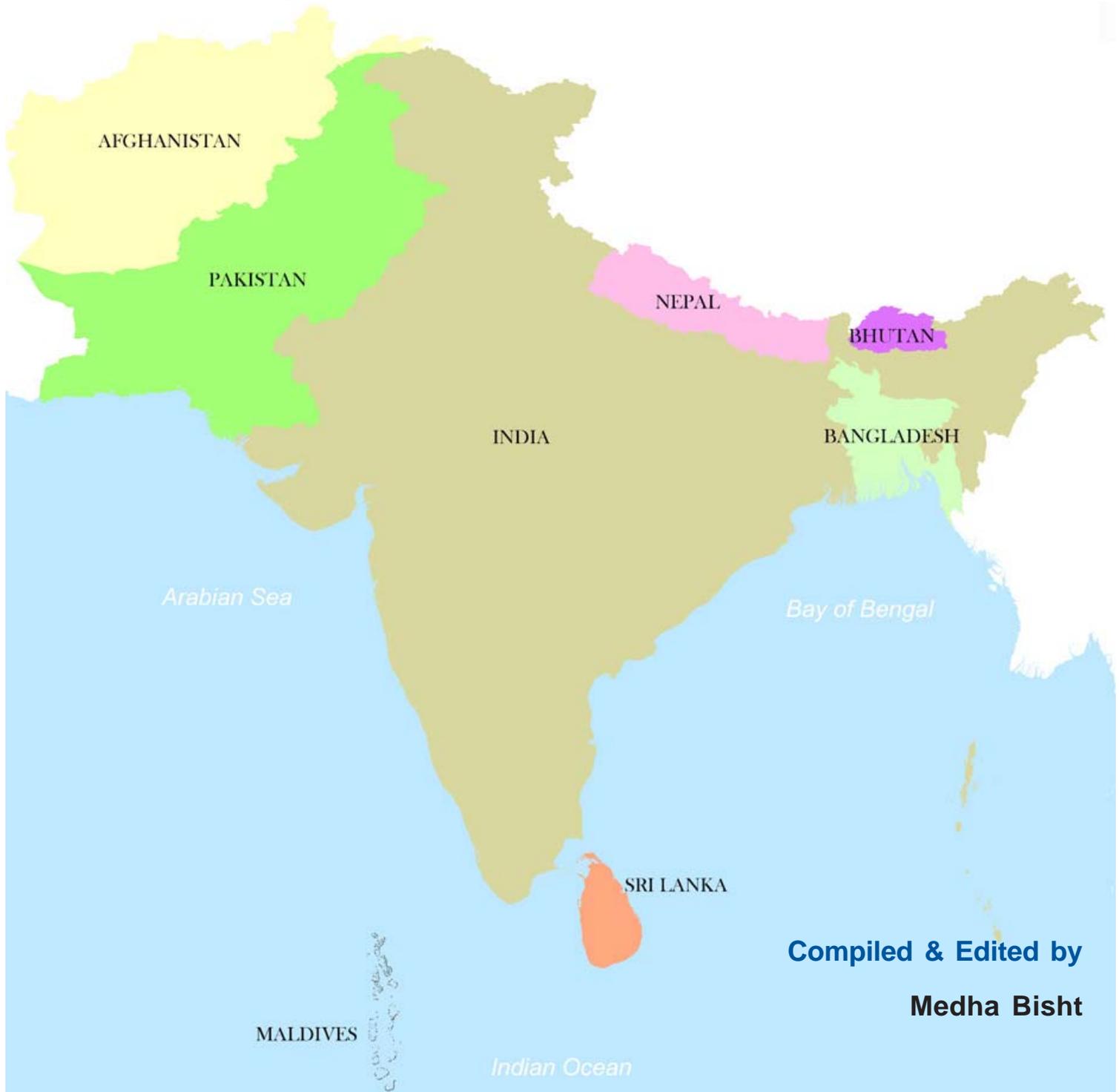


SOUTH ASIA TRENDS

Volume 1 Number 6 July 5-18, 2010

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.



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Editor's Note

The year 2008 was celebrated as the year of democracy in South Asia, as Maldives along with several other smaller countries such as Bhutan and Bangladesh took the first step towards democracy. The fledging democracy in Maldives however witnessed a hurdle, as the political deadlock jeopardised the functioning of the democratic government. Accusing the opposition of following a "scorched earth policy", Nasheed's cabinet had resigned enmasse on June 29, 2010 protesting the corrupt practices of the parliament, who they alleged were taking bribes which had proved debilitating to the ruling party. The opposition was also questioned on account of their arbitrary moves to appoint the members of the independent commissions, which the MDP claimed was the prerogative of the President. The crisis deepened as the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) arrested the leaders of several opposition parties, including Gasim Ibrahim and Abdulla Yameen. As the political crisis was unfolding some media reports stated that, "the parliamentary opposition had threatened to kick out Mr Nasheed's ministers one by one, through a series of no-confidence votes." Given these developments, the resignation move perhaps can be interpreted as a desperate bid by the MDP to salvage itself as the President does not possess the power to dissolve the Parliament.

However by bringing the friction to the public domain, Maldives did invite some political international attention. While the US Ambassador Patricia Butenis provided good offices for President Nasheed and four opposition parties, Sri Lankan President, Mahinda Rajapakse also undertook a good will visit to Maldives, in order to resolve the deadlock. A week later the political crisis, which brought the executive-legislature divide to the fore, seems to have been controlled as President reappointed his cabinet on July 8, 2010. The Supreme Court meanwhile opposed the decision of the High Court to detain Ibrahim and Yameen for 15 days, also ordering the immediate release of the high-profile businessmen and minor opposition party leaders. However, the current crisis reveals the democratic deficit prevalent in the country.

As countries gear up for the Kabul Conference on July 20, 2010, certain nuances can be identified on India's Afghan policy. First, with some pre-conditions attached, India has supported Karzai's effort to engage the good Taliban. Second, India has made overtures to China towards jointly working on some

projects with Afghanistan, and, third India has expressed the need for greater cooperation with Iran in stabilizing Afghanistan. The forthcoming Kabul Conference could well prove an opportune moment to reactivate its regional engagement with key neighbours on Afghanistan.

The much awaited bilateral talks between the Foreign Ministers of India and Pakistan concluded on July 16, 2010. Having failed in bridging the existing trust deficit, Indian Foreign Secretary, Nirupama Rao officially announced that the talks had not collapsed. Undertaking a post-facto analysis of the talks, some media reports claim that the Pak army is a key player controlling the reigns of politics as well as the hawkish posture of the civilian government.

Afghanistan

Afghan war at critical stage, says Petraeus

Daily Times, June 5, 2010.

General David Petraeus boldly declared on July 4, 2010 “we are in this to win” as he took command of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan at a time of skepticism over a counter-insurgency strategy he himself pioneered and confusion over goals in an increasingly violent war. “We are engaged in a contest of wills,” he told several hundred US, coalition and Afghan officials who gathered on a grassy area outside NATO headquarters in Kabul. By killing and maiming civilians - even using “unwitting children to carry out attacks” - the Taliban and their allies are trying to undermine public confidence in the Afghan government and the international community’s ability to prevail, he said.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\05\story_5-7-2010_pg1_1)

Canadian Ambassador William Crosbie: Ethnic Groups, Women Must Be Involved in Peace Process

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, July 6, 2010.

Canada could be convinced to back plans for political reconciliation in order to bring peace to Afghanistan but only if a number of stiff conditions are met first, says Canada’s ambassador to the country. Afghan President Hamid Karzai has been reaching out to the insurgents in hopes of ending the war. Last month, Karzai won endorsement from a national conference for his plan to offer incentives to the militants to lay down their arms, and to seek talks with the Taliban leadership. The Taliban have publicly shunned the offer, and the United States is skeptical whether peace can succeed until the Taliban are weakened on the battlefield. Canadian Ambassador William Crosbie said there’s no doubt that reconciliation is the key to solving Afghanistan’s woes but he said the political discourse is “going too far, going too fast.”

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

India for ‘Structured’ Talks with Iran on Afghanistan

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, July 6, 2010.

Taking note of sanctions imposed on Tehran by the UN and countries like the US, India resolved to push energy ties with Iran and underlined the need for greater cooperation between the two countries in stabilizing Afghanistan. “India desires to promote and enhance relations with Iran in a way that serves the interests of our two countries,” Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao said at a seminar here on “Strategic Dialogue on India and Iran.” “I would argue that the India-Iran relationship will become even more important with the inevitable rise of both India and Iran in this century, which has been dubbed by many as the Asian century,” she said. Rao’s comments have set a positive tone for the meeting of joint commission between External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna and Iranian Finance Minister Shamsuddin Huseini July 8-9, 2010.

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

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

Pakistan Renews Call for Dialogue with Taliban

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, July 6, 2010.

Pakistan's government, under fresh pressure to deliver stability after suicide bombers killed dozens last week, renewed its call on for talks with Taliban militants ready to renounce violence. At least 42 people were killed and 175 wounded when two suicide bombers struck Pakistan's most important Sufi shrine on July 1, 2010, the second major attack in a month on Pakistan's cultural hub and traditional seat of power Punjab province. Speaking after a special high level meeting on law and order, Information Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira said the government would welcome negotiations under the right conditions. "One thing is very clear that they will have to accept the writ of the state and surrender before the government. Our doors are open for negotiations with those who will surrender before the government," he told reporters.

