

# SANDNet Weekly Update, June 30, 2000

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## **Overview**

### **1. South Asian Drought**

The US will donate through its US Agency for International Development (USAID) the sum of US\$6 million to fight persistent drought conditions in areas of India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, which follows a June 15 shipment from the US to Afghanistan of 40,000 tons of emergency grain.

### **2. Redesignation of "Rogue" States**

An editorial in The Hindu argued that the US decision to end use of the term "rogue states" to describe countries such as the DPRK and others reflects acknowledgement that the US at times chooses indefensible positions, but also that it is an opportunity for the US to consider if it should sit in judgment on other countries as well.

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## **India**

### **1. Indian Military**

The Indian Directorate of Standardization will connect all three military services through the internet to facilitate their interaction and save costs.

The Union Home Ministry has convened a meeting of the chief secretaries, the home secretaries, and various police agencies to discuss strengthening the state police network, strengthening intelligence, enacting anti-terrorism laws, and dealing with illegal immigration.

### **2. Foreign Relations: Russia**

The Russian foreign ministry has said that India has expressed concern that Russia is assisting the PRC with the development of the FC-1 ground attack fighter known as the Super-7 and intended to include engines and radar used in the MiG-29. Pakistan will be one of the first buyers of the fighter and has ordered 150. Defense Minister George Fernandes' visit to Russia may result in an agreement on the aircraft carrier "Admiral Gorshkov" in which the platform would be free but India would pay for refitting, modernization, training, and the MiG-29K fighters. Russia will also be commissioning India's 10th EKM-class submarine, which will be fitted with Klub-class missiles, which have a 300km range. Fernandes is scheduled to sign a protocol with Russia to strengthen defense cooperation. Fernandes' talks with Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeev will also focus on plans to purchase Russian-made tanks and an aircraft-carrying cruiser, and obtain a production license for the Su-30 MKI fighter jet.

In a press conference with Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, Russian Finance Minister Igor Ivanov said, "Russia considers India as a strong and worthy contender for the UN Security Council seat."

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In a meeting with Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, Russian President Vladimir Putin confirmed that he will visit India from October 2 to October 4. Putin stated, "Intensive dialogue in the international arena, interaction in the military and technical spheres and economic cooperation constitute the backbone of our relations with India." Five or six bilateral agreements are likely to be signed. The visit may also result in a substantial Indian investment in Russia's oil industry that would help Indian energy needs. Singh also met with Russian Security Chief Sergei Ivanov, and they agreed to take steps to increase cooperation between their nation's Security Councils. Russian media interpreted a statement by Singh that he would work to resolve the situation as a promise that the Russian pilots jailed in the Purulia arms drop case would be granted a pardon.

### **3. Foreign Relations: US**

Two dozen activists protested in New York the participation of the US Ogden Corp in a 400-megawatt dam hydropower project to be built on India's Narmada River because it will displace 35,000 people in 61 villages.

Twenty members of the US House of Representatives urged President Clinton to declare India a terrorist state after the Indian government killed 35 Sikhs in March in Jammu and Kashmir. They said India had admitted that five of those killed were innocent. White House Press Secretary Joe Lockhart said that the Clinton's administration rejected the demand.

External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and US Secretary of State Albright will meet while in Poland for a conference on democracy. Singh told Albright that India hoped to discuss signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty at the monsoon session of Parliament in July. Albright urged Singh to act to improve relations with Pakistan.

### **4. Indian Participation in International Organizations**

Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh attended an international conference in Poland on promoting democracy. India was one of the seven conveners of the conference.

Planning Commission deputy chairman KC Plant will attend a UN special session on the external debt problems of developing nations and plans to raise developing nations unfulfilled promises from five years ago to give a percentage of their gross national product to developing nations.

Many nations in the G-15 have joined India in realizing the danger to developing nations of globalization, primarily the danger of linking trade issues with labor, environmental, and safety standards.

### **5. Foreign Relations: Vatican**

Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee will pay a short visit to Pope John Paul II in Rome to develop India-Italy relations, during which time he is expected to reassure people that India is serious about coping with recent attacks upon Christians in India.

### **6. Foreign Relations: Nepal**

Indian Agriculture Secretary Bhaskar Barua and Nepalese Secretary of Agriculture and Cooperatives Mukti Narayan Shrestha agreed on cooperation in several agricultural areas. Nine Nepalese left-wing parties have demanded the demolition of India's Laxmanpur Dam, which was completed in 1998 on the Nepalese side of the Rapti River.

