

### **FBI likely to investigate BDR carnage**

**Daily Star, 4 March 2009**

The US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is expected to help Bangladesh in forensic investigation into the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) carnage. "I believe the FBI has agreed to do that (investigation into the BDR carnage)," Acting Deputy State Department spokesman Gordon Duguid told a regular press briefing in Washington Tuesday. The confirmation came as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 1 sought the FBI assistance during the telephone conversation with US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Richard Boucher.

### **"No evidence of U.S. drone crash"**

**Hindu, 8 March 2009**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan military has not yet found any evidence of a U.S. unmanned drone aircraft crashing in the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan on Saturday, said an official. Reports said a drone aircraft, commonly used by the U.S. for carrying out missile strikes in the tribal areas had crashed on Saturday morning in the Angor Adda area of South Waziristan. Some reports said the pilotless plane had been shot down by Taliban militants.

### **FBI team arrives in Dhaka**

**Daily Star, 8 March 2009**

A two-member team of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the United States arrived in Dhaka this afternoon to help probe into the carnage at Bangladesh Rifles headquarters. US ambassador James F Moriarty confirmed their arrival, private television ATN Bangla reports. The FBI men came from New Delhi.

### **Obama hopeful about peeling away some in Taliban**

**Dawn, 9 March 2009**

WASHINGTON: President Barack Obama is holding out hope that US forces in Afghanistan can peel away elements of the Taliban and possibly move them toward reconciliation. There may be such opportunities, but the situation in Afghanistan is more complicated than the challenges the American military faced in Iraq, Obama said in an interview with The New York Times posted Saturday on the newspaper's Web site. US troops were able to persuade Sunni Muslim insurgents in Iraq to cooperate in some instances because they had been alienated by the tactics of al Qaida terrorists. Obama cautioned that Afghanistan is a less-governed region with a history of fierce independence among tribes, creating a tough set of circumstances for the United States to deal with.

### **PM-Obama meet April 2**

**Asian Age, 10 March 2009**

March 9: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is likely to meet US President Barack Obama on the sidelines of the Group of Twenty (G-20) summit in London on April 2. Dr Singh's meeting with the new US President will be his first since Mr Obama's inauguration on January 20. Foreign secretary Shiv-shankar Me-non began talks in Washington on Monday to lay the ground for a meeting between the two principals. While the focus of the summit will be on growth, jobs, financial stability and regulation, Dr Singh and Mr Obama are expected to discuss

a host of bilateral, regional and global issues connected to security and terrorism. The situation in India's extended neighbourhood, including but not limited to Pakistan and Afghanistan, the investigation of the November 26, 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai and the threat posed by terrorism emanating out of Pakistan are likely to find resonance with them. The G-20 Summit will be held on April 2.

### **Menon begins dialogue with Obama team**

**Hindu, 10 March 2009**

Washington: Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon on Monday plunged into three days of hectic diplomacy focusing on taking the India-U.S. strategic relationship forward as the two nations began their first high-level interaction since Barack Obama became President in January. Mr. Menon, who arrived here on Sunday, is set to meet Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the afternoon after a series of meetings with Deputy Secretary James B. Steinberg, and his counterpart Under-Secretary for Political Affairs William Burns. Besides bilateral issues, Mr. Menon is also expected to provide Indian perceptions on how to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan when he meets Ms. Clinton and U.S. special representative on Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke.

### **Hillary, Menon discuss 26/11**

**Hindu, 11 March 2009**

Washington: Meeting for the first time, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon agreed on the need to prevent another Mumbai-type attack. During the meeting on Monday at the State Department's Foggy Bottom headquarters, the first high-level contact for India with the Obama administration, Ms. Clinton also said the two countries needed to improve cooperation in bilateral and global issues. The State Department acting spokesman Robert Wood told journalists on Tuesday that the Mumbai terror attack figured during the meeting.

