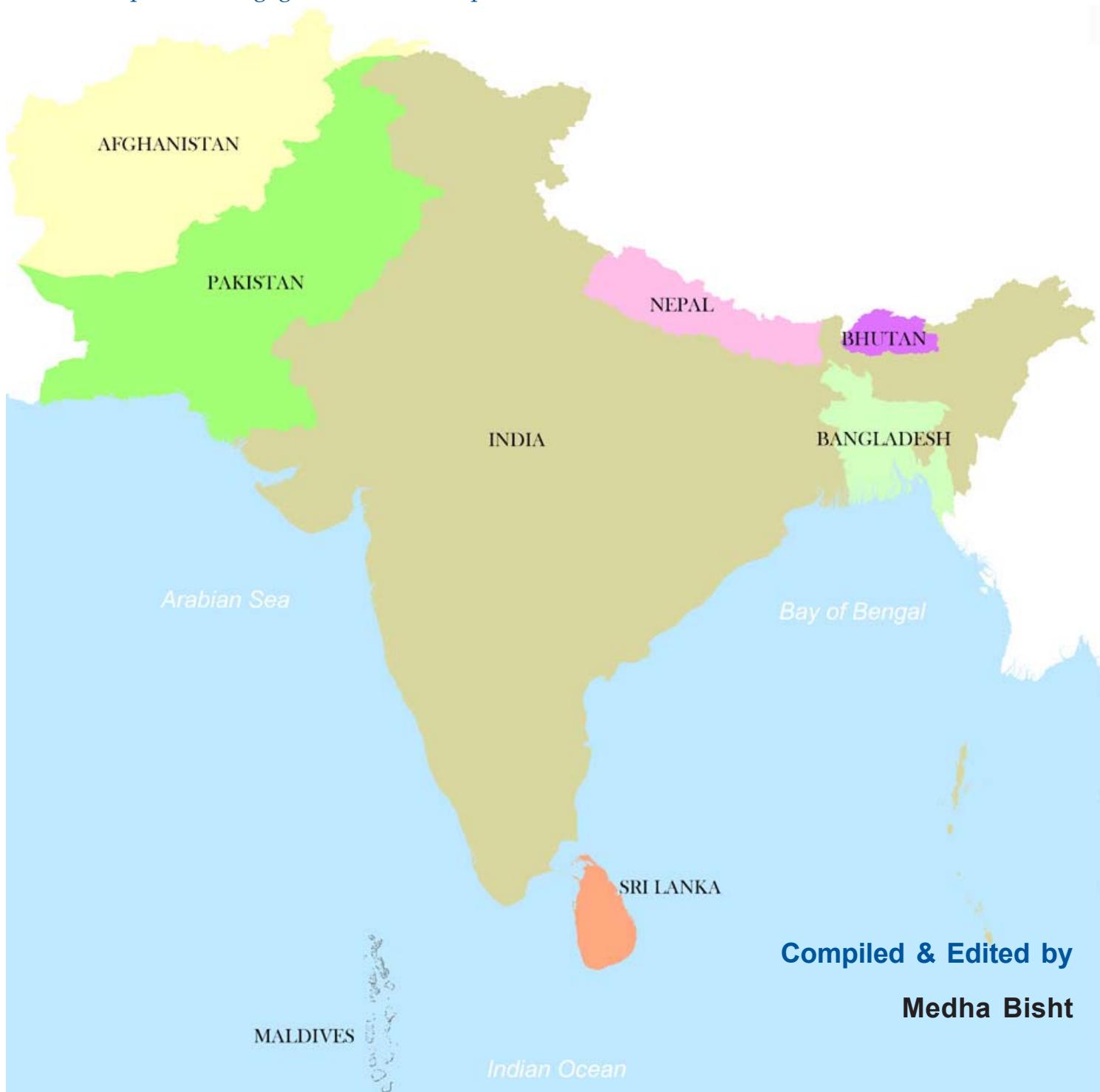


SOUTH ASIA TRENDS

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South Asia Trends is a fortnightly newsletter on South Asian affairs. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide a panoramic view of important events that shape and impact the politics of the subcontinent. The effort would be to inform our readers of the domestic, regional and international repercussions of the political debates and diplomatic engagements that take place in South Asia.



Editor's Note

Election to the Wolesi Jirga, the lower house of parliament, took place on September 18, 2010 in Afghanistan. While potential threats from the Taliban continued to overshadow the environment, reports suggest that at least 3.6 million Afghans (almost 40 percent) took part in the second parliamentary election. It has been suggested by many that the current parliamentary elections witnessed the lowest participation in comparison to the four elections held since the overthrow of the Taliban post 2001. Though Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, the leader of the Coalition for Change and Hope, had predicted that his party would win 100 seats of the 249 seats in the parliament, he later claimed that the elections had been orchestrated.

As far as the responses from the United States, NATO and International Forces are concerned, they have expressed satisfaction over the conduct of elections. Meanwhile, Moscow is deliberating over different forms of cooperation with NATO, including cooperation under the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), in order to tackle the Afghan drug threat.

A peace council has been established by President Karzai, to hold talks with the Taliban. The list includes former president and warlord Burhanuddin Rabani, warlords Abdul Rab Rasoul Sayaf, Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq and Hizb-i-Islami amongst others.

Reports on construction activities by China to build rail and road networks have been flooding the media for quite some time. According to reports, China has begun construction work on a strategic USD 2 billion rail network to connect the Tibetan capital of Lhasa with the region's second largest city of Xigaze that borders India, Bhutan and Nepal.

Afghanistan

Zardari, Karzai Vow to Step Up Cooperation in Fight Against Terror

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, September 16, 2010.

Leaders of Pakistan and Afghanistan vowed to expand scope of their talks aimed at greater cooperation in the fight against terrorism besides collaboration at bilateral political and economic levels. Addressing a joint press conference at the president palace in Islamabad, President Zardari said, "we have a common cause and suffer from this cancer of terrorism. They are friends of nobody and are our joint enemies." President Karzai said the two countries needed to "raise the bar" and had more in-depth cooperation to fight terror networks.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#02)

Afghan election to test government reforms

The Associated Press, September 17, 2010.

More than a year after a flawed presidential election, Afghans go to the polls for a parliamentary contest considered a test of whether President Hamid Karzai's government can now run a fair vote and prevent insurgents from disrupting the balloting. The results of the races for the relatively weak legislature are unlikely to affect Karzai, who has passed much legislation by decree when parliament was in recess. But the perception of how the vote is conducted will reverberate strongly with the international coalition supporting Afghanistan with 140,000 troops and billions of dollars.

(Source: <http://www.wtopnews.com/?nid=105&sid=2050844>)

Taliban call on Afghans to boycott vote

Zee News, September 17, 2010.

The Taliban called for a boycott of Afghanistan's Parliamentary Elections, after conducting a violent campaign that has left three candidates dead. "We call on our Muslim nation to boycott this process and thus foil all foreign processes and drive away the invaders from your country by sticking to jihad and Islamic resistance," said an e-mailed statement. Taliban threats to attack Afghanistan's Parliamentary Elections have prompted a mass deployment of troops across the war-torn country in a bid to secure Saturday's landmark vote. War-weary Afghans are to go to the polls to elect 249 members of the lower house of Parliament, the Wolesi Jirga.

(Source: <http://www.zeenews.com/news655481.html>)

Afghans Have Done a Commendable Job in Organizing Elections: White House

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, September 19, 2010.

The White House has congratulated Afghanistan for organizing crucial parliamentary election taking into account the fact the country is still at war with insurgents. "I think the Afghans have done a commendable job in setting up as best as they can a structure for a fair and important election. I think that's what will

happen," the White House press secretary, Robert Gibbs, told reporters. "I do think it's important to understand that while we are monitoring for fraud and while we have serious concerns about safety and security, we do look forward to successful elections," Gibbs noted.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#03)

3.6 Million People Cast Vote: Officials

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, September 19, 2010.

