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Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

India is negotiating the acquisition of an aircraft carrier and two nuclear-powered submarines from Russia. Asia Times published a summary of the key findings of a report by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency on India's and Pakistan's nuclear force capabilities, policies, and postures. Himal Magazine published a review of "Pakistan and India Under the Nuclear Shadow", a video produced by Pervez Hoodbhoy.

["Russian nuclear subs high on India's shopping list"](#)

Afghanistan

1. Current Situation

Pakistani newspapers reported attacks on Kandahar Governor's office. The US military base in Khost has also come under attack. Four US soldiers were killed when a rocket exploded as they were disposing unexploded ordnance. Four Canadian soldiers were killed and eight wounded when a US jet mistakenly bombed them during a training exercise.

["US troops escape rocket attack"](#)

2. Reconstruction

Afghanistan's former king Mohammad Zahir Shah arrived in Kabul after 29 years in exile. Ahmad Rashid believes that his return will both "speed up the political process" and "bring into the open long standing ethnic divisions in the country." In his essay for the Far Eastern Economic Review, Rashid also argues that "the U.S. has no long-term political strategy for Afghanistan." Writing for the daily Dawn, Amanullah Ghilzai reports increased ethnic fighting in Afghanistan.

["Survival of Afghan govt in danger"](#)

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

Indian and Pakistani troops continued they stand off along the border. The daily Hindustan Times has reported that the Indian army had to evacuate villagers living near densely mined fields along the Pakistan border as rising summer temperatures set off a series of explosions. According to a report in the daily Telegraph, the Indian government feels that a victory in the upcoming referendum would make President Musharraf "far more belligerent towards India than he has been till now."

["Troops exchange fire"](#)

["Pilots raring to go at Pakistan, says India"](#)

["Pakistan, India urged to defuse border tension"](#)

2. Analysis

Writing for Frontline, an Indian magazine, A.G.Noorani argues that "India should not .. go back on the Indus Waters Treaty."

Pakistan

1. Pakistan: Domestic Situation

A report in the daily News suggests that the Musharraf government is planning changes in the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan. Justice Tariq Mehmood, a Balochistan High Court judge, resigned from his position. He has accused the government of pressurizing him to refute his statement made in connection with his earlier resignation from the membership of the Election Commission. Twenty-two journalists were injured during a march protesting a government official's remark that the press is not covering Musharraf's referendum meetings properly.

All major Pakistani political parties have expressed their opposition to the referendum. According to a report in the Daily Times, a new English language newspaper, the government has decided to cancel most of its planned rallies aimed at shoring up support for the up coming referendum.

["PML determined to defy political ban"](#)

Columnist writing in Pakistani and Asian press have been generally very critical of President Musharraf's decision to hold the referendum.

["Pakistan: Let the people \(really\) decide"](#)

["Not the straight path"](#)

Pakistani government rejected reports that Osama bin Laden may have crossed into Pakistan and has asserted that the US has not sought permission to conduct raids along Pakistan's border with Afghanistan. Over 80 percent of the arrested members of banned militant groups seeking release from detention have submitted "disassociation certificates." Five Pakistanis have been arrested by the French police in connection with the investigation of the Richard Reid case. Reid, a 28-year-old Briton, is accused of attempting to ignite explosives hidden in his shoes on a commercial flight.

["80pc suspects of banned groups may be released"](#)

The Daily Times has initiated a bi-weekly review of news and analysis appearing in Pakistan's Urdu press.

In an interview with the Daily Times, Pakistan's former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has stated that she is ready to return to Pakistan.

India

1. India: Domestic Situation

Opposition parties in India have been demanding the removal of Gujarat's Chief Minister Narendra Modi. The Indian parliament has not been able to function normally for five days. Telugu Desam Party, a key ally of the Vajpayee Government, has reiterated its support of the government. Opposition parties have stated that they will not bring a no-confidence motion against the government. Jyoti Punwani's essay in the daily Hindu examines the state of Hindu-Muslim relations in Godhra. Nivedita Menon reports on a group of people staging a hunger strike in Delhi to protest

communal violence in Gujarat.
["TDP not to withdraw support"](#)
["Godhra revisited"](#)

In his column for the daily Dawn, M.J.Akbar laments the cynicism of the Indian political class. Praful Bidwai essay in the daily Hindustan Times criticizes Prime Minister Vajpayee for his stand on the Gujarat violence. Mukul Kesavan's article in the daily Telegraph argues that the lesson of killings in Gujarat is that "the distinction often made between the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Bharatiya Janata Party.. obscures the ideological oneness of the organizations."

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Bharati Janata Party have indicated their willingness to form a coalition government in Uttar Pradesh.

John Cherian report in Frontline examines possible major defense purchases being explored by India.

A report in the daily Hindu examines the spread of HIV in Mumbai's 'red-light' districts.
["Robbed of their innocence"](#)

2. US-India Relations

India has signed a \$146 million deal with the US to purchase eight weapon-locating radars. This is India's first major weapons deal with the US in more than three decades.
["India seals major arms deal with U.S."](#)

Kashmir

1. Internal Situation

Indian and Pakistani newspapers reported continued political violence and unrest in Jammu and Kashmir.
["10 killed in Kashmir violence"](#)

Kashmiri leaders from both sides of Line of Control (LoC) met in Sharjah for the first time in several years. Abdul Ghani Lone, a leader of the All Parties Hurriyet Conference (APHC) has stated that "our message to the world is that the violence should end immediately and the Kashmiris be allowed to plead their case peacefully through discussions." The Indian police has arrested Javed Mir, the vice chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). In his essay for Frontline, Praveen Swami writes that the arrest of JKLF president Yasin Malik on weak criminal charges is "all about politics."

In his essay for the daily Hindustan Times, Firoz Ahmed examines the Kashmiri Sufi tradition.

Regional News

1. Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankan government has indicated that it is prepared to consider the lifting of the current ban on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The LTTE has made clear that it is in no hurry

for a permanent solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict as long as it has an arrangement that gives it de facto control of the northeast part of the country. There have also been meetings between the LTTE and Sri Lanka's Muslim Party. Writing for Asia Times, Feizal Samath reports on LTTE chief Prabhakaran's recent press conference. Political analyst S.Muthiah's essay in Frontline presents a possible solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic problems.

["Government considers lifting LTTE ban"](#)

["No more than LTTE-controlled interim administration"](#)

["SLMC strikes a deal with LTTE"](#)

["Straight from the Tiger's mouth"](#)

2. Nepal

At least 160 police and Maoist rebels were killed in Nepal. Essays by Deepak Thapa and Dipak Gyawali in Himal closely examine the conflict between the government and the Maoists and argue for the need of a political solution of the crisis.

["More killings in Nepal"](#)

3. Region

Walden Bello's essay in the Daily Times argues that the operations of the US Special Forces in the Philippines will have destabilizing consequences for the country and the region. Saleem Samad's essay in the same newspaper notes the growing concern of Bangladeshi intellectuals and rights activists that the government policies are undermining secularism in the country.

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has warned that rising temperatures could cause over forty of Himalayan lakes to burst bank and cause widespread devastations.

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