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

As US fights, China spends to gain Afghan foothold

China Daily, July 5, 2010.

As the US and its NATO allies fight to stabilize Afghanistan, China has expanded its economic footprint with several high-profile investments and reconstruction projects. In 2007, it became the country's largest foreign investor when it won a \$3.5 billion contract to develop copper mines at Aynak, southeast of Kabul. The US is in favor of the Chinese investment. "It can be a good thing. As a matter of fact, we encourage all of the international community to take an interest in the economic development of Afghanistan," said US State Department spokesman Gordon Duguid. "Working with our coalition partners and other interested partners, we are trying to establish a viable market economy in Afghanistan. This is one way to wean people from illicit activities and also to fight the ideology of the terrorists," he said.

(Source: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2010-07/05/content_10065740.htm)

Sharif Urges Pakistan Neutrality On Afghanistan

Associated Press, July 6, 2010.

Pakistan should stop trying to influence affairs in Afghanistan, the opposition leader said, while admitting that the pro-Afghan Taliban policy he pursued when he was prime minister in the 1990s was a failure. Nawaz Sharif's comments come as he tries to gain political traction and deflect criticism that his party is beholden to extremist elements. Just last week, he pushed the government to open talks with elements of the Pakistani Taliban, and the ruling party agreed to his proposal to hold a national conference on stopping terrorism. The remarks also come as Pakistan tries to weigh in on reconciliation efforts between Afghanistan's government, the U.S. and the Afghan Taliban. Pakistan's historical interest in Afghanistan is largely a result of its desire to assert itself in the region and attain a strategic advantage over archrival India.

(Source: <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/07/06/ap/asia/main6650515.shtml>)

Kandahar is key to victory in Afghan war: McCain

Zee News, July 6, 2010.

The ranking Republican on the US Senate Armed Services Committee said NATO and Afghan troops will prevail in the war if they can succeed in securing and bolstering governance in the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar. Sen John McCain, who visited Afghanistan's largest city in the south yesterday with two other US lawmakers, warned of tough fighting ahead and predicted that casualties would rise in the short-term. "The Taliban know that Kandahar is the key to success or failure," McCain told a news conference at the airport in Kabul. "So what happens in this operation will have a great effect on the outcome of this conflict. But I am convinced we can succeed and will succeed, and Kandahar is obviously the key area. And if succeed there, we will succeed in the rest of this struggle."

(Source: <http://www.zeenews.com/news639003.html>)

Afghanistan urges Pakistan to act against terror groups

Daily Times, July 7, 2010.

Afghanistan's National Security Adviser Rangin Dadfar Spanta has called on Pakistan to "take serious measures" against militant groups, who, he claims, launch attacks on Afghan targets from secure havens inside Pakistan. Spanta spoke to AFP in an interview a week after the Al Jazeera television network said Afghan President Hamid Karzai had met the man who runs the Al-Qaeda-linked Haqqani network in talks mediated by Pakistan. Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Taliban have all denied any such meeting. Spanta's comments signal an about-turn by the Afghan government after months of overtures to Islamabad in efforts to prompt Pakistan to deal with militant groups, including Al Qaeda and the Taliban based along the Afghan border.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\07\story_7-7-2010_pg1_7)

Pakistan, Afghanistan Ink MoU on Rail Links

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, July 8, 2010.

Afghanistan and Pakistan on agreed to expand bilateral trade and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for laying a railways track between the two countries, officials said. The agreement came on the second day of an important meeting between the two sides on the proposed Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement in Pakistan's capital of Islamabad. The Pakistan side was led by Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs Dr. Abdul Hafeez Sheikh while the visiting delegation was led by his Afghan counterpart Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal. Addressing a joint press conference with Sheikh at the conclusion of the meeting, Zakhilwal said the rail tracks would link Baluchistan's capital of Quetta to southern Kandahar province and Peshawar to Jalalabad.

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

India Supports Talks with 'Good Taliban'

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, July 12, 2010

Amid Afghan government's efforts to bring Taliban elements into the mainstream, the upcoming Kabul conference is expected to see India expressing support for any reintegration move that leads to "genuine peace" in that country besides committing help in capacity building. External Affairs Minister S M Krishna, who will attend the conference of about 50 countries on July 20, is expected to underline India's commitment to providing whatever help Afghanistan wants for its capacity-building. Krishna is expected to convey India's support to Karzai government's efforts for reintegration of Taliban elements if that leads to "genuine peace", sources said. India does not see anything wrong if individual Taliban cadres are rehabilitated after they give up violence, end physical and ideological links with terror, vow to abide by the Afghan Constitution and commit to respect human rights, including women's rights.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#01)

UN to Decide on dropping more Taliban from Blacklist

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, July 14, 2010.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) would decide soon on a request from Kabul for striking off its blacklist the names of 20 former Taliban officials, a presidential spokesman said. The Karzai government handed over the names of the former Taliban figures to a UNSC delegation that visited Kabul recently, Siyamak Hirawi told Pajhwok Afghan News. The council would soon announce its decision on the fate of the ex-Taliban officials, he hoped, explaining the government had taken the step on the basis of a demand from the Peace Advisory Jirga, which was held in early June.

(Source: http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#01)

Karzai, Petraeus in Talks on Afghan Militias: Spokesman

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, July 14, 2010.

President Karzai and NATO commander in Afghanistan are trying to reach an agreement on creating grass-roots militias to fight the Taliban, an official said. US media have reported that US General David Petraeus, who took over command of 140,000 US and NATO troops on July 4, has been pushing for the establishment of Iraq-style tribal militias to fight militants in remote Afghan villages.

(Source: http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#01)

Afghanistan will be in throes of Taliban tyranny if US pulls out early: NATO

News Track India, July 14, 2010.

While the United States, Britain and other allied countries are planning to pull out from Afghanistan in two to three years time, NATO secretary general Anders Fogh Rasmussen has warned that such a move could prove catastrophic, with the Taliban very quickly likely to bring the entire country under its tyrannical rule. During a meeting with British Prime Minister David Cameron, Rasmussen said that the nations supporting the US -led 'war on terror' in Afghanistan should keep their soldiers in the country as long as necessary."

(Source: <http://newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/168712>)

U.S. Rebuilds Power Plant, Taliban Reap a Windfall

Wall Street Journal, July 13, 2010.

The U.S. has poured more than \$100 million into upgrading the Kajaki hydro-power plant, the biggest source of electricity in south Afghanistan. Since U.S.-funded repairs of a turbine at the Kajaki plant doubled its capacity in October, nearly half of the total electrical output has flowed to districts in Helmand province where the Taliban administer the grid, Afghan officials say. In those districts, residents pay their monthly electricity bills directly to the insurgents, who use the proceeds to fund their war with American and British troops.

(Source: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704545004575352994242747012.html?mod=WSJEUROPE_hpp_MIDDLETopNews)

No Change in Afghan Strategy: British Prime Minister David Cameron

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, July 15, 2010.

The British strategy in Afghanistan won't change despite attacks on the British military by a renegade Afghan soldier, the British prime minister said. The attack follows a weekend Taliban threat against international forces in Afghanistan dubbed al-Fatah, or "victory." The British Ministry of Defense said the incident was a "suspected premeditated attack" and the Taliban claim the Afghan soldier is now among their ranks, London's Guardian newspaper reports. "We must continue to work with the Afghan army to create a stable Afghanistan able to main-

tain its own security and to prevent al-Qaida from returning," he said. U.S.

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

US Senators: US Mission Should be Strengthen ANA

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, July 15, 2010

Two influential US senators have said the sole mission of the United States should be to strengthen the Afghan National Army; which has emerged as the most respected Afghan institution in the post-Taliban era. " However, they noted that Pakistan needed to take more action against the Afghan Taliban, which operates from Quetta, and against the Haqqani network, which finds a safe haven in Pakistan. "The building blocks of an Afghan policy mission are that you have an army that is respected and an opponent that is detested by the Afghan people.

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

Senators urge clarity on Afghan war

Al Jazeera, July 15, 2010.

US politicians have voiced their concern over the war in Afghanistan, saying US and Nato war efforts suffer from a crippling "lack of clarity". At a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing in Washington, the legislators said Barack Obama has not done enough to explain his exit strategy. They were referring to the US president's self-imposed July 2011 deadline for starting a withdrawal of US forces. Richard Lugar, the most senior Republican on the senate committee and one of the party's most respected elder statesmen on international affairs, said: "There's substantial concern about our course in Afghanistan." He cautioned that it is "unrealistic to expect that a significant downsizing of US forces could occur at that time [July 2011] without security consequences".

(Source: <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/americas/2010/07/20107154505414643.html>)

Hillary to visit Pak for 'most vital' security talks: Holbrooke

Zee News, July 15, 2010

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton would hold 'most vital' high-level security talks in Islamabad before landing in Kabul for the donors conference scheduled to be held on July 20, America's special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke has said. Addressing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Holbrooke said Hillary is likely to meet several top officials besides holding talks with Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi during her stop over in Islamabad. "During her upcoming visit to Pakistan, Secretary (Hillary) Clinton will reconvene the Strategic Dialogue with Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi to assess growing cooperation on topics ranging from energy and water, to education and health, to counter-terrorism and defence issues," The News quoted Holbrooke, as saying.