Election officials in Kabul say at least 3.6 million Afghans took part in the second parliamentary election, in spite of violence aimed at preventing them. The figure represented around 40 percent of the eligible population, but 1,561 polling centers out of a planned 6,835 could not be opened because of security fears. More than 11 million people are registered to vote, but in the context of the Taliban's threats the UN has said a turnout of between five and seven million would be considered a success. Many foreign embassies and international organizations in Afghanistan have ordered their staff to stay indoors on election day because of a heightened risk of attacks. The ballot has already been twice delayed over security fears and the need to implement electoral reforms.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#03)

Afghans are no better off than they were

Gulf News, September 20, 2010.

The low percentage of voters who chose to exercise their franchise in the parliamentary polls in Afghanistan offered an indication into the weary spirit of its people. Worn out by poverty, corruption and a constant threat from the Taliban to those who dared to turn out and vote, the natives of Kabul and its areas beyond chose to live another day in optimism. As Nato, backed by the US, tries to portray progress measured by various yardsticks in this war-torn country, the elections in Afghanistan were supposed to be a sure-fire way of endorsing the will of its people. Time, coupled with numerous events, has, however, shown that this has failed. The paucity of voters is ample reflection of this fact.

(Source: <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/editorials/afghans-are-no-better-off-than-they-were-1.684351>)

Violence, fraud mar Afghan election

The Australian, September 20, 2010.

Voter turnout for the weekend poll slumped to a record low, raising fears for the future of the fledgling democracy. Even as election officials, the UN and NATO congratulated the Afghans, figures suggested participation in Saturday's parliamentary elections would be the lowest of the four elections held since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001. The elections were billed as a test of Afghanistan's progress and the wisdom of a planned withdrawal of some US and NATO troops from next July. With the death toll of foreign troops at a record high and the Taliban insurgency spreading, another tainted election just 12 months after the discred-

ited presidential poll is likely to heighten concerns in the West. Mr Freeman said Taliban militants attacked polling stations across the province and blew up bridges to prevent voters and observers reaching ballot booths.

(Source:<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/violence-fraud-mar-afghan-election/story-e6frg6so-1225926416620>)

US, NATO Greet Afghans on Wolesi Jirga Vote

Afghanistan Daily Outlook. September 21, 2010.

The United States and NATO have congratulated the people of Afghanistan on conducting a fully Afghan-led parliamentary election under extremely difficult circumstances. "As expected, the Taliban made their best efforts to disrupt this important day through violence and intimidation, but the Afghan people who voted defied them," the embassy said in a statement. "The people of Afghanistan sent a powerful message today," said Gen. David Petraeus, commander of ISAF.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#03)

British troops leave volatile district in Afghanistan

USA Today, September 21, 2010.

Britain's military handed the U.S. responsibility for a dangerous district in southern Afghanistan that has been the scene of some of the bloodiest fighting by British troops. NATO said the 40 Commando Royal Marines were being reassigned throughout central Helmand province, which remains a volatile battleground even though tens of thousands of foreign and Afghan troops moved into the area in February. Since the conflict began in 2001, Britain has lost 337 troops in Afghanistan, including more than 100 in Sangin.

(Source:http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/afghanistan/2010-09-20-british-troops-helmand_N.htm)

Dr. Abdullah Abdullah: Afghan Opposition Party to Win Majority in Parliament

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, September 22, 2010.

Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, the leader of the 'Coalition for Change and Hope' said that his party will win almost 100 seats of the 249 seats in the parliament. Dr Abdullah said that the initial counting of votes reveal a leading success for his party members to win parliament seats. Mr. Abdullah added that his supporters will bring huge reforms in the government if they win in the elections. "The role of the parliament is to have overwatch the government, thus our supporters will act as an active reformist group in the parliament," Abdullah added.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#02)

Dr. Abdullah Abdullah: Electoral Fraud was 'Organized'

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, September 23, 2010.

Frauds during the Afghan parliamentary polls were "organized" and will have

negative consequences if not pursued, said Dr Abdullah Abdullah to reporters on Wednesday Dr Abdullah Abdullah, leader of the' Coalition for Change and Hope', expressing concern over widespread fraud during the elections, said Afghans have lost trust in the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) as well. Majority of the frauds were done in the country's unstable areas, especially in the Taliban controlled regions, Dr Abdullah told reporters in a press conference held in Kabul.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#03)

Karzai Asks IEC, ECC to Defy Pressures

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, September 23, 2010.

President Hamid Karzai asked the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) to do their work without accepting domestic and outside pressures. In a meeting, attended by IEC members, the two vice-presidents and the top UN representative to Afghanistan, the president praised voters' participation in the polls, security arrangements and efforts of IEC workers. In a statement from the Presidential Palace, Karzai said that announcing the election results was a key task for the IEC. Heads of the two panels assured the president they would work honestly to complete their job. IEC chief, Fazal Ahmad Manawi, and ECC head, Qazi Murad Sharifi, vowed to announce the result on schedule. The preliminary outcome is due on October 9 while the final tally will be announced on October 30.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#03)

Russian FM Sergei Lavrov: Russia, NATO Should Step Up Ties to Tackle Afghan Drug Threat

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, September 26, 2010.

Moscow is ready to consider different forms of cooperation with NATO, including cooperation under the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), so to tackle the Afghan drug threat, Russian Foreign Minister told Rossia 1 TV channel on Saturday. Russia "is ready to consider various forms of cooperation, involving delivery of helicopters on commercial basis, search for other ways of supporting the law enforcement structures of the country [Afghanistan]," Sergei Lavrov said. In time of the same interview, Lavrov said Moscow has received an official invitation to a forthcoming NATO summit in Lisbon. NATO is not sufficiently cooperating with Russia in tackling the Afghan drug threat, Nilotay Bordyuzha, CSTO Secretary General, said in late March.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#02)

Japan Pledges \$50m for Afghan Peace Effort

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, September 26, 2010.

Japan on September 23, 2010 pledged providing \$50 million to the Afghan government for strengthening security and efforts at national reconciliation. In this regard, an agreement was reached between Foreign Minister Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal and Japanese Ambassador to Afghanistan, Shigeyuki Hiroki in Kabul.

Talking to journalists after signing the agreement, Zakhilwal said the money would be spent on strengthening peace and the Afghan-led national reconciliation program in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). President Hamid Karzai has recently taken several steps to bring peace and stability to the country and has repeatedly called on the Taliban and other militant groups to shun violence and join the reconciliation process. Also present at the conference was presidential security advisor, Muhammad Masoom Stanikzai, who said the Japanese assistance would go to the reconciliation monetary fund.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#02)

NATO helicopters entered Pakistan to kill insurgents

DNA India, September 27, 2010

Two NATO helicopters killed 30 insurgents on Pakistani soil after a rare manned pursuit across the border from Afghanistan, NATO forces said. The two Apache attack helicopters from the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) crossed the border from eastern Afghanistan on Friday after the insurgents attacked a remote Afghan security outpost in Khost province. ISAF spokesperson Sergeant Matt Summers confirmed that the helicopters had attacked after crossing into Pakistan. He did not comment on which countries' forces were involved, but the United States is the only coalition member that uses Apaches. The United States regularly uses pilotless drone aircraft for missile strikes in Pakistan's borderlands, known to be a haven for militant groups including the Afghan Taliban who launch cross-border attacks from Pakistan's northwest.

(Source:http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_nato-helicopters-entered-pakistan-to-kill-insurgents_1443899)

Karzai sets up body for peace talks

Al Jazeera English, September 28, 2010.

Hamid Karzai, the Afghan president, has appointed a high-level peace council to hold talks with the Taliban. His office later released a list of 68 people hand-picked by Karzai to lead his efforts to broker a peace deal with Taliban and other anti-government fighters. The list includes former president and warlord Burhanuddin Rabani, warlords Abdul Rab Rasoul Sayaf and Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq, all key figures in the resistance during the 1996-2001 Taliban rule over the country. These commanders helped the United States and other Western allies topple the Taliban from power in late 2001. Dozens of pro-government religious leaders, former government officials and tribal elders are also part of the new council, along with at least seven women, Waheed Omer, Karzai's spokesman, said. Officials said the council would include former members of the Taliban and Hizb-i-Islami, a minor armed group led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former prime minister and mujahedeen leader.

