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Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

In their article for the Economic and Political Weekly, India, R. Rajaraman, M.V. Ramana and Zia Mian examine "the dangers that come with the possibility that in the foreseeable future India and Pakistan may deploy their nuclear arsenals." According to a report in the daily Dawn, Pakistan, India's military scientists have claimed that they have developed safeguards against nuclear, biological and chemical attacks. Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) is working on a plan to set up two new nuclear power plants.

["India develops nuke shelters"](#)

["Two nuclear power plants to be set up"](#)

Afghanistan

1. Current Situation

Afghanistan's Minister for Tribal and Frontier Affairs Aref Noorzaye has stated that the U.S. team investigating the bombing of a wedding party will not be visiting the villages that were attacked. Southern Afghan governors have reportedly arranged a meeting to discuss a proposal that would require US troops to seek their permission before striking at suspected al-Qaeda and Taliban units in the region. Meanwhile, a compound being used by US Special Forces in central Afghanistan was attacked with small arms.

A report in the daily Hindu, India, suggests that the killing of Haji Abdul Qadir, one of the Vice-Presidents of Afghanistan, can "derails the progression of the peace process" in the country.

["Afghan peace under threat"](#)

According to a report in the daily Frontier Post, Pakistan, al-Qaeda fighters may be seeking new escape routes out along Afghanistan's 815 miles long border with Tajikistan.

Afghanistan's government has appealed for international help to cover a budget deficit of \$257.2 million.

2. Humanitarian Crisis

World Health Organization (WHO) has expressed fears that cholera can spread in Kabul. Three people in the city have so far been diagnosed with the disease. The daily News, Pakistan, reports that humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan is facing serious funding shortage. Meanwhile, about 100,000 Afghans have returned to their homeland from Iran.

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

According to press reports, Indian army has withdrawn three strike divisions, or about 18,000 men, from the Pakistan frontier. The Indian government, however, has denied the report. Pakistani military, meanwhile, has initiated a 10-day long war exercises.

2. Analysis

The Daily Times' editorial criticizes India for "milking its post-September 11 policy somewhat like Israel, thinking Washington will deliver Pakistan's submission." Kuldip Nayar's article in the daily Dawn calls upon India and Pakistan to start a process of military de-escalation and dialogue. Writing for the daily Hindu, India, P.R. Chari believes that the "test of success in the present coercive diplomacy is not the discomfiture of Pakistan but the resolution of the Kashmir problem." L. Ramdas' article in the daily Hindu argues that "as a gesture of honest intent, India and Pakistan must reduce the levels of their security forces on the border."

["The border confrontation"](#)

["Signposts for peace in South Asia"](#)

Pakistan

1. Pakistan: Domestic Situation

Pakistani government has proposed another set of constitutional amendments ahead of the October general elections. The Pakistan Supreme Court upheld the newly introduced condition of minimum educational qualification for the members of parliament and provincial assemblies. The minimum education condition has created difficulties for political parties trying to select candidates for the October polls. The proposed constitutional amendment package has been strongly criticized by the Pakistan Bar Council. Pakistani press has also been very critical of the proposed amendments.

["President will appoint army chief"](#)

["Apex court upholds graduation condition"](#)

["Graduation condition puts parties in a fix"](#)

["Lawyers reject amendments"](#)

Writing for the daily News, Farhan Bokhari argues that "General Musharraf's determination to push ahead with making his own position unassailable is certain to fail in tackling popular frustrations." B. Muralidhar Reddy's essay in Frontline, an Indian weekly, examines General Musharraf recent statements and actions in light of "peculiar problems he faces in the post-September 11 world." Syed Saleem Shahzad's article in Asia Times suggests that the answer to "whether the militant organizations are capable of destabilizing Musharraf's military government" is "inextricably linked with how Musharraf will deal with the Kashmir issue in coming months."

["Musharraf's choices: Damned or damned"](#)

2. Daniel Pearl Case

The Anti-Terrorist Court, Hyderabad, has awarded death sentence to Ahmed Omar Saeed Shaikh, the prime accused, and life terms to co-accused, Salman Saqib, Fahad Nasim and Shaikh Muhammad Adil in the kidnapping and murder case of US journalist Daniel Pearl. The three accused have filed a joint appeal challenging the judgment of the trial court. Kamran Khan's report in the daily News indicates the possibility that the case may be sent back to the court for a fresh trial. Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and his supporters have warned of "dire consequences" if "any harm came to the commander Omer Sheikh or other Mujahideen."

["Convicts file joint appeal in SHC"](#)

["Omer threatens retaliation"](#)

["Omer's 'colleague' threatens jailers"](#)

3. Operations Against al-Qaeda

According to a daily News report, US forces have expanded their operations along Afghanistan-Pakistan border. US law enforcement agencies have also reportedly been working in tandem with the US military in Pakistan. According to President General Pervez Musharraf, only Pakistani forces - helped by "just a dozen US troops providing intelligence, communication support" - are conducting

the search for al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters in Pakistan's tribal areas.

President General Pervez Musharraf has offered to send back surrendering al-Qaeda members to their native countries. However, it has been reported that the governments of the countries of the militants' origin have not been willing to accept them.

["Pakistan in a fix over militants' deportation"](#)

According to an unconfirmed report in the daily Dawn, Pakistani authorities have arrested an alleged financial adviser of Osama bin Laden and two other militants believed to be from his al-Qaeda terror network.

India

1. India: Domestic Situation

According to Hindustan Times, India, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is planning to force early state elections in Gujarat. Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has called the Indian Parliament the "biggest obstruction" in its efforts to build the controversial Ram temple in Ayodhya. VHP has also backtracked on its promise to abide by the court verdict on the Ayodhya issue.

The People's War, a militant left group, based primarily in Andhra Pradesh and active in some other states, has indicated its willingness to "hold talks with the Bengal government, if certain conditions were met." According to a Daily Telegraph, India, report, however, the group is setting up new "guerrilla zone" to launch attacks in Bengal, Orissa and Jharkhand.

Purnima Tripathi's essay in Frontline examines the recent cabinet reshuffle in India.

Kashmir

1. Internal Situation

At least 25 people were killed in a terrorist attack in Jammu. India has expressed outrage at the massacre of Hindu civilians but "the usual diatribe against Pakistan was noticeably absent amid otherwise angry words." The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has condemned the massacre and called for impartial inquiry. There were reports of more violence in the state. According to a Hindustan Times report, "terrorists in Kashmir are targeting village heads to frighten voters away from crucial state elections set for September and October."

["India angry but subdued on Jammu incident"](#)

["Two senior Kashmiri fighters killed"](#)

["19 injured in J&K blasts"](#)

DNA tests have indicated that five people killed by security forces in the aftermath of Chattisinghpura massacre of 35 Sikhs in March 2000 and claimed to be "foreign trained terrorists" were actually local civilians.

Riyaz Punjabi's essay in the daily Hindustan Times argues that "militancy might have bruised Kashmiriyat (Kashmir's syncretic culture), but it never succeeded in diluting it."

In their respective essays, both A.N. Dar and Amitabh Mattoo criticize a recent idea of trifurcation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir along religious lines floated by the right wing Rashtriya

Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

["Dangers of dividing J&K"](#)

Regional News

1. Philippines

Writing for Frontline, Aijaz Ahmad gives a background to the US involvement in the Philippines and argues that the country may be the "next target in the 'war against terrorism'".

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