(Source: <http://www.zeenews.com/news641140.html>)

US Congresswoman: Declare Victory in Afghanistan

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, July 16, 2010.

With Al Qaeda no longer present in Afghanistan, US President Barack Obama should declare victory and bring American troops home, a Republican congresswoman has said. "As I look back on Afghanistan and the past week, I will say to you that it is time, not out of defeat, but it is time in victory to return home," Sheila Jackson-Lee said in a speech on the floor of the US House of Representatives on Friday. "Our soldiers can come home in victory, for not one more treasure should be cast in this war that is a civil war. Al Qaeda is not present in Afghanistan," said Jackson Lee, who last week was in Afghanistan.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#01)

Women's Role in Security Dialogue Stressed

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, July 16, 2010.

An international group of parliamentarians urged the Afghan government and the global fraternity to encourage the participation of women and their representatives in all aspects of the security dialogue. Ahead of the July 20 Kabul Conference, the Parliamentarians Network for Conflict Prevention and Human Security said women should be part of the security dialogue – from peace building to conflict resolution, from stabilization to development. "It is incumbent upon all delegates of the Kabul Conference to be guided by the Security Council Resolution 1325 and work towards concrete outcomes, including through the conference itself," the group said in a statement mailed to Pajhwok Afghan News.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news_Pages/main_news.html#01)

Bangladesh

Handover Jamaat trio to war crimes tribunal

Daily Star, July 5, 2010.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) urged the government to handover Jamaat leaders Motiur Rahman Nizami, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, Moulana Delwar Hossain Sayedee to the special tribunal for war crimes, says a press release. JSD made the demand at its central committee meeting held at the party head office in the city. JSD leaders at the meeting said that despite being widely known as war criminals, the Jamaat leaders have not yet been shown arrested in this connection. Trial of the war criminals was one of the major electoral pledges of the ruling party, they added.

(Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=145473>)

Bangladesh Islamists to counter 1971 'war crimes' charge

Sify News, July 6, 2010.

Top leaders of Bangladesh's Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), who have been detained, have said they will counter the charge of being engaged in targeting unarmed civilians during the 1971 freedom movement. They have reportedly confessed to allocating Taka 6.6 million (\$94,754) for a three-month campaign to counter the charge as government prepares to hold what it calls 'war crimes' trial. Jamaat's chief Motiur

Rahman Nizami, its secretary general Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid and deputy chief Delwar Hossain Sayedee told investigators Monday that they have also prepared a list of 50 'war criminals' who are now part of the ruling Awami League. A 10-member committee headed by a Supreme Court lawyer has prepared the list.

(Source: <http://sify.com/news/bangladesh-islamists-to-counter-1971-war-crimes-charge-news-international-khglucgiiif.html>)

China gives zero duty to Bangladesh, Nepal; Indian exporters hit

Times of India, July 7, 2010.

China has decided to treat exports from Bangladesh and Nepal on the basis of zero duty giving exporters in these countries much better incentives to tap the Chinese market as compared to India. Another Asian nation to benefit from its zero tax tariff system is Afghanistan where India and China are seriously engaged in reconstruction and development. The move is bound to force India, a major seller to these countries to sit up and take notice. For Nepal, the zero tariff move that came into effect on July 1, means an opportunity to lessen its heavy reliance on Indian buying, sources said.

(Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Biz/International-Business/China-gives-zero-duty-to-Bangladesh-Nepal-Indian-exporters-hit/articleshow/6139394.cms>)

U.S. Expands Support to Prevent Bird Flu In Bangladesh

All Headlines News, July 7, 2010.

A U.S. funded program was launched to improve the security of the live bird market at Sreepur Upazila (sub-district) in Gazipur district. STOP AI (Stamping Out Pandemic and Avian Influenza) Bangladesh initiative, funded by the United States government through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), collaborated with the Sreepur Municipality, and the market committee to develop a market improvement plan to prevent the spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) to birds and people, including renovation of the water supply, addition of a bio-gas facility for proper waste disposal and a slaughter house.

(Source: <http://www.allheadlinenews.com/articles/7019207851?U.S.%20Expands%20Support%20To%20Prevent%20Bird%20Flu%20In%20Bangladesh>)

Nizami quizzed over arms haul

Daily Star, June 7, 2010

Interrogators quizzed Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami about 10-turckloads of firearms and ammunition seized in Chittagong on April 2, 2004. Nizami, the then industries minister, is being interrogated in the arms haul case as the consignment was offloaded at the jetty of Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Company Ltd, which is under the industries ministry. He had sent the then industries secretary to Chittagong before the consignment was seized.

(Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=145680>)

Bangladesh's Forex Reserve Crosses \$11 Billion

All Headlines News, July 8, 2010.

Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserve has crossed US\$11 billion mark for the first time, thanks to a robust growth of remittances as well as decreasing import payments, officials told AHN Media. "Steady growth of inward remittances and decreasing import payments have contributed to cross the forex reserve \$11 billion mark," S.K. Sur Chowdhury, executive director of the Bangladesh Bank, the country's central bank, told AHN.

(Source: <http://www.allheadlinenews.com/articles/7019224943>)

Integrated watershed management suggested to address water related problems

Financial Express, July 10, 2010.

Comprehensive integrated watershed management involving South Asian countries could address the longstanding water related problems including flood havoc, desertification and flash flood, said water experts, reports UNB. As the origin of all principal rivers of Bangladesh is outside the country, so the rivers depend on upstream water to continue their flow and the country will not be able to address water related problems without integrated initiative with neighbouring countries, they said.

(Source: http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=105608&date=2010-07-10)

Bangladesh to reopen embassy in Kabul

Daily Times, July 12, 2010

Bangladesh has decided to reopen its embassy in Afghanistan soon, said Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni in Dhaka on Sunday. The process has been initiated as Afghanistan is now a member of SAARC as well, she told a news briefing at the Foreign Ministry. An official team will visit Kabul to select the mission building offered by Afghanistan.

Bangladesh mission in Kabul was shut down sometime in 1989. Separately, Bangladesh is contemplating to open a number of full-fledged embassies or consulates in Latin America and Africa to expand economic and trade activities as well as providing services to Bangladeshi nationals living in those parts of the world.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\12\story_12-7-2010_pg20_5)

Indo-Bangladesh chambers sign accord to boost cross-border trade

Associated Press of Pakistan, July 11, 2010.

Two leading chambers of Bangladesh and India signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Dhaka to perk up bilateral trade, business and investment with concerted efforts. India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IBCCI) of Bangladesh and Merchants' Chamber of Commerce (MCC) from India signed

the MoU at the Commerce Ministry in presence of Commerce Minister Faruk Khan. The agreement was signed when the declining regional trade fell as low as 5 percent, which was 25 percent a few decades ago. Speaking on the occasion, the Bangladesh Commerce Minister suggested bringing changes to the attitude for establishing more friendly relations among the regional countries so trade, business and investment can grow easily.

(Source: http://ftp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=108936&Itemid=2)

Top Islamist Militant Leader Held In Bangladesh

RTT News, July 14, 2010.

The chief of the Islamist militant group, Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), and more than 12 operatives of the banned outfit were arrested Monday night by Bangladesh security forces following a stepped-up anti-terrorism campaign in that South-East Asian country, a top official said Tuesday. "We have arrested incumbent JMB chief Anwar Alam Khoka alias Bhagne Shahid alias Nazmul while he was traveling on a passenger bus", Humayun Kabir, police chief of the northwestern Bogra district, 200 km northwest of capital Dhaka, told media representatives.

(Source: <http://www.rttnews.com/Content/GeneralNews.aspx?Id=1358208&SM=1>)

Bangladesh Invites Malaysians To Explore Investment Prospects

Bernama, July 13, 2010.

Bangladesh is inviting Malaysian investors to explore the investment prospects in that country. Its High Commissioner to Malaysia, A.K.M. Atiqur Rahman, said here Tuesday Malaysian investors should organise a trade mission to explore the business and investment opportunities in Bangladesh. "Malaysian labour-intensive industries could relocate their plants to Bangladesh because of the cheaper labour." "If you relocate your plant to Bangladesh, you can save at least 50 per cent on labour costs," he told reporters after a dialogue with members of the Sarawak Manufacturers' Association.

(Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=513317>)

Bangladesh reforms border force after mutiny

Reuters, July 13, 2010.

Bangladesh said on Tuesday it had reformed its paramilitary border force, empowering its commanders to impose the death penalty for the most serious offences, following a mutiny last year that shook the country's stability. "The cabinet approved the new name of the border force late on Monday and empowered its authorities to give capital punishment to unruly members," Abul Kalam Azad, press secretary to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, told Reuters. The Bangladesh Rifles will now be known as the Border Guard Bangladesh.

(Source: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/SGE66C0H4.htm>)

Mani Shankar Aiyar for boom in northeast-Bangladesh trade

The Hindu, July 13, 2010.