(Source: <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/americas/2010/09/2010928122241286855.html>)

President Obama: Afghan War Harder Than Iraq

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, September 29, 2010.

US President Barack Obama said in an interview published that the Afghan war was “harder than Iraq” but that key aspects of his troop surge strategy had not “failed yet.” Obama made the comments in an interview with Rolling Stone magazine, the same publication that quoted out-of-turn comments by former Afghan war commander Stanley McChrystal, which prompted the general’s sacking. The president said that his effort to forge progress in the nine-year war in Afghanistan was slow going, and would probably remain so. “This is very hard stuff, I knew it was hard a year ago, and I suspect a year from now, I will conclude that it’s still hard, and it’s messy.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#02)

68 Members of Afghan Peace Council Announced

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, September 29, 2010.

The Afghan government announced 68 members of the High Council of Peace which is part of efforts to make peace with the Taliban. Members in the peace council include some high level Afghan officials, Jihadi and tribal leaders and active Afghan women. The spokesman for the President, Wahid Omar said another two members of the peace council including a woman will also be introduced soon. The High Council of Peace which is formed to implement the decisions made in the national consultative peace conference, is said to be the first step forward to attract top armed anti-government groups’ leaders to peace process in the country.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#02)

Bangladesh

Tens of Thousands Flee Bangladesh Floods

One World, September 19, 2010

As late monsoon rains continue to swell Bangladeshi rivers, floodwaters have forced more than 140,000 people to flee their homes and destroyed some 40,000 hectares of farmland, officials say. Government officials say floodwaters have heavily eroded riverbanks and devoured some 80 villages since 9 September, most of them by the Brahmaputra river in the northwest. According to the country’s **Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC)**, although the situation in the northwest is expected to stabilize soon, officials predict it will deteriorate in the northeast over the weekend.

(Source: <http://us.oneworld.net/article/369485-tens-thousands-flee-bangladesh-floods>)

Crackdown against illegal Myanmar immigrants launched

Sify News, September 19, 2010.

The Mizoram government has launched a crackdown against Myanmar nationals living in the state without documents, officials said Sunday. ‘The Mizoram Armed Police in the past two days have apprehended 52 Myanmarese from Aizawl and

outskirts where (they) have set up colonies,' a police spokesman said. The official said the illegal entrants would be pushed back soon to Myanmar. The number of Myanmarese living in different parts of Mizoram has now been estimated at around 50,000.

(Source:<http://sify.com/news/crackdown-against-illegal-myanmar-immigrants-launched-news-national-kjtqkeajjhj.html>)

BDR-BSF conference resumes

Daily Star, September 23, 2010.

Both BDR and BSF are expected to exchange the lists of criminals hiding in India and Bangladesh during the conference, sources said.BSF DG Raman Srivastava is leading a 20-member delegation while BDR chief Md Rafiqul Islam a 22-member team in the conference. At the conference, Dhaka will raise the issue of killing, wounding, and torturing of unarmed Bangladeshi nationals by BSF and Indian civilians at the border, BDR sources said.Issues of adversely possessed land, construction of structure illegally, abduction of Bangladeshi people by BSF men will also come up for discussion.

(Source: http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=26018)

Bangladesh to reclaim 600 sq km land from Bay of Bengal

People's Daily, September 26, 2010.

Bangladesh is going to reclaim an area of 600 square kilometers from the Bay of Bengal in an effort to offset the growing demand for lands to accommodate ever increasing populations and adapt to the climate change."We are going to reclaim 600 square kilometers of land from the sea in near future. The government has allocated necessary fund for the first phase of the ambitious project," state minister for environment and forest Hasan Mahmud was quoted as saying by official news agency. Hasan said his ministry has allocated 350 million taka (50 million U.S.dollars) from the Climate Change Trust Fund, a 100 million U.S. dollars fund dedicated to mitigation and adaptation purposes, to fetch huge quantity of silts from the transboundary rivers and reclaim additional land in the sea.

(Source: <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90851/7151277.html>)

Bangladesh discovers gas field with huge reserves

Sify News, September 26, 2010.

A new gas field with a possibility of a two to three trillion cubic feet (tcf) reserve has been found in Bangladesh, an official said. The gas structure in the Sunamganj-Netrakona districts of the northeastern region has been discovered by the state-run Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Company (Bapex). The company is preparing to drill an exploratory well in the new oil and gas structure determined after a survey, Bapex Managing Director Mortuza Ahmad Faruque told The Daily Star.

(Source:<http://sify.com/news/bangladesh-discovers-gas-field-with-huge-reserves-news-international-kj0mOdjjajg.html>)

US asks for Bangladeshi troops in Afghanistan

Daily Star, September 27, 2010.

The USA requested Bangladesh to send combat troops to Afghanistan to ensure security and stability in the war-ravaged country, reports BBC Bangla Service. US Special Envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke made the plea before Foreign Minister Dipu Moni at a meeting in New York. Dipu Moni assured the US envoy of further talks on the issue. Diplomatic analysts in Dhaka, however, say it is risky to send troops to Afghanistan right now and the decision of sending troops should be made after consulting the United Nations and other Muslim-dominated countries. A foreign ministry statement in the capital disclosed the US request for troops. The foreign minister also informed the US envoy that the proposal of sending teachers and doctors to the war-ravaged country has already been made to Bangladesh, the statement added.

(Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=156159>)

Bhutan

Tracking the conflict

Kuensel, September 16, 2010.

Bhutan's strict conservation efforts have not come without a cost. For more than two decades, farmers across the country have been fighting a losing battle with wild animals that continue to prey on their livestock and crops. Efforts to safeguard both wildlife and farmers have been made. But, with a weak reporting system, and even lesser financial assistance, the task to mitigate human-wildlife-conflicts (HWC) is challenging, said officials from wildlife conservation division (WCD). With an online data base to record HWCs across the country launched yesterday, WCD officials said that an important step towards tackling the issue has been taken. It's a system where every attack on livestock and crops by wildlife, as and when reported, would be entered into the data base by field officers across the country. The information punched in would be accessible by others as well as analysed by the system. With such data in place, WCD said that taking decisions would be faster and easier.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16743>)

Security clearance (of another sort)

Kuensel, September 17, 2010.

The coming of autumn, when leaves turn brown, brings worries to local leaders of the four gewogs in the southern district of Sarpang. It means it is time for them to clear the bushes and undergrowth on either side of the 32-km Sarpang-Gelephu highway. The people of the four gewogs of Bhur, Dekiling, Sompangkha and Gelephu, through which the road passes, have to clear the bushes 150 ft to the north and 300 ft towards the south of the road, twice a year. This is done for security reasons, because of the porous border shared with the Indian state of Assam that has a few insurgent groups. "The residents have to contribute labour, ranging from four days to seven days in June and October, to clear the epitorium bushes," said Dekiling gup Gomchen. "But since they are paid only Nu 35 to 40 a

day, it's difficult to convince them to work.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16747>)

Bhutan targets 1 lac Tourist Arrivals by 2012

Traveltechie, September 17, 2010.

The Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan is looking to triple its annual number of visitors. Jigme Thinley, Prime Minister, Bhutan has outlined an expansion plan for the sector, setting a target of one lakh tourists by 2012. About 30,000 tourists are expected to visit Bhutan this year. According to a report, Thinley did not clarify whether the one lakh target would include regional tourists, like those from India. The Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators (ABTO) said it would be possible to bring in up to 60,000 non-Indian tourists by 2012, but perhaps not more. Indian tourists pay in rupees as it is the same value as the Bhutanese currency, the Ngultrum. All foreign visitors to Bhutan, except those from India, must pay a daily minimum tariff of between USD 200 and USD 250

(Source: http://www.traveltechie.com/travel_news_india/search_news/629/Bhutan-targets-1-lac-Tourist-Arrivals-by-2012)

Borrowing cost doubles

Kuensel, September 17, 2010.