### **Obama unlikely to mediate on Kashmir**

**Hindu, 11 March 2009**

Washington: The Obama Administration is unlikely to mediate on the Kashmir issue and the U.S. policy of non-interference will continue despite calls for greater American involvement, according to a latest Congressional report. The Indo-U.S. ties appear all set to deepen under Mr. Obama's presidency notwithstanding apprehensions in some quarters about "potential friction" on issues like Kashmir and nuclear non-proliferation, said the 83-page report on the 'India-U.S. Relations' by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). Referring to some apprehensions that the Obama Administration may mediate between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue, the report said this is unlikely to happen as the U.S. would continue with its policy of non-interference.

### **U.S. assures India it will proceed with nuclear deal**

**Hindu, 12 March 2009**

Washington: The new Obama administration on Wednesday assured India that it will proceed with the landmark India-U.S. nuclear deal, signed during George W. Bush's tenure, and said the two countries needed to ramp up cooperation in counter-terrorism and global issues such as climate change. Senior State Department officials gave the assurance to Foreign Secretary Shiv

Shankar Menon, who is on a four-day official visit. Mr. Menon on Monday met Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and discussed the nuclear deal, counter-terrorism cooperation, bilateral issues, Sri Lankan conflict and bringing the situation under control in war-torn Afghanistan. During his talks with Under-Secretary for Political Affairs Nicolas Burns on Wednesday, Mr. Menon discussed the landmark civil nuclear deal and other bilateral issues.

### **Britain, US concerned by political turmoil**

**Daily Times, 12 March 2009**

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan Robert Brinkley met Prime Minister Yousuf Gilani on Wednesday, and conveyed his government's concern over the political turmoil in Pakistan and the reported arrests of opposition leaders in Punjab – while the US urged restraint on part of all political parties and called for resolution of political issues in accordance with the country's law. "Brinkley met Prime Minister Gilani ... and conveyed his government's concern after dozens of people were arrested ahead of an opposition rally," according to a statement by BHC spokeswoman Jennifer Wilkes. staff report/app

### **NATO chief urges deep engagement with Pakistan**

**Daily Times, 13 March 2009**

BUDAPEST: NATO must deepen its engagement with Pakistan, ensure it has sufficient troops in Afghanistan and keep up a dialogue with Russia, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said on Thursday. "Of course we need to look beyond Afghanistan ... and especially Pakistan, with which we must deepen our engagement," Scheffer told a conference in Budapest on the 10th anniversary of the accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic to NATO. He also said NATO must ensure it has enough troops in Afghanistan as that country prepares for elections. "We must ensure that we have sufficient troops on the ground to enforce security both during and after the coming election period," Scheffer said.

### **Obama Afghan Plan Focuses on Pakistan Aid and Appeal to Militants**

**New York Times, 13 March 2009**

WASHINGTON — The emerging outlines of President Obama's plan for Afghanistan include proposals to shift more American efforts toward problems in neighboring Pakistan and to seek some kind of political reconciliation with the vast majority of insurgents in the region, according to administration officials. The police checked passengers on a bus crossing from tribal areas in Pakistan. The United States may focus more attention there. The plan reflects in part a conclusion within the administration that most of the insurgent foot soldiers in Afghanistan and Pakistan are "reconcilable" and can be pruned away from the hard-core organizations of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. At least 70 percent of the insurgents, and possibly more, can be encouraged to lay down their arms with the proper incentives, administration officials have said.

### **IT cos fret over likely L1 Visa curbs**

**Economic Times, 14 March 2009**

KOLKATA: The amendments proposed in the H1-B visa norms may just be the beginning. Key players in India's software industry circles are apprehensive that the current wave of protectionism being seen in the US could also lead to a tightening of the L1 visa provisions. An L1 visa is a temporary visa which allows companies the flexibility to transfer certain class of

employees to work at their US operations for up to seven years. Although Nasscom has thus far been stressing more on the changes in the H1-B visa process and its potential impact on outsourcing, the software industry body is also keeping its ears to the ground on the L1 issue.

