

The king appoints the chairman and four of the HACA’s eight board members. Two others are appointed by the prime minister. The remaining two are named by the Speaker of the Chamber of Representatives (lower house of parliament) and the Speaker of the Chamber of Counsellors (the upper house).

2.2 OWNERSHIP

Although the state monopoly of the broadcast media officially ended in 2002, earlier partial liberalization had allowed limited private investment in radio (Medi 1, established in 1980) and television (2M TV in 1989).

With the exception of the partially state-owned 2M TV and Medi 1 TV - which exercise self-censorship and are seen as semi-official outlets - all other television channels based in the country are entirely state-owned.

Since the late 1990s, dozens of privately-owned newspapers have been established. Most traditional political parties publish their own newspapers, in Arabic and French.
3. Media freedom

In its 2015 World Press Freedom Index, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) ranks Morocco 130th among 180 countries.

This is a six-place improvement on 2014. But RSF says freedom of information is still constrained in practice by the red lines forbidding coverage of the monarchy, Islam and Western Sahara and by the criminalization of blasphemy.

RSF says the authorities have stopped some journalists from tackling sensitive issues. It cites the deportation in February 2015 of Jean Louis Perez and Pierre Chautard, journalists from France 3 TV who were investigating the impact of the 2011 protests which led the king to pass key powers to parliament.

US NGO Freedom House’s 2015 Freedom of the Press report says the private press has significant freedom to report on economic or social policy, but the authorities use “restrictive press laws and an array of financial and other more subtle mechanisms” to punish critical journalists, particularly when the focus is on monarchy, Islam and Western Sahara.

Freedom House has said the state “dominates” the broadcast media. Private radios are largely prohibited from airing political programming and self-censorship is widespread.

Under the 2002 press law, the government has the right to close any publication “prejudicial to Islam, the monarchy, territorial integrity, or public order”. The law also provides for prison sentences and heavy fines for the publication of offensive content.

In late 2014, the government unveiled three draft bills – on press and publishing, the status of journalists, and the formation of a National Press Council.

The draft legislation provides for the scrapping of prison sentences for media offences and contains provisions for the confidentiality of journalists’ sources. The proposed National Press Council would institute a system of “mediation and arbitration” for the sector, says the communications minister.

RSF says some provisions need to be overhauled, especially those on procedures for seizing publications and closing websites. The watchdog regrets that the usual editorial red lines are unaffected by the draft laws.

3.1 INTERNET FREEDOM

The state does not routinely filter online content, although this was relatively commonplace before 2011. The government does not generally block Web 2.0 applications, anonymous proxy tools or Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services.

Sites related to Western Sahara, the Amazigh minority or Islamist groups are no longer blocked. Social networks including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are freely available.

While web blocking is not widely practised, the targeting of online contributors may have contributed to a climate of self-censorship.

In 2013, the head of news website lakome.com, Ali Anouzla, was arrested over an article which included an indirect link to an Al-Qaeda video.

Also in 2012, a student, Abdelssamed Haidour, was given a prison sentence for criticizing the king in a video posted on YouTube.
4. Key personalities

Abdelmouneim Dilami is chairman of Eco-media group and the owner of the Casablanca-based Arabic-language daily newspaper Assabah (Morning) and French-language economic daily L’Économiste. He is the chairman of the Moroccan Federation of Newspapers’ Editors (FMEP) and vice-chairman of the Paris-based International Union of Francophone Press (UFP). Dilami holds a 29 per cent share in Radio Atlantic, of which he is chairman and managing director.

Uthman al-Umayri is a Saudi businessman and owner of the Maroc Soir media group. He is a former editor-in-chief of the London-based pan-Arab newspaper Al-Sharq al-Awsat and the current owner of the online liberal newspaper Elaph - www.elaph.com. Elaph was launched in 2001 and was registered in the UK in 2006 after it was banned in Saudi Arabia.

Fatima Baroudi is director of news at the state-owned broadcaster SNRT and a presenter of programmes including “Exclusive Interview” (Liqa Khas) and “Youths in the Forefront” (Shabab fi al-Wajjah).

Mustapha Alaoui is known for his “Dialogue” (Hiwar) programme on SNRT’s Al Aoula (Channel One) TV and for covering royal news on the channel.

Abderrahmane Adoui is the owner of Radio Plus and presenter of “Issues and Views” (Qadaya wa Ara) on Channel One TV.

Rachid Nini is a former director of the prominent daily newspaper Al-Massaie. He is known for his critical newspaper column “Shuf Tshuf” (See and You Will See) which has sometimes landed him in hot water. In 2011 he was given a one-year prison sentence for “undermining a judicial ruling” and reporting on "untrue criminal offences". He founded Al-Akhbar newspaper in 2012 and resumed his daily Shuf Tshuf column.

