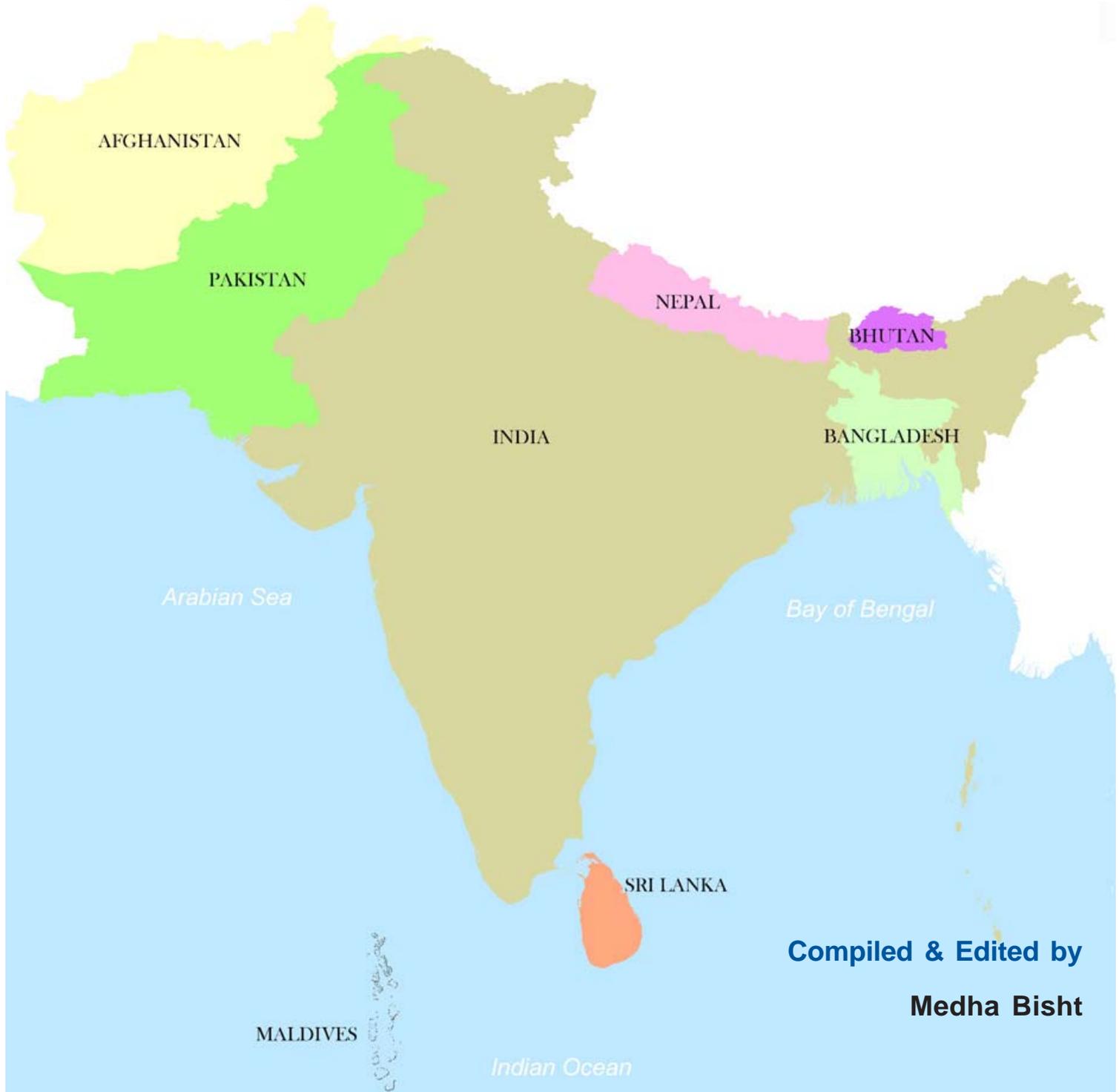


SOUTH ASIA TRENDS

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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.



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Editor's Note

Afghanistan was back into spotlight, given the media hype over the Kabul conference and the infamous WikiLeaks episode. The day long Kabul Conference on July 20, 2010, which attracted high level officials from more than 70 countries, witnessed frenzy from various quarters over the prospects of engaging the Taliban. While Iran and Pakistan emphasized on a political solution to deal with the Taliban, the United States seemed to be articulating a three point agenda as a pre-requisite for engaging the Taliban. According to Hillary Clinton, any engagement overtures with Taliban should ensure that they (Taliban) (a) renounce violence; (b) recognize the Afghan constitution and (c) respect women rights. The Taliban have expressed disdain over the developments and chose to denounce the Kabul conference. Meanwhile the notorious WikiLeaks have not only unraveled the anxiety in Washington over the consequences of the leaks on the already debilitating Afghan situation, but has also revealed the fault lines between Afghanistan-Pakistan. From the fall of McChrystal to the episodic WikiLeaks, media has come out as a potential game changer in strategic calculations.

Even before the WikiLeaks were out in the public domain, Richard Holbrooke partially expressed concern over the Taliban-al Qaeda-LeT link. Expressing caution over the activities of the "terror conglomerate" as he called it, Holbrooke added that the aim of the network was to hurt western ideologies and create problems between India and Pakistan. The spill over effect of WikiLeaks was clearly reflected in Cameron's much controversial statement made during his two day visit to India. Cameron had remarked that Pakistan could no longer "look both ways" by tolerating terrorism. Pakistan has taken serious offence on the statement, accusing the British premier of damaging the prospects of regional peace and security. Analysts suggest that the issue could overshadow Zardari's visit to the United Kingdom in the first week of August.

Pakistani Ambassador to the US, Hussain Haqqani, expressed Pakistan's support for the Kashmir's right to self-determination and has asked India to enter into result-oriented talks with Pakistan on Kashmir. Meanwhile, Minister of State for Home Affairs, Ajay Maken, informed the Rajya Sabha on July 28, 2010 that anti-India elements based in Pakistan were behind the ongoing flare up in Kashmir.

Though at the domestic level political stalemate in Nepal continues, at

the bilateral level, India has begun de-silting the Kosi river to avert possibility of floods. The Irrigation Minister of Nepal, Bal Krishna Khand, has expressed caution over the flows of the Narayani river, which it suspects could breach the Gandak embankment. According to Nepali media reports, the embankment could burst due to the low quality of work by Indian side in the Gandak canal!

Afghanistan

UK troops may start leaving Afghanistan in 2011 - PM

The Star, July 21, 2010.

