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Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

Pakistan's Chashma nuclear power plant is scheduled to be shut down for refueling and cleaning.

The daily Dawn (Pakistan) reports that the proposed sale of an Arrow missile defense system from Israel to India will increase tension between India and Pakistan.
"Missile sale to India will hike tension"

Afghanistan

1. Current Situation

Afghan President Hamid Karzai survived an assassination attempt in Kandahar. Earlier, a car bomb killed over 30 people in Kabul. Four rockets were reportedly fired in an area where US soldiers were operating in southeastern Afghanistan. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former mujahideen prime minister of Afghanistan, has called for a jihad against US forces in Afghanistan. Syed Saleem Shahzad's essay in Asia Times examines connections between Hekmatyar and Taliban/al-Qaeda groups in Afghanistan.
"The new Afghan jihad is born"

The three main Afghan factions in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif have issued a 24-hour ultimatum to armed groups to withdraw from the city. Five Afghans were reportedly killed in accidents involving anti-personnel mines.

The daily Frontier Post (Pakistan) reports that US forces are expanding their bases in Afghanistan. Another report in the same daily examines the possibility of a role for US military bases in southern Afghanistan in an attack against Iraq.

Over a hundred Pakistanis imprisoned in Afghanistan have been handed back to Pakistan.

According a daily Frontier Post report, the Afghan government has been able to clear just about third of the country's poppy fields.

The value of the Afghan currency has reportedly plunged because of fears about the introduction of a new type of bank note.

Pakistan

1. Pakistan: Domestic Situation

Pakistani paramilitary troops have launched a military operation after issuing an ultimatum to tribesmen living near the border with Afghanistan to hand over four "foreigners" or face an armed assault. Thousands of tribesmen reportedly staged a protest in support of Islamic guerrillas after troops began blowing up homes of villagers accused of harboring al-Qaeda militants. Iranian Interior Minister has called on Pakistan to do more to prevent fugitive al-Qaeda fighters from entering Iran. President Pervez Musharraf has stated that he has "no regrets, not at all," for joining the US-led war on terrorism. Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal - a coalition of six religious parties - has announced that, if victorious in October elections, they will remove all US bases in Pakistan.

According to a report originally published in Guardian (England), Sheikh Ahmed Salim - one of the most wanted al Qaeda operative - is now in US custody.

A Pakistan court rejected the election nomination papers of the leader of Pakistan Peoples Party and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Subsequently, former prime minister and leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N), Nawaz Sharif, announced that he is withdrawing his candidature in protest against rejection of Benazir Bhutto's nomination papers. According to daily Dawn report, leaders and workers of all major political parties are unsure about how to conduct the shortest-ever election campaign in the country's electoral history. Muhammad Ahsan Yatu essay in the daily Jang argues that the formation of National Security Council is an attempt to legitimize "military's self-acquired but unconstitutional political role..."
"Benazir's papers rejected"

Pakistani government has approved a "Code of Ethics" for the print and electronic media. The Daily Times fears that these new laws "could well be used to gag the press."

India

1. India: Domestic Situation

The Indian Supreme Court has declined to interfere with the Election Commission's (EC's) decision to hold elections in Gujarat in November or December. An editorial in the daily Indian Express calls for the imposition of President's Rule in Gujarat until the next election. Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi has postponed, for the second time, initiating the controversial Gaurav Rath Yatra.
"President's rule now"

Ashok Singal, president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), has termed the mass killing of Muslims in Gujarat as a "successful experiment." A daily Telegraph (India) editorial notes that "liberalism and belief in the democratic ethos hit their limit with Mr Singhal's celebration of the Gujarat pogrom."
"We'll repeat our Gujarat experiment'"

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Government at the Center has stripped the Congress Government in Delhi of all legislative and administrative powers. Delhi is a constituted as a Union Territory with is own government. The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa has called for a non-BJP, non-Congress alternative at the Center.
"Delhi Govt. stripped of powers"
"Need for non-Cong., non-BJP alternative"

According to a study that covers the state of Karnataka, the violence against women, including dowry deaths, is on the rise. Sultan Shahin's essay in Asia Times examines "India's split personality."
"Modernity, Indian-style: phones and widow burning"

Andre Beteille's essay in the daily Hindu suggests that village councils in India "in which women and Dalits have a central place will be a genuine institutional innovation and not a return to the institutions of the pre-colonial village."
"Village republics"

According to a daily Indian Express report, the Indian army is setting up 'Red Force' or RedFor, an 'enemy within the system' that will "think like the adversary."
"To beat 'em, Army to outthink 'em"

2. US-India Relations

J.N. Dixit (Indian Express) believes that the "emerging realism" in Indo-US relationship should be protected and built upon.
"India and US: a new maturity?"

Kashmir

1. Internal Situation

Ram Jethmalani - chairman of the Kashmir Committee (KC) engaged in dialogs with All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) - has criticized Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani for his refusal to meet with APHC leader Shabir Shah. Abdul Ghani Bhat, chairman APHC, has reiterated that his organization will not take into consideration any Indian offer for maximum autonomy to Kashmir. APHC has decided against expelling its estranged constituent, the Peoples Conference (PC). Some members of PC have decided to contest the upcoming elections in the state as 'proxy' candidate. The Indian government, according to the daily Hindu, is taking extra precautions to ensure the physical safety of these proxy candidates. 30,000 Indian paramilitary forces and police commandos have arrived in Jammu and Kashmir to provide security for the elections. Various newspapers, however, have reported more political violence.
"Jethmalani slams Advani's refusal to meet Shabir Shah"
"More protection for 'proxy' candidates"

A daily Indian Express report notes discrepancies between population figures and number of voters in different parts of the state.

2. Opinions

Zubeida Mustafa (Jang) urges the Pakistani government to "make an honest attempt to determine the thinking of the Kashmiris themselves." Chinmaya R.Gharekhan (Hindu) believes that "if ever a solution is to emerge, it would have to be built around the Line of Control." Binoo Joshi (Telegraph) argues that "despite the non-participation of the separatists, the Kashmir elections may start off a healthy process of dialogue."
"How we can help the Kashmiris"
"Kashmir - a way forward?"

3. India, Pakistan, US

Mariana Baabar's report in the daily Jang indicates increased US involvement in efforts at resolving the Kashmir dispute. It has been rumored that President Pervez Musharraf would discuss a "Kashmir solution" - that will require a crucial shift in Pakistan's Kashmir policy - with President George Bush during his upcoming visit to Washington.

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