Younes Moujahid is a member of the Socialist Union of the Popular Forces (USFP) national council and senior vice-president of the Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). Until June 2014, he was chairman of the National Union of the Moroccan Press (SNPM). He was replaced by Abdellah Bakkali from the Istiqlal Party (PI).
5. Broadcasting

The state-owned Societe Nationale de Radiodiffusion et de Television (SNRT - National Company for Radio and Television) operates several TV and radio channels. Website: www.snrt.ma

The SNRT is often referred to by its previous name, Radiodiffusion-Television Marocaine (RTM).

The SNRT chairman is Faycal Laraichi, its managing director is Mohamed Ayad and director of news is Fatima Baroudi.

Privately-owned stations are licensed by the HACA regulatory body (see "Media regulation" section).

5.1 TELEVISION

Foreign satellite TV stations are popular and many Moroccan households have a satellite dish, giving access to French and pan-Arab stations.

State TVs carry news, locally-made comedy and entertainment, and foreign-made soap operas.

5.1.1 State TV

SNRT operates the following services. All of them (except Al Maghribia and Aflam) are available on terrestrial (analogue and digital), satellite and ADSL transmission platforms.

Al Aoula (Channel 1), formerly Television Marocaine (TVM), is a general entertainment and news channel. It broadcasts political, social and economic programmes. News bulletins are in Arabic, French, Spanish and Tamazight.

(Note: 2M TV - see below - is also known as Channel 2.)

Arradia (Channel 3) focuses on sports, domestic and international.

Arrabia (Channel 4) focuses on education and culture. It is also referred to as the "culture channel".

Al Maghribia (Channel 5) is a satellite-only service aimed at Moroccans abroad and foreign audiences. It rebroadcasts material from Al Aoula and 2M TV.

Assadissa (Channel 6), or the Mohammed VI channel for the Holy Koran, focuses on Islam and the Koran. It carries news, and documentaries and debates about religion.

Aflam TV (Channel 7) shows foreign and domestic drama series. It is only available via digital terrestrial TV (DTT, known in Morocco as TNT - Television Numerique Terrestre).

Tamtazight TV (Channel 8) was launched in 2010 to promote the Amazigh language and culture. It broadcasts 80 per cent of its programmes in Tamazight.

Laayoune TV is a regional service for Western Sahara (what the SNRT, using the official terminology, refers to as Morocco’s "southern provinces"). It was launched in 2004 and carries news, political, religious and sports programmes.

5.1.2 Other TVs

2M TV (Deuxieme), 60-per cent state owned, is a leading general entertainment and educational channel. Based in Casablanca, it was set up in 1989. Around 20 per cent of 2M is owned by the National Investment Company (SNI), a
private holding company controlled by the royal family.

**Medi 1 TV.** 80-per cent owned by the state pension fund (CDG), was launched in 2006. It broadcasts in Arabic and French from the northern city of Tangier.

### 5.2 RADIO

A 2002 decree ended the state’s monopoly of radio broadcasting.

By August 2014, Morocco had 17 state-owned radio channels and a similar number of operational private radio stations.

Radio stations are divided into two categories: multi-regional and regional. Multi-regional channels broadcast to a number of provinces using multiple frequencies, while regional stations broadcast to a single province.

There have been no new entrants to the radio scene since 2011.

#### 5.2.1 State radio

**SNRT operates the following services:**

**Moroccan National Radio (Radio National Marocaine - Al Idaa Al Watania)** is Casablanca-based and is the main national service in Arabic, offering news, information and entertainment.

**Chaine Inter** which broadcasts mainly in French, launched in 2009 with a more contemporary style of news, cultural and music programming. It is based in Casablanca and aims to portray an open and modern Morocco. Some programmes are in English and Spanish.

**Mohammed VI Radio of the Holy Koran (Radio Mohammed VI du Saint Coran)** promotes Islamic values according to the Maliki School of Islam. It was inaugurated by King Mohammed VI in 2004.

**Radio Amazigh (Al Idaa Al Amazighia)** is a general entertainment service that promotes the Amazigh culture, based in Casablanca.

**Regional SNRT radios** operate in 13 locations: Agadir, Casablanca, Dakhla, El Hoceima, Fes, Laayoune, Marrakech, Meknes, Ouarzazate, Oujda, Rabat, Tangier and Tetouan.

#### 5.2.2 Private radio

**Medi 1** (also known as Radio Mediterranee Internationale) broke the state radio monopoly when it was launched in 1980. Based in Tangier, it has joint Moroccan-French ownership and broadcasts to a pan-Maghreb audience in both Arabic and French on longwave and shortwave, and within Morocco on a nationwide FM network. It also has FM relays in France and Belgium. Website: www.medi1.com

**Atlas MFM Radio** is a local station based in Marrakech.

**Radio Aswat (Voices)** is a Casablanca-based nationwide entertainment radio station which began broadcasting in 2007. It covers news, sports and social issues. Its slogan is "Listen and Enjoy".