The cost of borrowing the Indian rupee (INR) needed by the Bhutanese economy was around Nu 190M for the 2009-10 fiscal year, almost twice that incurred in the previous fiscal year, according to records maintained by the royal monetary authority (RMA). About Nu 150M was paid on the standby credit facility (SCF) of INR 3B borrowed from the government of India, at an interest rate of five percent. An additional Nu 40M was incurred on the overdraft (OD) facility extended by the state bank of India at an interest rate of 8.5 percent. The OD facility has a limit of Nu 5B. In the 2008-09 fiscal year Bhutan paid about Nu 100M as interest on both SCF and OD borrowings, with about Nu 60M paid as interest on the overdraft facility.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16768>)

Nepal-Bhutan trade talks in November

Himalayan Times, September 19, 2010.

The second Joint Secretary level meeting between Nepal and Bhutan in November in Thimphu will prepare bilateral trade agreement. "The trade talks will include issues regarding list of exportable products from both the countries," said Surya Prasad Silwal, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Commerce and Supplies (MoCS). "The issues regarding trade routes and business procedures will also be discussed during the meeting," he said. "The meeting in November is expected to explore possible opportunities to boost bilateral trade," Silwal said, adding that during the meeting they will discuss on the modality for the formal trade treaty that could be later developed as various preferential treatment required for the bilateral

trade. Bhutan's export to Nepal during 2008-09 was around Rs 300 billion whereas Bhutan's import from Nepal was at Rs 200 million.

(Source:<http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Nepal-Bhutan+trade+talks+in+November&NewsID=258393>)

Building democracy from below - The Bhutanese context

Kuensel , September 19, 2010.

The poor turn-out of candidates registering for the local government elections is not unexpected. The reason could be found in the contextual reality of our social and cultural milieu to accommodate such new political openings, rather than attributing it to mere lack of information and awareness of the process with the citizenry. Decentralisation and democracy is undeniably credited for empowering local governments and enabling citizens to productively and efficiently handle development functions that are not usually performed well by central government.

(Source:<http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16767>)

Bodo separatists planning terror strikes in Assam: police

Sify News, September 21, 2010.

More than 100 tribal separatists belonging to the outlawed National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) have entered India's northeastern state of Assam from bases in Bangladesh for terror strikes, officials said. The militants are now scattered across five Assam districts — Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Udaguri and Sonitpur. Meanwhile, there are reports that the NDFB was once again trying to set up bases in Bhutan. 'The NDFB is facing the heat from security forces in the border areas and hence we have reports they are trying to set up bases inside Bhutan,' said M.K. Gehlot, commander of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

(Source:<http://sify.com/news/bodo-separatists-planning-terror-strikes-in-assam-police-news-national-kjut4cajbdc.html>)

India opens new culture cell in Bhutan

Sify News, September 21, 2010.

The Indian embassy in Thimphu inaugurated its cultural wing, the Nehru-Wangchuck Cultural Centre, in collaboration with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). The cultural cell was jointly inaugurated by ICCR president Karan Singh and Lyonpo Minjur Dorji, Bhutan's minister for home and cultural affairs, an ICCR statement said here.

(Source: <http://sify.com/news/india-opens-new-culture-cell-in-bhutan-news-national-kjvtOcehcfgf.html>)

Bring happiness on board

Kuensel, September 22, 2010.

Prime Minister Lyonchhoen Jigmi Y Thinley proposed to include "happiness" as

the ninth millennium development goal (MDGs), while addressing world leaders at the UN high-level plenary meeting (HLPM) on MDGs in New York on September 20. The inclusion of happiness as the ninth dimension of MDG, according to the Lyonchhoen, will remain beyond 2015. "It is a goal that stands as a separate value while representing as well the sum total outcome of the other eight," said the prime minister, who added that its relevance goes beyond the poor and developing member states to bind all of humanity, rich and poor, to a timeless common vision.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16809>)

Bhutan bids for UN Security Council seat

Daily Times, September 23, 2010.

As world leaders take stock of progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goal benchmarks by 2015, which were committed to by more than 190 heads of states and governments in 2000, Bhutan also started for the first time to lobby in a subtle way for a seat in the 2013 UN Security Council, a media report said on Wednesday. Prime Minister of Bhutan Lyonchhoen Jigmi Y Thinley, who is in New York for the three-day UN high level plenary meeting, which started on September 20, and is busy attending the bilateral meetings with participating heads of states and governments, told the Kuensel newspaper that Bhutan was aspiring for the UN Security Council seat so as to make contribution to world peace and stability. Lyonchhoen said that the election campaign was being launched this year to elect 10 non-permanent members in 2012. "If Bhutan is elected then we assume a seat in 2013," he said.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\09\23\story_23-9-2010_pg20_3)

One dead from anthrax in Bhutan

Bio prepwatch, September 24, 2010.

In the Zhemgang province in Bhutan, at least one person has reportedly died of the pulmonary form of anthrax and approximately eight people have contracted its cutaneous form as of September 15. The National Center for Animal Health has also reported that 25 cattle, eight horses and mules, four pigs and six cats have died since the outbreak began. It is believed that the outbreak occurred first in a group of cattle on a farm near the village of Bloktong, according to KuenselOnline.com.

One dead from anthrax in Bhutan

(Source: <http://www.bioprepwatch.com/news/215999-one-dead-from-anthrax-in-bhutan>)

72 officers sold their weapons for profit: Army

Times of India, September 25, 2010.

A shocking disclosure, the Army on Friday admitted that 72 of its officers, including a serving Colonel and three Lt Colonels, posted in sensitive border districts of

Rajasthan and in the Indian Army Training Team (IMTRAT) at Bhutan were part of an illegal arms selling racket. Weapons procured and sold off in violation of the Army Act and Customs Act to arms dealers and private persons included both prohibited and non-prohibited bore and "a total of 72 officers and one JCO were blameworthy" in these cases, the Army said quoting a report submitted by the Court of Inquiry two years ago. Significantly, in the affidavit submitted before a Bench comprising Justices B Sudershan Reddy and S S Nijjar, the Army authorities put the gross violation to the ignorance of its personnel. It said that its officers posted at IMTRAT, Bhutan, wrongly felt that it was alright for them to import firearms and ammunition and sell them at a profit. "This needs to be corrected immediately," it said.

(Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/72-officers-sold-their-weapons-for-profit-Army/articleshow/6622221.cms>)

Bhutan PM attends Buddhist society meet in Bodhgaya

Sify News, September 26, 2010

Bhutanese Prime Minister Jigme Thinley participated in the 113th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Mahabodhi Society of India in Bodhgaya. Thinley, along with other senior functionaries of his delegation, were special invitees at the meeting, which was attended by 150 delegates on Saturday. Dressed in the traditional Buddhist robe, Thinley acknowledged India's role in keeping the philosophy and traditions of the religion alive. "We as Buddhists are indeed grateful that the vision of this great Bodhisattva has been realised by the endeavors of the Mahabodhi Society and its members and indeed by the support and the patronage of the Government of India, the Government of Bihar and the officials of the local-government here in the districts where the four important places are located." Thinley said.

(Source: <http://sify.com/news/bhutan-pm-attends-buddhist-society-meet-in-bodhgaya-news-national-kj0lOcbihdd.html>)

(Similar story at: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16848>)

China begins work on Tibet railway network

DNA India, September 27, 2010.

China has begun construction work on a strategic \$2 billion rail network to connect the Tibetan capital of Lhasa with the region's second largest city of Xigaze that borders India, Bhutan and Nepal. The extension of the 253-km railway line costing about 13.3 billion yuan will take four years to complete, said Zhang Ping, head of the National Reform and Development Commission.

(Source: http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_china-begins-work-on-tibet-railway-network_1444074)

Maldives

President outlines transition to programme budgeting

Minivan News, September 19, 2010.

