

Pakistan 'disturbed' over Indian N-tests

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan said yesterday it was disturbed by reports that India might be considering additional nuclear tests after doubts were raised about the success of its 1998 tests.

Indian nuclear scientist S Santhanam, who was a director for 1998's test-site preparations, has claimed that the tests were only partially successful and the results were much weaker than claimed at the time.

In a reported statement urging India not to sign the comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty, Santhanam said the 1998 explosions did not yield the desired results as the thermonuclear devices tested were a "fizzle."

"We are disturbed by media reports that India might be considering additional tests," foreign ministry spokesman Abdul Basit told a weekly press briefing Thursday.

India's Atomic Energy commission chief Anil Kakodkar denied Wednesday that the country was planning any more tests, however, and Santhanam's "fizzle" claims have been rejected by Indian government and other nuclear officials.

"We have enough data. We have comprehensive simulation capability and therefore there is no need for any more tests," Kakodkar told local news agency PTI from Mumbai.

India carried out nuclear tests on May 11 and 13, 1998 and Pakistan responded days later with six tit-for-tat tests, on May 28 and 30.

Islamabad, however, unilaterally announced a moratorium on further testing if India did not carry out additional tests.

Basit said Pakistan hoped the moratorium would continue to be observed.

"We hope that the unilateral moratorium on testing effective since 1998 will continue to be maintained," Basit added.

PML-N will not indulge in 'undemocratic' method to overthrow govt: Sharif

ANI, Lahore

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief Nawaz Sharif has said his party would not get involved in any 'undemocratic' process to bring down the ruling PPP government.

Interacting with media persons here, Sharif said a change of regime would not resolve the crisis being faced by the country at present.

"We will not take part in any undemocratic process to overthrow the present government," The News quoted Sharif, as saying.

He asked the Gilani government to come forward for talks with the PML-N to solve all pending issues in accordance with the Charter of Democracy (CoD).

Commenting on former President General Pervez Musharraf's visit to Saudi Arabia, Sharif said he has no knowledge about the former general's purpose of visit.

The former Prime Minister asked Riyadh to not to meddle in Pakistan's internal matters.

"Saudi Arab ought not to be involved in the politics of Pakistan and I have no idea as to why Musharraf visited the kingdom," Sharif said.



Indian Congress party workers place flowers by a portrait of deceased Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Rajasekar Reddy at Gandhi Bhavan in Hyderabad yesterday. Reddy and four others went missing after leaving Hyderabad at 8.30 am on Wednesday in a helicopter later found in the south-eastern state's dense mountain forest with its dead passengers.

PHOTO: AFP



Indonesian residents stand beside a collapsed house following an earthquake in Tasikmalaya town in West Java yesterday. Rescue workers on Indonesia's Java island searched by hand for dozens of people trapped by a major 7.0-magnitude earthquake that killed at least 57, officials said.

PHOTO: AFP

Blind, yet they set green mark

FROM PAGE 1

Monzurul Islam, a born blind now in his early 30s, of Mirganj village of Jaldhaka, has deep love for trees. As an escape from childhood pangs and agonies, Islam used to take refuge under a large banyan tree at one corner of his village. He used to rest under it to feel relieved and eventually fall asleep with the touch of its gentle breeze.

As Monzurul became grown up, he got acquainted with other blind men of his neighbourhoods and started sharing their thoughts and ideas on every haat-day (weekly bazaar) as they used to meet at a place beside Mirganj haat. That was the place where the village nursery owners used to come and sit with saplings of different trees for sale.

Sometimes as the nursery owners would throw away a few rejected saplings from their lots, Islam and his sightless friends used to pick those up and plant beside the roads. To their pleasure, some saplings survived and became trees.

In 2007, Islam and nine other blind persons formed an association—Mirganj Shapla Protibondhi Unnayan Samity—with a motto to plant more trees.

Upon their application, Mirganj Union Parishad permitted them to plant trees on a 2-km stretch roadside from Mirganj haat to Am Bagan for ten years.