**Cap Radio** is a multi-regional station based in Tangier. It covers the north, the Rif region and eastern provinces. The channel broadcasts in Tamazight and Moroccan dialect (a mixture of Arabic and Tamazight).

**Bizz FM Radio** is a multi-regional station focusing on economic affairs with studios in Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakech, Fes, Meknes and Agadir.

**Chada FM** is based in Casablanca and focuses on Moroccan culture and pop music.

**Eco Media Radio** is a multi-themed radio station focusing on the economy and finance, with studios in Rabat and Casablanca.
**Hit Radio Maroc** - launched in 2006 - is a multi-regional music station with studios in Rabat (its HQ), Casablanca and Marrakech.

**Radio Luxe** is based in Casablanca and broadcasts pop music and entertainment.

**Radio Plus** is based in the southern city of Agadir and broadcasts news, rock, pop and folk music.

**Maroc Music** is based in the central western city of El Jadida and broadcasts Arabic and world music.

**Radio 2M** is Casablanca-based, and was launched in 2004. It generally broadcasts music programmes.

**Medina FM** is a local station in Meknes, focusing on rural affairs.

**Radio Atlantic** was launched in 2006 and is based in Casablanca. Some 31 per cent of its capital is owned by Marie-Therese Bourrut, alias Nadia Salah, and 29 per cent by her husband, managing director Abdelmouneim Dilami, who is also the owner of the Moroccan newspapers *L’Economiste* and Arabic daily *Assabah*. Sixty per cent of its programmes, which are in Arabic and French, are on economic issues.

**Radio Mars** was launched in 2010 and is based in Casablanca. Most of its programmes - which are broadcast in Arabic, French and Tamazight - are dedicated to sports news.

### 5.2.3 Foreign radio

6. Press and news agency

Newspapers sell a combined total of 350,000 copies per day, compared with 1.3 million in neighbouring Algeria, says the Arab Press Network.

The number of privately-owned titles increased significantly after Mohammed VI became king in 1999.

There is a handful of pro-government and political party-affiliated newspapers and dozens of privately-owned dailies, publishing in Arabic and French.

The usual range of taboo issues applies to all newspapers, whether state-funded or private.

6.1 STATE-FUNDED PRESS

Le Matin (also known as Le Matin du Sahara et du Maghreb - www.lematin.ma) is a Casablanca-based French-language daily. It was founded in 1971 and belongs to the pro-government Maroc Soir group media company. In 2004, the group was acquired by Saudi businessman Uthman al-Umayri, a former editor-in-chief of London-based pan-Arab newspaper Al-Sharq al-Awsat and current owner of Elaph website.

Essahra al-Maghribia (Moroccan Sahara - www.almaghribia.ma) is a Casablanca-based Arabic-language version of Le Matin, launched in 1989. Its managing director and head of publication is Mohamed Djaouahiri and its chief editor is Ahmed Nechati.

Al-Anbaa (News - www.anbaanet.com) is a Casablanca-based Arabic-language weekly. Its publication director is Abdelbari Antar.

6.2 PRIVATELY-OWNED PRESS

Al-Alam (Flag - www.al-alam.ma) is a Rabat-based Arabic-language daily and the mouthpiece of the nationalist Istiqlal Party. Its managing director is Abdallah El Bakkali and its editor-in-chief is Omar Edderkouli.

L'Opinion (www.lopinion.ma) is a Rabat-based French-language mouthpiece of the Istiqlal Party. Founded in 1965, it focuses on political and economic news as well as social issues.

Al-Ittihad al-Ichtiraki (Socialist Union - www.alittihad.press.ma) is a Casablanca-based Arabic-language newspaper and the mouthpiece of the Socialist Union of the Popular Forces (USFP). Its director is Abdelhadi Khairat and its editor-in-chief is Abdelhamid Djamahiri.

Liberation, founded in 1964, is the French-language version of Al-Ittihad al-Ichtiraki, mouthpiece of the USFP.

Assabah (Morning - www.assabah.press.ma) is a Casablanca-based newspaper founded in 2000. Its owner and director of publication is Abdelmouneim Dilami and its editor-in-chief is Khaled El Hari.

L'Economiste (www.leconomiste.com) is a Casablanca-based French business daily, established in 1998 and directed by Abdelmouneim Dilami and his French wife Marie-Therese Bourrut. It specializes in economic and financial issues. It is the sister publication of the Arabic-language daily Assabah. Both papers are owned by Echo-Medias Group, a Moroccan company owned by King Mohammed VI and a group of French businessmen.

Rissalat al-Oumma (Message of the Nation) is a Casablanca-based Arabic-language daily and the mouthpiece of the Constitutional Union party (UC). Its director is Abdelaziz Moumni.

Al-Haraka (Movement) is the Rabat-based mouthpiece of the Popular Movement (MP). Its director is Ali Alaoui and its chief editor is Mohamed Machhouri.

Attajdid (Renewal - www.attajdid.ma) is a Rabat-based Arabic-language newspaper and the mouthpiece of the majority ruling Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD). Its editor-in-chief is Hassan Bouykhef.