**Pakistan's Leaders Take New Steps to Stifle a Protest; U.S. Appeals Seem Unavailing**  
**New York Times, 14 March 2009**

LAHORE, Pakistan — The civilian government asked the army to be ready to guard the route of a national protest to the capital on Sunday in what appeared to be a hardening of the stance of President Asif Ali Zardari against a deal with the main opposition party. Appeals by the United States to Mr. Zardari and to the opposition party's leader, Nawaz Sharif, to cool the political crisis, which many Pakistanis fear could result in bloodshed during the protest, appear to have been rebuffed as both sides geared up for a showdown on the streets. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton called Mr. Zardari and Mr. Sharif on Saturday evening to discuss the current situation, spokesmen for the two men said.

**Hillary phones Zardari, Nawaz to defuse tension**  
**Daily Times, 15 March 2009**

ISLAMABAD: Amid the prevailing tensions between the PPP and the PML-N – US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Saturday called President Asif Ali Zardari and Nawaz Sharif over the telephone in a bid to bring them to a workable cooperation formula, Daily Times has learnt. Hillary's separate conversations with Zardari and Nawaz marked the most senior foreign intervention yet in the crisis. Flexibility: Sources said that Hillary used her "good family relations during her talks with Nawaz Sharif to persuade him to show flexibility in reconciling differences with Zardari, so that issues can be settled amicably".

**Pentagon Rethinking Old Doctrine on 2 Wars**  
**New York Times, 15 March 2009**

WASHINGTON — The protracted wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are forcing the Obama administration to rethink what for more than two decades has been a central premise of American strategy: that the nation need only prepare to fight two major wars at a time. For more than six years now, the United States has in fact been fighting two wars, with more than 170,000 troops now deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan combined. The military has openly acknowledged that the wars have left troops and equipment severely strained, and has said that it would be difficult to carry out any kind of significant operation elsewhere. To some extent, fears have faded that the United States may actually have to fight, say, Russia and North Korea, or China and Iran, at the same time. But if Iraq and Afghanistan were never formidable foes in conventional terms, they have already tied up the American military for a period longer than World War II. A senior Defense Department official involved in a strategy review now under way said the Pentagon was absorbing the lesson that the kinds of counterinsurgency campaigns likely to be part of some future wars would require more staying power than in past conflicts, like the first Iraq war in 1991 or the invasions of Grenada and Panama.

**Editorial: Bombing Balochistan**  
**News, 20 March 2009**

According to reports in the US media, Washington may be planning to embark on a new strategy involving drone attacks in Balochistan. The argument goes that drone bombings in the

northern areas have led to key Al Qaeda militants fleeing southwards, to Quetta, where they are more vulnerable and can be targeted through aerial attacks. Senior US administration figures have also been quoted as saying the province had been used by militants as a safe haven for years. Security officials based in Balochistan have denied that Al Qaeda leaders are present in the area. The problem is that the issue of defeating the militants must go beyond the mere aim of bombing them out of existence. We must concede that the drone attacks seen in the tribal areas all through the last year have resulted in the death of at least some militants – possibly some important figures in the movement. But what they have also done is create immense anger and resentment among ordinary people, who have also been among the victims of the bombs and missiles that flatten homes and kill indiscriminately. The graves of women, children and the elderly killed in such attacks stand dotted across Waziristan and other tribal areas. The strategy that underpins the drone attacks sees these deaths as nothing more than 'collateral damage'. For local people, it is of course the worst possible tragedy. What, after all, could be more devastating than having a family member killed by a ball of fire that descends from planes bearing the markings of a foreign power?

### **U.S. wants India to de-escalate on border with Pakistan**

**Hindu, 20 March 2009**

New Delhi: South Block may have successfully fought off the initial drive to formally extend Richard Holbrooke's 'AfPak' mandate to India but the Obama administration's Special Representative for the region drew first blood last week, asking New Delhi to draw down its own troop presence on the Pakistan border so that Islamabad can beef up its presence on the Afghan front. The request that India de-escalate its forces on the border was conveyed to Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon during the latter's visit to Washington last week, well-placed sources said.