Britain could start withdrawing troops from Afghanistan as early as next year, British Prime Minister David Cameron said on July 21, 2010. Britain has said it wants to pull the bulk of its 9,500-strong force out of the war zone within five years, in line with an international aspiration to give Afghans full control of their security by the end of 2014. The United States, which has committed the bulk of foreign troops deployed in Afghanistan, hopes to start bringing soldiers home from July 2011.

(Source: http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/7/22/worldupdates/2010-07-21T205039Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0_-502986-2&sec=Worldupdates)

Petraeus Sharpens Afghan Strategy

Wall Street Journal, July 21, 2010.

David Petraeus plans to ramp up the U.S. military's troop-intensive strategy in Afghanistan, according to some senior military officials, who have concluded that setbacks in the war effort this year weren't the result of the strategy, but with flaws in how it has been implemented. The officials said Gen. McChrystal put too much attention on hunting down Taliban leaders, at the expense of the U.S. counterinsurgency strategy, which focuses on protecting civilians and bolstering popular support for the government. Supporters of Gen. McChrystal dispute that assessment, dismissing any notion there were flaws in how he fought the war.

(Source: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703954804575381223866697214.html?mod=WSJEUROPE_hpp_LEFTTopStories)

Reconciliation Effort Earns Support

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, July 21, 2010

A number of foreign delegates to the Kabul Conference supported President Hamid Karzai's reintegration and reintegration initiative. Foreign ministers and high-level officials from more than 70 countries and international organizations attended the one-day meeting aimed at discussing Afghanistan's priorities for lasting peace and development. The Taliban have not yet reacted to support for the peace talks from the international community. However, a spokesman for the Gulbadin Hekmatyar-led Hezb-i-Islami (HIA) said he doubted the credibility of the West. Abdullah Kamawal said their conditions, notably the removal of HIA leaders from the UN sanctions, should be met ahead of any peace parleys.

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

Kabul Conference Concludes with Renewing Support to Afghanistan

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, July 21, 2010

In a resolution issued at the conclusion of the conference the participants agreed to support the Afghan government's initiative peace and reconciliation program with the armed opposition groups. The 32-article resolution read out by Afghan Finance Minister Omar Zakhilwal also said that the participants expressed their

support to channel 50 percent of the funds contributed by the international community to Afghanistan. In the resolution the participants also stressed for continued support of Afghan national security forces, good governance, economic development and boosting regional cooperation. Secretary General of the NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen assured the alliance in his speech firm support and said that, "The military alliance would remain in Afghanistan even after Afghan security forces take responsibility for security."

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

China Wants to See Peaceful Afghanistan: Chinese FM

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, July 21, 2010

Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi called for continued support of the international community to the war-torn Afghanistan. "We want to see a peaceful, stable and independent Afghanistan that enjoys development and good neighborhood," Yang said addressing one-day international conference on Afghanistan in the capital Kabul. "To achieve the goal, he proposed four points including ensuring security, political reconciliation, speeding up economic reconstruction and enhancing international cooperation." China had contributed more than 900 million Yuan (over 123 million U.S. dollars) besides canceling 19.5 million U.S. dollars worth of debt owed by Afghanistan from 2002 to 2009

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

US Surge Not Helping Afghanistan: Iran FM

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, July 21, 2010

Iran's foreign minister said that a US-led surge of troops into Afghanistan had failed to stabilize the country, addressing a key international conference attended by his American counterpart. Iran's Manouchehr Mottaki told the gathering that NATO and US troops had failed to defeat the Taliban, nine years after bringing down their Islamist regime, and instead had exacerbated violence in Afghanistan. He said that Western troops, expected to peak at 150,000 within weeks, was a cause of "insecurity, violence and dissatisfaction for the Afghan public." Mottaki also blamed a surge in drugs production in Afghanistan, which is Iran's eastern neighbor, on "Western money laundering systems". Washington has in the past accused Tehran of providing low-level help to some militants in Afghanistan, but former NATO commander in Afghanistan, Stanley McChrystal, said in May that most of Tehran's role was legitimate.

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

U.S. Soldiers Captured in Afghanistan

Huffington Post, July 24, 2010.

Two U.S. Navy service members disappeared in a dangerous area of eastern Afghanistan, prompting a massive air and ground search and appeals on local radio stations for their safe return, NATO and Afghan officials said. The *New York Times* reports that, according to local residents and officials, the two soldiers have been

captured by the Taliban: The Taliban have reportedly claimed responsibility for seizing the two Americans, but Mr. Darwish said local officials knew little more. "We don't know what their demands are," he said.

(Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/07/24/us-soldiers-kidnapped-in_n_658289.html)

Kabul to top agenda on Nirupama's Russia trip

Times of India, July 25, 2010

Close on the heels of the security meet in Kabul, foreign secretary Nirupama Rao will travel next week to Moscow where she will engage the Russians over the issue of political settlement in Afghanistan. Highly placed government sources said on Wednesday that India and Russia were on the same page in the sense that both believe there can't be good Taliban and that the visit by Rao will explore further the extent to which the two countries can cooperate in dealing with the emerging situation in Kabul. "The Russians are clearly allergic to putting boots on the ground in Afghanistan but they are a very important player in the region. "They can use their sphere of influence in the region to provide transit facility to Afghanistan. We are looking at how we can cooperate with Moscow on this issue," said an official.

(Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Kabul-to-top-agenda-on-Nirupamas-Russia-trip/articleshow/6212491.cms>)

EU to Give Kabul 400m

Afghan Daily Outlook, July 26, 2010

Praising the Afghan government and people for successfully holding a major international conference, the European Union Sunday pledged 400 million euros over next three years for the development of different Afghan sectors. Speaking at a press conference in Kabul, EU special representative in Afghanistan, Vygaudas Usackas, said the assistance would be used for the development of agriculture and health sectors, as well as capacity-building of Afghan officials. He supported the decisions taken at the Kabul Conference, attended by representatives from 70 countries and international organizations, which endorsed President Hamid Karzai's goal that Afghan forces should lead security operations across the country by 2014. "The arrangements, including security, show Afghans have the potential to run effectively any kind of affairs and they have the ability to run their country on their own," Usackas said.