The union parishad also allowed the blind men's Samity to take 80 percent from the sales proceeds of the trees after 10 years of their plantation while the remaining 20 percent would be equally shared by the parishad and the roadside people.

Monzurul Islam told The Daily Star that in the first phase they had targeted to plant 1,000 trees in the rainy season of 2008. To purchase tree saplings, fertiliser, and bamboo sticks the association members started contributing Tk 50 each in the following few months, he recalled.

Ismail Hossain, the secretary of the association, said some of the group members had hard time giving the monthly contribution of Tk 50 but yet they have succeeded to create a fund. Eventually, they planted 850 saplings in 2008 while 650 this year on both sides of the two km road from Mirganj haat to Am Bagan, he said.

The efforts of the blind people have created an enthusiasm among the surrounding villagers. They have also extended their helping hands to them. Mirganj Hafizia Madrasa teacher Moinul Islam said he had directed his students to take care of the trees so that cattle do not cause any harm.

Some of the trees planted in 2008 have become 8-10 feet tall. They are spreading branches to create a green landscape on the horizon. The

blind people take rest under them while they become tired nursing the trees. Sometimes birds sit on branches and start chirping, sometimes gentle breeze blows creating a rhythmic sound of leaves, locals said.

A member of the union parishad Alimuddin said 95 percent trees have survived thanks to the sincere care of the blind men.

Jatindranath Rishi, a rehabilitation assistant of RDSS, an NGO working for handicapped people in the area, said they have provided white canes to the blind people. He holds monthly meetings with

them to train them in income generating activities like tree plantation.

Mirganj Union Parishad Chairman Mir Hamidul Ehsan Chanu told this correspondent that the blind people of his area have proved their utility as they are contributing to preserving the environment.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Jaldhaka Shahidul Islam Bhuyan said the blind people have proved that they are no more burdens to the society. Their effort is a message to all that the days are changing to turn the handicapped into manpower, he added.

News in Brief

2 cops killed in Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar

Two Indian policemen were killed when a group of heavily-armed militants ambushed their patrol in a southern district of revolt-hit Kashmir, police said yesterday.

The ambush took place late Wednesday in a remote village of Rajouri district, bordering Pakistan-administered Kashmir, a police spokesman said.

Militants have launched series of attacks in the restive region since Ramadan began on August 13.

11 feared dead in Afghan floods

AFP, Jalalabad

Flash floods in Afghanistan washed away homes and farmland, leaving up to 11 people feared dead a day after a suicide attack in the same province, an official said Thursday.

Triggered by, unseasonal downpours overnight, the floods destroyed three mud-brick houses and damaged many others in a valley in Alingar district of Laghman province, said Sayed Ahmad Safi, spokesman for the provincial governor.

Afghan envoys call for 'fair' election outcome

AFP, Paris

Top envoys for Afghanistan called Wednesday for a "fair" election process to prevail after claims of massive fraud cast a pall over the presidential vote and a suicide bomb attack left more than 20 dead.

Washington's special envoy Richard Holbrooke insisted Western powers would not interfere with the choice of the Afghan people as he met in Paris with his counterparts from 26 countries and organisations.

"We have no candidates and no preference as to a first-round victory or a run-off," President Barack Obama's representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan told a news conference at the French foreign ministry.

"Our advocacy is for a fair process overseen by the Independent Electoral Commission, taking into account the decisions of the electoral complaints commission," he added, insisting claims of ballot fraud would be addressed.

Diplomats had previously said Holbrooke would prefer Afghanistan to hold a second round run-off between President Hamid Karzai and his rival Abdullah Abdullah to improve the credibility of a race marred by fraud claims.

Afghanistan's election commission is investigating more than 2,500 complaints of irregularities from the August 20 vote.

Washington's relations with Karzai have grown strained while public opinion in the US and Europe has cooled over what is seen as an ill-defined Afghan campaign bogged down in violence.