Bangladesh will be greatly benefited if it increases its trade with northeast India, according to the former Union Minister, Mani Shankar Aiyar. Participating in a discussion "Bangladesh-India relations" here, the diplomat-turned-politician said New Delhi had a vision 2020 programme of Rs. 20 lakh crore for the northeast. He, however, pointed out that the region lacked managerial, technical and technological support to implement the plan. Mr. Aiyar invited Bangladesh to invest in businesses in the region as India had withdrawn all restrictions on Bangladeshi investments two years ago. The growth of the region would rise to 9 per cent, from the current 4 per cent, with huge public investments. It would be wise for Bangladesh to involve itself in the region's development programme.

(Source: <http://www.hindu.com/2010/07/13/stories/2010071356232000.htm>)

Bangladesh arrests are opening act of war crimes tribunal

Christian Science Monitor, July 14, 2010.

Bangladesh's government arrested two of the country's leading Islamist politicians, charging them with committing mass murder during Bangladesh's liberation war from Pakistan in 1971. Both men are members of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, the country's largest fundamentalist party. Their detention comes after the government arrested three of Jamaat's top leaders, including the party's head, Motiur Rahman Nizami, in late June, sparking street riots that wounded more than 80 people. The arrests, which have effectively neutralized Jamaat's leadership, are the opening act in a tribunal that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed established in March to try war crimes committed during 1971.

(Source: <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2010/0714/Bangladesh-arrests-are-opening-act-of-war-crimes-tribunal>)

Electricity purchase from Nepal, Bhutan likely

The Nation, July 15, 2010.

Prime Minister's Advisor Dr. Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury indicated that discussion would start soon with Nepal and Bhutan about purchase of electricity from the two neighbouring countries. "We're going to start talks with Nepal and Bhutan soon," he told a seminar on "Energy Sector Mega Plan and its Implementation Challenges" at CIRDAP Auditorium in the city. The indication about the government's possible move about purchase of electricity from Nepal and Bhutan came amid nagging crisis following the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with another neighbour India in January this year about purchase of 250 MW.

(Source: <http://nation.ittefaq.com/issues/2010/07/15/news0332.htm>)

Bangladesh urges India to clarify on using its ports

The Hindu, July 15, 2010.

Bangladesh has asked India to explain how it plans to use Chittagong and Mongla

Bhutan

ports under an agreement signed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's maiden tour to New Delhi in January this year, officials said. "We have asked for the Indian proposal explaining the modus operandi for using our Chittagong and Mongla ports," said Mr Jahangir Alam, spokesman for Shipping Ministry. He said Bangladesh has assured the Indian envoy that the ports were now ready for uses in line with the deal while under previous two separate deals, Bhutan and Nepal would also be allowed to use the facilities simultaneously.

(Source: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/blnus/10141532.htm>)

UNHCR urges more help with growing resettlement

The News, July 5, 2010.

Some 172,300 refugees will need to be resettled in third countries next year, the UN refugee agency said, calling for more places for the growing number who cannot stay in the country they fled to. About 40,000 of them are unlikely to find places, according to a report by the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. The UNHCR said that just 24 countries are open to resettled refugees and those states also have quotas on admission. In 2009, the number of places available to the UNHCR stood at 80,000. The bulk of those in need of resettlement last year came from Iraq (36,067), Myanmar (30,542) and Bhutan (22,114).

(Source: <http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=107961>)

Well on track to universal connectivity

The Kuensel, July 6, 2010.

Roads were on the top among people's wish list in almost all gewogs during the familiarisation and campaign tours, and the DPT government promised it would connect all gewog centres with motor roads by the end of their term. Almost half-way into the term, the national assembly speaker Tshogpon Jigme Tsultim said the government had met about 96 percent of that target. The economic affairs minister Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk argued against such a measure, explaining that linking the entire nation with roads was the government's chief priority, which meant that, while they cleared roads in places deprived of one, they would continue maintaining and improving those existing. He said the funds for the roads had already been approved and finalised.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=15993>)

Bhutan earmarks \$5m for bid to develop renewables projects

Recharge News, July 7, 2010.

The solar, biogas and wind projects, which are scheduled to commence in January 2011, are relatively new to the south Asian country, which has about 18GW of installed hydro capacity. "Energy demand in Bhutan is rising by about 12% each year," says Mewang Gyeltshen, chief engineer at the renewable energy division of the Department of Energy at the Ministry of Economic Affairs. "Our hydropower is more than sufficient to meet energy needs but remote households in the moun-

tainous region will need a sustainable standalone off-grid system," Gyeltshen speaks to Recharge. About 2,000 rural households will have solar PV panels of 50 watt peak (Wp) installed at a cost of about \$300 per system.

(Source: http://www.rechargenews.com/business_area/politics/article220431.ece?WT.mc_id=rechargenews_rss)

Renewable Energy Projects Coming to Bhutan

Energy Boom, July 13, 2010

The government has recently earmarked US\$5 million to develop small-scale wind power plants, residential solar photovoltaic (PV) systems and biogas production facilities, according to a Bhutanese official. Work on the projects could start as early as January 2011. Although the sum is small in comparable terms, the investment is significant for Bhutan, where clean energy development is still in the early stages. Mewang Gyeltshen, chief engineer at the renewable energy division of Bhutan's Department of Energy says energy demand is rising at a clip of 12% annually, and while the water-resource rich country has around 18GW of installed hydro capacity, more than enough to meet its needs, the additional power will enable remote communities to have a standalone off-grid system.

(Source: <http://www.energyboom.com/emerging/renewable-energy-projects-coming-bhutan>)

PM questioned on McKinsey & Co.

Kuensel, July 14, 2010.

In the national assembly's question hour, which exceeded two hours, the opposition leader questioned the prime minister on what the consultancy firm, McKinsey and co., was initiating, which the civil servants were not able to. Opposition leader cited several civil servants, who expressed concerns, saying that McKinsey had been hired to assist in executing work, which the civil servants can or are already doing. He also said that some civil servants were unimpressed with what the consultants have done in almost a year. Civil servants said that ideas and programmes, being initiated by the consultants, are either not new or not feasible for Bhutan, he said. McKinsey and co. is the government's consultant, for the 'accelerating Bhutan's socio-economic development' (ABSD) project, for a fee of USD 9.1M (approx. Nu 432M). The 23-month project began in July 2009.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16084>)

Maldives

Maldives facing biggest challenge to its constitution: President Nasheed

Minivan News, July 4, 2010.

Maldives is facing its biggest challenge in implementing the constitution, said President Nasheed in his weekly radio address, and "We should face this hurdle with aptitude, patience and wisdom." Referring to the circumstances surrounding the mass resignation of his cabinet, the president said they resigned in protest at the behaviour of members of the Majlis who they claimed were "hijacking" the pow-

ers of the executive and making it impossible for cabinet ministers to function. The cabinet ministers alleged that MPs' votes at the Majlis were influenced by bribery.

(Source: <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief>)

241 committee cancels confidential meeting with police and defense chiefs

Minivan News, July 6, 2010.

Parliament's '2412 security services oversight committee has canceled a confidential meeting that was to be held today, after summoning Police Commissioner Ahmed Faseeh and Chief of Defence Force Major General Moosa Ali Jaleel for questioning over their handling of the current political deadlock. Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) MP Ahmed Shifaz said that the committee meeting was cancelled on a request by MDP MPs. "Because there are two MPs charged with criminal offences, we recommended the committee cancel the meetings," said Shifaz. "It does not make much sense when two MPs accused of criminal offences summon the Police Commissioner and Chief of Defense in order to question them."

(Source: <http://minivannews.com/politics/241-committee-cancels-confidential-meeting-with-police-and-defense-chiefs-9066>)

US Ambassador mediates between President and opposition parties

Minivan News, July 6, 2010.

President Mohamed Nasheed met with four of the country's opposition parties, in a meeting arranged by US Ambassador Patricia Butenis to try and resolve the current deadlock between the executive and the legislature. President Nasheed addressed Speaker of the Majlis Abdulla Shahid, saying he "is an honest man. We may have issues but I would like to work with him." Spokesperson for the US Embassy in Colombo, Jeffery Anderson, later confirmed that Ambassador Butenis arranged the meeting "between the President and the main opposition party", but provided no further information.

(Source: <http://minivannews.com/politics/us-ambassador-mediates-between-president-and-opposition-parties-9049>)

Rajapaksa in Maldives to mediate, New Delhi watching

Hindustan Times, July 7, 2010.

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa is reaching Maldives to mediate between counterpart Mohamed Nasheed and a sulking opposition to resolve the ongoing political deadlock. Nasheed's cabinet comprising 13 ministers resigned en masse last week citing problems with the 77-member opposition-controlled Majlis (Parliament). Legislative and executive powers are separated in Maldives. Since the resignations, the government has accused the opposition of attempting to bribe independent MPs.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Rajapaksa-in-Maldives-to-mediate-New-Delhi-watching/Article1-568565.aspx>)

Maldives President reappoints his cabinet

BBC News, July 8, 2010.