(Source: <http://outlookafghanistan.net/index1.html#>)

US Reaffirms Support for Pak-Afghan Talks on Way Forward

Afghan Daily Outlook, July 26, 2010

The United States renewed its support for Pakistan-Afghanistan dialogue toward better ties and common peace and stability objectives, with a top diplomat saying that the American policy in this respect, which also takes into account regional considerations, is moving forward. "That is a good thing, not a bad thing. As long

as they had no dialogue, you could not get anywhere,” Richard Holbrooke, U.S. Special Representative for the region emphasized. He was commenting on the recent talks between Pakistani and Afghan leaders including the Kabul meeting between Pakistani army chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and President Hamid Karzai. Holbrooke, who spoke in the backdrop of recent progress in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations including conclusion of a trade agreement between the two neighbors, faulted the previous Bush Administration for not making successful effort at promoting Pak-Afghan ties.

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

US Afghan Policy Keeps Indian Interests in Mind: Holbrooke

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, July 27, 2010.

Tens of thousands of previously unseen military and intelligence logs from six years of warfare in Afghanistan have revealed what many had already suspected an alliance that was operating at times under the radar and with little accountability. The documents, leaked by the online whistle blower Wikileaks, and given several weeks prior to three media outlets – The Guardian, The New York Times and the German news magazine Der Spiegel – detail unreported civilian casualties, covert hit squads, undisciplined Afghan security forces, the escalation of Taliban attacks and Pakistans growing influence with the Taliban. There are 92,000 entries in all, covering the war from January 2004 through December 2009. Most are military logs, entries by soldiers on the ground, but others are classified memos between diplomats and intelligence agents. Not all have been published by Wikileaks, whose founder, Julian Assange, has not said where he got the information from. The White House has condemned their release saying it put at risk the lives of Americans, our partners, and local populations who co-operate with us and said the logs do not reflect the current administrations efforts in Afghanistan, blaming years of neglect by Barack Obamas predecessor, George W Bush.

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

No victory in war of terror till Pak’s ISI reined in: Karzai aide Home

Newstrack, July 27, 2010

An aide of Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai has said that victory in the war against terror will remain distant as long as Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is not reined in. Even as the White House, attempts to defuse the row at home over the WikiLeak engineered leak of 91,000 US military documents containing information about the war in Afghanistan war, in Kabul, Waheed Omar, a spokesman for President Karzai, bluntly said: “The war on terrorism will not succeed unless we address the root causes .

(Source: <http://newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/171076>)

US denounces disclosure of 92,000 reports

Irish Times, July 27, 2010.

The white House has reacted angrily to what may be the most massive leak of

secret documents in history – the publication of 92,000 classified reports which provide a daily diary of the war in Afghanistan from January 2004 through December 2009.”The US strongly condemns the disclosure of classified information by individuals and organisations which could put the lives of Americans and our partners at risk, and threaten our national security,” Gen Jim Jones, President Barack Obama’s national security adviser, said in a statement reacting to the publication of the documents by WikiLeaks.org

(Source: <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2010/0727/1224275546804.html>)

Minority Leaders Alienate from Govt., Fear Civil War in Afghanistan

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, July 27, 2010.

A growing number of Afghan minority leaders who once participated fully in Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai’s government, have expressed that his move to negotiate with the Taliban has alienated and marginalized them and feared that it might lead to civil war in the region. According to the Washington Post, minority leaders of Tajik, Hazara and Uzbek, who once were closely associated with Karzai, have expressed their concern that Karzai is marginalizing them by making efforts to strike a peace deal with the insurgents. Amarullah Saleh, the man who served Karzai as top intelligence official for six years has launched a campaign to warn Afghans that Karzai has lost conviction in the fight against the Taliban and is recklessly pursuing a political deal with insurgents.

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

Karzai doubts allies plan to fight terror

Gulf News, July 29, 2010

Afghan President Hamid Karzai questioned the willingness of his Western allies to strike insurgent bases in Pakistan given the strong evidence of alleged support in Pakistan for the Taliban.”The war against terrorism is not in the villages or houses of Afghanistan ... but in the sanctuaries, sources of funding and training (of terrorism), and they lie outside Afghanistan,” he told a news conference in Kabul.” It is a different question whether Afghanistan has the ability to tackle this,” he said in response to a question about alleged Pakistan support for the Taliban and why the conflict was dragging on. “... but our allies have this capability.

(Source: <http://gulfnews.com/news/world/afghanistan/karzai-doubts-allies-plan-to-fight-terror-1.661482>)

FBI to assist in war leaks probe

Channel 4, July 30, 2010

A criminal investigation into the leak of tens of thousands of secret Afghanistan war logs could go beyond the military, US Defence Secretary Robert Gates said, and he did not rule out that WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange could be a target.”The investigation should go wherever it needs to go,” Mr Gates said.He would not be

more specific, waving off questions about whether Mr Assange or media outlets that used the WikiLeaks material could be subjects of the criminal probe. But he noted that he has asked the FBI to help in the investigation “to ensure that it can go wherever it needs to go”.

(Source: <http://www.channel4.com/news/articles/world/fbi+to+assist+in+war+leaks+probe/3728022>)

Afghan war leak may have severe consequences - Gates

The Star, July 30, 2010

The unprecedented leak of secret U.S. military reports this week about the war in Afghanistan could have potentially severe consequences for U.S. troops and their allies, and could cost people their lives, U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates said.

(Source: http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/7/30/worldupdates/2010-07-30T010548Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0_-505063-1&sec=Worldupdates)

UN Removes 5 Taliban from Sanctions Blacklist

Afghan Daily Outlook, July 31, 2010

The U.N. Security Council removed five Taliban members from its sanctions blacklist, a move sought by the Afghan government to promote reconciliation. Still, it was just half the number Afghan President Hamid Karzai was seeking. Council diplomats said those taken off the list include former U.N. ambassador Abdul Hakim Mujahid Muhammad Awrang; Abdul Salam Zaeef, author of “My Life with the Taliban;” Abdul Satar Paktin; and two members described as “deceased,” Abdul Samad Khaksar and Muhammad Islam Mohammadi. The decision leaves 132 Taliban members on the list and still subject to an asset freeze and travel ban.

(Source: http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/archive/July_31__2010/news_Pages/main_news.html#02)

Bangladesh

Bangladesh to implement 14 projects with Indian loan

Sify News, July 21, 2010.

India and Bangladesh have finalised 14 infrastructure projects, including those that will enhance connectivity between the two countries, which will be implemented with an Indian loan of \$1 billion. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced a line of credit of \$1 billion during the visit of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in January for a range of projects including railway infrastructure, supply of broad gauge locomotives and passenger coaches and dredging of rivers. Bangladeshi officials said Tuesday that Dhaka submitted 29 projects for utilising the \$1 billion loan. Of them, the two sides at a recent meeting held in New Delhi reviewed the 29 projects and finalised 14 for implementation, Daily Star reported Wednesday. Most of the projects are for development of railway infrastructure in Bangladesh.

