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Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

India has started construction work on two new nuclear power plants in Rajasthan. S.R. Dharwadkar, a former scientist at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) has claimed that he is developing a ceramic matrix to contain high-level nuclear waste from India's nuclear reactors.
"Largest nuke park soon"
"Retd BARC scientist fights war against N-hazard"

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has denied charges that Pakistan helped North Korea in its Uranium enrichment program.

Afghanistan

1. Current News

The US has partially withdrawn reconstruction aid to Afghanistan in an effort to force regional warlords to end disputes. Afghan President Hamid Karzai has issued a warning to unruly factions within his own government to stop fighting. The Daily Times reports tensions between US Special Forces' bodyguards protecting President Hamid Karzai and Afghan soldiers.
"US withdraws aid amid mounting Afghan clashes"
"Karzai's bodyguards, Afghan army face-off"
"Karzai issues warning to unruly warlords"

Five rockets were fired at a Coalition military base in eastern Afghanistan. Two rockets were also fired at a US airfield in Kandahar. The daily News reports that two US helicopters bombed Pakistan's tribal areas. Dr Ghairat Baheer, former Afghan diplomat and son-in-law of anti-Karzai warlord Gulbaddin Hekmatyar, has reportedly been arrested in Pakistan. The US military has reportedly freed the brother of anti-Taliban commander Haji Roohullah and his seven companions after keeping them in custody for two months.

The US military has stopped giving confiscated weapons to Afghan militia fighters following criticism that the practice was strengthening regional warlords. The daily Dawn reports that threatened by the potential lose of US aid, rival warlords in northern Afghanistan have decided to disarm.
"Afghan warlords to disarm today"

Iqbal Khattak reports for the Daily Times that the US is seeking greater Pakhtoon involvement in future decision-making.

The daily Frontier Post, Pakistan, reports that over 2000 displaced Afghans have been moved from remote sites to a new UNHCR refugee camp near Kandahar. Asma Jehangir, Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights, has called for an international effort against alleged war criminals in Afghanistan.

The UN has warned that Afghanistan is likely to reclaim its position as the worlds largest exporter of heroin.

Campaign Against Al-Qaeda

1. News and Analysis

The daily News reports that the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents, along with officials of Pakistani security services, have arrested Dr. Amir Aziz, a respected orthopedic surgeon in Lahore, Pakistan, for allegedly providing bio-chemical weapons formula to Taliban and al-Qaeda. US special envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad has stated that he "thinks" that "there are key [Taliban and Al Qaeda] figures near and across the border in Pakistan." The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has reportedly decided to wind up operations in Pakistan.

Rahimullah Yusufzai reports that 2 out of the 58 prisoners in the custody of the US in Guantanamo Bay and listed as Pakistanis are, in fact, Afghans. The daily News reports that a Pakistani interrogation squad that flew to Guantanmo Bay, Cuba, to question 58 alleged Pakistani al-Qaeda members, has cleared 54 detainees of links with the terrorist network. The first Pakistani to be released from Guantanamo Bay is reportedly still in being held in Islamabad by Pakistani authorities.

Ahmed Rashid reports that "Al Qaeda is no longer a party with a central core as existed in Afghanistan before September 11, but a global movement whose essence is now local."

According to a International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) report, quoted in the Daily Times, inadequate communications equipment and slow reactions by military commanders allowed hundreds of fighters loyal to Osama bin Laden to escape during the US-led war in Afghanistan.

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

An Indian army spokesperson stated last week that it will take "eight to 10 days before the formal redeployment starts." The Indian government has, however, ruled out addition de-escalatory measures. Pakistan government has stated that "there is no physical evidence of any move back [by India]." Mariana Baabar (News, Pakistan) reports that India had decided to pull back its troops several months before the recent official announcement of troop withdrawal. According to the National Security Advisory Board (India), keeping troops in a state of high alert along the border with Pakistan cost India about $13 million a day. Pakistan has also decided to withdraw its forces from its borders with India. Neither India nor Pakistan has, however, withdrawn its troops from the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir.

2. Analysis & Opinions

Editorials in Pakistani and Indian newspapers welcomed military de-escalation along the international borders. The daily Hindu (India) believes that the "logical next step would be to revive full diplomatic relations and initiate other confidence building measures." The Daily Times (Pakistan) suggests that India has "no military option and no satisfactory pre-emptive doctrine at hand comparable to a peace dialogue with Pakistan over the Kashmir dispute." The Hindustan Times is

pessimistic about "improvement in mutual ties in the near future." Indian Express suggests steps that India can take to "nudge" Pakistan "towards a normal relationship."
"Towards de-escalation"
"Resetting the thermostat"

Pranab Dhal Samanta (Hindu) examines India's redeployment strategy.
"When an army moves"

Shekhar Gupta (Indian Express) argues that India's 'coercive diplomacy' was a "a genuine victory without war." Jay Raina (Hindustan Times), however, suggests that the "gains of the operation .. are hard to pinpoint."
"After coercive, now diplomacy"

Raja Mohan (Hindu) suggests that "for India, the diplomatic option of refusing to talk until there is complete cessation of cross-border terrorism, might have run its course."
"Triangular diplomacy: phase two"

Pakistan

1. October Elections

The daily News reports that the Pakistani government has finalized plans to transfer power to the newly elected political leadership by November 7th. It is not clear what type of coalition will form the government in Islamabad.

2. Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal

The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) - an electoral alliance of religious parties - has nominated Qazi Hussain Ahmed, the president of Jamaat-e-Islami, as the Parliamentary leader in the National Assembly. Maulana Fazlur Rehman will remain as the MMA nominee for the prime ministerial office. Malulana Rehman has stated that he sees no reason why "the religious forces and the Western world" cannot have good relations. Rahimullah Yusufzai (News) reports on the electoral performance of various component parties of the MMA. Farzan Bari (News) argues that "MMA's electoral success is not a victory of an ideology but a victory of pragmatism in the politics of our country." General Mirza Aslam Beg, former Chief of Army Staff, fears that, under US pressure, MMA will be denied power sharing in the future government.

Farhan Bokhari (News) believes that the democratic process in the country has been compromised by Prevez Musharraf's pre and post election manipulations.

At least 8 people were injured when 4 out of the 8 parcel bombs, mailed to various government offices in Karachi, exploded. A daily News editorial notes that the bombs were sent to the offices of investigators involved in tracking al-Qaeda remnants that may be present in Pakistan. The daily News reports that the Pakistan government has given sweeping powers to the police and other agencies to detain suspected religious extremists. Maulana Azam Tariq, head of Sipah-e-Sahaba, an extremist Sunni Islamic group, has been released after 11 months in detention.

According to a Financial Times report, the Pakistani armed forced have consumed 25 percent of the country's total public spending over the past 55 years.

3. Pakistan - US Relations

The Daily Times reports that Pakistan agreed in December 2001 to allow the US long-term use of Jacobabad airbase. Commander-in-Chief US Central Command, General Tommy R Franks, was in Pakistan to observe the 16-day joint US-Pakistani military exercises

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India

1. India: Domestic Situation

Five Dalits (untouchables), accused of slaughtering a cow, were lynched by a mob in the Indian state of Haryana. Dalit leaders have blamed the killings on increased activities of the Hindu fundamentalist Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal (BD) in the region. Acharya Giriraj Kishore, a senior leader of the VHP was quoted by the daily Indian Express as stating that ''the life of a cow is more precious than that of a human being.'' Swami Agnivesh and Valson Thampu (Hindustan Times) see the lynching as "a symbolic pointer to the degeneration that is overtaking the country."
"Dalits blame saffron surge"
"Dalits lynching"

Leaders of the ruling Bharitya Janata Party (RSS) and its parent party the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) are scheduled to meet to resolve "perceptional differences" between various Hindu religious parties.
"BJP to talk to RSS on 'differences'"
"Sangh plans meet to make PM VHP-proof"

The Union Cabinet has approved the Tenth Five-Year Plan with a growth target of eight per cent per annum for the years 2002 to 2007.
"PM, Advani push gets Cabinet nod for Tenth Plan"

2. China-India Relations

In a three-part essay, Brahma Chellaney (Hindustan Times) examines the history of India-China relations at the occasion of the 50 years anniversary of the war between the two countries.

Kashmir

1. Elections- News

After weeks of negotiations with the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the Congress Party has agreed to form a coalition government with Mufti Mohammed Sayeed of PDP as the new Chief Minister of the state for the first three of the six-year term. Commenting on the long and sometime petty negotiations between the PDP and Congress, Amitabh Mattoo (Hindu) writes that "if the delay has resulted in a firmer commitment to a common minimum programme and in the determination to make a real difference, the loss of a fortnight may begin to be recognised, in retrospect, as a blessing in disguise." Firdous Syed (Hindu) argues that Kashmiri people are not interested in who will be the next Chief Minister of the state; rather, they are looking for a government that can provide "a vibrant, clean and responsive administration."
"Mufti Saheb, take charge"
"An agenda for a new Kashmir"

"The people's priorities"

S.S. Gill's essay (Indian Express) argues that by boycotting the elections, the nationalist-separatist All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has "not only lost much of its credibility, it has badly hurt the larger interests of the state." Kashmir Committee chairman Ram Jethmalani, however, believes that it would be "foolish" to write off the Hurriyat Conference.

Sandeep Bamzai (Hindustan Times) writes that a new government in Kashmir will mean "nothing" for the Kashmiri Pandits; they have been "decisively isolated."

Ten people, including seven alleged terrorists, were killed in separate encounters with security forces.

2. India, Pakistan, US

Richard Haass, a senior US State Department official, believes that "the time is not ripe for ambitious [US] diplomacy" for resolving the Kashmir dispute.

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