President Mohamed Nasheed on Friday announced the transition from line-item

to programme budgeting in 2011, a process that began in 2006 under the previous government. In his weekly radio address, President Nasheed explained that the new budget will be based on the Strategic Action Plan formulated in 2009. The purpose of a programme budget is to determine and identify means of achieving targets of government offices and institutions. "After identifying the target, objective or the aim, what offices have to do is determine the work that will be needed to achieve it," he said. "And then they have to determine the expenditure required for it such as machinery, services, people. That is what we consider the budget. But what is important are the programmes."

(Source:<http://minivannews.com/politics/president-outlines-transition-to-programme-budgeting-11298>)

Vice President to participate in UN General Assembly for the first time

Haveeru, September 19, 2010.

Vice President Dr Mohamed Waheed Hassan Manik departed for New York Saturday to attend the General Debate of the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Speaking to journalists at No.1 Jetty before his departure Saturday evening, the Vice President said he would represent the Maldives in a Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) review summit to be held before the debate.

When asked by Haveeru about the matters to be discussed, the Vice President noted that the Maldives would highlight the issues facing the countries, including environmental problems and the need for foreign aid to mitigate the effects and the Maldives' vote of favour to the Middle East peace talks.

(Source:<http://www.haveeru.com.mv/english/details/32358>)

Dhaka offers Maldives diplomatic service

Associated Press of Pakistan, September 21, 2010

Bangladesh has reinforced its ties with the Maldives by offering the Indian Ocean island nation diplomatic service through its various missions abroad. At present, the Maldives has only 13 missions abroad. They are located in London, Beijing, Tokyo, Riyadh, New Delhi, Islamabad, Dhaka, Colombo, Brussels, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. Besides its permanent missions are in New York and Geneva. Sources said Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes has been drafting a concept paper on how to proceed with the new role being envisaged for Bangladesh with regard to the Maldives. Apart from their common South Asian identity, both Bangladesh and the Maldives have Muslim majority populations and identical climate vulnerability.

(Source: http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=116646&Itemid=2)

Come up with targeted support for small island states, Maldives tells UN summit

Asian Tribune, September 23, 2010.

The United Nations needs to have a far better targeted system of support for small

island states, Maldives Vice President told the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Summit in New York, Tuesday."There needs to be a far better organized, more efficient, more targeted, and more measurable system of United Nations support for Small Island Developing States", said Vice President Dr. Mohamed Waheed.

(Source: <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/09/23/come-targeted-support-small-island-states-maldives-tells-un-summit>)

Nepal

MoU on bilateral cooperation

My Republica, September 16, 2010.

Nepali and Chinese businessmen on Thursday agreed to work together for the development of hydropower and energy sector in Nepal through mutual cooperation and investments. Singing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the concluding ceremony of the 11th meeting of Nepal China Non-Governmental Cooperation Forum, the two sides agreed to further expand bilateral economic ties by tapping opportunities in bilateral trade, tourism and infrastructure sectors. The MoU was inked by Kush Kumar Joshi, president of the Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and Quan Zhezhu, the first vice-chairman of All China Federation of Industry and Commerce (ACFIC). At a meeting held earlier, the two sides acknowledged that the forum's activities have led to positive achievements for both sides and strengthened mutual relations.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=23389)

Rs 10.62 crores Indian grant to Nepal

The Himalayan Times, September 16, 2010.

India has provided a grant assistance of 10.62 crores to Nepal for construction and renovation work and for the provision of furniture in different schools in four districts including Mahottari, Myagdi, Morang, and Rupandehi. Indian Embassy in Kathmandu signed four separate MoU today with concerned executing agencies of the government of Nepal and beneficiary organisations for providing the grant assistance under the India-Nepal Economic Cooperation Programme. According to an Indian embassy statement issued here today, of the total grant, Rs 3.18 crores will be spent for construction of a two-storey building and furniture for Shree Mahendra Rastriya Higher Secondary School, Ramgopalpur in Mahottari. According to the statement, these schools meet the educational needs of over 4,200 students, about half of whom are girls. The existing infrastructure of the schools is either inadequate or in a dilapidated condition.

(Source: <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Rs+10.62+crores+Indian+grant+to+Nepal&NewsID=257921>)

Kathmandu-Lhasa bus service to resume

My Republica, September 16, 2010.

Tibetan authorities have agreed in principle to resume the Kathmandu-Lhasa bus

service and provide visa to international tourists. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in this regard during the fourth meeting of China's Tibet-Nepal Joint Tourism Coordination Committee held on Monday and Tuesday in Lhasa, Tibet. The pact was signed by Laxman Prasad Bhattarai, joint secretary at the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, and Wu Ying Jie, standing committee executive vice chairman of Tibet government, on behalf of the respective governments, said a press statement released by the Nepal Tourism Board.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=23391)

Another Kosi? 14 lakh people face flood threat

Hindustan Times, September 16, 2010.

Bihar faces a 2008 Kosi-like flood situation, with the Gandak River, flowing from Nepal, threatening to breach its embankments in the Barrauli block of Gopalganj district in North Bihar. "The breach is imminent now. The entire workforce trying to bolster the embankments has been withdrawn. Only a miracle can save us," Ajoy Nayak, principal secretary of the state's Water Resources Department (WRD) told HT. WRD officials said about 14 lakh people in three districts - Gopalganj, Saran and Siwan - are under the threat of floods. Engineer-in-Chief (North) of the State Water Resources Department, Rajeshwar Dayal told HT on Wednesday, "The situation is dangerous. The river water has been caught up in a shifting vortex and is pounding the entire embankment length between Batadeh and Salehpur and till Simaria. If the embankment is breached, senior WRD engineers believe that the devastation would be greater than that in the Kosi area in 2008."

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Another-Kosi-14-lakh-people-face-flood-threat/Article1-600663.aspx>)

Maoist to withdraw from PM race

My Republica, September 17, 2010.

UCPN (Maoist) chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal announced to withdraw his candidacy from the ongoing prime ministerial election in parliament. The largest party agreed to back off from the election during a joint meeting of Maoist and CPN-UML on Friday. "Pushpa Kamal Dahal will withdraw from the election with an aim of selecting PM on the basis of new national consensus," a release jointly signed by Dahal and UML chairman Jhala Nath Khanal stated. Both the parties also agreed not to participate in the ongoing prime ministerial election. Parliament has failed to elect PM in seven rounds of election.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=23400)

Maoist confers with fringe parties on PM poll

The Himalayan Times, September 19, 2010.

The UCPN-Maoist and some fringe political parties held discussion on Sunday for the formation of a government garnering two third majority, comprising the UCPN-

Maoist and CPN-UML. The discussion was held at the Parliamentary Party office of the Maoists, Singha Durbar. During the meeting, Maoist leaders had informed about the 4-point pact signed with the Maoists and UML for the prime ministerial election. During the meeting, the leaders of other parties had complained on Prachanda's step to pull out from the prime ministerial election without informing them.

(Source:<http://thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Maoist+confers+with+fringe+parties+on+PM+poll&NewsID=258377&a=3>)

Prachanda thwarted, big brother India smug

Telegraph India, September 20, 2010.

The unilateral and frustrated withdrawal of Nepali Maoist boss Prachanda from the prime ministerial race is occasion for a little glee and much gratification among India's Nepal policy makers. They won't admit it publicly but Prachanda's backing off is the consequence of sustained and often barely-concealed efforts by New Delhi to ensure he does not muster enough support in the Constituent Assembly to return as head of government. The failure to elect a Prime Minister even after seven attempts means that the disabling political deadlock in Nepal continues.

(Source:http://www.telegraphindia.com/1100920/jsp/nation/story_12958036.jsp)

US, China and India have varied interest in strategically located Nepal, Interview with Deepak Gajurel

Telegraph Nepal, September 22, 2010.

China has had its interests in the South of the Himalayas from the very beginning. It still exists. Any country's interests are just linked with preservation of its national security, expansion of its trade and diplomacy in the conduct with other nations. China in the past also had been exhibiting its interests in Nepal and its affairs. To recall, as back as in 1961, the then Chinese Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Marshal Chen Yi had clearly stated that any interference in Nepal's internal affairs from any quarters would be taken as an attack on China itself.