(Source: <http://sify.com/news/bangladesh-to-implement-14-projects-with-indian-loan-news-international-khvo4cahcfh.html>)

Bangladesh forms parliamentary panel to amend constitution

Zee News, July 22, 2010.

Bangladesh tonight formed a 15-member parliamentary committee to amend the country's constitution in line with an earlier plan to restore the "spirit" of the post independence constitution of 1972. Hasina referred to the protracted direct and indirect military rules and coups and counter coups in the country and said military personnel paid the price of the army rules as many widows cried in the barracks, and the development process was obstructed in countries which were ruled by the military.

(Source: <http://www.zeenews.com/news642701.html>)

Bangladesh unlikely to ban religious parties

DNA India, July 23, 2010.

Bangladesh is unlikely to ban religious parties or drop the Islamic verse "Bismillahir Rahmani Rahim" from the preamble of the constitution that will be reviewed by a top parliamentary panel in a bid to restore the "secular" spirit of 1971 'Liberation War'. Bangladesh prime minister Sheikh Hasina told party lawmakers that she was personally opposed to the idea of banning any political party, sources said today. "I am not in favour of banning any political party," Hasina was quoted as saying by the private *Bdnews* news agency after parliament constituted a special committee to amend the constitution two days ago. "We want to revive the spirit of Liberation War and enable people to reap the dividends of democracy," Hasina told parliament yesterday.

(Source: http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_bangladesh-unlikely-to-ban-religious-parties_1413714)

Bangladesh can Meet 80pc Power Demand using Renewable Energy : expert

Energy Bangla, July 24, 2010

Bangladesh can meet about 80 percent of her power demand using renewable energy including solar and wind power systems. Dr Sajed Kamal, a scientist and teacher of Brandeis University, Massachusetts in USA, made the opinion at a seminar titled 'Solar Energy Resource: Bangladesh's Un-utilizing Energy Storehouse' at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) in the city on Friday. In his speech, Dr Sajed Kamal said: "Germany and the Latin American countries including Cuba are now planning to generate 80 percent of their power by setting up renewable energy systems and we should consider these methods to address our ongoing power crisis"

(Source: <http://www.energybangla.com/index.php?mod=article&cat=GreenPage&article=2504>)

Have Bangladesh-India relations hit a snag?, M. Serajul Islam

Daily Star, July 24, 2010.

Recently in a seminar arranged by the Policy Research Institute (PRI), the Minister

for Commerce made a statement that poured cold water on the spin of optimism that the foreign minister had succeeded in giving in the media to the Prime Minister's state visit to India in January. The foreign minister had given the visit a perfect score. She also spoke in a number of seminars arranged to evaluate the visit. In these seminars, she articulated herself brilliantly, based on the agreements and the Joint Communiqué of the visit, to convince everybody that Bangladesh-India relations were poised for a paradigm shift for the better to the mutual benefit of the two countries.

(Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=147935>)

Bangladesh Army following model of Pak Army

Daily Star, July 24, 2010.

The business Bangladesh Army is carrying out in the country, is just following the model of Pakistan Army, reported the second episode of the nine-part BBC radio documentary "Probaho". The documentary revealed this while investigating business projects of Bangladesh Army, particularly the Mongla Cement Factory in Khulna. Regarding the relations between two armies, eminent expert on military affairs in the sub-continent Dr Ayesha Siddika told the weekly BBC documentary, "There is a keen interest in building links with Bangladesh. I mean, older officers, Pakistan Army officers, want to develop a close relationship with Bangladesh Army." Ayesha also said that she had taken part in many discussions in which high ranked officials of Pakistan Army and Air Force talked without due respect and dignity that another sovereign country deserves.

(Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=148031>)

1971 war criminals' trial soon: Hasina

Sify News, July 24, 2010.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina assured that trial for the 1971 liberation war criminals would start soon and the offenders would be brought to justice. The Jamaat-e-Islami, the major partner of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party of former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, has denied the charges that it worked along with the Pakistani army during the 1971 war. Recently, Bangladesh has imposed a travel ban on 40 people, mostly Jamaat leaders, over fears that they may try to flee the country ahead of any war crime trial.

(Source: <http://sify.com/news/1971-war-criminals-trial-soon-hasina-news-national-khycyVahaca.html>)

Bangladesh ahead of India, Nepal

Daily Star, July 25, 2010

Bangladesh has scored better than India and Nepal in UNDP's Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of five South Asian countries. Among 104 countries, Bangladesh ranked 73. India ranked 74, Nepal 82, Pakistan 70, Sri Lanka 32 in the MPI released on July 15. Only nine percent people of poor households have their

children not attending schools in Bangladesh.

(Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/newsdetails.php?nid=148076Pakistan>)

Arrest warrants against Bangladesh Islamists

Hindustan Times, July 26, 2010.

A tribunal issued arrest warrants against four top Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) leaders on charges of committing “war crimes” during the 1971 liberation movement. The four, who are the top brass of the country’s largest Islamist party, are arraigned for committing genocide, murder, torture, loot, arson and targeting unarmed civilians during the movement that led to separation from Pakistan. Bangladesh’s International Crimes Tribunal allowed the police custody of JeI’s chief Motiur Rahman Nizami, its secretary general Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mojahid and two senior assistant secretary generals Muhammad Kamaruzzaman and Abdul Quader Mollah.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Arrest-warrants-against-Bangladesh-Islamists/Article1-577881.aspx>)

Bangladesh signs landmark power deal with India

Economic Times, July 27, 2010

Energy starved Bangladesh has signed a landmark 35-year power transmission deal with India paving ways for import of import 250 megawatt electricity from the neighbouring country starting from 2012 end. The state-run Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) inked the bulk power transmission treaty with Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd (PGCIL) at a ceremony witnessed by Bangladesh’s Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith, Prime Minister’s energy adviser Tawfique-e-Elahi Chowdhury and concerned officials of both the countries. The agreement keeps the provision for Bangladesh to export power to India in the future while PGCIL was tasked to construct, own, operate and maintain a 400-KV double-circuit line to exchange 500-MW power between the two neighbouring countries soon after the system is launched.

(Source: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/news-by-industry/energy/power/Bangladesh-signs-landmark-power-deal-with-India/articleshow/6221380.cms>)

ULFA militant, aide held in Meghalaya

Sify News, July 28, 2010.

