

Multiple crises send Pakistan to the brink

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan faces a "perfect storm" of crises, with its US-backed fight against al-Qaeda and the Taliban faltering and the country lurching towards bankruptcy, analysts and opposition figures say.

Dramatic developments over the past week on both the security and economic fronts underscored more clearly than ever the massive challenges facing the fragile government of the world's only nuclear-armed Islamic nation.

First the International Monetary Fund announced on Wednesday that Islamabad had sought a politically unpopular rescue package to give the country the four billion dollars it needs to avoid defaulting on its foreign debts.

Parliament meanwhile ended a historic two-week session by passing a unanimous resolution that

called for an "urgent review" of Pakistan's role in the "war on terror" and for fresh talks with militant leaders.

"Pakistan is truly at a crossroads," Talat Masood, a leading security analyst and retired Pakistan army general, told AFP.

"If the economic situation continues to decline it will reinforce militancy and make it more difficult for the government to tackle. They need to do better than the past six or seven months," Masood said.

If local media dubbed the slaying of Benazir Bhutto as Pakistan's 9/11 and JFK rolled into one, the crisis now faced by President Asif Ali Zardari, her widower, is arguably even greater.

His government faces US pressure to crush militant safe havens in its tribal belt bordering Afghanistan, where al-Qaeda and Taliban rebels have formed new alliances seven years after fleeing

the US-led invasion of Afghanistan.

The army said Saturday it had turned a corner with the capture of a strategic town in the tribal zone of Bajaur after a two-month offensive. It has also hailed the formation of tribal militias opposed to the Taliban.

But in an apparent sign of US frustration, suspected US missile strikes on insurgent targets in Pakistan have soared in recent weeks. Eleven people were killed in an attack on a centre run by a leading Taliban commander on Thursday.

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani admitted the problems the government faces in a statement earlier this week, saying that the "very stability and survival of Pakistan is at stake."

"Our resources are over-stretched and our economy is severely impacted by each bomb blast and each suicide attack," he said.

But Zardari's efforts to win public support for an end to the violence ran into trouble when parliament dealt an apparent snub of Islamabad's alliance with Washington.

Its resolution on Wednesday night hit out at the US missile strikes and recommended increased talks with militants. Previous talks have been criticised by Islamabad's western allies for allowing the insurgents to regroup.

There was no mention meanwhile of Pakistan's powerful intelligence agencies -- accused by Washington and Kabul of sponsoring the very militants they were meant to be fighting.

Yet the government is being distracted by Pakistan's economic woes, a toxic brew of debt, inflation and a sinking currency redolent of the dark days of the 1990s before the coup that brought former president Pervez Musharraf to power.



An aerial view shows damaged buildings caused by floods in the eastern Yemeni province of Hadramaut on Saturday following two days of fierce storms. Aid operations swung into higher gear in Yemen Sunday after floods killed at least 58 people and six more died from lightning strikes during two days of fierce storms.

Obama tries to win over GOP-leaning Colorado

AP, Albuquerque

Barack Obama is trying to snag a win in Colorado, a state that twice sided with President Bush, as the race for the presidency whirls into its final days.

The Democratic contender could significantly boost his chances of locking up the magic number for victory 270 electoral votes if he could secure the nine votes Colorado offers. Polls give Obama a slight lead over Republican John McCain in the state.

Obama is holding rallies in Denver and Fort Collins on Sunday. McCain made three stops in Colorado on Friday, and both candidates' running mates have made recent visits, too.

Traditionally, Colorado has gone for Republicans in presidential races.

More broadly, Obama is using his record-breaking fundraising advantage to buy up media time and make what he hopes is a clos-

ing argument for the presidency. McCain and his team say the race is hardly over, particularly for a candidate who's had his share of comebacks.

Election Day is nine days away, on Nov. 4.

Confident and leading in most polls, Obama keeps playing on traditionally Republican turf. He is spending the diminishing campaign time in places that Bush won four years ago.

Obama on Saturday took shots at McCain's attempt to keep some distance between himself and Bush, a Republican president at a time when most people think the country is badly off track. The White House announced this week that Bush has already cast his vote for McCain.

"That's no surprise, because when it comes to the policies that matter for middle class families, there's not an inch of daylight between George Bush and John McCain," Obama said.

Bush leaves a world of trouble for successor

AFP, Washington

US President George W Bush's successor inherits a world of troubles come January, including wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, a defiant Iran, and a US economy battered by the global financial crisis.

The new president will take the reins of a limping superpower facing deep doubts overseas about the limits of its strength, and sharply diminished US standing even among Washington's closest friends, recent studies find.

"America's moral leadership and decision-making competence will continue to be questioned at home and abroad, despite the arrival of new leadership in Washington," a Georgetown University working group said earlier this year.

Already, both major contenders in the November 4 election

Bush's fellow Republican and chosen successor John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama -- have denounced the vastly unpopular president's policies and promised a new course.