### **CIA chief meets Chidambaram**

**Hindu, 20 March 2009**

NEW DELHI: Terrorism, post-26/11 Mumbai terror strike, the security scenario in South Asia, the situation in Pakistan and Bangladesh and cooperation in operational areas of security were some of the topics that came up for discussions which the visiting United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) chief, Leon Panetta, had on Thursday with Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram and top officials in India's security and intelligence establishment. Mr. Panetta, who is the third high-ranking U.S. official to visit India after the 26/11 attack, first met Mr. Chidambaram for nearly half an hour at North Block. Though it was described as a "familiarisation trip" of the CIA chief to India, his first visit outside the U.S. after assuming office, sources said he discussed ways of further strengthening cooperation with India in the fight against terrorism.

### **Pakistan, India, Afghanistan fates linked: US senator**

**Daily Times, 21 March 2009**

WASHINGTON: The fates of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan are interlinked, Senator Carl Levin, chairman of the US Armed Service Committee said on Friday, emphasising that improvement in Pakistan-India relations is the key to stability in South Asia. Levin, a leading Democrat lawmaker, said Pakistan and India faced common threats. "In South Asia, the interests and fates of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan are linked. The Mumbai attacks last

November, and the aftermath, remind us that tensions still exist between India and Pakistan, and stability between these two countries is vital to stability in the region,” he said. His remarks came as media reports said Washington had asked New Delhi to pull back troops from its border with Pakistan, to ease bilateral tensions. The US believed lowering tensions over Kashmir between the two neighbours was essential to allow Pakistan to focus on Afghanistan.

### **Raisani warns US against drone attacks in Balochistan**

**Daily Times, 21 March 2009**

QUETTA: Warning Washington against launching drone attacks inside Balochistan, Chief Minister Muhammad Aslam Raisani on Friday said such actions could tarnish the Obama administration’s international image. Referring to a report published in The New York Times, he told media at the Balochistan Assembly that the people of America had voted for change and want to abolish the violent policies of George Bush. The people of Balochistan would unite to condemn any such attacks, he added. “We do not have to panic about published reports about possible drone attacks since they could be wrong. I will soon meet the American ambassador to convey our concerns to her. This issue would be brought to the attention of President Asif Ali Zardari and Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi as well,” he said.

### **The roles we play**

**Indian Express, 21 March 2009**

That Washington forces New Delhi to do things it does not like in order to please Islamabad is an important part of Indian foreign policy mythology. This particular myth gained some fresh wind this week amidst reports that the Obama administration has asked India to reduce its troops on the border with Pakistan so that Islamabad could focus on the war against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. According to media leaks, the US special representative on Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, conveyed this to the Indian foreign secretary, Shiv Shankar Menon, in Washington a few days ago. The reports add that India rejected the suggestion outright. Before parsing the merits of the proposed troop reduction, we must return to the larger myth.

### **NATO Says Senior Taliban Leader Slain**

**New York Times, 23 March 2009**

KABUL, Afghanistan — A senior Taliban leader responsible for numerous roadside bombings and suicide attacks against NATO forces has been killed along with nine other insurgent fighters, NATO said Monday. Maulawi Hassan, described as a well-known Taliban commander in southern Afghanistan, was killed in an attack Saturday on his compound near Kajaki, in Helmand Province, according to a NATO statement. “He became known for his insurgent activities in the autumn of 2008 and was heavily involved in several illegal activities,” the statement said, noting that there had been no civilian casualties in the attack. The statement said Mr. Hassan had reported directly to Mullah Rahmatullah, the Taliban commander who directs insurgency efforts from outside Afghanistan.