The President and parliament are at loggerheads Maldives President Mohamed Nasheed has reappointed his cabinet which staged a mass resignation last week. He swore in the 13-member cabinet on the seafront in the capital, Male. The president gave ministers the same portfolio they had before they resigned, officials in the president's office said. The 13 resigned in protest at what they said were attempts by parliament of the Indian Ocean country repeatedly to block the government's work. Presidential aides say that Mr Nasheed is eager to end his power struggle with parliament. But the BBC's Charles Haviland in Colombo says the impasse could start again soon as parliament still has to give its "consent" to the cabinet reappointments while two opposition MPs remain under house arrest for allegedly buying votes.

(Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10551210>)

Maldives praises Rajapaksa's role in ending pol stand-off

Hindustan Times, July 9, 2010

Maldives praised the role of Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa for helping end a stand-off between the government and the opposition-led parliament that had forced the Cabinet to resign en masse on June 29. The ministers were reappointed as Rajapaksa undertook a one-day goodwill visit to Maldives on July 7 to help mediate in the political crisis. "We thank Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa and also the role played by diplomats from other countries in overcoming the stalemate. A way was found to commence negotiations on the political crisis," Maldivian Foreign Minister Ahmed Shaheed told reporters here.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Maldives-praises-Rajapaksa-s-role-in-ending-pol-stand-off/Article1-569852.aspx>)

Supreme Court orders release of MPs

Minivan News, July 11, 2010.

The Supreme Court of Maldives has overturned a High Court ruling to keep MPs Gasim Ibrahim and Abdulla Yameen under house arrest for 15 days, ordering the immediate release of the high-profile businessmen and minor opposition party leaders. Yameen and Gasim were detained pending an investigation into alleged corruption, bribery and treason. A legal team led by former Attorneys General Azima Shukoor and Dr Hassan Saeed, representing the MPs, appealed the High Court decision last week on the grounds that the arrest was unlawful as Gasim was taken to the police station "to clarify something."

(Source: <http://minivannews.com/politics/supreme-court-orders-release-of-mps-9238>)

MJA calls for Govt. to stop pressuring media

Asian Tribune, July 12, 2010.

The Maldives Journalist Association (MJA) has urged the Government to stop pres-

surizing media organizations, under the guise of the current political situation in the country. A statement issued by the Association listed out alleged instances of influencing the local media. "MJA has learnt that Maldives National Broadcasting Corporation (MNBC) has instructed the news organisations operating under MNBC not to broadcast the news and the voice of the opposition," it said. It said the association "was informed that the Department of Information has also demanded to get hold of some of the contents of the private TV channel VTV." MNBC being a corporation owned by the state, the association said it is "unacceptable to broadcast news in a biased manner."

(Source: <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/07/12/mja-calls-govt-stop-pressuring-media>)

Government to Continue Fight against Corruption: President Nasheed

Minivan News, July 16, 2010

"Many people were ready for direct action to show the level of their disapproval of corruption," said President Nasheed today in his weekly radio address. "Government, therefore, is forced to take swift measures, and do whatever possible to find a solution for corruption." The President was commenting on the recent political turmoil in Male where senior opposition figures in the Majlis were charged with bribery and treason, and then released by Supreme Court judges. A Criminal Court judge suspended the police prosecutors. The Maldivian Democratic Party, of which President Nasheed is a leading member, staged demonstrations in the capital calling for an end to corruption, and condemning the decisions of the judges.

(Source: <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief>)

Opposition coalition launch "continual protest"

Minivan News, July 18, 2010.

The main opposition Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP), People's Alliance (PA), Jumhoory Party (Republican Party) and Dhivehi Qaumee Party (DQP) began a series of "continual protests" against the detention of Mulaku MP Abdulla Yameen by the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF). DRP MPs as well as senior officials of the minor parties addressed a large crowd of supporters outside the DRP office near the artificial beach area, calling for the resignation of President Mohamed Nasheed and accusing the government of targeting political opponents. While participants held "Free Yamin" placards, the opposition politicians vowed to continue the protests until the PA Leader was released.

(Source: <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief>)

Nepal

Secret deal before PM resigned

Republica, July 5, 2010.

Four days after Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal tendered his resignation, it has been learnt that the outgoing prime minister's move came after a secret agreement with Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal on the basic principles of the new constitution and the peace process. According to Nepali Congress's former

lawmaker Amresh Kumar Singh, who has been involved in numerous informal talks with the Maoists since the peace process began, Nepal resigned three days after he struck a verbal deal with the Maoist party chairman on June 27.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=20660)

UML PP stresses on consensus govt

Himalayan Times, July 5, 2010.

The CPN-UML Parliamentary Party (PP) stressed on the need to form the new government on the basis of political consensus. According to UML leader Bhim Prasad Acharya, the PP meet voiced for the formation of new government based on consensus as the prime minister, who had a majority in the parliament, resigned to pave the way for the proposed national consensus government. Talking to reporters after the meeting, he said the UML will not obstruct the consensus building even if it has staked claim over the government leadership.

(Source: <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=UML+PP+stresses+on+consensus+govt&NewsID=248848>)

Nepalese envoy invites Sarkozy to visit Nepal

Nepal News, July 5, 2010.

Presenting his credentials to French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Nepalese ambassador to France, Mohan Krishna Shrestha requested the French President to schedule a visit to Nepal at an appropriate time. Sarkozy shared his keenness to visit Nepal, said envoy Shrestha in a statement issued on Sunday from the Nepalese mission in Paris. According to the statement, Sarkozy was positive in taking Shrestha's proposal. Shrestha was also learnt to have held discussions with former French ambassadors to Nepal and veteran French climber Marice Herzog on bilateral issues, trade links and probable French aid for infrastructural development projects in Nepal.

(Source: <http://www.nepalnews.com/main/index.php/news-archive/8-news-in-brief/7332-nepalese-envoy-invites-sarkozy-to-visit-nepal.html>)

Minister Pokharel believes country's situation has worsened after PM's resignation

Nepal News, July 6, 2010.

Spokesperson of the current "caretaker" government and Minister for Information and Communication Shanker Pokharel has said that the political crisis facing the country has become worse instead of getting solved following the resignation of Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal. The caretaker minister was of the opinion that the national media was wrong in assuming that PM Nepal's resignation is crucial to ending the political crisis facing the country."

(Source: <http://www.nepalnews.com/main/index.php/news-archive/2-political/7367-minister-pokharel-believes-countrys-situation-has-worsened-after-pms-resignation.html>)

UML CC wants deadline to form govt extended

The Himalayan Times, July 7, 2010.

The Central Committee meeting of CPN-UML decided to step up talks with the other parties to forge consensus for the formation of new government. Stressing on the need of consensus for the proposed national government, it concluded that the deadline given by the president to form it was not enough and should be extended. After the coalition government led by UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal stepped down on June 30, President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav has asked the parties to form a government based on consensus by July 7. However, the major parties have failed to make a headway against the differences over the government leadership.

(Source: <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=UML+CC+wants+deadline+to+form+govt+extended&NewsID=248994>)

Khanal replaces Oli in talks team

Republica, July 6, 2010.

The CPN-UML Central Committee (CC) on Tuesday decided to replace party Standing Committee (SC) member KP Sharma Oli with party Chairman Jhala Nath Khanal as coordinator of the committee formed four months back to hold talks with other political parties on resolving the political deadlock. The decision comes at a time when some top UML leaders have intensified talks with other political parties staking claims to the leadership of a new government. Khanal himself held several rounds of talks with other political parties in recent days, seeking support for forming the new government

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=20731)

France bags Nepal MRP Deal, Indian influence run down

Telegraph Nepal, July 7, 2010.

After the dishonorable exit of Nepal's Southern Neighbor, India, from the Machine Readable Passport deal with government of Nepal some three months back, the caretaker government of Nepal on Tuesday July 6, 2010, awarded the printing rights of Machine Readable Passports to a company based in France. Concerns were raised in Nepal over the possibility of the misuse of Nepali passports by the Indian authorities and possible leakage of information if the MRP printing rights were awarded to India.

(Source: http://telegraphnepal.com/news_det.php?news_id=7924)

Nepal parties gets 5 more days to form government

Taiwan news, July 8, 2010.

Nepal's political parties have been given five more days to agree to form a new coalition government, officials said. President Ram Baran Yadav extended the deadline for a compromise after meeting with the leaders and representatives of the 25 parties in Parliament on Wednesday evening, said Lalit Basnet, an official

at the president's office. The parties, none of which has a clear majority in Parliament, also must agree on a new prime minister to succeed Madhav Kumar Nepal, who resigned last month. Maoists, the former communist rebels who had pushed for Nepal's ouster, hope to lead any new coalition since their party has the most seats, and they want their chief to become the new prime minister. Two other major parties Nepali Congress and Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist Leninist) also are jockeying for the prime ministership.

(Source: http://www.etaiwannews.com/etn/news_content.php?id=1312640&lang=eng_news)

Nepal Maoists lay out plan for integration of former rebels

Hindustan Times, July 10, 2010.

