

US won't mediate Indo-Pak conflict, says Obama

Washington sees Pakistan's progress on extremism

ANI, AFP, Washington

The United States will not mediate from outside to resolve all conflicts between India and Pakistan, President Barack Obama told a joint news conference with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday.

Obama took note of the historic animosity between Pakistan and India.

"Obviously there are historic conflicts between India and Pakistan. It is not the place of United States to try to...from the outside resolve all those conflicts. On the other hand we want to be encouraging of ways in which both India and Pakistan can feel secure and focus on the development of their own countries and their people," he said.

Prime Minister Singh said he was satisfied with the outcome of his discussions with Obama.

"The President and myself had a very productive and useful exchange of views relating to security, peace and counter-terrorism in our region. I am very satisfied with the outcome of my discussions with President Obama," Singh said.

Obama said Tuesday he believed Pakistan was making progress in fighting extremism as he tried to assuage India's

concerns about its historic rival.

"Pakistan has an enormously important role in the security of the region by making sure that the extremist organisations that often operate out of its territories are dealt with effectively," Obama said.

"And we've seen some progress," he said.

He was speaking at a joint news conference with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who has called for greater pressure on Pakistan to rein in extremists one year after the grisly assault on Mumbai that left 166 dead.

Many Indians have been uneasy about oversight of a giant 7.5 billion-dollar US aid package for Pakistan, which Obama hopes will bring development to Pakistan and reduce the appeal of Islamists.

Obama pointed to Pakistan's offensive against Taliban insurgents in the Swat Valley and South Waziristan as a sign of progress.

The operation "indicates the degree to which they are beginning to recognise that extremism, even if initially directed to the outside, can ultimately also have an adverse impact on their security internally," Obama said.

President Obama said he will

announce a new US strategy for Afghanistan soon and that his intention will be to have a plan to "finish the job" there after eight years of war.

Influential voices in Obama's national security cabinet, including Defence Secretary Robert Gates and military chiefs, favour a US troop increase of 30,000-plus, officials said. The final number could reach 35,000 once US trainers are factored in, but estimates on the number of trainers vary widely.

Obama would not be drawn out on specifics but said he would have an announcement after this week's Thanksgiving holiday. He is expected to give a prime-time address next Tuesday.

"Afghanistan's stability is important to that process. I have also indicated that after eight years some of those years in which we did not have, either the resources or the strategy to get the job done. It is my intention to finish the job," Obama said a day after his final meeting with his war council about his new strategy.

Under pressure from Democrats and many Americans to find a way out of Afghanistan, Obama said it is going to be important to recognise that the Afghan people "are ultimately going to have to provide for their own security."



US President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama greet Indian President Manmohan Singh and his wife Gursharan Kaur at the North Portico of the White House on Tuesday as the Obamas host their first official State Dinner.

Pak TV networks accused of fanning political instability

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's television networks are heaping political pressure on an increasingly unpopular President Asif Ali Zardari with critical and influential programming that offers a voice to the poor.

In the decade since military ruler Pervez Musharraf issued licences and softened state control on media after seizing power, more than 50 channels have mushroomed in the country, with around half dedicated to news broadcasts.

The channels have become campaigners against the leadership, have whipped up fervour for and against the Taliban, have embarrassed the security services and sown fear with 24-hour coverage of attacks beamed into living rooms.

"The government is under constant pressure from the media," Muttahir Sheikh, head of international relations at Karachi University, told AFP.

A recent Gallup survey claimed that more than half of

Pakistanis -- 57 percent of those polled -- blame the media for stirring up political instability in the country, which has known regular periods of military rule.

There are dozens of private satellite channels based in Pakistan and abroad that present every possible political opinion, pumping out news and debate in Urdu, English and regional languages to the country's 167 million people.

Owned by newspaper groups, wealthy businessmen and private individuals, critics accuse them of sensationalism and peddling conspiracy theories, particularly about perceived interference from India and the United States.

Renowned author Ahmed Rashid accuses talk show hosts of "demonising the elected government, trying to convince viewers of global conspiracies against Pakistan led by India and the United States or insisting that the recent campaign of suicide

bomb blasts... is being orchestrated by foreigners."

"The campaign waged by some politicians and parts of the media -- with underlying pressure from the army -- is all about trying to build public opinion to make Zardari's tenure untenable," he wrote on the BBC website.

This week, authorities banned a Dubai-based show presented by an outspoken critic of the government on Pakistan's most influential private channel, Geo.

"Apparently the Pakistani government, President Zardari to be specific, used his position to get the authorities in Dubai to impose a ban on the airing of the programme," Azhar Abbas, Geo's managing director, told AFP.