"Restored respect will come only with fresh demonstrations of competence," the Georgetown group said in a study of US standing in the world and the foreign policy challenges of the next administration.

Bush leaves a mountain of unfinished business. Barring perhaps unimaginable breakthroughs, it will fall to one of his successors to end the US presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, herald the end of nuclear programmes in Iran and North Korea, and celebrate a lasting peace deal in the Middle East.

And the next president will certainly inherit a grim economy -- the White House this week pre-

dicted a sharp rise in unemployment, while some private-sector forecasts warn of a trillion-dollar budget deficit in 2009.

Bush will host a global crisis summit November 15 in Washington, but it will focus on laying out principles for overhauling regulations, while leaving that task and potentially the worst of the crisis to his successor.

The new president will likely face difficult decisions on Iraq. Recent US public opinion polls reveal new optimism amid decreased violence there, but most Americans still want US troops to come home as soon as possible.

And it is not clear whether US and Iraqi negotiators will agree on a long-term strategic pact and a separate deal spelling out the rights and duties of US troops before the UN mandate for their presence lapses in December.

Fears of confrontation, coup ease in Thailand

THE NATION/ ANN, Bangkok

Fears of political violence and a possible coup d'etat somewhat eased Saturday after the supposed plan to surround and dislodge the anti-government People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) protesters were denied by its architect, former deputy national police chief General Salang Bunnag.

Also, there was an assurance from the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces General Songkitti Jakkabat that there will be no coup.

But Salang yesterday said he merely postponed his plan to besiege the Government House from Saturday to Monday.

Songkitti told reporters that any talk of another coup is a "rumour" and insisted that the armed forces definitely have no such idea. Coup is not good for the country.

Songkitti argued, and those who kept on talking about it are like old records repeating themselves. The armed forces' role is to protect national sovereignty.

Songkitti was asked what he thought of the scheduled phone-in talk from London by convicted former premier Thaksin Shinawatra. He said it's still unclear what Thaksin wished to communicate. "He may just want to greet

others, that's all," the supreme commander replied.

The supreme commander urged the media to be more reliable and responsible in reporting, citing Salang's denial Saturday that he had ever told the media that he would surround and dislodge PAD protesters from the Government House. Salang's apparent backtracking didn't stop the PAD from calling for the First Army Division to intervene and protect protesters if they're under threat by Salang's men.

The Government House, which was taken over by the PAD in August was fenced off with barbed wires Saturday, and more car tyres were placed to protect the protest site. Security has also been beefed up and those entering and leaving the Government House compound were being searched.

Pipop Thongchai, a PAD leader, said the PAD would remain on alert for possible attack by Salang and government supporters.

Meanwhile Commander of the First Army Division, Lt-General Kanit Sapitak said the public should not be alarmed by troop movements starting Sunday as they will stage a military parade drill in Bangkok in preparation for His Majesty the King's birthday in December.

Rebels seize east Congo army camp

Thousands flee homes in fear

AP, Kibumba

Rebels and UN officials say fighters of a renegade general have seized a major army camp in eastern Congo in heavy fighting that sent thousands of civilians fleeing.

Refugees say an unknown number of soldiers, rebels following Gen. Laurent Nkunda, and civilians have been killed.

Government troops raced to reinforce a counterattack Sunday morning and one tank careened into a group of fleeing civilians and killed three teenage boys.

Associated Press reporters who watched the fathers burying their sons in a cabbage patch at Kibumba could hear bombing from army tanks about 12 miles from the Rumangabo army camp.

It is the second time rebels have seized the army base since fighting resumed Aug. 28 in North Kivu province. cs

Bitter infighting over 'diva' Palin in McCain campaign

AFP, Waterloo

Bitter infighting between aides to John McCain and Sarah Palin erupted into public view on Saturday in a sign of tension gripping the Republican camp with the election 10 days away.

A series of recent surveys have suggested Palin's presence on the ticket is hurting McCain's chances in the November 4 election, at a time when Democratic rival Barack Obama has surged clear in most key polls.

The inquests into what has gone wrong with McCain's campaign appear to have already begun, according to reports, with Palin's camp blaming the Arizona senator's senior advisers for mismanaging her contribution.

The Politico.com website cited four Republicans close to Palin as saying she had grown frustrated by advice given to her by campaign handlers, whom her supporters blame for a series of public relations gaffes.

The report said Palin was now increasingly willing to disregard orders from advisors, suggesting

the Republican running mate was in the initial stages of forging her own identity for a future tilt at the White House.

"She's lost confidence in most of the people on the plane," said a senior Republican quoted by Politico, adding that Palin had already begun to "go rogue" in some of her public pronouncements on the campaign trail.

The Alaska Governor's supporters accused McCain strategist Steve Schmidt and senior aide Nicole Wallace of blaming Palin for the failure of the campaign.