(From left) International special envoys for Afghanistan and Pakistan, French Thierry Mariani, US Richard Holbrooke, France's Foreign Affairs Minister Bernard Kouchner, UN secretary general's special envoy, Norwegian Kai Eide, and European Union special envoy Ettore Sequi, attend a press conference after their meeting on Wednesday in Paris.

PHOTO: AFP

Suu Kyi files appeal against conviction

AP, Yangon

Lawyers for detained Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi filed an appeal Thursday against the criminal conviction that put her under house arrest for 18 more months.

A district court ruled on Aug. 11 that the 64-year-old Nobel Peace Prize laureate was guilty of violating the terms of her earlier detention after an uninvited American visitor stayed at her home. The court sentenced her to three years in prison with hard labor, but that was reduced to 18 months of house arrest by order of military junta chief Senior Gen. Than Shwe.

Suu Kyi's legal team submitted the appeal to the Divisional Court in Yangon, which said it would decide Friday whether to accept the appeal, said lawyer Nyan Win.

"We submit the appeal because the judgment against Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was wrongful," Nyan Win said. Daw is a respectful term for a woman.

Suu Kyi earlier described the conviction as unfair and the court's assessment of the case as unjust.

The appeal argues that the law cited by authorities is invalid because it applies to a constitution abolished two decades ago, head lawyer Kyi Win said.

Chandrayaan-I image confirmed US moon landing

AFP, Panaji

India's first lunar mission has captured images of the landing site of the Apollo 15 craft, debunking theories that the US mission was a hoax, the country's state-run space agency said Wednesday.

"The images captured by a hyper-spectral camera fitted as a part of Chandrayaan-I... has reconfirmed the veracity of the Apollo 15 mission," said Prakash Chauhan, from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Nasa's 12-day Apollo 15 mission in 1971 was the first designed to explore the surface of the moon in great detail and over a long period.

But it and others in the Apollo project, including the Apollo 11 mission in 1969, when astronauts first stepped on the moon, have been the subject of a catalogue of conspiracy theories ever since.

Chauhan said Chandrayaan-I, which India launched late last year, located the Apollo 15 landing site by identifying disturbances on the moon's dark surface.