"The government is unnerved and uneasy over the independent criticism it faces in our unbiased programmes. But instead of countering argument with argument it goes for tactics which bring more embarrassment."



Indian President Pratibha Patil gestures before being strapped into the cockpit of an Indian Air Force Sukhoi SU-30 MKI fighter jet at the Lohegaon airbase in Pune yesterday.

Indian president makes history by flying in a fighter

ANI, Pune

President Pratibha Devisingh Patil created history yesterday by becoming the first serving female head of state to fly in an Indian Air Force Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter aircraft from the Lohegaon Air Force Base here. What was even more remarkable was the fact that she achieved the feat at the ripe age of 74.

Patil landed at the air force base after 22 minutes of flying.

The Indian Air Force had earlier chalked out a special rectangular navigation route for Patil's maiden sortie, which was originally scheduled to last for 30 minutes. The aircraft is said to have touched a maximum speed of 0.9 Mach (700 to 900 kmph).

President Patil was accompanied an award winning Wing Commander Sajan, who has 3200 hours of Sukhoi flying experience.

She thus becomes the second President to have flown in a Sukhoi after her predecessor APJ Abdul Kalam.



Members of an Indian "laughter club" participate in a laughter therapy session at the popular Gateway of India monument plaza in Mumbai yesterday opposite the landmark Taj Mahal hotel which was attacked by militants one year ago.

First birthday for baby 'Bullet' born during Mumbai attacks

AFP, Mumbai

Shamu Lakshman Chavan and his wife Viju look like any other proud parents in the Colaba Woods Garden in south Mumbai, playing with their young daughter as she wriggles and gurgles in their arms.

The other children here though are unlikely to have had such a dramatic entry into the world as Tejaswini, who was born one year ago on Thursday.

Her mother went into labour at the city's Cama and Alibless Hospital on November 26 last year, just as two heavily armed gunmen began stalking the building's corridors and eight others laid siege to India's financial capital.

The gunmen had fled to the maternity hospital after killing 52 people and injuring more than 100 others at the city's main railway station in a blitz of automatic gunfire and hand grenades.

Viju said she was oblivious to the danger and thought the shooting was the sound of firecrackers on a marriage procession.



Shamu Lakshman Chavan holds his baby daughter Tejaswini (R), who is nicknamed 'Goli', (bullet) because she was born during the Mumbai attacks last year, in the Colaba Woods Garden in Mumbai. Shamu's wife Viju went into labour at the city's Cama and Alibless Hospital on November 26, 2008, just as two heavily armed gunmen began stalking the building's corridors and eight others laid siege to India's financial capital.

Mumbai marks 26/11 attack anniversary

India to have integrated coastal security: Antony

PTI, INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Mumbai/ New Delhi

Amid the ongoing blame-game in Mumbai's police establishment over who failed in the line of duty, the bustling metropolis will observe today the first anniversary of the 26/11 terror attack in solemn remembrance of those who lost their lives.

Former Mumbai police commissioner Hasan Gafoor's interview to a news magazine wherein he said that a section of senior police officers refused to be on the ground and take on the terrorists, touched off an avoidable controversy on the eve of the anniversary, prompting Chief Minister Ashok Chavan to say, "police are a very disciplined organisation and this (remarks) does not fit into it."

The report of the government-appointed Ram Pradhan Committee, which went into the lapses leading to one of the most brazen terror strikes in

recent memory, is yet to be made public though "relevant portions" were tabled in the Legislature.

Earlier just a day before the first anniversary of the attack on Mumbai by sea-borne terrorists, Defence Minister AK Antony said an integrated approach has been put in place for the security of country's 7,516-km long shoreline.

Replying to a question in the Lok Sabha, Antony said that to check the effectiveness of the new system, joint and operational exercises between navy, the Coast Guard, police and customs are being undertaken.

"The government has accorded top priority to coastal security and for this an integrated approach has been put in place. The intelligence-sharing mechanism has been streamlined through the creation of joint operation centres and multi-agency coordination mechanism," Antony said.

LIBERHAN REPORT BJP turns to Vajpayee again for a rescue

NDTV, New Delhi

It's up to Atal Behari Vajpayee again to rescue the BJP from a new crisis.

The party says the Liberhan Report cannot be considered credible because it includes the former prime minister among 68 people culpable of leading the country to the brink of communal discord. But the same commission that indicted him did not ever serve him a notice, asking him to appear before it, points out the BJP, hoping that this will provide it with the loophole to challenge the report.