Bayan al-Yaoume (Today’s Statement - www.bayanealyaoume.press.ma) is a Casablanca-based Arabic-language daily. Its head of publication is Mahtat Rakkas and editor-in-chief is Hocine Chabi.

Al Akhbar (News - www.alakhbar.press.ma) is an influential Casablanca-based Arabic-language daily. Its director is Rachid Nini.

Aujourd’hui le Maroc (www.aujourd'hui.ma) is a French-language daily founded in 2001 by Khalid Hachimi Idriss, the current editor of official news agency, Maghreb Arab Presse (MAP). It focuses on news, analysis, and investigative journalism.

L’Observateur du Maroc (www.lobserveurdumaroc.info) is a Casablanca-based French-language daily. It deals with political, economic, social and cultural issues as well as world news. Its head of publication is Ahmed Charai and editor-in-chief is Mohammed Zainabi.

6.3 WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Asdae (Echoes - www.asdae.com) is a Casablanca-based Arabic-language newspaper. It describes itself as independent and a newspaper for the elite. It deals mainly with political issues. Its director is Hassan Arbai and its editor-in-chief is Moulay Touhami Bahtat.

Al-Ayyam (Days) is a Casablanca-based privately-owned Arabic newspaper.

La Nouvelle Tribune (www.lanouvelletribune.com) is a Casablanca-based privately-owned French-language newspaper.

La Verite is a Casablanca-based French-language newspaper.

La Vie Eco (www.lavieeco.com) focuses on economic affairs and social and cultural issues.

MarocHebdo International (www.maroc-hebdo.press.ma) is a Casablanca-based privately-

**TelQuel** (As It Is - www.telquel-online.com) is an influential privately-owned weekly founded in 2001. It is anti-Islamist and critical of the government. Its Arabic version Nichane went out of business in 2010, following government pressure on companies to withdraw advertising. The paper is seen as one of the most independent-minded newspapers in the kingdom. Its editor-in-chief is Abdallah Tourabi.

### 6.4 NEWS AGENCY

**Maghareb Arabe Presse** (MAP - www.map.ma) is the official government news agency, established in 1959. Its managing director is Ali Bouzerda. It provides services in Arabic, French, English, Spanish and Tamazight. Its director-general is Khalil Hachimi Idrissi.
7. Internet

7.1 ACCESS
Internet penetration in 2014 was estimated at 60 per cent of the country’s population of 33.5 million, according to the Internet Live Stats website.

The number of internet and 3G subscriptions both grew significantly in the year to the first quarter of 2015, according to Morocco’s National Agency for the Regulation of Telecommunications (ANRT).

The ANRT, an independent government body created in 1998, is in charge of regulating and liberalizing the telecommunications sector.

Three companies act as internet service providers and mobile phone operators: Maroc Telecom, Medi Telecom, and INWI.

Maroc Telecom is a former state company that monopolized the telecoms sector until 1999 when ANRT granted licences to Medi Telecom and INWI.

While Maroc Telecom effectively controls the telephone cable infrastructure, the ANRT is tasked with settling the prices at which the company’s rivals can access those cables.

7.2 KEY OFFICIAL WEBSITES

Prime Minister’s Office - www.pm.gov.ma

Ministry of Communication - www.mincom.gov.ma

National Agency for Regulation of Telecommunications (ANRT) - www.anrt.net.ma

High Authority of Audiovisual Communication (HACA) - www.haca.ma

National Company for Radio and Television (SNRT) - www.snrt.ma

High Institute of Information and Communication (ISIC) - www.isic.ac.ma

7.3 NEWS WEBSITES

Hespress (www.hespress.com) is an Arabic-language site which deals with political topics, social issues, business, culture and sports.

Hibapress (www.hibapress.com) is an Arabic-language site which focuses on royal, government and international news as well as social issues and sports.

Jepress (www.jepress.com) is an Arabic-language site which covers Moroccan as well as international news.

Arrifinu (www.arrifinu.net) focuses on news and developments in the northern region of Rif.

Goud (www.goud.ma) focuses on political and social news as well as sports and arts.

Yabiladi (www.yabiladi.com) is a portal which carries news in Arabic, French and English and whose target audience is mainly Moroccans abroad.
7.4 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has played a political role in Morocco, as it has in other Arab countries.

In 2011 the 20 February youth group organized protests on the streets demanding reform. Social media was used to cover and coordinate protesters’ rallies, and became a source of news for other online media platforms and traditional outlets.

Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are freely accessible in Morocco.

The number of Facebook users reached 7.2 million, or 22 per cent of the population, in May 2014, according to the 6th Arab Social Media Report published by the Dubai School of Government. This was up from 16.4 per cent the year before.

In contrast, the proportion of active Twitter users in March 2014 dropped slightly to 76,700, or 0.23 per cent of the population, from 0.25 per cent the year before, according to the report.