### **US asks India to support Pakistan on extremists**

**Daily Times, 24 March 2009**

WASHINGTON: The US has called on India to support Pakistan in rooting out extremism. Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg also said on Monday that the US backed

a 'global role for India. Steinberg delivered the first substantive remarks on India by President Barack Obama's administration which is expected this week to unveil a new strategy on fighting terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan. "I think it will be important for India to make clear that as Pakistan takes steps to deal with extremists on its own territory that India will be supportive of that," said Steinberg.

### **US wants Afghanistan 'exit strategy'**

**Daily Times, 24 March 2009**

BRUSSELS: US special envoy Richard Holbrooke met NATO allies on Monday to outline Washington's policy review for Afghanistan, after President Barack Obama said it would contain an exit strategy and greater emphasis on economic development. "What we can't do is think that just a military approach in Afghanistan is going to be able to solve our problems," Obama said in an interview with CBS TV's '60 Minutes'. "So what we're looking for is a comprehensive strategy. And there's got to be an exit strategy ... there's got to be a sense that this is not perpetual drift."

### **Bomb Kills 9 Civilians in Afghanistan**

**New York Times, 25 March 2009**

KABUL, Afghanistan — An explosive device ripped through a minibus on Wednesday, killing nine civilians and wounding seven others on a road frequently used by security forces and international troops in eastern Afghanistan, the police said. Abdul Quyum Baqizoy, the provincial police chief of Khost, said the passengers on the bus, traveling from the town of Zazimydan, included women and children. Seven, one of them a woman, were killed instantly and two more died on the way to the hospital, Mr. Baqizoy said. Seven more people were wounded, of whom six were hospitalized, two of them in critical condition

### **U.S. Weighs Sharif as Partner in Pakistan**

**New York Times, 25 March 2009**

LAHORE, Pakistan — The opposition leader, Nawaz Sharif, sealed his place as the most popular politician in Pakistan this month when he defied his house detention and led a triumphant protest that forced the government to restore the country's chief justice. Now, as the Obama administration completes its review of strategy toward the region this week, his sudden ascent has raised an urgent question: Can Mr. Sharif, 59, a populist politician close to Islamic parties, be a reliable partner? Or will he use his popular support to blunt the military's already fitful campaign against the insurgency of the Taliban and Al Qaeda?

### **Editorial: No easy exit?**

**News, 25 March 2009**

President Obama has now started the 'long goodbye' to Afghanistan. There are 34,000 American troops currently there, plus a rainbow of forces from NATO countries. The Taliban — who were not defeated in 2001, they simply went back to their homes — are resurgent, and have in the south and east of the country fought the coalition forces into a stalemate. The Karzai government is monstrously corrupt. Karzai himself is regarded as weak and unable to take a position, unable to confront unpleasant realities — and elections loom. The good news is that elections are happening at all, the bad news is that there is no other presidential candidate who is likely to be any better at the job than Karzai; and indications are that all the alternatives

would be significantly worse. Against this background the Obama administration is working to put together what is nowadays called 'the Af-Pak strategy'. A part of that may be the creation of the post of prime minister in Afghanistan which, it is hoped, may dilute the powers of Karzai – but there is no guarantee that the PM would enjoy any better relationship with the premier than does our own.

### **CIA wary of British Pakistanis**

**Daily Times, 25 March 2009**

LAHORE: Washington's fears that future attacks on the US are likely to be carried out by Muslims from the UK could be boosting surveillance of British Pakistanis. According to Sky News, the CIA is working alongside British security services in an effort to quash what they see as the 'greatest threat' to homeland security. Former US FBI investigator Matthew Levitt told Sky, "There is a very acute threat, especially from the South Asian community ... (and) has direct ties back to South Asia – where the core of Al Qaeda is believed to be hiding. That of course presents a threat not only to our allies in Britain, but because of the visa waiver programme ... it presents a problem to the US as well."

