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Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

The Press Trust of India reported that India would begin the commercial production of supersonic anti-ship Brahmos cruise missile, with a range of 280 km, by 2004. India also test fired Trishul, its short-range surface-to-air missile.

A new US government funded study finds it unlikely that terrorists will be able to steal Pakistani or Indian nuclear weapons.

President Pervez Musharraf has stated that Pakistan's "minimum deterrence needs would continue to be pursued, while avoiding an arms race."

Afghanistan

1. Current News

According to a daily News (Pakistan) report, the US forces have launched an operation aimed at capturing former Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The daily Frontier Post reports that the US army has increased its troops in Afghanistan's Nimrouz province that borders Iran. A single rocket was reportedly launched at a US special operations base in southeastern Afghanistan. General Dan McNeill, commander of US forces in Afghanistan, organized and mediated a meeting between Gul Agha Shirazi and Ismail Khan, governors of Khandahar and Herat province respectively. The meeting was aimed at easing tensions between the two former warlords. The UN is preparing a team to investigate the reports of a mass grave found in northern Afghanistan which is believed to contain bodies of hundreds of Taliban prisoners.

Campaign Against Al-Qaeda

1. News and Analysis

The Pakistani government has announced more arrests of alleged members of extremist religious groups. Rauf Klasra (News, Pakistan) reports that Pakistan has informed the US that 33 activists of the banned Harkatul ul Mujahidin Al-Alami - "equipped with deadly weapons like rocket launchers and detonators" - are still at large. Klasra also writes that Pakistan has asked the US to 'gradually' decrease FBI's role in Pakistan's campaign against extremist religious groups. Meanwhile, the FBI is reportedly planning to install close-circuit cameras at selective spots in Karachi. According to a government spokesperson, Pakistan has so far handed about 420 alleged al-Qaeda and Taliban activists to the US.

["Five Al Qaeda suspects held"](#)

["Five more Harkat men arrested"](#)

["IG confirms arrest of 7 suspected militants"](#)

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

India's Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha has stated that "there is no chance of a dialogue, until and unless Pakistan puts an end to cross-border terrorism." President Musharraf, on his part, stated that "if they don't want to talk to us, we don't want to talk to them either... there is no problem."

2. Analysis

M.P. Bhandara's essay in Dawn, Pakistan, notes ambiguities in President Musharraf's statements about Pakistan's role in supporting militancy in Kashmir and argues that "there should be no room for training camps in Pakistan or in Azad Kashmir."

["As grave peril persists"](#)

Pakistan

1. Domestic Situation

Unidentified assailants killed 7 Christian employees of a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Karachi. The killing was strongly condemned by Pakistan's political parties and NGOs. The daily Dawn called the killings a "chilling reminder of the growing threat posed to Pakistan's Christian community by extremists." The Daily Times writes that the killings show "our deep internal regression over the past three decades..."

["Political parties, NGOs condemn killings"](#)

The Super-7 fighter aircraft - result of the biggest-ever joint venture between Pakistan and China - will go through its first flight by June 2003 in China.

Pakistan's federal cabinet has approved the Freedom of Information Ordinance 2002 to 'ensure all citizens' access to public records.'

2. US - Pakistan Relations

Pakistani and US defense officials have restarted a joint consultative forum after a four-year suspension. The daily News (Pakistan) reports that the meeting is "unlikely to have any major breakthrough because of the reluctant approach by the US team .."

["Defence talks with US begin"](#)

India

1. India: Domestic Situation

Thirty people were killed when two gunmen attacked a Hindu temple in Gujarat. The gunmen were later killed in a commando strike. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) blamed Pakistan for the attack. Pakistan condemned the attack and called Indian allegations of Pakistan's role in the attack

"highly irresponsible." About 3000 Indian army troops were moved into Gujarat to prevent anti-Muslim violence in areas around Ahmadabad, the capital of Gujarat and the site of the attacked temple. The daily Hindu called upon "the entire political class .. [to] .. reach out to the masses with the message of communal amity and harmony, [and] not seek to drive a wedge between different religious groups for narrow partisan gains."

["Temple siege ends"](#)

["BJP blames Pak, Govt more subtle"](#)

["Army brigade moved to Ahmedabad"](#)

["No Godhra-II: Modi is given the message"](#)

["A heinous act"](#)

Amulya Ganguli (Hindustan Times) points out the links between the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and writes that a "multireligious country is unacceptable to the RSS which roots for a Hindu rashtra. And it doesn't care for democracy either."

The global credit-rating agency Standard and Poor's (S&P) has downgraded India's local currency rating to junk bond status. Indian Finance Ministry believes that S&P's poor rating will not affect India's economy. A Hindustan Times editorial states that S&P's rating "reflects the terrible absence of 'good governance' and the abject failure of the ruling coalition to push forward economic reforms."

["Reforms stuck, India's credit rating tumbles"](#)

Rajeev Dhaven's essay in the daily Hindu criticizes the forced eviction of Indian tribal people from their land following a recent Indian Supreme Court decision.

["Evicting 10 million tribals"](#)

2. US-India Relations

C. Raja Mohan (Hindu) believes that "as a rising power, India is more sympathetic to the American effort to rework the rules of the global game from which it could benefit. Europe, on the other hand, is a staunch defender of the present order."

["India and the U.S.-European divide"](#)

Kashmir

1. Elections

Increased violence preceded the second phase of polling in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) state elections.

["Militants kill constable, take two officers hostage"](#)

["Five troops killed in Valley"](#)

["14 injured in grenade blast"](#)

The second phase of polling in J&K ended with official voter turnout of 42 per cent. Two reports by Indian Express' Muzamil Jaleel describe the atmosphere and the activities surrounding the polling.

["42 p.c. turnout in second phase of J&K polls"](#)

["Phase 1 setback, militants strike night before Phase 2"](#)

["In Jammu and Valley, Phase Two tests positive too"](#)

Rajindar Sachar (Hindu) warns that "the mildly satisfactory polling should not deceive the

Government of India into assuming that people's resentment has vanished... It should initiate talks not only with the elected representatives but also other groups."

["Lessons of the Kashmir elections"](#)

Aditya Sinha's (Hindustan Times) essay provides a brief glimpse of how Omar Abdullah - expected to be the next Chief Minister of J&K - is viewed by people in the state.

2. India, Pakistan, US

Robert Blackwill, the US Ambassador to India, has stated that infiltration of militants across the line of control is "is certainly going on -- absolutely. Our judgment is it is up in August and up in September and we condemn it." Amin Lakhani's essay in the daily Dawn argues that "Pakistan should permanently cease its backing for any military action in Indian-controlled Kashmir. It should disarm all militants and disband all supporting camps and training facilities."

["Courage to compromise"](#)

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