7.4.1 Blogs

Les Chroniques de Yamna

(leschroniquesdeyamna.blogspot.co.uk) is an award-winning French-language blog which focuses on domestic affairs, written by architect Yasmin Naciri.

The view from Fez

(riadjany.blogspot.co.uk) is an English-language blog that focuses on the city of Fez.

Maghreb Blog

(maghrebog.blogspot.co.uk) is an English-language blog dedicated to current political and economic trends, and news of the Maghreb region. It is written by Mohamed Daadaoui, an academic and social commentator and author of “Moroccan Monarchy and the Islamist Challenge: Maintaining Makhzen Power”.

Almohtarif

(www.th3professional.com) is an Arabic-language blog dedicated to technology. It is written by Amin Ragheb.

7.4.2 Facebook

The top Facebook pages in Morocco belong mainly to news websites, radio stations and celebrities (number of likes as in late May 2015):

Ounousa

(facebook.com/ounousa) is an Arabic-language website that covers a variety of topics of interest to women such as fashion, health and beauty, celebrities, cookery, and wedding. Number of likes: 6.8 million

Hespress

(facebook.com/Hespress) is a web-based, Arabic-language newspaper. Number of likes: 4.7 million

Gad Elmaleh

(facebook.com/gadelmaleh) is a Moroccan-Canadian comedian, actor and musician. Number of likes: 4.5 million

Samira Said

(facebook.com/SamiraSaid) is a famous Moroccan female singer. Number of likes: 4.2 million

Al-Maghrib (Morocco) Today

(facebook.com/Moroccotodaynews) is a well-known page which focuses on issues related to Morocco and the Maghreb. Number of likes: 3.4 million

Jamel Debbouze

(facebook.com/JamelDebbouzeOfficiel) is a French-Moroccan actor, comedian and producer. Number of likes: 3.1 million

King Mohammed VI of Morocco

(facebook.com/ROI.DUMAROC.MOHAMED.6) Number of likes: 2.8 million

Alyaoum24

(facebook.com/Alyaoum24) is a news website. Number of likes: 2 million
Hit Radio (facebook.com/HITRADIO.OFFICIEL) is a music radio station. Number of likes: 1.8 million

Maghrib El 3ajaiB (facebook.com/3ajaibb) is an entertainment page focusing on the quirky and humorous. Number of likes: 196,000

The 20 February Movement (facebook.com/Movement20) describes itself on its page as "a youth movement that claims a radical political and social change in Morocco". It takes its name from the date of protests in 2011 at the time of the Arab Spring. Posts are in Arabic and French. Number of likes: 70,000

### 7.4.3 Twitter

The top Twitter accounts in Morocco belong mainly to newspapers, TV and radio stations and celebrities (number of followers as in late May 2015):

**@SalmaRach** - Salma Rachid is a young Moroccan entertainer and vocalist who rose to fame in the Arab world at the age of 18 following her participation in the second season of Arab Idol, broadcast on MBC. Number of followers: 764,000

**@HESPRESSNews** - Hespress web-based newspaper. Number of followers: 735,000

**@MarocTopNews** - News website. Number of followers: 713,000

**@Medi1TV** - State-owned Medi 1 TV. Number of followers: 565,000

**@HITRADIOmA** - Privately-owned Hit Radio. Number of followers: 427,000

**@FakhriZina** - "A simple citizen of the world, for freedom of expression and the free choice of life for each and everyone". Number of followers: 404,000

**@Maroc_Telecom** - the main telecommunication company in Morocco. Number of followers: 352,000

**@MOMOBOUSFIHA** - Moroccan radio host. Number of followers: 258,000

**@Jacobzawaq** - Moroccan journalist and photographer. Number of followers: 219,000

**@Sofia_Essaidi** - French-Moroccan singer. Number of followers: 213,000

**@SaidTaghmaoui** - French actor and screenwriter of Moroccan origin Said Taghmaoui. Number of followers: 158,000

**@2MInteractive** - State-owned 2M TV station. Number of followers: 118,000

**@AhmedBenchemsi** - Moroccan journalist and secular activist. Number of followers: 56,000
8. Media in Western Sahara

Morocco occupies most of the disputed and sparsely-populated territory of Western Sahara, which was, until 1975, a Spanish colony. Rabat regards the territory as an integral part of the Moroccan state and describes it as Morocco’s "southern provinces".

The Moroccan state broadcaster SNRT operates regional television and radio services from Laayoune (El-Aaiun), Western Sahara's largest city (in the north of the territory). There is also an SNRT regional radio station in Dakhla (the main town in the south).

Some Moroccan private radio stations are relayed on FM in Laayoune and Dakhla.

Sovereignty over Western Sahara is also claimed by the self-declared Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), whose government-in-exile is based in the refugee camps in Tindouf Province of neighbouring southwest Algeria.