A militant of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and an aide of the group were arrested in separate incidents by Border Security Force (BSF) troopers along the India- Bangladesh border in Meghalaya, officials said. ‘Columbus M. Marak, a hardcore ULFA, was detained from Hathimara village while trying to infiltrate into India from Bangladesh,’ BSF spokesman Ravi Gandhi said. In a separate incident, an aide of the outfit, Golzim A. Sangma, was arrested from Mahendraganj. Hathimara and Mahendraganj are border villages located along the India-Bangladesh border in western Meghalaya under the West Garo Hill district. In March 2008, Columbus escaped from Tura jail in Meghalaya as he was

facing extortion charges in the Garo hills region. He was also engaged in extortion in Jorabat area on the Assam-Meghalaya border, the BSF official said.

(Source: <http://sify.com/news/ulfa-militant-aide-held-in-meghalaya-news-national-kh2v4bhabjf.html>)

Court restores 'secularism' in Bangladesh constitution

Sify News, July 30, 2010

In a far-reaching move, Bangladesh's Supreme Court has restored 'secularism' in the country's constitution. It has also denounced the declaration of martial law in the past and sought safeguards to end 'extra-constitutional adventures'. Responding to the ruling, Bangladesh's top law officer, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, said the country would, however, continue to be an Islamic republic. Bangladesh has a 90 percent Muslim population. 'Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim', which is not in the original 1972 constitution, but introduced subsequently by a military-led regime, would be retained, he said Wednesday after the apex court's 186-page order was made public, The Daily Star reported.

(Source: <http://sify.com/news/court-restores-secularism-in-bangladesh-constitution-news-international-kh3p4cfijeh.html>)

Bangladesh apex court wants safeguards against military rule

Sify News, July 30, 2010

Bangladesh's Supreme Court has denounced the declaration of martial law in the past and has sought safeguards to end 'extra-constitutional adventures'. Bangladesh underwent radical political and constitutional changes during a 15-year period between August 1975 and December 1990 when martial law was promulgated and the country had a series of military-led governments. The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in a landmark 186 page ruling upheld a 2005 High Court verdict that had declared the fifth amendment to the constitution illegal.

(Source: <http://sify.com/news/bangladesh-apex-court-wants-safeguards-against-military-rule-news-international-kh3lOdbhegb.html>)

Bhutan

Assam flood

Telegraph India, July 20, 2010.

Release of water from Bhutan has flooded many areas in downstream Bodo belt in Assam. Water from Kurichu dam in Bhutan has flooded many areas of Baksa district. A portion of the 1560 Narayanguri Azad LP School was also washed away after the floodwater eroded many areas of Narayanguri in the district. Over 21 families in Pachim Narayanguri, 65 in Nonke Kagrabari and 300 in Alengamari, Bispani, Rogobil, Sunbari and Kagrabari were affected. Parts of Manas National Park were also flooded. Kokrajhar and Chirang districts bore the brunt of the flood too.

(Source: http://www.telegraphindia.com/1100720/jsp/northeast/story_12703343.jsp)

Protesters block India-Bhutan road

Hindustan Times, July 21, 2010.

The movement of vehicles between India and Bhutan was halted for over five hours by several students and social organisations near Rangiya in Assam in support of their demands. The protesters blocked the international road at Kumarikata near Rangiya in Kamrup (Rural) district, stopping road communication between the two countries, official sources said. They were peacefully demanding the repair of the road and protection against the ongoing erosion by Barnadi river in the area, the sources said.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Protesters-block-India-Bhutan-road/Article1-574725.aspx>)

No truth in Telegraph report: KHPC

The Kuensel, July 22, 2010

Kurichu hydro power corporation (KHPC) officials say that the power plant is not responsible for the floods in the neighbouring Indian state of Assam, as reported by some Indian media. The Telegraph newspaper, which is published from Kolkata, on July 19 had reported that a sudden release of water from Kurichu dam has flooded many areas in downstream Bodo belt in Assam, particularly under Baksa district.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16166>)

Kurichu - Favourite whipping boy

The Kuensel, July 24, 2010.

Every summer, especially during the monsoon, flooding due to incessant rain throwing normal life out of gear provides a rich seam of subject matter for newspapers across the border. They flash stories of the monsoon spell wreaking havoc, with lives lost and homes washed away. Such accounts indeed help people understand and come to terms with the two-month long spell. But how, amidst all this, do some baseless allegations help, especially when an innocuous hydropower plant easily becomes a plump target for putting the blame on for nature's fury? It is certainly bad news, not just for the people of Assam, but for the people of Bhutan too. It is bad news for the people of Assam, as they have been hit by yet again another flood; and it is bad news for Bhutan, since the cause of the damages is being imputed to her. And, as we clear our own backyard, we have fellow feeling and sympathy for our friends across the border during this difficult time.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16182>)

Cabinet to decide subsidy level

The Kuensel, July 26, 2010.

As of now, the average tariff rate is Nu 1.54 per unit for households or low voltage users, and about Nu 1.72 per unit for medium and high voltage using industries. The

revised rates is likely to come into effect from August 1, a month behind schedule, because the revision proposals from the government owned distributing company and generating company, Bhutan Power corporation (BPC) and Druk Green Power corporation (DGPC), were submitted to BEA only on March 25. According to the rules determining tariff regulations, at least four months are required to study and review the proposals before a decision is taken. "The review process is now complete for the cabinet to finalise it," said the economic affairs minister, Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk.

(Source:<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16207>)

Founding a knowledge-society

Kuensel, July 27, 2010.

The foundation to internationalise Bhutan's education system is now laid. The tertiary education policy (TEP), which was launched yesterday by the prime minister, will now open new doors for students, both Bhutanese and international to pursue higher education in areas, such as GNH studies, IT, environment, Buddhist studies, cultural studies and traditional medicine. "The TEP policy is a road map for the development and expansion of tertiary education in the country," the education minister, Lyonpo Thakur Singh Powdyel said. "The wish of the country is to develop Bhutan into a knowledge hub, and making Bhutan an IT enabled knowledge society."

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16219>)

Imtiaz Ahmed made ambassador to Bhutan

The Nation, July 30, 2010

The government has decided to appoint Imtiaz Ahmed, Bangladesh ambassador to Sweden, as the next Bangladesh ambassador to Bhutan. Imtiaz, a career diplomat and belongs to the 1984 batch of BCS (Foreign Affairs) cadre, joined the foreign service in 1986, a press release said. During his distinguished diplomatic career, he has served in Bangladesh missions in Washington, Kathmandu, Kuala Lumpur, Rome and Cairo in various diplomatic capacities.

(Source: <http://nation.ittefaq.com/issues/2010/07/30/news0767.htm>)

Maldives

US envoy to mediate Maldives political talks

Haveeru, July 21, 2010.