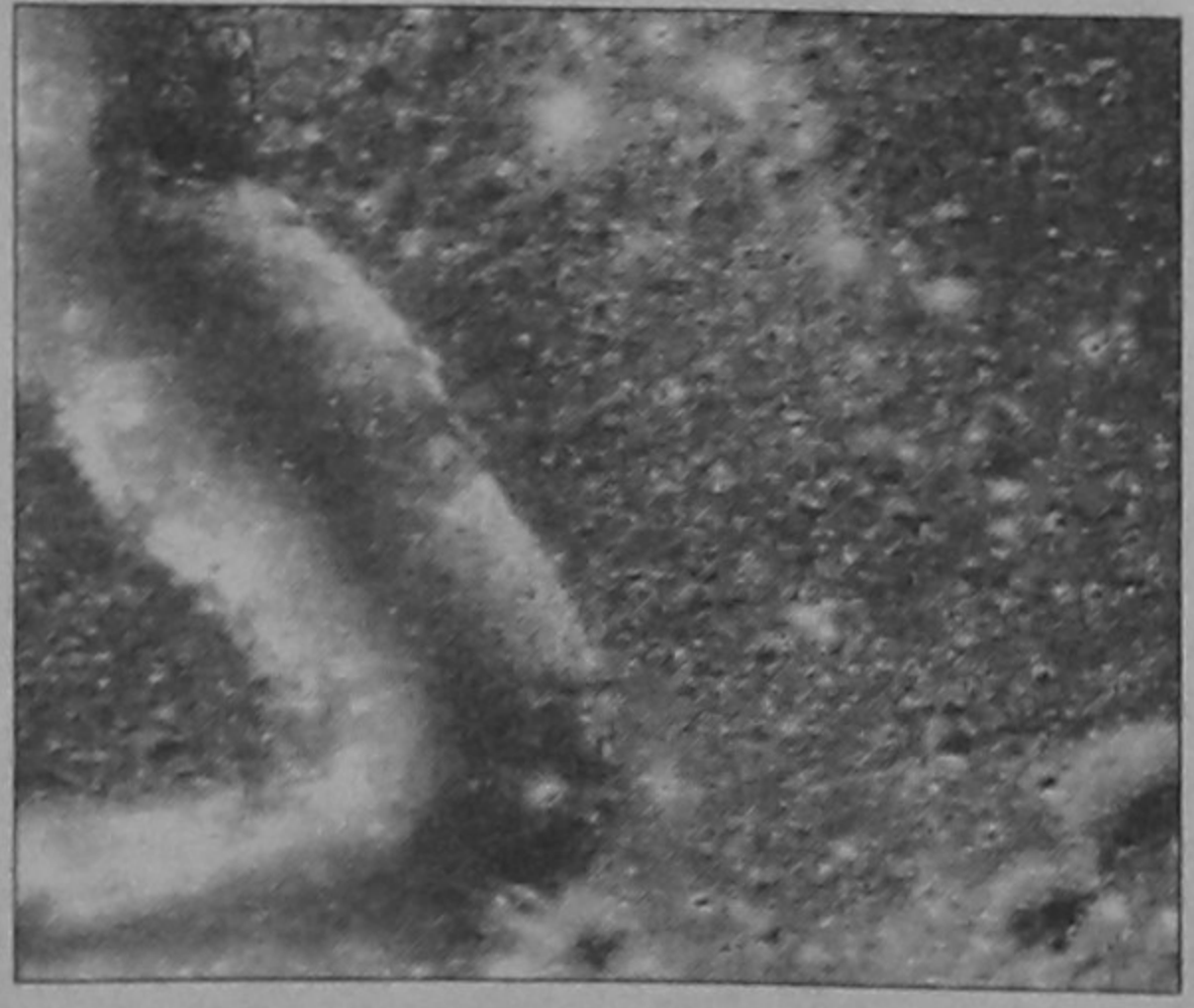
"The disturbed surface is bright," he said, in a presentation in the western state of Goa, where a conference on space missions is being held.

"Our images also show tracks left behind by the lunar rovers which were used by the astronauts."

US, Japanese and Russian scientists have previously found evidence of Apollo 15's landing site by studying photographs.

Chauhan said Chandrayaan-I's findings were further, "independent corroboration" of the landing, adding to other evidence of the Apollo missions, including photographs and analysis of rock samples.