In the wake of reports that some Nepalese government officials were linked with Pakistan's ISI, the

Nepalese government is likely to take steps to reduce the ISI's influence. In a similar issue, a Bangladeshi government official disclosed that he had been offered a large bribe by the ISI to affect the negotiations of a peace settlement with rebels.

## **7. Foreign Relations: Britain, EU, Israel, China, SADR/Morocco**

Indian Home Minister LK Advani held meetings in Britain with British Home Secretary Jack Straw and Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, where terrorism and counter-terrorism were the top issues. India and Britain have agreed to expand cooperative efforts in combating terrorism.

An editorial in The Hindu argued that while political ties with the European Union are strong, India must be active in developing economic ties in order to increase trade.

External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh is in Israel and is scheduled to meet with the senior members of the government as a follow-up to Home Minister LK Advani's recent visit. A statement issued in London by the Indian High Commission denied that nuclear cooperation was a topic during Advani's visit to Israel or that the visit would affect India's relations with Arab countries.

A study prepared by the Los Angeles-based RAND Corporation, a think-tank supported by the US Defense Department, said that India, as well as Vietnam and Japan, were politically, militarily, and economically strong enough to ward off any attack from the PRC short of a nuclear one. This explains why the PRC has avoided making concessions at this time on the Sino-Indian border dispute.

Enabling the development of ties with Morocco, a leading nation in the Organization of Islamic Conference, India has decided to reverse its decision to recognize the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic.

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## **Pakistan**

### **1. Overview**

Pakistani Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf has repeated his invitation to India to join a strategic restraint regime with Pakistan. He spoke at the Pakistan Institute of International Affairs and said that Pakistan's foreign policy could be summed up in the statement, "To avoid war through dialogue with India." At another time, he said that Pakistan would neither negotiate away its nuclear deterrence, nor would it engage India in an arms race.

### **2. Democracy**

The Supreme Court of Pakistan Bar Association has challenged the legitimacy of the army takeover and its subsequent restriction of rights as being illegal and unconstitutional. The European Union is anxious to maintain good relations with Pakistan, but must wait until the military government sets a date for a return to democracy.

An editorial in The Dawn by retired Major General Ghulam Umar argued that the transition to democracy is confused with civilian supremacy, but added that democracy must be stabilized enough that military takeovers become impossible in the future. In the meantime, civilians should share power with the military.

### **3. Foreign Relations: US**

An editorial in The Dawn by Afzaal Mahmood argued that extensive talks between Pakistani Foreign minister Abdul Sattar and US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott on regional security and the nuclear issue indicates a thaw in US-Pakistani bilateral relations. Talbott urged Pakistan to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and Sattar replied that there would be no decision without national consensus. Mahmood also argues that India's reluctance to take up Pakistan's offer of a strategic restraint regime is because it wants to avoid peace and normalization.

Dawn reported that 4,700 Pakistanis and 5,000 Bangladeshis have won immigrant visas to the US under the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (DV-20001).

#### **4. Military Affairs**

Pakistani troops began shelling indiscriminately upon Indian positions along the line of control in north Kashmir.

Pakistani Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf opened the Jinnah Naval Base, saying that it was necessary because India sought to dominate not only the Arabian Sea, but the whole Indian Ocean.

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### **Kashmir**

#### **1. Overview**

Former chief justice of Pakistan Nasim Hassan Shah presided over a Pakistan Movement Workers Trust meeting in which the speakers argued that Pakistan should attempt to block India's move to get a UN Security Council seat until India implements the UN resolutions on the Kashmir and makes moves to solve the Kashmir problem.

Satellite pictures have shown that the Ravi River has shifted course on the Indian side due to an embankment built by Pakistan; each side has dug several spurs to counter the others attempts to divert the river into its territory.

India has been publicly denying the deal for a gas pipeline that would go from Iran and through Pakistan, but has sought guarantees from Iran that India would be compensated if Pakistan blocked the flow of gas. Pakistan has proposed tripartite talks and a Memorandum of Understanding between Pakistan, India, and Iran over the proposed gas pipeline.

Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee said that India remains open to a dialogue process with Pakistan, but that the missing ingredient is Pakistan's willingness to abstain from violence and cross-border terrorism.

#### **2. International Court of Justice (ICJ)**

The ICJ rejected Pakistan's claims in the Atlantique surveillance aircraft downing case after India successfully argued that the court had no jurisdiction over the case because it withdrew from a 1928 treaty in 1979. An Indian Foreign Office spokesman said that India was pleased with the outcome but also stands committed to dialogue when Pakistan ends cross-border terrorism. The ICJ, however, did recommend that India and Pakistan pursue bilateral negotiations as a possible solution.