The US will send an envoy to mediate political talks between the government and opposition parties, AFP said. The decision comes days after US urged Maldives to accept international offers of mediation to resolve a power struggle between President Mohamed Nasheed and the opposition-controlled parliament. The current political unrest was triggered after the cabinet resigned en masse on June 29, claiming that opposition MPs were "hijacking" the executive and making it impossible for the ministers to discharge their constitutional duties.

(Source: <http://www.haveeru.com.mv/english/details/31517>)

Deadlocked Paradise

Lanka Business, July 23, 2010.

The Indian Ocean island of Maldives said it welcomed help from international community to resolve an internal political deadlock stemming from a battle between the president and parliament." We are extremely grateful to our friends and partners in the international communities (sic), who are trying to help us resolve the political impasse," a statement from the office of Maldives President Nasheed said. The Maldives government was shaken when President Nasheed's cabinet of ministers resigned after the parliament threatened to impeach them.

(Source: <http://www.lankabusinessonline.com/fullstory.php?nid=1064238460>)

No joke, we will impeach President Nasheed, vows DRP MPs

Asian Tribune, July 27, 2010

Rayyithunge Party MPs has vowed to impeach President Mohamed Nasheed, over alleged violation of the country's constitution. DRP Parliamentarian Ahmed Nihan has said that a no-confidence motion against President Nasheed will be forwarded to Parliament soon, Minivan News reported. "Any MP who works according to the oath and is sincere to their people, will definitely support the motion," he claimed in the news report. "This is a very serious declaration, this is not a joke. The whole nation is calling in one voice simultaneously for the resignation of the president," he added. DRP MP Ahmed Mahlouf, DRP MP and deputy leader of the party Ahmed Ilham and DRP MP Ali Arif were working together to secure the no-confidence vote.

(Source: <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/07/27/no-joke-we-will-impeach-president-nasheed-vows-drp-mps>)

Nepal

Nepal election stalemate a setback for Maoists

Christin Science Monitor, July 21, 2010.

Neither Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda of the UCPN-Maoist party nor his major rival Ram Chandra Poudel of the Nepali Congress party, nor even Jhalanath Khanal of the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) party - the three major candidates - won the necessary majority vote from the parliamentary members in the 601-member Constituent Assembly. A runoff between Mr. Prachanda and Mr. Paudel is now set for Friday. Mr. Khanal withdrew from the voting process after he failed to secure support of two-thirds of parliament. The Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal have both hardened their stance against the Maoists. Before they will support Prachanda, both parties have demanded a time-frame to settle the future of 19,000 combatants, the dissolution of the Maoist's paramilitary youth wing, and the return of seized property.

(Source: <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2010/0721/Nepal-election-stalemate-a-setback-for-Maoists>)

Nepal to hold poll for Premier again

The Hindu, July 22, 2010.

As the two candidates – Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda) and Nepali Congress vice-president Ram Chandra Paudel – who contested the prime ministerial election did not get a simple majority to lead a new government, the poll would be held again. Voting was held in Parliament, where the chairman of the largest political party, Mr. Prachanda, got 242 votes, five more than the total number of seats. Mr. Paudel, who is the parliamentary party leader of the second largest party, secured 124 votes, 10 more than the number of his party seats.

(Source: <http://www.hindu.com/2010/07/22/stories/2010072258480100.htm>)

Pak-Nepal plan free trade pact: Report

Hindustan Times, July 24, 2010.

Pakistan and Nepal plan to ink a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), with a high-level bilateral task force set to finalise the pact soon in a bid to boost bilateral trade and business, a news report said today. Nepal plans to ink the FTA with Pakistan in the next meeting of Joint Economic Commission (JEC) scheduled in October, *Daily Times* newspaper reported. "Nepalese side has desired to finalise FTA for the two countries in the next JEC which will be held on October 19-20 this year in Islamabad," the daily quoted a communication sent to the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) from the Pakistan embassy in Kathmandu. The report, citing unnamed sources, said a task force comprising representatives from ministry of commerce from both countries has been set up for finalising the FTA. The plan has been put on a fast-track after the 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, sources said.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Pak-Nepal-plan-free-trade-pact-Report/Article1-577200.aspx>)

Nepal's defense minister signals for stop salary to the Maoist's army

Review Nepal, July 24, 2010.

Defence Minister Bidhya Bhandari of the present incumbent government has on Saturday said that the government would stop the salaries provided to the people liberation army (PLA). The government can not afford to keep the Maoist combatants if the integration process is not concluded soon Bhandari said while talking to reporters at Simara Airport on Friday. Defense minister has made such a comment in the mean time when political parties have been sharply divided on the issue of PLA integration and rehabilitation.

(Source: http://www.reviewnepal.com/detail_news.php?id=653)

Nepal FM bats for India again, claims MRP deal with France non-transparent

Telegraph Nepal, July 24, 2010.

Sujata Koirala, foreign minister of current caretaker government has done one more favor to India-that did not want Nepal's Machine Readable Passport Deal to go to any other country except India. Look what she said of the decision undertaken by her own ministry. "The decision to award printing rights of Nepal's Machine Readable Passport to Oberthur Technologies of France is not transparent," said Sujata. "The evaluation committee did not show any document to me prior taking the decision in favor of Oberthur", she added. "The documents submitted by the evaluation committee to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is also incomplete thus the decision need to be reinvestigated", she demanded. "I need to be kept abreast with all activities going on within my ministry", she said and asked, "Why I was not informed of this deal?"

(Source: http://telegraphnepal.com/news_det.php?news_id=8010)

US hopes Nepal government formed quickly

Sify News, July 24, 2010.

The United States voiced hope that Nepal will quickly form a government to get to work on pressing concerns including the drafting of a new constitution. Lawmakers in Nepal, which is recovering from a decade of war, will meet Friday in a fresh attempt to elect a new prime minister amid a three-week political vacuum. "We urge Nepal's political leaders to reach agreement on a government that will move forward quickly on the issues that are essential for Nepal's stability and economic development, completion of the peace process and drafting of a new constitution," US State Department spokesman Philip Crowley said.

(Source: <http://sify.com/news/us-hopes-nepal-government-formed-quickly-news-international-khyaubeihjd.html>)

India keeps close watch on Kosi, 'Bihar's sorrow'

Sify News, July 26, 2010.