The Liberhan Commission has indicted the BJP's top rung for the demolition of the Babri Masjid. In particular, it slams Kalyan Singh, then the BJP chief minister of UP, for paralysing his administration into "ineffectiveness" till the demolition was complete. Singh has rejected those charges, but describes December 6, 1992, the day the Masjid was demolished, as "the proudest day of my life." He has also said he has no remorse or regrets over the demolition.

Cassini captures 'ghostly dance' of Saturn's northern lights

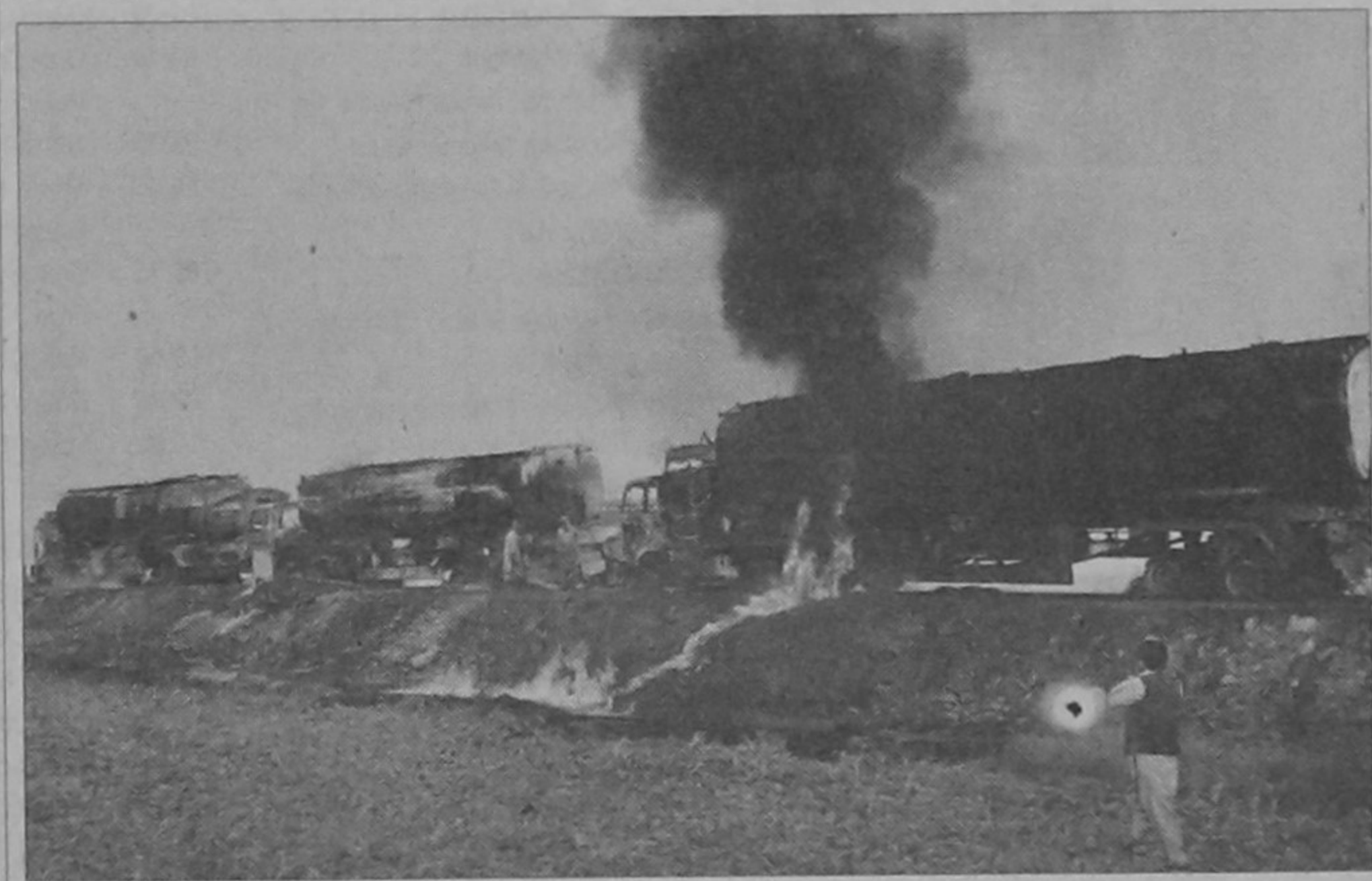
ANI, Washington

In the first video showing the auroras above the northern latitudes of Saturn, Cassini has spotted the tallest known "northern lights" in the solar system, flickering in shape and brightness in a 'ghostly dance' high above the ringed planet.