### **Taliban Attacks in Afghanistan Kill 9 Police Officers**

**New York Times, 26 March 2009**

KABUL, Afghanistan — Nine Afghan policemen were killed and six officers were wounded in two attacks by Taliban insurgents in southern and central Afghanistan on Thursday, the Interior Ministry said. The attacks came one day after the police said an explosive device ripped through a minibus on Wednesday, killing nine civilians and wounding seven on a road frequently used by Afghan security forces and international troops in eastern Afghanistan

### **Afghan Strikes by Taliban Get Pakistan Help, U.S. Aides Say**

**New York Times, 26 March 2009**

WASHINGTON — The Taliban's widening campaign in southern Afghanistan is made possible in part by direct support from operatives in Pakistan's military intelligence agency, despite Pakistani government promises to sever ties to militant groups fighting in Afghanistan, according to American government officials. The support consists of money, military supplies and strategic planning guidance to Taliban commanders who are gearing up to confront the international force in Afghanistan that will soon include some 17,000 American reinforcements.

### **Report asks US to identify regional dimension of Pakistan's security**

**Daily Times, 26 March 2009**

Report asks US to identify regional dimension of Pakistan's security

WASHINGTON: The United States must prevent a power vacuum in Afghanistan that could destabilise Pakistan, an influential Washington think tank said on Tuesday. The Centre for American Progress also recommended an integrated regional effort to address the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and the Tribal Areas. It called on the Obama administration to "implement policies that recognise the regional dimension of Pakistan's security challenges"

### **US says will continue to work closely with Zardari govt**

**Daily Times, 26 March 2009**

WASHINGTON: The United States said on Wednesday it is working closely with the democratically elected Pakistani government led by President Asif Ali Zardari in wide-ranging areas of common interest and that American officials maintain contacts with the opposition parties in Pakistan just as they do in other countries. The State Department also made it clear that Washington would continue to work with the current democratic government until Pakistan has a new government in due course of political process and as a result of elections in the mandated timeframe

### **Pakistani and Afghan Taliban Unify in Face of U.S. Influx**

**New York Times, 27 March 2009**

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — After agreeing to bury their differences and unite forces, Taliban leaders based in Pakistan have closed ranks with their Afghan comrades to ready a new offensive in Afghanistan as the United States prepares to send 17,000 more troops there this year. In interviews, several Taliban fighters based in the border region said preparations for the anticipated influx of American troops were already being made. A number of new, younger commanders have been preparing to step up a campaign of roadside bombings and suicide attacks to greet the Americans, the fighters said. The reformed alliance was forged after the reclusive Afghan Taliban leader, Mullah Muhammad Omar, sent emissaries to persuade Pakistani Taliban leaders to join forces and turn their attention to Afghanistan, Pakistani officials and Taliban members said

### **In New Afghan Strategy, Obama Will Add Troops**

**New York Times, 27 March 2009**

WASHINGTON — President Obama plans to further bolster American forces in Afghanistan and for the first time set benchmarks for progress in fighting Al Qaeda and the Taliban there and in Pakistan, officials said Thursday. In imposing conditions on the Afghans and Pakistanis, Mr. Obama is replicating a strategy used in Iraq two years ago both to justify a deeper American commitment and prod governments in the region to take more responsibility for quelling the insurgency and building lasting political institutions. “The era of the blank check is over,” Mr. Obama told Congressional leaders at the White House, according to an account of the meeting provided on the condition of anonymity because it was a private session

### **Obama calls President Zardari**

**Daily Times, 27 March 2009**

ISLAMABAD: US President Barack Obama on Thursday called President Asif Ali Zardari and discussed bilateral relations, the security situation of the region, and other matters of mutual interest. The two leaders also discussed matters relating to the fight against militancy, with particular reference to peace in the region, APP reported. Also on Thursday, Obama called Afghan President Hamid Karzai to inform him that Washington had completed a review of its strategy in Afghanistan, Karzai’s office told AFP. agencies