With the crisis of 2008 still fresh in mind, when a rain-gorged Kosi river wreaked havoc in southern Nepal and India's Bihar state, India has begun de-silting the mighty river to avert a fresh crisis this monsoon, the first such effort in nearly 50 years. India's Minister of State for Water Resources Vincent H. Pala paid a surprise visit to Sunsari district in southern Nepal Sunday to inspect the removal of debris from the pilot channels of the Kosi river in a bid to prevent the swirling waters from breaching embankments and triggering floods. The government of Bihar, which is entrusted with the maintenance and repair of the Kosi barrage, has brought a dredger machine, reportedly costing nearly NRS 50 million, to remove the accumulating sand and silt in the bed of the river and help keep the water level down. This is the first time since the construction of the Kosi barrage in 1962, as per a bilateral pact between India and Nepal, that the river is being de-silted,

Nepal's official media said Monday.

(Source: <http://sify.com/news/india-keeps-close-watch-on-kosi-bihar-s-sorrow-news-international-kh0o4bihgaf.html>)

All is not well, Crack noticed in new Nepal Madhesi Front

Telegraph Nepal, July 26, 2010.

Reports quote one of the Nepali Congress (NC) leaders as saying that Upendra Yadav and Jay Prakash Prasad (JP) Gupta of Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum-Nepal were seen clearly divided over issues concerning the formation of next government at a meeting held between the NC leaders and Unified Madhesi Alliance, July 25, 2010. While Upendra Yadav was time and again referring to the need of the Left Unity, Gupta was making remarks in favor of Democratic Alliance, reports claim. This division surely bodes ill for the newly established Madhesi Front. NC leader Dr. Shekhar Koirala, who was also present during the meeting, told the media that "JP's remarks were agreeable".

(Source: http://www.telegraphnepal.com/news_det.php?news_id=8018)

PM election impasse rankles prez

Kathmandu Post, July 26, 2010.

Speaker Subas Nembang told President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav no formal request has been made by any party for amendment to the Parliament Rules of Procedures-2008. The amendment would end the stalemate in the election of a new prime minister. The Speaker said so in connection with concerns voiced by the president over the proposal floated by some leaders for the amendment to the regulation to elect a new prime minister. On Sunday, Maoist Vice-Chairman Baburam Bhattarai rallied for the agenda of amendment floated by CPN-UML Chairman Jhala Nath Khanal. The leaders have been saying that the two contestants for the post of prime minister—Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Nepali Congress leader Ram Chandra Poudel—should withdraw so that a national consensus government can be formed.

(Source: <http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2010/07/26/top-story/pm-election-impasse-rankles-prez/210868/>)

Minister inspects Gandak embankment

My Republica, July 27, 2010.

In view of looming threat of flood in Narayani river bursting the Gandak embankment due to the low quality of work by Indian side in Gangak canal, a team led by Minister for Irrigation Bal Krishna Khand inspected the embankment. State Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare Ram Bachan Yadav and former state minister for home affairs Devendra Raj Dandel were also in the team. The current water flow (271,000 cusec) has been constantly weakening spurs of the embankment, though it was constructed to withhold 850,000 cusec water flow, inviting high risk of embankment bursting. The team also made field inspection of the land being breached by the river. The flood has started breaching Spur No 2

and 3 of the embankment on the Nepali side.

Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=21512

China presses Nepal to curb pro-Tibet activities

Hindustan Times, July 28, 2010.

Terming them as threat to its territorial integrity and sovereignty, China has urged Nepal to curb pro-Tibet activities on its soil. Nepal's northern neighbour would provide financial assistance to strengthen security agencies in better monitoring and prevention of anti-China activities. The decision was taken at the first border security and law enforcement meeting between two nations that concluded in Kathmandu on Tuesday. Since 2008, China has taken serious note of Tibetans entering Nepal and anti-China demonstrations carried out by Tibetan refugees outside Chinese embassy and consular office. In recent months there have been reports of Chinese border police entering Nepal in search of Tibetans and security forces of both countries have conducted joint operations to prevent entry of Tibetans.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/News-Feed/nepal/China-presses-Nepal-to-curb-pro-Tibet-activities/Article1-578885.aspx>)

'Reintegration of ex-Maoists in Nepal conditional'

The Hindu, July 29, 2010.

Personal integrity plays a key role in the reintegration of ex-Maoist cadres into the Nepalese security forces. People with a clean chit will be considered for recruitment within the framework of the law of the land, that too, as per the stipulated rules and regulations," said Lieutenant-General Paban Jung Thapa, Chief of General Staff of the Nepal Army. As the special committee, formed to go into the whys and hows of the reintegration process is busy collating vital details, the Army will have an advisory role in the process by providing vital counsel to policy-makers. The Lieutenant-General, who has just returned to serve the Army after a two-year stint as Force Commander with the United Nations Mission in Sudan, is excited about the 'challenging role' in store for him in Nepal, which is witnessing an 'unstable political environment.'

(Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article540537.ece>)

Nidhi hopes Nepal Madhesh alliance vote in NC favor

Telegraph Nepal, July 29, 2010.

Talking to journalists in his home town Janakpur of Dhanusha district, July 28, 2010 Nepali Congress General Secretary Bimalendra Nidhi, son of NC veteran leader late Mahendra Narayan Nidhi, revealed that the parties represented in the Unified Democratic Madhesi Alliance have made commitment to support the Nepali Congress Prime Ministerial candidate Mr. Ram Chandra Poudel during the third round of voting that is to take place August 2, 2010. He said, the Madhesi alliance has made commitment to support us-the NC-and we are eagerly awaiting

response from the United Marxist Leninists' camp.

(Source: http://www.telegraphnepal.com/news_det.php?news_id=8037)

Indian envoy Rakesh Sood soothes Nepal UML's Khanal?

Telegraph Nepal, July 29, 2010.

The Indian ambassador to Nepal, Mr. Rakesh Sood has begun making some visible moves and that began just a day after the US ambassador to Nepal Scott H. DeLisi met with the United Marxist Leninists' Chairman Jhal Nath Khanal. Sood also preferred to meet Khanal, July 28, 2010. Mr. Sood had reportedly told the vice chairman of Unified Maoists' Party Narayan Kaji Shrestha at the farewell dinner recently hosted by British Embassy in Kathmandu in the honor of outgoing envoy Dr. Andrew Hall that the Maoist's party chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal will fail repeatedly even if Prime Ministerial election were held forty times.