#### **3. Autonomy Issue**

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah denied that an Assembly resolution on

autonomy would lead to a disintegration of the country. Mohammad Shafi said that they are offering autonomy within the Constitution, restricting the national government's role to defense, finance, and communications. Home Minister LK Advani indirectly suggested that the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly's proposal would have little effect even if passed, as any actions would need to be taken by the Parliament. On June 25, the Assembly passed the autonomy proposal, while acknowledging that any actions on the proposal would need to be taken by the central government, despite protests by the Opposition which saw the proposal as nationally divisive and unconstructive for solving "bread and butter" issues.

Senior National Conference legislator GM Bawan said that the status quo should be maintained with regard to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir because unification of the two territories would mean that non-Kashmiris would be the dominant population and therefore have dominant representation in the anticipated State Assembly. The Pakistani Foreign Ministry released a statement saying that the Assembly in Kashmir was a puppet of the Indian government and that the vote for autonomy was "farcical" and contrary to the wishes of the Kashmiri people. Pakistan's position is that the Kashmiri people are represented only by the All-Party Hurriyat Conference, which urges that the 1948 UN resolution for a referendum on Kashmir be implemented. AJK PPP Parliamentary Party Sardar Khalid Ibrahim Khan also said the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference was the only representative of the people of the Kashmir and that India was attempting to deceive world opinion by portraying the movement as one for autonomy within India.

Anil Shastri, spokesman for the Congress Party, said that Farooq Abdullah's and the central government's handling of the autonomy vote "could lead to the internationalization of the Kashmir issue."

The Organization of Islamic Conference's Contact Group on Kashmir will meet to discuss the political debate for autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir.

#### **4. Military Actions**

According to the Army, violence has increased in the Kashmir Valley, with a couple dozen soldiers and militants killed.

Indian coastguards have detained three Pakistani fishing boats for illegal fishing in Indian waters, though the 12 crewmen swam for shore and arrived safely. A group of Indian and Pakistani fisherman urged both countries to release all detained fishermen.

#### **5. US Role**

US Ambassador to India Richard F. Celeste said that India and Pakistan should have an open mind and fresh opinions in order to resolve the Kashmir issue. He said that the US wants the two countries to take positive steps, but he refused to comment on the recent Assembly autonomy proposal.

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### **Sri Lanka**

#### **1. Overview**

The Indian Tamil Nadu state has received another 500 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in the last two months, for a total of 1,200 in the last year.

Prominent Muslims in Sri Lanka have rejected the LTTE's call that the Muslims join the Tamil is supporting the formation of Eelam.

## **2. LTTE Activities**

The Thai Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Thakur Pukhet, denied that the LTTE has any bases, military or naval, in Thailand and also assured Sri Lanka that it will not permit the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelan (LTTE) to carry out operations in Thailand, including the smuggling of weapons.

The LTTE rammed an explosives-packed boat into a merchant vessel carrying food and other supplies to the Jaffna peninsula. 11 crewmen were still missing. While Sri Lankan Naval vessels were searching for survivors, they were attacked by several LTTE boats.

## **3. Interim Council**

The Sri Lanka government and the Opposition United National Party, negotiating as part of the process to create a new Constitution, agreed to constitute an Interim Council to administrate the Tamil-dominated north. Under the new plan, the temporary merger of the north and eastern areas will hold until a referendum can be held to determine whether the eastern province will join the north or split. Sri Lanka President Chandrika Kumaratunga has submitted a draft of the new Constitution to the LTTE before submitting it to the Parliament for ratification, which the Times of India said provided new opportunities for the peace process.

The non-militant Tamil parties are divided on whether the constitutional reforms, including the Interim Council, are worthwhile as long as the LTTE is excluded. It is expected that the LTTE is quiet now as it is preparing for "black July," which commemorates the 1983 anti-Tamil riots in Colombo.

The ruling People's Alliance agreed, during talks with the United National Party, to not outright exclude the LTTE from the Interim Council. Sri Lanka later said that the LTTE could participate only if it gave up violence and entered the democratic mainstream.

## **4. Foreign Diplomacy**

Norwegian Special Envoy Erik Solheim met with Minister for Constitutional Affairs GL Peris and opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe on June 27, and was scheduled to meet with President Chandrika Kumaratunga. There were no details on the meetings.

Sri Lankan Janata Party president Subramanian Swamy said Indian diplomacy had failed because it was too passive and that India should have convinced Sri Lanka to adopt an Indian-style federal system in its new constitution.

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