In an attempt to end the political stalemate, opposition Maoists in Nepal divulged an action plan on Saturday on integration of their former rebels into the country's security agencies. Nepal is going through a political crisis following resignation of Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal last month to make way for a 'national unity government'. But the political parties have failed to arrive at a consensus. The Nepali Congress and Communist Party of Nepal (UML) have been urging the Maoists to spell out a detailed plan for integration of the former rebels as one of the conditions for supporting a government headed by it. The plan titled 'Basis of Consensus for ending Political Deadlock' was made public by Maoists vice-chairman Narayankaji Shrestha.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Nepal-Maoists-lay-out-plan-for-integration-of-former-rebels/Article1-570470.aspx>)

Nepali Congress says UN siding with Maoists

Central Chronicle, July 11, 2010

Acting president of Nepali Congress Sushil Koirala has accused the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) of being loyal to the Maoist on a number of occasions, therefore, his party would not extend UNMIN tenure in Nepal. "UNMIN is openly defending the Maoist activities against the spirit of the peace agreement," Mr Koirala told mediapersons at his resident in Maharajgunj. UNMIN is in Nepal to monitor the peace process signed between the major parties and the Maoists after it came to the peace process giving up violence four years ago.

(Source: <http://www.centralchronicle.com/viewnews.asp?articleID=41147>)

UCPN-M's action plan against peace agreement: Nepali Congress

People's Daily, July 11, 2010.

Hours after the main opposition Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (UCPN-M) publicized its action plan on integration and rehabilitation of their combatants, the Nepali Congress (NC) party claimed that the UCPN-Ms' proposal is against peace agreement and past pacts. A meeting of the NC office bearers held here in the capital Saturday evening concluded that the UCPN-Ms' proposal cannot implement the first point of three-point agreement reached on May 28 night. "The Maoists' proposal cannot implement the first point of May 28 deal,"

said NC Vice President Ram Chandra Poudel, talking to the reporters after the meeting, adding “there has been a distortion of Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the past pacts.”

(Source: <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90851/7061076.html>)

Nepal, B'desh to negotiate tariff cut

Republica, July 13, 2010.

Commerce secretaries from Nepal and Bangladesh are beginning new round of trade talks from to eliminate tariff barriers and facilitate movement of cargo vehicles between the two countries in a bid to give new impetus to bilateral trade. The meeting will be held in Dhaka and last for two days, said an official at Ministry of Commerce and Supplies. The official informed myrepublica.com that the talks would focus on starting zero tariff trade on commodities of mutual export interests, movement of Nepali containers in Bangladesh and expediting trade through railways via Rohanpur-Singhad route.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=20987)

China building 'biggest' land port to connect with South Asia via Nepal

Times of India, July 13, 2010.

China is expanding its engagement with Nepal by building what is being billed as the biggest land port connecting it with the South Asian region as a whole. This is seen by observers as part of a larger move to connect Xigaze with Nepal by rail.

The local government of the Tibet Autonomous Region has said that the Gyirong Port located in TAR's Xigaze Prefecture will begin operations in 2011 although some portion of the construction work will continue even after it is opened to public.

(Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/china/China-building-biggest-land-port-to-connect-with-South-Asia-via-Nepal/articleshow/6163712.cms>)

Elect PM by simple majority, says Nepal President

Indian Express, July 13, 2010.

Nepal President Rambaran Yadav has told political parties to elect a new Prime Minister by simple majority as political parties had failed to do so through consensus. In a letter, the President asked parties to elect a new Prime Minister under Article 38(2) of the interim constitution, implying that anyone commanding support of 301 members in the House of 601 will be elected leader. Rambaran Yadav, who had political parties a week to elect a leader by consensus, had extended the deadline by five days. On Monday, however, he decided not to give them any more time as they had shown no flexibility in their stance, asking them to form a majority government.

(Source: <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/Elect-PM-by-simple-majority-says-Nepal-President/645606>)

Nepal Parliament to elect PM on July 21

Indian Express, July 14, 2010.

The Nepalese Parliament will elect a new Prime Minister on July 21 following a direction by President Ram Baran Yadav to form a majority government after political parties failed to reach a consensus on a leader. Subas Nembang, the Speaker of the 601-member Constituent Assembly, which functions as the country's Parliament, said the election for the new Prime Minister would be held on July 21 at 11 am in a full meeting of the House. "I have decided to hold the election for next PM at 11 am on July 21," Nembang was quoted as saying by the Himalayan Times.

(Source: <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/Nepal-Parliament-to-elect-PM-on-July-21/646187>)

China-Nepal cooperation looks up

The Himalayan Times, July 18, 2010

China is expanding its engagement with Nepal by building what is being billed as the biggest land port connecting it with the South Asian region as a whole. This is seen by observers as part of a larger move to connect Xigaze with Nepal by rail. "The port will remain as an alternate port that will facilitate the trade between Nepal and China, presently we only have Taro Pani Route," said Kailash Bajimaya, under secretary at Ministry of Commerce and Supplies (MoCS). China has granted zero tariff for 4061 exportable products and for this Nepal should make its supply side strong and produce those products also, he added. According to Bajimaya, study over the route and its infrastructure development is going on.

(Source: <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=China-Nepal+cooperation+looks+up&NewsID=250172>)

Nepali Congress, Maoists woo Madhesi parties to head govt

Zee News, July 18, 2010

Nepal's two largest parties, Nepali Congress and UCPN-Maoist, who are in the race to form a new government stepped-up efforts to woo the Terai-based Madhesi parties, whose support is crucial for a majority in Parliament. The Nepali Congress today held a key meeting with four Madhesi parties – Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPR), MPRF Democratic, Terai Madhes Democratic Party and Sadbhavana Party – with their combine strength of 80 seats in the 601-member Constituent Assembly, which functions as the country's interim Parliament.

(Source: <http://www.zeenews.com/news641912.html>)

New Constitution timeline in Nepal

The Hindu, July 18, 2010

After failing to deliver a Constitution by the earlier stipulated date of May 28, 2010, Nepal's Constituent Assembly has pledged to finish the job by mid April 2011. On the CA endorsed an amendment bill and a new timetable to present a Constitution for the country that turned a federal republic two years ago. The task that was supposed to be finished in about 19 months' time will now take 29 months. The new timetable has been presented nearly two months after extending the ten-

Pakistan

ure of the CA. The differences among Nepal's political has affected the Constitution-drafting process. Parties differ on issues such as re-structuring of the nation, interpretation of Constitution, formation of Council of Ministers.

(Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article522192.ece>)

Terrorism has shattered economy: PM

Daily Times, July 7, 2010.

Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani stressed that Pakistan's role as a frontline state in the war against terrorism has had a serious impact on all spheres of national life, especially on the country's economy. He said this while talking to a delegation of the International Crisis Group (ICG) that called on him at the Prime Minister's Secretariat.

The PM told the delegation, led by ICG President Louise Arbour, that foreign investment in Pakistan had declined considerably and economic activities had come under pressure.

"Despite these serious constraints, Pakistan remains resolutely committed to take this war to its logical conclusion and root out the threat of terrorism and militancy from its soil," he said.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\07\story_7-7-2010_pg1_1)

Reshuffle in bureaucracy on the cards

Dawn, July 7, 2010.

The government is reported to be considering making major changes in the federal bureaucracy. The reshuffle, likely in a few days, is said to have been 'necessitated' by a strong protest lodged by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah against top finance ministry officials for 'misleading' the President and getting unauthorised changes made in the consensus 7th National Finance Commission Award finalised by the political leadership. While concluding the debate on the provincial budget in the Sindh Assembly, Mr Shah had criticised the officials and expressed his lack of trust in them.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/reshuffle-in-bureaucracy-on-the-cards-770>)

Irsa's acting chief calls for opening link canal

Dawn, July 7, 2010.

In a unilateral decision, the acting chairman of Indus River System Authority, Shafqat Masud, has asked the Water and Power Development Authority to open Chashma-Jhelum link canal and start releasing 10,000 cusecs through the canal despite opposition from members representing the federal and Sindh governments. Irsa sources said Sindh's water share had also been increased by 10,000 cusecs to 200,000 cusecs as demanded by the provincial government. Sources close to the

federal and Sindh government members said Mr Masud discussed the issue of opening of the CJ canal with federal member Bashir Dahar who opposed the proposal.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/16-irsas-acting-chief-calls-for-opening-link-canal-770-hs-01>)

Musharraf prepares to storm Pakistan politics

Siasat Daily, July 8, 2010

Former president and ex-chief of Pakistan Army Pervez Musharraf has secured himself a launchpad for his return to the country from his exile in London. There is still a lot of work to do, but we have the concept, the objectives and the will,' asserted retired General Rashid Qureshi, who was the military and presidential spokesperson for Musharraf and is now one of the 'masterminds' behind the All Pakistan Muslim League (APML). The APML emulates the name of the historical Muslim party that played a decisive role in the independence of Pakistan in 1947, after decades of struggle for freedom from the dominion of British Empire.

(Source: <http://www.siasat.com/english/news/musharraf-prepares-storm-pakistan-politics>)

Terror camps still running in Pakistan: U.S.

The Hindu, July 8, 2010

The Obama Administration has maintained that it is receiving significant counter-terrorism contribution from Pakistan, even as a fresh charge-sheet filed by the U.S. Department of Justice revealed that al-Qaeda is still running terrorist training camps in that country. The plot to bomb New York's subway system, uncovered in September 2009, was directed by the al-Qaeda leadership in Pakistan, the Justice Department said. The eleven-page charge-sheet, which was filed in a New York federal court, said that five of the accused had received training from al-Qaeda in Waziristan in 2008 and early 2009.