The Polisario Front, which forms the government of the SADR, operates the following media outlets from Algerian territory:

- **National Radio of the SADR** broadcasts for several hours a day in Arabic and Spanish. Its mediumwave transmissions are jammed by the Moroccan authorities. According to the World Radio TV Handbook, the station’s transmitter is at the Rabouni refugee camp in Algeria. The radio's website is http://web.jet.es/rasd/radionacional.htm

- **RASD TV**: RASD is the abbreviation of the Spanish name (Republica Arabe Saharauí Democratica) for the SADR. The TV operates a terrestrial service (mainly serving the refugee camps) and is also on satellite. Its website offers a live feed and recorded items in Arabic and Spanish: www.rasd-tv.com and www.rasd.tv

- **Sahara Press Service (SPS)** is the SADR’s news agency. Its website (www.spsrasd.info) provides material in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish. SPS says it is based at the Shahid El Hafed refugee camp in Algeria.
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BBC Monitoring Marketing
marketing@mon.bbc.co.uk

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BBC Monitoring
Caversham Park
Reading RG4 8TZ
+44 (0) 1189 486 289
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Angola

Biography

BOTELHO de VASCONCELOS, Jose Maria
Known as: Jose Maria Botelho de Vasconcelos

Summary

Jose Maria Botelho de Vasconcelos has served in oil- and gas-related ministerial posts in the Angolan cabinet since 1999 and represented Angola during its presidency of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 2009. Trained as an electrical engineer, he worked in the oil industry before entering government. He is reported to have business interests in other sectors.

Background

Aged 58 (as of 2013)

Place of birth: Malange, Angola

An engineer by training

Angolan news blog Maka Angola reports in February 2010 that he is the co-owner of Giasop - Sociedade Comercial Agricola e Pecuaria Limitada (Commercial Agriculture and Stock Raising Company), along with Industry Minister Joaquim David. (biog) Giasop is reported to be in partnership with Portugal's main beverage manufacturer UNICER, in building a new beer factory in Angola. The investment of Giasop, and the project's other Angolan partners Imosil and Emprominas, was approved by the Council of Ministers. Maka Angola reports that investment totals 84.6 million dollars

Education

Technical Electrical Engineer, Industrial Technology Institute of Luanda, 1974

Lubrication and Application of Lubricants, Shell France, 1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1977-1979</td>
<td>Works for the National Directorate of Petroleum Marketing as deputy inspector for Technical Fina Petroleum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999, 30 January</td>
<td>Sworn in as the new minister of petroleum by President Jose Eduardo dos Santos (biog).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 April</td>
<td>Signs a protocol on energy cooperation with his Algerian counterpart Chakib Khelil (biog).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 July</td>
<td>Announces that Angola will begin to produce and export natural gas in the next few years, as part of a project named LENG. The natural gas will come from the bay south of the Zaire river. He also states that they aim to increase oil production to 1m barrels per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002, 6 December</td>
<td>Appointed as minister of energy and water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 May</td>
<td>At an Offshore Technology Conference (OTC) in Houston, USA, states that the Angolan economy is going through a period of stability, and that the peace agreement achieved four years ago has been an important factor in the country's economic recovery. Highlights Angola's natural resources potential - in diamonds, oil, water and fertile land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008, 1 October</td>
<td>Appointed as the new minister of petroleum. Succeeded as energy minister by Emanuela Afonso Viera Lopes (biog).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 November</td>
<td>Speaks at the International Bio-fuel Conference in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on Angola's potential as a biofuel producer. Says: &quot;Agricultural energy production in Angola, as a renewable source and an alternative to oil, may translate into social, economic, energy, and environmental benefits&quot;, such as increased rural employment, environmentally friendly energy sources, reduction of gas emissions, increased exports and improved electricity availability for rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 December</td>
<td>Attends an oil conference in London, UK, which discusses the role of oil in the context of the global economic crisis. At a recent Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) meeting in Algeria, members decided to cut oil production by 2.2m barrels per day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2009: Angola is to hold the rotating presidency of OPEC for the first time in 2009

2009 July: Angola has overtaken Nigeria, by this date, to become Africa's largest oil producer. Nigerian output has been hurt by political failures and the actions of rebels in the Niger Delta, where many foreign oil operations are based

2009 July: Says that China is playing a prominent role in Angola's economic development, during a visit to Beijing. Describes the oil market as being in a "delicate situation" due to speculative forces which have encouraged price increases

2009 September: Ahead of an OPEC summit due to be held on 9 September, says that the reduced variation in oil prices "is a sign that the world economy is recovering", and that output will remain unchanged

2009 November: Heads a delegation to Ecuador, to discuss participation in oil and gas exploration and exploitation in Ecuadoran territory. Signs a letter of intent which Botelho de Vasconcelos describes as "the embryo of an agreement that will serve to unite two regions: Africa and America"

2010: Succeeded as president of OPEC by Ecuador, represented by Non-Renewable Natural Resources Minister Germanico Pinto (biog)