(Source: http://www.telegraphnepal.com/news_det.php?news_id=8293)

Sushil Koirala is Nepali Congress new president Sushil Koirala: 1692 • Sher Bahadur Deuba: 1317 • Bhim Bahadur Tamang: 78

The Himalayan Times, September 22, 2010

Nepali Congress acting president Sushil Koirala has won the election for the party president post. In the vote count that concluded at the Academy Hall in Kamaladi, the incumbent acting president of the party secured more than 50 percent votes to win the top post of the country's largest democratic party. He polled 1692 votes while his closest rival Sher Bahadur Deuba could garner 1317 votes only. Koirala maintained a distinct lead over Deuba in the vote count from the beginning.

(Source: <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Sushil+Koirala+is+Nepali+Congress+new+president&NewsID=258693&a=3>)

UML, Maoist urge Speaker to start PM election afresh

My Republica, September 23, 2010.

UCPN (Maoist) and CPN-UML leaders on Thursday formally urged Speaker Subas Nembang to terminate the ongoing prime ministerial election at parliament and begin a new process."Today (Thursday) we have formally requested the Speaker to end the ongoing voting for prime minister and begin a new process," Maoist Vice-Chairman Narayankaji Shrestha told reporters after meeting with Nembang at the latter's office in Singha Durbar. The parties also decided to request Nepali Congress (NC) to withdraw from the election and be ready to elect new prime minister through consensus. The fourth agreement between two parties states that they will work to expedite the constitution writing and the integration and rehabilitation of the Maoist combatants.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=23609)

Nepal-Pakistan to sign FTA in October

Himalayan Times, September 26, 2010.

Nepal and Pakistan are planning to ink Free Trade Agreement (FTA) during the meeting of Joint Economic Commission (JEC) scheduled for October. A high-level bilateral task force is set to be finalised that will discuss the matter in the JEC meeting."Government is setting up a team of delegation that will head for the JEC meeting," said Surya Prasad Silwal, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Commerce and Supplies (MoCS).JEC meeting is scheduled for October 19-20, this year in Islamabad. "The meeting will discuss all the economic aspects of the two countries," Silwal said, adding that the Finance Ministry is also preparing for the JEC meeting. The plan has been put on a fast-track basis after a brief visit of Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani to Nepal while on his way to Bhutan to attend the SAARC meet in Thimphu in April.

(Source:<http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Nepal-Pakistan+to+sign+FTA+in+October&NewsID=259342>)

Beijing begins extending rail to Nepal boundary

Times of India, September 27, 2010.

China's exponentially increasing influence in Nepal, much to the chagrin of India, received further fillip on Sunday with Beijing starting work on extending its rail-way from Lhasa to Xigaze or Shigatse, the second largest city in Tibet which borders Nepal, India and Bhutan. This is the first step taken by Beijing in extending its rail link to the Tibet- Nepal border and which many believe will culminate in its extension right up to Kathmandu. In fact, as per pictures posted on the internet by western tourists, work on the Lhasa-Xigaze railroad may already have been underway for some time. "The Chinese plan now is to build the railway from Xigaze to the Chumbi Valley (Tibet-Sikkim border) and to the Brahmaputra's Great Bend (near the border with Arunachal)," said strategic affairs expert Brahma Chellaney.

(Source:<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Beijing-begins-extending-rail-to-Nepal-boundary/articleshow/6633156.cms>)

Uncertainty in Nepal, Poudyal fails PM race again

Indian Express, September 27, 2010.

There appears to be no end to the political uncertainty in Nepal as R C Poudyal of Nepali Congress failed to get majority support in Parliament in the Prime Ministerial election for the eighth time in a row on Sunday even after Maoist chairman Prachanda withdrew from the race. Ahead of the voting in the 601-member Constituent Assembly, the House officially approved the withdrawal of Prachanda's candidacy, leaving Nepali Congress (NC) candidate Poudyal alone in the fray. 65-year-old Poudyal received 116 votes in his favour, 184 votes short of a simple majority.

(Source:<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/uncertainty-in-nepal-poudyal-fails-pm-race-again/688371/>)

Madhes parties vote against election office

The Himalayan Times, September 29, 2010.

Seven Madhes-based parties today warned the Election Commission to stop voters' identity card distribution at the earliest. Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum-Nepal, Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum- Democratic, Nepal Sadbhawana Party, Nepal Sadbhawana Party (Anandidevi), were among the other political parties that urged the EC to halt the process. The process is blatantly unscientific and against the Madhes communities' welfare, said a joint press release.

(Source: <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Madhes+parties+vote+against+election+office&NewsID=259627>)

Election for Nepali PM to continue until only candidate withdraws

People's Daily, September 29, 2010.

Nepali law practitioners have said the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections for the post of prime minister will continue until the only candidate Nepali Congress (NC) leader Ram Chandra Poudel withdraws his candidature, the National News Agency RSS reported Wednesday. Constitution expert Bhimarjun Acharya, said that according to the parliament regulation the resignation of another candidate Chairperson of Unified Communist party of Nepal- Maoists (UCPN-M) Prachanda was legitimate. Prachanda withdrew his candidacy from the 8th round voting held on Sunday.Acharya also said that the poll would take place for a thousand times if the only candidate does not resign on his own will.

(Source: <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90851/7154336.html>)

Pakistan

Afghanistan won't be used to plot against Pakistan: Karzai

Central Asia Online, September 16, 2010.

Afghanistan is prepared to act if it receives evidence about elements plotting subversive activities against Pakistan in Afghan territory, Afghan President Hamid Karzai said September 15. Karzai and President Asif Ali Zardari addressed a joint news conference in Islamabad following their meeting and delegation-level talks,

and the leaders vowed to work together for regional peace. Karzai also urged the security and intelligence agencies of the two countries to co-operate in rooting out extremists, BBC Urdu reported. The Afghan president said it was his government's policy to reconcile with elements within the Taliban who have no links with Al-Qaeda and who respect the Afghan constitution, according to published reports.

(Source: http://centralasiaonline.com/cocoon/caii/xhtml/en_GB/features/caii/newsbriefs/2010/09/16/newsbrief-06)

IMF Approves 451 Million-Dollar Loan to Pakistan

RTT News, September 17, 2010.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved a \$451-million loan, under the Emergency Natural Disaster Assistance (ENDA), to Pakistan to help that South Asian Islamic country recover from the worst floods in eight decades. The IMF stated its board had approved the immediate disbursal of the full amount of this emergency loan to help Pakistan manage the aftermath of the massive and devastating floods. The IMF said it hoped that the loan would spur more lending by international donors—preferably either as grants or at highly-concessional rates of interest—and help finance the immediate foreign exchange needs, thereby arresting a decline in its external reserves and boosting confidence in Pakistan's position in the comity of nations.

(Source: <http://www.rttnews.com/Content/GeneralNews.aspx?Id=1421671&SM=1>)

Pakistan endorses Karzai's Kabul plan

The Express Tribune, September 17, 2010

Three major players pitted against the Taliban insurgency gathered here on Thursday for what appeared to be the first meeting in Islamabad of its kind in nine years to discuss the regional security situation. The proposed peace-making plan with the Taliban was at the heart of the conversation between Afghan President Hamid Karzai, Pakistan Army Chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and US commander in Afghanistan General David Petraeus. The head of the Inter-Services Intelligence, Lt Gen Ahmed Shuja Pasha, Afghan spymaster Rahmatullah Nabil and top US intelligence officials also attended the unprecedented meeting. It was a rare occasion when top civil, military and intelligence officials from Pakistan, Afghanistan and the US met together to discuss a host of issues related to the fight against extremism. ISPR spokesman Major General Athar Abbas and the US embassy would not comment on the development.

(Source: [http://tribune.com.pk/story/51096/pakistan-endores-karzai%20%99s-kabul-plan/](http://tribune.com.pk/story/51096/pakistan-endorses-karzai%20%99s-kabul-plan/))

PML-N opts for aggressive policy against govt

Sana News, September 19, 2010.

Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) chief Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has directed his party members to adopt aggressive policy against the government in the parliament. In a meeting with party leaders including, among others, the Chief

Minister Punjab Mian Shahbaz Sharif, Opposition leader in the National Assembly Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Senator Khurshid at his residence in Raiwind on Sunday, he said they would not allow corruption to be protected in the name of democratic system. It was agreed upon during the course of meeting that the government's malpractices and mismanagement would be clearly highlighted in the parliament

(Source:<http://www.sananeews.net/english/2010/09/20/pml-n-opt-for-aggressive-policy-against-govt/>)

'Pakistan should play more meaningful role on Kashmir'

Sify News, September 19, 2010.

The 'freedom struggle in occupied Kashmir' is fast reaching its objective and it is time Pakistan intervenes more forcefully and initiates a global diplomatic and media campaign to expose the Indian 'barbary and oppression', a Pakistani newspaper said Sunday. 'The freedom movement in occupied Kashmir has reached its final stage. It is time Pakistan helps the oppressed Kashmiri people with diplomatic and moral support as well as guidance. Kashmir is the 'shah-e-rag' (jugular vein) of Pakistan and it is the time and it is liberated,' an editorial in the Nawa-i-Waqt said. It said while Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had made some 'stuttering' and 'half-hearted' statements in support of the Kashmiri people, these were 'not enough' and in light of the current happenings in the Kashmir Valley where over 100 people had been killed in the last three months. 'The need of the hour is to speak out forcefully.'

(Source:<http://sify.com/news/pakistan-should-play-more-meaningful-role-on-kashmir-news-international-kjtr4cecgga.html>)

Karachi violence takes ominous turn

Dawn, September 21, 2010.

At least nine people were killed in incidents of violence in Karachi. Commercial centres remained closed and traffic thinned out as tension and fear gripped some areas during funeral of five people who were shot dead on September 20, 2010. Muttahida Qaumi Movement leader Dr Farooq Sattar held the federal interior ministry and the Sindh home department responsible for the renewed wave of violence in the city. "If they are not responsible, then they should tell us as to why they failed to curb the acts of terror in the city," he said at a press conference here on September 21, 2010.

(Source:<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/karachi-violence-takes-ominous-turn-190>)

PML-N wants change only through elections: Nawaz

Daily Times, September 21, 2010.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief Nawaz Sharif said on Monday that he wanted change that came through elections and which appealed to the nation. Talking to a private TV channel, Nawaz said that it was the government's

responsibility to work for the good of the people. "I will not become part of any conspiracy, instead we will face any challenge," he said, adding that he would defend democracy at any cost. "Any change should come from within the present system and I am not in the favour of any engineered or sponsored change," Nawaz added. He said that the Supreme Court was making all the decisions, which the government should have made.

(Source:http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\09\21\story_21-9-2010_pg1_4)

India ready to discuss 'all issues' with Pakistan: Rao

Daily Times, September 22, 2010

India is prepared to "discuss all outstanding issues" with Pakistan, including the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, but it has to take "ameliorative action" to eradicate terrorism directed against the country, Indian Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao said. "The issue of Jammu and Kashmir comes up in our relationship with Pakistan and we've said very clearly, very confidently and very transparently that we are prepared to discuss all outstanding issues with Pakistan," Rao said. The foreign secretary made these comments just before a likely meeting between the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan on the sidelines of the forthcoming UN General Assembly's annual meeting in New York.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\09\22\story_22-9-2010_pg1_2)

Pakistan floods hit militant fight: Holbrooke

Dawn, September 22, 2010.

Pakistan's fight against militants has been constrained by the need to deploy troops to help victims of recent devastating floods, the senior US official for Pakistan and Afghanistan said. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke said there was no evidence yet that Islamabad was acting on Washington's demands that it move against the Haqqani group, a Taliban ally which US officials suspect has ties to Pakistani intelligence, and suggested this was because of the country's devastating floods.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/world/19-pakistan-floods-hit-militant-fight-holbrooke-hh-02>)

No one can scare us, says Gilani

Daily Times, September 23, 2010.

Responding to speculations that the democratic set up was at risk, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani on Wednesday asserted that the government would not be scared and vowed to protect the parliamentarians being accused of corruption. Defending politicians against allegations of corruption, the prime minister said the government would defend them. "Same allegations are being leveled against the politicians. It is being said that they (politicians) are a product of army.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\09\23\story_23-9-2010_pg1_3)

No difference between Zardari, Musharraf govts, says Brahamdagh*Daily Times, September 23, 2010.*

Exiled Baloch leader Brahamdagh Bugti on Wednesday said that although the tactics of the incumbent government led by President Asif Ali Zardari are different from those adopted by former president Pervez Musharraf, the aim of both governments remains the same. Speaking to Daily Times, the exiled leader said that the current government is worse for Balochistan than the previous one. "During the previous government, the government conducted operation against Balochs at a specific area, but now it has spread out to all of Balochistan. Now our political leaders, intellectuals and activists are targeted too. Let's not talk about Zardari too much because he has no authority. The politicians don't have any control," he said.

(Source:http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\09\23\story_23-9-2010_pg1_4)

Court reserves right to review any law, says Justice Javed*Dawn, September 27, 2010.*

The Supreme Court on Monday heard petitions challenging the 18th Amendment. A 17-judge full court heard the petitions challenging certain clauses in the amendment. During the hearing, Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry said opening the Objectives Resolution's Pandora's Box was not necessary. He further said that the Supreme Court has made obvious the constitution's fundamental features through its decisions. "The constitution represents 180 million people of Pakistan...any legislation in conflict with the constitution cannot be a law," Chief Justice Iftikhar said.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/04-sc-18th-amendment-petition-qs-02>)

MQM leader's murder linked to rows within party: report*Dawn, September 27, 2010.*

MQM senior party leader, Dr. Imran Farooq may have been killed due to conflicts in his own party, a report in the Guardian stated on Sunday. The report said that Farooq, who was stabbed to death in London earlier this month, may have been about to join a new political party set up by former president Pervez Musharraf and his assassination could have been linked to that. Farooq's assassination is being investigated by the Scotland Yard. Also on Sunday, MQM Chief, Altaf Hussain said that the "international establishment" and a few powerful countries had planned a conspiracy to eliminate him and Farooq's murder was a part of this plot.

(Source:<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/03-mqm-leaders-murder-linked-to-rows-within-party-report-ss-02>)

Govt has good relations with establishment, army*Daily Times, September 29, 2010.*

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani said the government has good relations with

the establishment and the army, adding that the army and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) were in favour of democracy, a private TV channel reported on Tuesday. Speaking with a panel of journalists at the Prime Minister's House in Islamabad, the prime minister said that the government would complete its tenure, adding that those who wished the government to dissolve before its time would be disappointed. He said that the government had no confrontation with the judiciary, adding that the extension given by the apex court for writing a letter to the Swiss government against President Asif Ali Zardari was not the outcome of any deal.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\09\29\story_29-9-2010_pg1_1)

Pakistan to raise Nato helicopter violation issue

Dawn, September 29, 2010.

Federal Interior Minister, Rehman Malik said on Wednesday that the issue of Nato helicopter violations in Pakistani areas will be raised by the Army Chief in the Pak-Afghan Commission. While talking to the media outside parliament house, Malik said that Pakistan has strongly protested to the US, Afghan ambassadors and Nato against the recent violation of Nato helicopters. Malik said that no one is allowed to launch operation within Pakistani borders. He also said that Pakistan is trying to achieve drone technology. Malik said that he told US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton that halting the drone attack in Pakistan will help minimise anti-US sentiment among Pakistani people.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/03-pakistan-to-raise-nato-violation-issue-in-pak-afghan-commission-ss-03>)

Sri Lanka

Public should be vigilant of pro-LTTE elements - Minister

Daily News, September 17, 2010.