The new video reveals changes in Saturn's aurora every few minutes, in high resolution, with three dimensions.

The images show a previously unseen vertical profile to the auroras, which ripple in the video like tall curtains.

These curtains reach more than 1,200km above the edge of the planet's northern hemisphere.



Pakistani drivers stand beside burning oil tankers in Dera Allah Yar, a town in Jafarabad district some 400km south of Quetta, on Tuesday. Gunmen in southwest Pakistan torched four Nato vehicles carrying fuel for its forces fighting Taliban insurgents in neighbouring Afghanistan.

'Pak Army controlled back channel talked with India during PML-Q regime'

ANI, Lahore

At the time when Islamabad is pushing for resolution of the Kashmir issue in accordance with the UN resolutions of 1948 and 1949, Pakistan Muslim League -Quaid (PML-Q) Secretary General Humayun Akhtar Khan has revealed that the PML-Q government was involved in back-channel diplomacy with India to resolve the long-pending issue.

Addressing a joint press conference with PML-Q's dissident group's leader Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri here, Khan said Islamabad had reached a formula on the issue which was acceptable to a majority of Kashmiri leaders, The Daily Times reports.

Khan said while officials from both India and Pakistan were engaged in backdoor talks, it was the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Army which were the actual players in the dialogue.

"Two officials of the foreign ministry were engaged in backdoor talks with India,

however, the main task in this regard was under the control of Pak Army and ISI," Khan said.

Interacting with media persons during the press conference, Kasuri said President Obama should fulfil his promise regarding the Kashmir issue.

Referring to the Indo-US civil nuclear deal, he urged Washington to sign a similar deal with Islamabad.

Kasuri criticised the incumbent PPP government for damaging Pakistan's interests, and added that it was the PML-Q's regime, which "convinced" India to pull out troops from Kashmir.

He said the PML-Q government never took notes from foreign countries, particularly the US.

"The previous government followed the dictates of America neither on the issue of sending troops to Iraq nor did it take part in resolution against Iran. The foreign policy during its regime was completely independent and its truly acted like a government of a sovereign state," Kasuri added.

Talks with Taliban may fail to yield results: US

ANI, Washington

The United States has confirmed that it would support any initiative for talks with the Taliban in Afghanistan, however any such plan for a dialogue with the insurgents is unlikely to yield the desired results.

According to sources, only middle rank Taliban leaders have agreed for the talks, and any decision made by these leaders would not have any major impact on Afghan insurgency.

Sources privy to the issue said US' talks with former Taliban Ambassador to Pakistan Mullah Mutawakil and Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef might also fail to produce results.

Mutawakil and Zaeef do not enjoy the Taliban's support and are looked upon with disregard by the current Taliban leadership following their surrender to the US earlier in the Afghan war.

US officials have made it clear that the Obama administration has no issues in

holding talks with the Afghan Taliban, and that it would support any initiatives by other countries in this regard.

Obama's Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke confirmed that Saudi Arabia has initiated a dialogue with the Taliban, which the US dully supports.

"I have talked to the Saudis. I've been to Riyadh. I talked to King Abdullah about it myself. We would be supportive of anything that the kingdom chose to do in this regard," The Dawn quoted Holbrooke, as saying.

Holbrooke, however, parried queries about whether Britain was also involved in the talks.

"I can't speak about the British. You have to ask them," he said.

US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton has also said that Washington is open to the Afghan government's proposal to hold talks with the outlawed outfit, but cautioned Kabul to proceed carefully.

Career Opportunity

Position	Academic Qualification	Experiences
Professor/Associate Professor: (Management, Finance, Accounting, Marketing, MIS & Law)	The persons considering themselves as qualified candidates are requested to contact Registrar (ASaub) with full CV and relevant papers by 12th December, 2009.	
Assistant Professors/ Lecturers: (Management, Finance, Accounting, Marketing, Economics, Mathematics, Statistics, Bangladesh Studies, English & Law)	Candidates must have first class/equivalent grade at all levels. Candidates of Law & Bangladesh Studies with 3 first classes and English with 2 first classes may apply.	Teaching experience with publications or higher/foreign degree(s) are required for the position of Asst. Professor and above. For exceptional candidates conditions may be relaxed.

Candidates may apply with complete C.V, supporting documents and two PP size photographs by 12th December, 2009 to the Registrar. Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interview. The above conditions may be relaxed in case of exceptional candidates. N.B. Candidates having North American degrees/ Ph.D will be preferred in some positions.



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