### **White House Debate Led to Plan to Widen Afghan Effort**

**New York Times, 28 March 2009**

White House Debate Led to Plan to Widen Afghan Effort

WASHINGTON — President Obama’s plan to widen United States involvement in Afghanistan came after an internal debate in which Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. warned

against getting into a political and military quagmire, while military advisers argued that the Afghanistan war effort could be imperiled without even more troops. American Marines patrolled at a bazaar on Friday in the southwestern Afghanistan town of Delaram. The Marines have tightened security after recent bombings. All of the president's advisers agreed that the primary goal in the region should be narrow — taking aim at Al Qaeda, as opposed to the vast attempt at nation-building the Bush administration had sought in Iraq. The question was how to get there

**Obama unveils sweeping new Afghan war strategy, includes Iran in Afghan contact group: Qaeda 'cancer'**

**Daily Times, 28 March 2009**

WASHINGTON: Unveiling a sweeping new strategy for the Afghan war – US President Barack Obama warned on Friday that Al Qaeda was a cancer that could devour Pakistan. “Al Qaeda is actively planning attacks on the US from safe havens in Pakistan ... to the terrorists who oppose us, my message is ... we will defeat you.” “We will insist that action be taken ... one way or another,” he said, indicating that the US would act on intelligence against terrorists if Pakistan does not. He said Pakistan and Afghanistan were inextricably linked. Obama said the US military would also shift the emphasis of its mission to training and expanding the Afghan army.

**India, Iran in Obama AfPak plan**

**Asian Age, 28 March 2009**

March 27: US President Barack Obama said on Friday that he plans to further bolster American forces in Afghanistan, increase aid to Pakistan, and for the first time set benchmarks for progress in fighting Al Qaeda and the Taliban in both chaotic countries. In strikingly ominous tones, Mr Obama warned — just as President George W. Bush did repeatedly over the years — of intelligence estimates that Al Qaeda "is actively planning attacks on the US homeland from its safe haven in Pakistan". Among other things, officials said he planned to recast the Afghan war as a regional issue involving not only Pakistan but also India, Russia, China, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and the Central Asian states. His plan envisions persuading Pakistan to stop focusing military resources on India so it can concentrate more on battling insurgents in its lawless tribal regions.

**US trying to give everything Pakistan needs: Holbrooke**

**Daily Times, 30 March 2009**

LAHORE: United States special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke has said the US would give everything that is required by Pakistan and Afghanistan to fight terrorism, a private TV channel reported on Sunday. “We are treating Afghanistan and Pakistan as a single theatre and address them in an integrated way. We are going to give them more resources,” Holbrooke said. According to the channel, Holbrooke told an American TV that efforts were being made to eradicate extremism in collaboration with Pakistan's neighbours and for that reason the US was also in contact with India and China

**Strikes to be with Pak consent: Obama**

**Daily Times, 30 March 2009**

WASHINGTON: Washington will strike Al Qaeda and Taliban targets in Pakistan “after

consulting with” Islamabad, US President Barack Obama said in an interview aired on Sunday. He said US troops would not go in hot pursuit of extremists across the Afghan border into Pakistan – but demanded Islamabad hold up its end of the anti-terror struggle. “I haven’t changed my approach,” Obama said in the CBS programme “Face the Nation”, referring to US missile strikes. “If we have a high-value target within our sights, after consulting with Pakistan, we’re going after them.

**Editorial: War on terror?**

**Indian Express, 30 March 2009**

As US President Barack Obama promotes his restructured “Af-Pak” strategy on the international stage this week, India has reasons to be pleased and concerned. The good news from the much touted review, announced by Obama last Friday, comes from his diagnosis of the problem. He has taken on board much of India’s own analysis of the challenges confronting the world in the badlands between the Indus and the Hindu Kush. He agrees with India that Pakistan is the source of Afghanistan’s insecurity and the world must act together to cure Islamabad of its political malaise. In recognising that the borderlands between Pakistan and Afghanistan constitute the single most important threat to global peace and security, arguing that Islamabad is part of the problem rather than the solution, and asking India to join an international concert in managing the Af-Pak region, he has made welcome departures from the American policy towards South Asia since September 11, 2001.