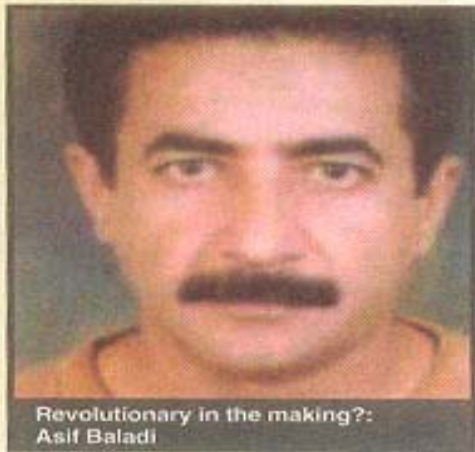


PRESUMED MOTIVE

Baladi was suspected of introducing a new brand of nationalism

Asif Baladi, a Sindhi nationalist leader, disappeared soon after he left his home in Gulistan-e-Jauhar on June 26, a week before he was scheduled to host a three-day conference on the espousal of peace, love and harmony in the province. Members of his family are convinced that he is in the custody of intelligence agencies. Their fears were not unfounded since police personnel later confirmed that Baladi had indeed been detained



Revolutionary in the making?:
Asif Baladi

by intelligence agencies. Baladi's son, Jibrán, has filed a petition in the Sindh High Court against the detention.

Baladi had been planning to introduce a new brand of nationalism by uniting all those belonging to Sindh — old as well as new Sindhis. His friends say the conference may have been viewed by the government as a launch pad for a political movement, since Baladi was viewed as a staunch spokesman for Sindh's rights. Some 20,000 people were expected to attend his conference. Organisers of the event, however, insist they had decided that no political or ethnic statement would be issued at the conference. ■

— M.K.

civvies who intercepted his brother's vehicle were being tailed van. Murtaza Bugti, Bilal Bugti's brother-in-law, was taken away in a similar fashion by intelligence personnel. Several missives of pleas against their detention continue to fall on deaf ears.

In the last week of June, four men, including the president of the National Party — Mengal, Zulfiqar Mulghani, were separately taken into custody by intelligence personnel in Turbat, Marriabad and Taunsa. Among the four was a Mastung-based landlord who was first shot and then injured by the intelligence operatives. "Mughlani was released 12 days after his abduction," says Akhtar Hussain Lango, a provincial legislator and a central committee member. According to Lango, some 6,000 to 7,000 activists who have disappeared from various parts of the province elsewhere are believed to be in the custody of intelligence agencies. Not all disappearances have been blamed on the agencies.

The Frontier Constabulary (FC) is seen to be involved in the case of a Turbat grower and social worker, Raja Ahmed Khan Gichki, who was sighted at a restaurant at Shahi Tumb seven months ago. His daughter Jan says 11 other men — including her father's brother Khan Mohsin Khan and brother-in-law Professor Munir Ahmed Gichki — were picked up from the same place. Within a couple of hours, Ahmed Gichki and other detainees, except Khan Gichki, were freed from the FC camp. Ms. Jan says her mother has sold their jewellery and has come down to Karachi in the hope of shaking the conscience of the administration long enough to secure Khan Gichki's release.

Qari Mohammad Alam, an imam at the Bakshi Mosque in Landhi, was picked up outside a fruit juice shop on December 17, 2005 by secret service personnel along with other people. His

FREEDOM REGAINED

Union leaders shared cells with Rauf Khan Saifullah, Saeed Brohi, Munir Mengal and Dr Safdar Sarki

Some 12 union leaders of the Pakistan Petroleum Ltd (PPL) who were sailing teacher emerged bruised and battered from the shackles of intelligence sleuths on July 12 after seven months in detention. The seven other men picked up with the unionists from Karachi's Plaza hotel on December 9, 2005, were freed six months earlier. Those released were willing to talk about their ordeal but they managed to coax a few into speaking out briefly on the conditions of their identities would not be revealed.

The unionists were apparently driven to Malir Cantt by Military Intelligence personnel and locked away in five cells in a basement. Four to five men were kept in each cell. Their captors questioned them about the November 15, 2005 bomb blast near the PIDC building and the role each had played in it. It was insinuated that they had abducted people from Sui and other parts of Balochistan and extorted money from Nawab Akbar Bugti. Various forms of torture were used against them.

During their confinement some of the men shared their cell with the deputy secretary-general of the Jamhoori Wattan Party (JWP) — Saeed Brohi, party sympathiser Saeed Brohi, Munir Mengal, managing director of Baloch Voice television channel, and Dr Safdar Sarki, secretary of the Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz. These four men were separately picked up by intelligence operatives between February 2 and April 4, 2005 and have not been heard of since. ■