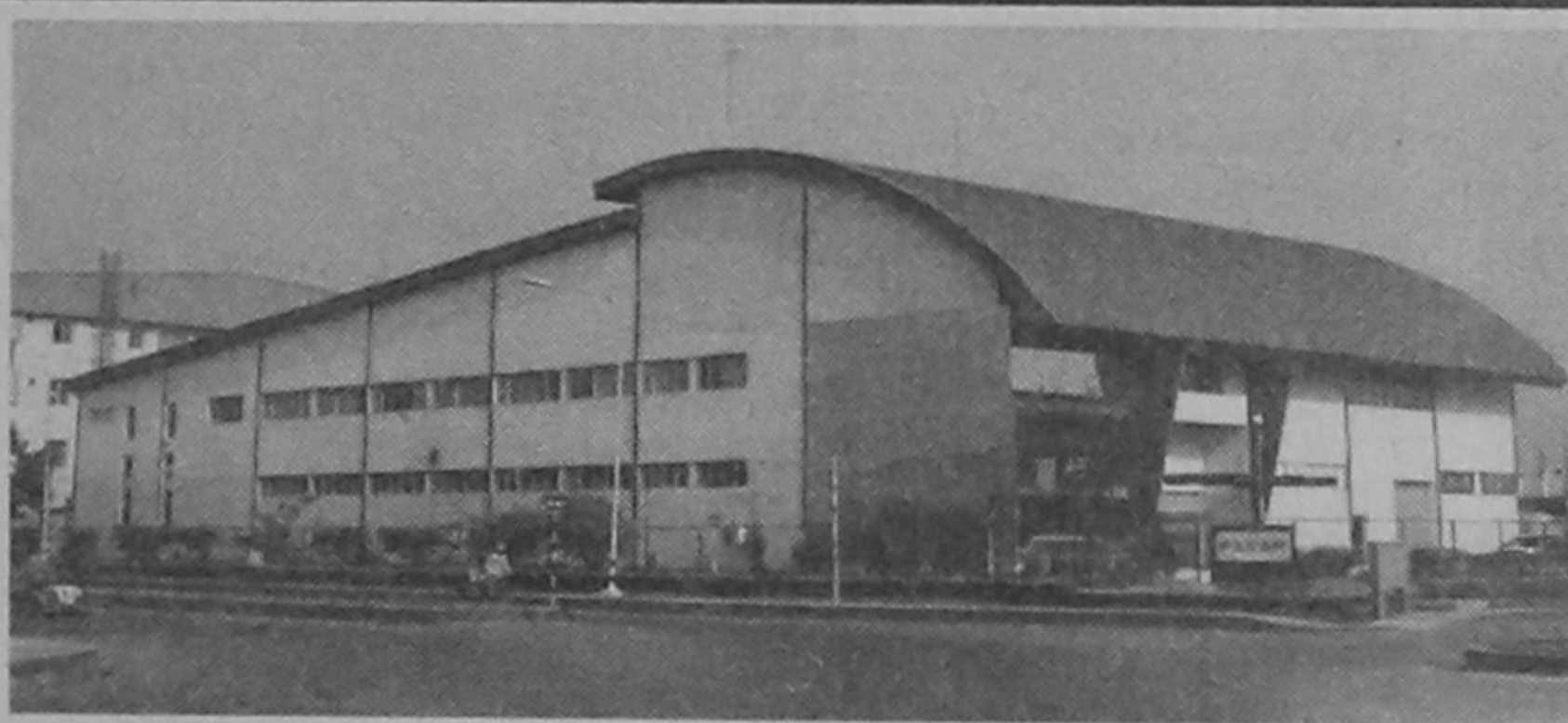
The images were among 70,000 taken by the Chandrayaan-I craft before the mission was aborted last weekend. Scientists blamed a computer malfunction for cutting communications with the orbiter.



A handout from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Wednesday purportedly shows a three-dimensional image of the moon landing site of Nasa's Apollo 15 spacecraft. The image was taken by a camera on board India's Chandrayaan-I lunar orbiter, which was launched late 2008.

PHOTO: AFP

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Manager, Planning

To lead and supervise the planning team is the prime responsibility of this position. This role has the responsibility to get the maximum performance from his workforce to meet the organization goals and objectives. He has to make the short term as well as long term production plan optimizing material and capacity utilization. Ideally the candidate should be B.Sc in Mechanical or Industrial Engineering with at least 5 - 6 years of experience in similar capacity, preferably in multinational companies. The candidate must be result-oriented individual with excellent interpersonal and leadership qualities to lead his team. Ability to communicate effectively and good working knowledge in MS Office is essential. Excellent analytical ability is also the prerequisite for this position.

Executive, Product Development

Candidates for this position must be BBA/ MBA from reputed university. Attention to detail and being an excellent organizer are necessary qualities for success. Ideally this position requires 2-3 years of experience in relevant fields. The ideal candidate must possess excellent written and spoken English skills. Similar language skills in French, German or Spanish can be an added advantage.

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Candidates for this position must possess at least 3-4 years of experience in Mac Operating System to work in a highly sophisticated digital pre-press environment. Excellent knowledge in application packages such as Photoshop, QuarkXpress, Illustrator, In-Design, Barcode Freehand etc. is essential. Practical experience in designing garments item and fluency in English are also prerequisites. Experience in Platesetter/imagesetter work environment and programming knowledge in File Maker, Fox Pro can be an added advantage.

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