"These people are going to try and shred her after the campaign to divert blame from themselves," a McCain insider was quoted by Politico as saying.

When asked to comment on the Politico story by AFP, Wallace said in an email: "I have no comment other than what's in the story, if people wish to throw me under the bus, my personal belief is that the graceful thing to do is to lie there."

Later Saturday, Politico quoted McCain advisers reacting angrily to the report, branding Palin a "diva."

Israeli PM-designate wants early elections

AP, Jerusalem

Prime Minister-designate Tzipi Livni yesterday abandoned her efforts to form a new coalition government and said she would recommend early parliamentary elections.

Palestinians worried the decision could put already fragile peace talks in limbo for months until the elections are held. The balloting could also clear the way for opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu, who rejects sweeping territorial

concessions to the Palestinians, to reclaim the premiership.

Livni has been trying to cobble together a government since she took over as head of the ruling Kadima Party from the corruption-tainted Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in September. But partners in the current coalition, which took power in May 2006, used the changing of the guard to press new demands.

In a statement Sunday, Livni said she was willing to make con-

cessions but had to put a stop to "impossible" demands.

"When it became clear that everyone and every party was exploiting the opportunity to make demands that were economically and diplomatically illegitimate, I decided to call off (talks) and go to elections," she said.

Early elections had appeared likely since Friday, when the ultra-Orthodox Shas Party announced it would not join a Livni-led government.

Iraqi Sunni bloc breaks ties with US after killing

AFP, Fallujah

A leading Iraqi Sunni political bloc, said on Saturday it is breaking ties with US forces in the former rebel bastion of Fallujah after troops killed one of its members.

But the American military said US and Iraqi troops killed an armed man who fired on them during an operation to arrest a suspected "terrorist" on Friday.

The Iraqi Islamic Party, headed by Iraq's Sunni Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi, said troops raided the house of one of their members and during the raid a party member was killed and five others arrested.

Following the incident, "Iraqi Islamic Party has decided to suspend all ties with the American military and civil personnel until it receives an apology," the party said in a statement.

It said the incident occurred in western Fallujah late night Friday.

On Saturday, the supporters of the party protested in Fallujah and demanded the release of the five

arrested members, an AFP correspondent reported.

In a statement the US military said Iraqi and US forces arrested a suspected militant leader from Hamas al-Iraq group following a warrant issued by the interior ministry.

It said the suspect is said to be responsible for training groups in manufacturing and planting of bombs.


As Iraqi and coalition forces, who assisted in the operation, entered the home of the suspect they came under fire from an armed man within the house, the military statement said.

They returned fire and killed the man who was later believed to be a bodyguard of the suspect, it said, adding only the suspect had been arrested.

Troops also confiscated a cache of homemade explosives, detonation cord and blasting caps in the room where they arrested the suspected militant, the statement added.



Iraqi Sunni Muslims demonstrate on Saturday in Fallujah to protest against the killing of one of their member by the US troops during a raid in town on October 24. A leading Iraqi Sunni political bloc, said it is breaking ties with US forces in the former rebel bastion of Fallujah after troops killed one of its members.



Reedisha Knitex Limited

Reedisha Knitex Limited; a latest and composite textile unit with a unique rising image. This is the sister concern of a reputed industrial group of the nation. To support its continuous expansion and to cope with the larger production schedules, we are looking for the professional to fulfill the requirements of this composite unit that involves knitting, dyeing, finishing and knit garments. The plant is located in Nayanpur, Sreepur (Gazipur) & Head Office in Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka.

Sr. Vice President (Marketing & Merchandising)

Job Profile:

- ✓ Control the Marketing & Merchandising Department as Departmental head. Reporting to The Managing Director.
- ✓ To export 1.5 million pieces of 3 million USD per month.
- ✓ Handle 40 members of merchandising team and 8 existing buyers.
- ✓ New buyers and market development

Pre-requisite to apply for this position:

- ✓ Masters in related subject from any reputed university.
- ✓ Minimum 15 years of experience in marketing & merchandising in knit garments. Out of those 2-3 years as head of marketing & merchandising department.
- ✓ Should possess in depth knowledge on Import/Export procedure, Documentation, Shipment, L/C, Banking, Customs, BGMEA, EPB etc.
- ✓ Able to manage high and diverse workload and to meet the deadlines.
- ✓ Able to work independently with buyers, local and overseas suppliers.
- ✓ Ability to control merchandising team in an effective and efficient manner.
- ✓ Well conversant with electronic communications.
- ✓ Able to work under pressure.

Should be a team player with commitment and dedication.

Call for the Leader

Only the eligible candidates will be short listed for interview. If you think you are the right person we are looking for, please Apply with full confidence with your detailed CV and two recent colored photographs mentioning the position above the envelope to the following address by 10/11/2008 or mail to aypadmin@kcccl-bd.com

Director (Corporate Affairs)
Kohinoor Chemical Co. (BD) Ltd.
 36, Shahid Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani,
 Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208