2010 March: OPEC rejects his request to allow Angola to increase its production rate to 1.750m barrels a day

2010 April: Government approves a law that will help to increase the country's production of biofuels

2010 April: Announces that Angola is considering joining the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GRECF); currently they have observer status to the organization

2010, 14 May: Says that the first phase of the new oil refinery in Lobito will begin operating in 2014, and will have the capacity to treat 115,000 barrels of oil a day

2010, 18 May: Says that Angola may ask for an extraordinary meeting of OPEC if international oil prices continue to decline. Oil prices have dropped by 10 dollars per barrel over the last few days. He says that the current prices are still within "an acceptable limit". Lusa news agency describes Angola as the
largest producer of oil in sub-Saharan Africa, with oil being the main driver of its economy

2010, 19 May: According to the Portuguese Lusa news agency he describes the strategic partnerships between the state-owned oil companies of Angola, Portugal and Brazil as "very important" for Angola's state oil company Sonangol

2010 August: Announces that Angola plans to increase its vigilance with regards to inspecting the oil premises of companies operating in Angola, following a large oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico from a ruptured BP well

2010 October: Signs a memorandum of understanding with his Indian counterpart, Murli Deora, (biog) with the aim of speeding up cooperation between the two countries in the energy sector

2011, 18 January: States that the Liquefied Natural Gas Project (Angola LNG) could start exploring natural gas by the first quarter of 2012

2012 March: Agreements are signed with his Congolese counterpart, Andre Raphael Loemba, (biog) which will allow Chevron to develop an oilfield in a zone jointly owned by the two countries

2012 May: Signs a memorandum of understanding on oil and gas cooperation with Thai Energy Minister Arak Chonlatanon (biog)

2014 April: Russian oil company Rosneft holds talks on expanding its business into Angola with Vasconcelos, Energy and Water Resources Minister Joao Baptista Borges (biog) and Sonangol (state-owned oil company) head Francisco de Lemos Jose Maria (biog)

**Career**

Ex - **Engineer Maintenance Technician, Cabinda Gulf Oil Company**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974-76</td>
<td>Takes up post 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-??</td>
<td>Leaves post 1976</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ex - **Deputy Inspector of the Directorate of Technical Fina Petroleum,**
National Directorate of Petroleum Marketing

- Takes up post 1977
  - OPECNA 13-06-14
- Leaves post 1979
  - OPECNA 13-06-14
- Deputy director-general of Sonangol [state-owned oil company] for distribution and fuel trading, before entering politics [dates unknown]
  - KPMGWW 13-06-14

**Ex- Minister of Petroleum**

- 01-99 - 12-02
- With effect from January 1999
  - TPATV 30-01-99
- Succeeded 6 December 2002
  - LUSALI 06-12-02

**Ex- Chairman of the Committee of Southern African Development Community (SADC) Ministers of Energy, SADC National Committee**

- ??-99 – ??-00
- Takes up post 1999
  - OPECNA 13-06-14
- Leaves post 2000
  - OPECNA 13-06-14

**Ex- Minister of Energy and Water**

- 12-02 - 10-08
- Appointed 6 December 2002
  - LUSALI 06-12-02
- Succeeded 3 October 2008
  - ANGOPI 03-10-08

**Minister of Petroleum**

- 10-08 -
- Appointed 1 October 2008
  - ANGOPI 01-10-08
- Sworn in 3 October 2008
  - ANGOPI 03-10-08
- Reappointed February 2010
  - LUSALI 02-02-10
Reappointed and sworn in 1 October 2012
Strong quake devastates Nepal

Hundreds of people are feared dead with toll expected to rise as rescue teams reach remote areas

The quake, measuring 7.9 on the Richter scale, hit the Himalayan country at 0611 gmt on 25 April, and was followed by a series of strong aftershocks. The epicentre of the quake was 77 km from the capital Kathmandu in Lamjung.

The exact number of casualties is yet to be ascertained but media reports on the death toll range from 100 to 450. The toll is expected to rise as rescue teams try to reach remote areas.

The quake is being described as the worst disaster to hit Nepal in over 80 years. Officials say Kathmandu Valley has been the "worst-hit".

The impact of the powerful quake was felt far and wide, with strong tremors in many parts of north and eastern India.

Massive damage

Many old buildings in densely-populated Kathmandu have collapsed and huge cracks have developed on roads.

Rescuers remove a victim’s body from Dharahara Tower in central Kathmandu.

Among those reduced to rubble is the 19th-century Dharahara Tower in the city.

Nepal's Ambassador to India Deep K. Upadhyay told reporters that the death toll is estimated to be around 100 but could rise further given the intensity of the quake.
So far, there is little information about casualties in Lamjung which falls in the Gandaki Zone. Other affected areas are Bhaktapur, which lies to the east of Kathmandu and Gorkha, also in Gandaki.

Media are also reporting avalanches at Mount Everest and reports say eight mountaineers have been killed at the base camp and several more are missing.