(Source: <http://thehindu.com/news/international/article505843.ece>)

Pakistan works to tame Taliban and nationalist sympathies

CNN, July 8, 2010.

Pakistan is taking a page from America's counterinsurgency playbook in trying to win the hearts and the minds of those who might otherwise join Taliban militants or Balochistan nationalists against its military. Balochistan province – Pakistan's largest and one of its most troubled – is home to a nationalist insurgency and an increasingly violent Taliban presence. The sight of Baloch troops marching in the Pakistani army might have been unimaginable three years ago, but recruits are now training to fight for the army, not against it. More than 3,500 such troops have been recruited since 2007, commanders say.

(Source: <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/07/07/pakistan.military.hearts.minds/?fbid=GRXjZ6E3U5A>)

Pakistan, China vow to strengthen strategic ties

Daily Times, July 8, 2010.

Pakistan and China on reaffirmed to strengthen strategic relationship between the two countries, increase the level of economic cooperation and take concrete measures to further bring their people closer. The two countries pledged to make joint efforts to fight terrorism, and signed six deals of cooperation in the areas of agriculture, healthcare, justice, media, economy and technology. Chinese President Hu Jintao and President Asif Ali Zardari witnessed the signing of the deals. During the two-hour-long talks before the signing ceremony, Jintao and Zardari also vowed to fight the “three forces” of extremism, separatism and terrorism jointly.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\08\story_8-7-2010_pg1_1)

Norway Announces Three Arrests in Terrorist Plot

New York Times, July 8, 2010

Three men who were arrested in Norway and Germany on suspicion of terrorism were “one node” in the global terror network that plotted the foiled attack against the New York subway and planned to blow up a shopping center in Manchester, England, European and American counterterrorism officials said. The three Muslim immigrants to Norway – a Uighur from China, an Iraqi Kurd and an Uzbek – had ties to operatives of Al Qaeda in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Also linked to those operatives were Najibullah Zazi, who tried to organize the subway attack, and men arrested in Britain in April 2009 in the Manchester plot.

(Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/09/world/europe/09norway.html? r=1>)

Govt decides to restructure IRSA

Daily Times, July 9, 2010

Due to the ongoing controversy over water distribution between Punjab and Sindh, the federal government has decided restructure the embattled Indus River System Authority (IRSA) to remove the reservations of provinces over water distribution. Sources in IRSA told Daily Times that Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani has taken notice of the resignations of the federal and Sindh IRSA members after the reopening of the Chashma-Jhelum Link Canal (CJLC).

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\09\story_9-7-2010_pg1_1)

Zardari vows to promote China-Pak rail

China Daily, July 10, 2010.

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari pledged to strengthen cooperation with China to promote a railroad connecting the two countries and said his country can be a “force multiplier” for China’s development. “Pakistan can offer road links to China,” he told China Daily in Beijing. The president said he is confident that both countries can benefit significantly from the rail link. India has objected to the

proposal as the railroad link passes through some of the disputed Gilgit-Baltistan region, which forms part of Azad Kashmir, or Pakistan Controlled Kashmir, according to RTT News

(Source: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2010-07/10/content_10089840.htm)

India, Pak should make re-engagement process result-oriented

Hindustan Times, July 11, 2010.

India and Pakistan should take effective measures to make their re-engagement process productive and result-oriented so that the Kashmiri people can own and support the peace process, participants in a civil society dialogue said. Civil society activists, politicians, legislators and former government officials from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir,

Pakistan and refugees settled in Pakistan took part in the debate on the Foreign Minister-level talks to be held in Islamabad on July 15. The meeting expressed its support for the peace process and concerns regarding the resumption of the India-Pakistan dialogue process.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-Pak-should-make-re-engagement-process-result-oriented/Article1-570869.aspx>)

PPP strong enough to foil conspiracies

Daily Times, July 11, 2010.

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is strong enough to foil all conspiracies, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani said. "The PPP has come to power through a democratic process and after rendering sacrifices, and as such, it is in a position to frustrate any conspiracy against it," Gilani said while addressing a convention of PPP office bearers and workers from Larkana at the Sindh Chief Minister's House.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\12\story_12-7-2010_pg1_1)

FBI probe of 26/11 terror attack led to Pakistan

Sify News, July 12, 2010

A lot of information led back to Pakistan with the early arrest of Pakistani national Ajmal Amir Kasab, proving a major turning point in the investigation of the November 2008 Mumbai terror attack, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). 'A lot of the information led back to Pakistan,' Anthony Tindall, a supervisory special agent who led the bureau's investigation told members of the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force recounting the sobering lessons the assault offered for US in the constant fight against terrorism. Another major turning point in the investigation was the early arrest of Kasab, the lone surviving attacker, a poor, uneducated young man recruited, trained and selected for the mission directed by Pakistan-based terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

(Source: <http://sify.com/news/fbi-probe-of-26-11-terror-attack-led-to-pakistan-news-international-khmtuecbice.html>)

Pakistan must take on Haqqani network:US

Daily Times, July 12, 2010

A senior US senator urged Pakistan to crack down on the al Qaeda-linked Haqqani network, which operates on both sides of the country's border with Afghanistan.

Senator Carl Levin, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, said he does not think the Haqqani network would ever make peace, and he vowed to push to include the group on the US terrorist blacklist.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\12\story_12-7-2010_pg1_3)

Pakistani official vows to fight India for Kashmir

Washington Post, July 13, 2010.

The top official in Pakistan-held Kashmir vowed to fight India for control of the disputed territory in a speech to thousands of people assembled by a coalition of banned militant groups. The provocative comments by Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan come amid the worst unrest in years in India-held Kashmir, which like Pakistan is majority Muslim. Residents have often chafed against rule by majority Hindu India. Khan's comments also come a day before India is scheduled to make its highest level visit to Pakistan since militants linked to Pakistan killed 166 people in Mumbai in 2008. The talks are meant to reduce tension between the two countries, but Khan's comments could do the opposite.

(Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/13/AR2010071302364.html>)

Gilani hopes India-Pakistan talks are fruitful

Hindustan Times, July 13, 2010.

Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani today expressed confidence that the forthcoming meeting between the foreign ministers of Pakistan and India would be fruitful and would pave the way for further dialogue. Indian External Affairs Minister SM Krishna will travel to Islamabad July 15. "The willingness to resume the stalled dialogue presents a win-win situation for both the countries, as peace and stability is the only way forward for the progress and prosperity of the entire region," Gilani said during a meeting with Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Xinhua reported. Pakistan is desirous of a negotiated and peaceful resolution of all disputes with India, a statement the Prime Minister's office quoted Gilani as saying.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Gilani-hopes-India-Pakistan-talks-are-fruitful/Article1-571811.aspx>)

Indian Home Secretary accuses ISI in Mumbai attacks

Dawn, July 14, 2010.

Pakistan's intelligence agency controlled and coordinated the 2008 Mumbai attacks, a top Indian security official said, in what is the most direct indictment yet

of Pakistan by India in the strikes that killed 166 people."It was not just a peripheral role," the Indian Express newspaper quoted G.K. Pillai, India's home secretary, as saying. "They (Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence) were literally controlling and coordinating it from the beginning till the end."

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/world/04-india-mumbai-attacks-isi-qs-06>)

Hundreds of suspected Taliban arrested in Pakistan

ABC News, July 14, 2010.

Pakistani police and soldiers raided houses in the north western city of Peshawar and several surrounding villages, rounding up hundreds of men accused of links with the Taliban. The crackdown was launched in response to last week's double suicide bombing which killed more than 100 people in the village of Yaka Ghund. Many of the victims were women and children. The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, the country's deadliest since more than 120 people were killed in a suicide attack in Peshawar in October last year.

(Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/07/14/2952896.htm?section=world>)

Pakistan committed to Kashmir issue, says Gilani

Daily Times, July 14, 2010.

Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani has said that Pakistan is committed to the cause of Kashmiri people for their right to self-determination, and the Pakistan people's Party-led government will continue to follow the vision of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto in this regard. During his meeting with PPP Azad Kashmir President and former Legislative Assembly speaker Chaudhry Abdul Majid, and MPA Shah Rukh at the PM Secretariat, he said that the late PPP leaders always demanded the resolution of the Kashmir issue in accordance with the wishes of the people. The prime minister said that the Kashmir Martyrs' Day, which is observed on July 13 every year, reminds of the people's sacrifices rendered in 1931 for their rights.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\14\story_14-7-2010_pg7_25)

Peace talks with a hawkish tinge

Dawn, July 15, 2010

Mumbai will continue to cast its long shadow over Pakistan-India ties as their foreign ministers get together here on Thursday to rebuild trust. The sanguinity being expressed by both sides ahead of the crucial meeting aside, expectations of a dramatic turnaround in the knotty relations were rather slim and both could at best agree on a schedule of meetings of officials to sustain the process of engagement. Besides, the ministers are likely to announce some minor 'doable' steps for confidence-building at a joint press conference after the meeting at the Foreign Office.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/>)

[dawn/news/pakistan/03-indian-fm-krishna-arrives-in-pakistan-for-key-talks-ss-01](http://www.dawn.com/news/pakistan/03-indian-fm-krishna-arrives-in-pakistan-for-key-talks-ss-01))

Water row key to India-Pakistan rivalry

Dawn, July 15, 2010

For Pakistani farmer Ghulam Sarwar, only war with India can overcome the water shortages parching his crops and drying up his profits. His family owns 85 acres (34 hectares) in northern Punjab, traditionally the bread basket of Pakistan but where the country's sizeable agriculture sector is finding it increasingly difficult to irrigate crops. "This year water supply is less than last year. Crop earnings decline every year and water shortages have affected 50 per cent of our agricultural business. The problems with India can only be resolved with war," said Sarwar. "Only jihad can help get water released to Pakistan, so people should rise up," said Jammāt-ud-Dawa, a charity seen as a front for Lashkar-e-Taiba, blamed for the Mumbai attacks.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/03-water-row-key-to-india-pakistan-rivalry-ss-01>)

Gilani urges more talks with India

Dawn, July 17, 2010

Pakistan's prime minister called for more dialogue with India, a day after his foreign minister accused New Delhi of limiting a talks process by refusing to discuss key issues between the two nations. Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani said he believed India remained committed to the talks, despite comments from Qureshi accusing New Delhi of restricting the discussions. "We want dialogues, they (India) too want dialogues, so when there will be talks then we will discuss all issues. At this point I cannot say something in the air," Gilani told reporters near Lahore. "They (India) had told us that they want to talk on all issues and I am sure that Indian prime minister is an honourable man and he will fulfil all his commitments," Gilani said.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/03-gilani-urges-more-talks-with-india-ss-09>)

Pakistan, India should learn from Europe: Altaf

Daily Times, July 17, 2010.

Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) chief Altaf Hussain said that Pakistan and India should take lessons from Europe, which indulged in infighting for a long time and finally realised that fight was not a solution to any dispute as friends could be changed but not neighbours. "We should accept each other as neighbours, as well as discuss the core issues for their settlement," he opined, adding, "We appreciate bilateral talks between the two countries even though they concluded without any positive outcome, but they should continue."

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\17\story_17-7-2010_pg7_23)

Kayani hand behind India-Pakistan stalemate?

Hindustan Times, July 17, 2010

Pakistan Army Chief, Gen Ashraf Parvez Kayani, met President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani on the afternoon of July 15, just hours before India and Pakistan resumed extended talks in the evening that soured badly, well informed sources said in New Delhi. After two days of bitter slanging match, sources with access to the government see the hand of the Pakistan Army, widely considered the real power centre in Islamabad, in the hardening of posture on Pakistan's part at talks that ended in mutual recrimination without any roadmap for future engagement.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Kayani-hand-behind-India-Pakistan-stalemate/H1-Article1-573752.aspx>)

Pakistan, India take U-turn, say talks must go on

DNA India, July 17, 2010

After two days of sharp exchanges following foreign minister level talks, India and Pakistan played down their differences, saying the talks to normalise ties will continue. India's foreign secretary Nirupama Rao stressed that the talks had not collapsed and the dialogue process must go on. But she also said that Pakistan foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and his Indian counterpart SM Krishna will not have a meeting on the sidelines of a donors' conference in Doha on July 20, which both are attending.

(Source: http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_pakistan-india-take-u-turn-say-talks-must-go-on_1410976)

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka bashing by Tamil Nadu politicians to secure the vote bank the centuries old burning issues unresolved

Media Centre for International Security, July 8, 2010

It has become an obsession for Tamil Nadu politicians to interfere in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka despite their many urgent problems. Since late, instead of resolving these pressing issues even after three decades of Independence they continue to intrude into the internal matters of a sovereign State. This ruse conveniently adopted by Tamil Nadu politicians is not confined to only taking such uncalled swipes at Sri Lanka but also extends to offer advice on Sri Lankan internal affairs seems an attempt to deflect burning issues in Tamil Nadu.

(Source: <http://www.nationalsecurity.lk/fullnews.php?id=25676>)

President helps Maldives as friend and neighbour

Daily News, July 9, 2010.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa who was on a goodwill visit to the Maldives met with Maldivian President Mohamed Nasheed, Maldivian Opposition Leader Ahmed Thasmeen Ali, the Chief Justice, Speaker of the Majlis and former President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, states an External Affairs Ministry release. President Rajapaksa also met a delegation of the MDP and an Opposition delegation

consisting of the DRP, Qaumi Party, Jumhoori Party and the People's Alliance. President Mahinda Rajapaksa also met with some leading members of the Maldivian business communities.

(Source: <http://www.dailynews.lk/2010/07/09/news02.asp>)

Sri Lanka opposition slams Minister's anti-UN protest

Colombo Page, July 11, 2010.

Sri Lanka's main opposition United National Party (UNP) said the hunger strike launched by a government minister against the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon brought dishonor to the country but achieved nothing. Speaking to media the UNP spokesman Gayantha Karunatileka said Minister Wimal Weerawansa's 'fast unto death campaign' had not achieved anything other than bringing discredit to the nation. Sri Lanka's National Freedom Front (NFF) Leader and Housing, Construction and Engineering Services Minister Wimal Weerawansa launched the indefinite fast outside the UN office in Colombo on calling the UN Secretary-General to withdraw the Panel of Experts appointed by him to advise him on Sri Lanka's accountability during the later stages of the war with Tamil Tigers.

(Source: http://www.colombopage.com/archive_10B/Jul11_1278862403CH.php)

Sri Lanka's former army chief faces fresh allegations

Australia Network News, July 13, 2010.

The party of Sri Lanka's Former Army Chief and defeated Presidential candidate Sarath Fonseka says police have filed a new case against him for allegedly employing military deserters. General Fonseka who's also now an opposition lawmaker, is accused of employing 10 army deserters in the run-up to the January presidential poll. The AFP news agency reports he was named as an accused during a criminal court hearing on Monday. It says formal charges are expected when the court reconvenes on July the 26th.

(Source: <http://australianetworknews.com/stories/201007/2952784.htm?desktop>)

Sri Lanka's new deal on constitutional changes

Reuters, July 13, 2010.

Sri Lanka's president and opposition leader have struck a broad deal on constitutional changes, chief of which is a plan to return the Indian Ocean island nation to leadership by an executive prime minister. Broadly, more changes to take power out of presidential hands. The two sides agreed to work on the never-implemented 17th amendment, designed to put a check on the president's power to appoint the judiciary, the attorney-general, police, the election and financial commissions and other state bodies. Bringing independence to those institutions would go a long way toward boosting confidence that the government is not operating solely at the whim of a single politician.

(Source: <http://in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-50093720100713>)

Sri Lanka may shed presidential system in reform package

People Daily, July 13, 2010.

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa (R) presides over a meeting with a delegation from the main opposition United National Party (UNP) on the proposed constitutional amendments at the presidential office in Colombo, Sri Lanka, July 12, 2010. They reached a consensus to create an Executive Prime Minister accountable to parliament by abolishing the Executive Presidency under the new Constitutional Reforms proposed by the government. Sri Lanka may opt to change its presidential system of governance in the new constitutional reform envisaged, party officials said. Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa and a ruling party delegation conferred here with a delegation from the main opposition United National Party (UNP) on a possible package which would lead to a new constitution.

(Source: <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90783/91321/7063159.html>)

Major political parties of Sri Lanka agree to create an Executive Prime Minister position

Colombo Page, July 13, 2010.

The two major political parties of Sri Lanka, the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) and the United National Party (UNP) came to an agreement to create an Executive Prime Minister position that is responsible for the Parliament.

(Source: http://www.colombopage.com/archive_10B/Jul13_1278960348CH.php)

PM in China

Island, July 15, 2010.

Prime Minister D. M. Jayaratne was scheduled to leave for China on July 16, 2010 to participate in the Expo 2010 Commercial and Cultural seminar in Shanghai. The seminar on the theme 'Better City, Better Life' will be attended by representatives from 246 countries and institutions. During his stay the Premier will meet political and business leaders and hold talks on bilateral interests.

(Source: http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=2158)

UK can do more in SL development - British High Com

Island, July 15, 2010.

"Now is an important time in Sri Lanka's economic development and the UK is already playing a role, through the companies represented by the Council for Business with Britain (CBB), but we can do more," stated Acting British High Commissioner Mark Gooding at the 10th Annual General Meeting of the CBB. "This will further help develop the strong existing economic and cultural links between our two countries at this exciting time for Sri Lanka," he said. The Council for Business

with Britain is expecting more business volumes between the two countries with the end of a three-decade conflict.

(Source: http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=2154)

Sri Lanka to Sue UN General Secretary Ban Ki Moon

Nidhasa, July 18, 2010.

Sri Lanka government's law advocates claim that special commission appointed to investigate possible war crime in Sri Lanka is against UN constitution. They are planning to file a case in international court against UN head. Sri Lanka government stirringly opposed the special commission appointed by Moon and one of government minister started hunger protest against it. However protest has been seized as a result of President Mahinda Rajapaksa's mediation. This is the first time in the history that a government is trying to sue UN general secretary.

(Source: <http://news.nidhasa.com/news.php?go=fullnews&newsid=1057>)