The Sri Lankan public should continue to be vigilant because the same elements which tried their best to save the LTTE and destroy Sri Lanka are still active and working towards achieving their evil targets, National Freedom Front (NFF) Leader Minister Wimal Weerawansa said. Minister Weerawansa said that the very same local and foreign elements which tried their best to save the LTTE, promote separatism in Sri Lanka and prevent the country from achieving peace and economic development are still active, exist under different faces and are working to achieve their goals. Accordingly both UK and US worry about the 18th Amendment passed by the Sri Lankan Parliament with a two thirds majority. The 18th amendment closed all loopholes which weakened the State. Those are the same elements which supported the LTTE in every way during the humanitarian operation.

(Source: <http://www.dailynews.lk/2010/09/17/news04.asp>)

62 dead and 50 injured in Eastern Sri Lanka as ammunition container explodes

Asian Tribune, September 17, 2010.

At least 62 people -among them two Chinese nationals- are killed in Karadiyanaru

of Eastern Sri Lanka as a container with ammunition for road construction accidentally exploded. More than 50 also were injured in this explosion. The container belongs to a road construction firm. Karadiyanaru city is located on the A5 road to eastern city of Batticaloa. The explosion killed mostly policemen, according to initial reports. The Karadiyanaru Police station too has been damaged by the explosion.

(Source: <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/09/17/update-62-dead-and-50-injured-eastern-sri-lanka-ammunition-container-explodes>)

Sri Lanka awards Rs. 50 bn Colombo South Port deal to China Holdings - Aitken Spence consortium

Asian Tribune, September 17, 2010.

Sri Lankan government has awarded the tender for the much-delayed construction of Rs. 50 bn Colombo South Port Project to the only tender-hopeful – an investor consortium consisting of Aitken Spence and the Hong Kong-based China Merchant Holdings. In a disclosure submitted to the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) today, Aitken Spence said that the Government decided to issue the Letter of Intent (LoI) to build and operate the Colombo Port Expansion Project to its Consortium. Asked what the agreed value of the financial bid was, (which had been a highly debated issue during negotiations), Chairman/CEO of Aitken Spence Shipping Limited and former SLPA Chairman, Dr. Parakrama Dissanayake said that he was unable to comment on it.

(Source:<http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/09/17/sri-lanka-awards-rs-50-bn-colombo-south-port-deal-china-holdings-aitken-spence-conso>)

Sri Lanka main opposition says dissolving CMC would mean dissolving part of country's history

Colombo Page, September 19, 2010.

Sri Lanka's main opposition United National Party (UNP) says that the first casualty of the government's two-thirds majority is the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC). UNP Deputy Leader and one time Mayor of Colombo, Karu Jayasuriya told the local media that the government's move to abolish the CMC and establish a Special Authority for development is a violation of basic rights of the people. He explained that such a move would deprive voters in Colombo from electing their administrators. However, Jayasuriya said that the UNP has not yet received any official communication or draft from the government on the proposed authority.

(Source:http://www.colombopage.com/archive_10B/Sep19_1284904705JR.php)

Sri Lanka: From LTTE to let

Daily Mirror, September 20, 2010.

US agencies have passed on intelligence inputs to India that the LeT already has some 200 cadres present in Sri Lanka who plan to use the country as a staging ground to enter India, the MSN India reported yesterday. It's learnt that Washington has also informed Colombo on this after Lankan authorities denied that LeT had training facilities here. As per New Delhi's assessment, the threat could

be aggravated if remnants of the LTTE cadre were engaged in logistics for LeT. Contrary to initial claims that Baig was trained in Sri Lanka, what had been confirmed was that he travelled there in 2008 where he met a contact from LeT. Sources said investigations were on to find out whether he undertook more visits and if LeT operatives were using Sri Lanka as a rendezvous to avoid detection.

(Source:<http://www.dailymirror.lk/print/index.php/news/front-page-news/21954.html>)

MDMK leader Vaiko urges the Tribunal to lift ban on LTTE in India

Asian Tribune, September 22, 2010.

The Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam(MDMK) leader and staunch supporter of the slain LTTE leader Velupillai Prabakaran has urged the 'Unlawful Activities Prevention Tribunal(UAPT)' in Delhi and sought permission to argue against a notification issued by the Central Government to continue the ban on Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to two more years from May 14. The Central government advocate, however, objected and said that under the law only a member of the organization that was sought to be banned could be heard.

(Source: [http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/09/22/mdmk-leader-vaiko-urges-tribunal-lift-ban-ltte-india\)-22](http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/09/22/mdmk-leader-vaiko-urges-tribunal-lift-ban-ltte-india)-22)

Sri Lanka still neighbour's envy

Hindustan Times, September 22, 2010.

Sri Lanka has the lowest maternal mortality rate (MMR) in south east Asia and its infant mortality rate (MMR) is better than many wealthier countries, the United Nation's second report on Millennium Development Goal (MDG) progress has said. "At its current level of 11.3 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, IMR (infant mortality rate) is lower than that achieved by countries considerably wealthier than Sri Lanka," the report, released on Tuesday, said. The report said poverty had declined from 26.1 per cent in 1990-91 to 15.2 per cent in 2006-07. Besides, Sri Lanka has almost achieved the universal primary education target with net enrollment rate reaching 97.5 per cent in 2006/07 for both males and females.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Sri-Lanka-still-neighbour-s-envy/H1-Article1-603374.aspx>)

Norway to probe failed peace effort, final phase of war

The Island, September 22, 2010

Norway is preparing to launch a full scale inquiry into the failed Norwegian peace efforts in Sri Lanka from 1997 to 2009 with special emphasis on the final stage of the war between January and May 2009, while Premier Jens Stoltenberg's government is seeking a new role in the post-war Sri Lanka, *The Island* learns. The Norwegian government is likely to hire a Norwegian private consultancy firm to carry out a comprehensive examination of the peace process, whose failure led to Eelam war IV resulting in the eradication of the top LTTE leadership in May last year.

(Source: http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=7288)

Call for the change of the UNP leadership becomes more louder*Asian Tribune, September 26, 2010.*

An opinion has been formed within the UNP that the party leadership should be changed immediately. This was mainly due to the continuous defeats of the party at the elections held during the past period. Following the UNP working committee meeting held recently the rebel MPs of the party seem to be silent. But Kurunegala District Parliamentarian Dayasiri Jayasekara considered a leading member of the party has taken the trouble to take issue of the change of forward. We met MP Dayasiri Jayasekara about this abnormal silence in the midst of the rebel UNP parliamentarians asked for his comments.

(Source: <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/09/26/call-change-unp-leadership-becomes-more-louder>)

Sri Lanka parliament to debate External Affairs Minister's no-confidence motion on October 7*Colombo Page, September 27, 2010.*

Sri Lanka's party leaders in parliament have agreed to take up the no-confidence motion against External Affairs Minister Prof. G.L. Peiris in the House on October 7. The no-confidence motion against the Minister was put forward by the United National Party (UNP). Chief Government Whip and Minister Dinesh Gunawardena told the local media that voting on the no-confidence motion is to take place on the same day. The no-confidence motion was handed over to Speaker Chamal Rajapaksa by UNP MPs John Amaratunga, Lakshman Kiriella, and Ravi Karunanayaka.

(Source: http://www.colombopage.com/archive_10B/Sep27_1285566492JR.php)

Indo-Lanka IMBL meeting today*Daily News, September 29, 2010.*

The routine biannual International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) meeting between Sri Lanka and India will be held today. The meeting will be held with the participation of the Sri Lanka Navy, Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard Unit on board an Indian ship on the Indo-Sri Lanka International Maritime Boundary Line in the North of Sri Lanka. Navy Spokesman Captain Athula Senarath The Navy Spokesman further stated that this meeting is held to strengthen the relationship between the two Navies and mainly with regard to secure the seas in coordination with the two Navies. With reference to a news item published in an Indian Newspaper in connection with the IMBL meeting, Captain Senarath stated that the Sri Lanka Navy totally dismisses claims that this meeting was urgently called to discuss the matters related to harassments of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy.

(Source: <http://www.dailynews.lk/2010/09/29/news32.asp>)