Flight diversions from Kathmandu to Indian cities were reported earlier in the day. However, Upadhyay denied reports about the closure of Kathmandu airport, saying it was briefly shut during the quake.

Meanwhile, India’s eastern states have also suffered damages. There are reports of deaths from Bihar and West Bengal. Parts of Uttar Pradesh and Sikkim have also been affected.

The tremors are also said to have been felt in other countries of the region such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan and China. TV reports say two people have been killed in Bangladesh.

How is India helping?

After the news of the quake broke, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that his government is working to help the quake-affected people in his country as well as Nepal.

He has spoken to Nepalese leaders and offered to help. India has also sent medical teams to Nepal. Meanwhile, the Indian Army, Air Force and Border Roads Organisation are also on standby to help with the relief work.

Calls for foreign assistance

Nepal’s Information Minister Minendra Rijal has called for international help.

“We need support from the various international agencies which are more knowledgeable and equipped to handle the kind of emergency we face now,” he told reporters.
The following is a round-up of politically-motivated violence by non-state actors available to BBC Monitoring in the period 1-2 June 2015.

**SECTION A: JIHADIST TERRORISM**

**MIDDLE EAST**

Iraqi prime minister endorses Shi’i militias: Iraqi Prime Minister Haydar al-Abadi has said the predominantly Shi’i Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) operate as part of the government armed forces. Al-Abadi made the remarks at the Paris international conference to counter the Islamic State armed group in Iraq and Syria. "PMF is not a militia, but an official organization affiliated to the state," he said. (Al-Iraqiyah TV, Baghdad, in Arabic 1200gmt 02 Jun 15)

Iraq says video of burning Islamist "fabricated": Iraq’s Joint Operation Command has said footage showing alleged PMF members burning an Islamic State fighter in contested Al-Anbar Province. "Some media outlets circulated a video clip unfairly and unjustly attributing to a PMF faction the act of burning a Da'ish (Islamic State) member in a brutal way that is completely against human treatment criteria and the ethics of our fighters," Command spokesman Sa’d Ma’an said, according to Al-Mada Press. A YouTube video published on 30 May showed what is believed to be a Sunni man being suspended upside down above a fire by men wearing "Brigades of Imam Ali" Shi'i militia badges. (Al-Mada website, Baghdad, in Arabic 01 Jun 15)

**AFRICA**

Somali militants seize village in northeastern Kenya: More than 30 gunmen from Somalia, suspected to be members of the Al-Shabab militia, have taken over a village in the Lafey area of Mandera County, the Daily Nation newspaper reported on 2 June, quoting Mandera Deputy County Commissioner Fredrick Ayieko. Hundreds of villagers have fled. Ayieko said the gunmen had a "lot of money", which he feared would be used to "lure runaway students into terror cells". (Daily Nation website, Nairobi, in English 2 Jun 15)

Al-Qa’idah in Maghreb claims two attacks on UN forces in northern Mali: Al-Qa’idah in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has claimed responsibility for attacks carried out against UN forces in Mali (MINUSMA). Spokesman Abderrahmane Al-Azawadi said AQIM launched a rocket attack on the UN base on 25 May, and a grenade attack on 28 May on a convoy containing military and police chiefs. He said three people had been killed in the second attack, although the UN just said three peacekeepers from Burkina Faso had been wounded. (Radio France Internationale, Paris, in French 0630gmt 1 Jun 15)

**SOUTH ASIA**

Pakistan Taleban claim killing Punjab councillor: The Pakistan Taleban group has claimed responsibility for the killing of government councillor Rana Shamshad, who
was shot dead along with his son and a Muslim League (N) party worker in Kamoki on 31 May, Pakistani newspaper The Nation reported on 2 June, quoting spokesman Muhammad Khorasani. The Punjabi politician was on his way home with family and colleagues when assailants opened fire on his vehicle. (The Nation website, Islamabad, in English 2 Jun 15)

EUROPE

Islamic State, Al-Qa’idah send "terrorists" to Norway among refugees: Norway’s police intelligence unit has found between five and 10 terrorists among every 1,000 refugees approved by the UN to be sent to Norway, the Views and News from Norway website reported on 1 June. Among them are young men and women recruited by both Islamic State and Al-Qa’idah. "Unfortunately there are those who try to exploit and misuse the refugee institution," Svein Erik Molstad, an officer at PST, told Dagbladet newspaper. The police would not say exactly how the alleged refugees were uncovered or what methods were used in the background checks. (Views and News from Norway website, Oslo, in English 1 Jun 15)

SECTION B: NON-JIHADIST TERRORISM

No relevant reports were noted.
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For more information on this report contact:
BBC Monitoring Marketing
marketing@mon.bbc.co.uk

Bringing the world to you

BBC Monitoring
Caversham Park
Reading RG4 8TZ
+44 (0) 1189 486 289
www.monitor.bbc.co.uk