(Source: http://telegraphnepal.com/news_det.php?news_id=8038)

Normalcy returns to Indo-Nepal border

Hindustan Times, July 30, 2010

The impasse between traders and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) personnel ended following an hour-long meeting with SSB officials and office-bearers of traders' organisation of Krishna Nagar town of Nepal and Barhni town of Siddharthnagar district on Wednesday. This led to restoration of normalcy in Barhni town on the Indo-Nepal border. SK Singh, the SSB assistant commandant deployed on the Indo-Nepal border, said all disputes with the traders had been resolved. Markets in towns on India and Nepal sides of the border reopened on Wednesday and business activities began there as usual, Singh added. The Sashastra Seema Bal jawans were upset ever since some Nepali residents, allegedly involved in smuggling, pelted stones at them from across the border.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Normalcy-returns-to-Indo-Nepal-border/Article1-579823.aspx>)

Don't interfere in Nepal's internal affairs: Sushil to UNMIN

Telegraph Nepal, July 30, 2010

The acting president of Nepali Congress party Sushil Koirala in his fresh meeting with Ms. Karin Landgren told that the "United Nations' Peacekeeping Mission in Nepal- UNMIN was unnecessarily interfering in matters internal to Nepal. The UNMIN chief Landgren had arrived at Sushil's residence, July 27, 2010. Koirala also expressed his anger over UNMIN's 60 weeks long Maoists' Militia integration and Rehabilitation plan that Koirala claimed was brought without holding proper consultations with the political parties of Nepal. In reply, Landgren told Koirala that the proposal was drafted after holding proper consultations with local experts and the plan was intended to support government but not to annoy it. Reports add: Koirala also told the UNMIN chief that unless Maoists totally disarm themselves the proposition for formation of their party led government was impossible.

(Source: http://www.telegraphnepal.com/news_det.php?news_id=8031)

Pakistan

Water Dispute Increases India-Pakistan Tension

New York Times, July 21, 2010.

Jamaat-u-Dawa, the charity wing of Lashkar-e-Taiba, the militant group behind the Mumbai attacks, has retooled its public relations effort around the water dispute, where it was once focused almost entirely on land claims to Kashmir. Hafiz Saeed, Jamaat's leader, now uses the dispute in his Friday sermons to whip up fresh hatreds. With their populations rapidly expanding, water is critical to both nations. Pakistan contains the world's largest contiguous irrigation system, water experts say. It has also become an increasingly fertile recruiting ground for militant groups, who play on a lack of opportunity and abundant anti-India sentiment. "The treaty worked well in the past, mostly because the Indians weren't building anything," said John Briscoe, an expert on South Asia's water issues at Harvard University. "This is a completely different ballgame. Now there's a whole battery of these hydroprojects." "(Pakistan is) confronting a very serious water issue," said a senior American official in Islamabad. "There's a high amount of anxiety, and it's not misplaced." The design of the dam requires that much of the water in the Kishenganga River be diverted for much of the year. That will kill off fish and harm the livelihoods of the people living in the Pakistan-administered side of Kashmir, Pakistani officials say.

(Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/21/world/asia/21kashmir.html?pagewanted=1&r=1>)

India-Pakistan talks can never succeed, says former NSA Brajesh Mishra

Sify News, July 21, 2010.

Stating that India-Pakistan talks could never succeed as long as the armed forces were the rulers in Pakistan, the former National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra said that there was a grave danger to the national security because of "unmitigated hostility of Pak and China". "Pakistan Army's hostility towards India is not because of Bangladesh (factor), Kashmir or Siachen. Their very existence depends upon hostility towards India. Unless we grasp that, we would never able to deal with Pakistan," said Mishra.

(Source: <http://sify.com/news/india-pakistan-talks-can-never-succeed-says-former-nsa-brajesh-mishra-news-national-khvuOdbccca.html>)

NATO chief praises Pakistan's regional role

Reuters, July 21, 2010.

NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen praised Pakistan's regional role and said the country's action against militants along the border with Afghanistan would improve the "overall security situation." Rasmussen was speaking at a joint news conference with Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi. The NATO chief was in Pakistan to discuss regional security a day after an international conference in Afghanistan. "We appreciate very much what Pakistan has done to promote regional stability and security," Rasmussen said. "I would like to commend the Pakistani government and the Pakistan military for your operations

in the tribal belt with the aim to improve the overall security situation.”

(Source: <http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFTRE66K1W420100721>)

Taliban ties at heart of conference

National Post, July 21, 2010.

“Iran and India share the same allies,” said Kamran Bokhari, a security analyst for the private intelligence firm Stratfor, referring to the two countries ties to Afghanistan’s varied tribes and ethnic groups. “Traditionally the Iranians allied with the Tajiks, the Hazaras, the Uzbeks, the same people the Indians have been supporting as well. And they both have an interest in making sure Pakistan doesn’t dominate Afghanistan. But Pakistan is also looking to broaden its influence so that it is not seen as simply backing the Taliban or the Pashtun groups that dominate much of the south, as it did in the 1990s.” “They learned their lesson last time,” Mr. Bokhari said. “This time around the Pakistanis don’t want to just back the Taliban. They’re going to support Karzai, they’re going to support the Taliban. They want to undermine Indian influence among Afghan society.”

(Source: <http://www.nationalpost.com/news/world/Analysis+Taliban+ties+heart+conference/3302648/story.html>)

No Indian goods to be allowed to Afghanistan through Pakistan

Daily Times, July 21, 2010.

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Qamar Zaman Kaira said that under the Pak-Afghan Transit Trade Arrangement (APTTA), only transport of trade goods from Afghanistan would be allowed and that to up to Wahga border only while no Indian goods would be transported to Afghanistan through this route. While addressing a press conference at the Prime Minister’s Secretariat, he said that only a letter of understanding has been signed for this purpose so far.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C07%5C21%5Cstory_21-7-2010_pg5_9)

US asks India not to make Headley’s disclosures public

Daily Times, July 22, 2010.

The United States has expressed displeasure over the string of public statements made by Indian officials about what Mumbai attacks’ suspect David Headley supposedly told his Indian interrogators, including the alleged role of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in the 26/11 attack. Senior Indian officials, including Home Secretary GK Pillai and National Security Adviser Shivshankar Menon, have claimed over the past week that Headley, a Pakistani American, had revealed that the ISI had a direct role in the Mumbai attacks. “The Americans are especially annoyed with GK Pillai for making an affirmative statement last week that Headley had confirmed the involvement of Pakistan’s ISI in the 26/11 attacks from beginning to the end,” the sources said.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\22\story_22-7-2010_pg1_6)

Pakistan calls for joint monitoring of Afghan border

Daily Times, July 22, 2010.

Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani emphasised the need for joint monitoring of the Pak-Afghan border and increased sharing of information between Pakistan and NATO-ISAF forces on cross-border movement of terrorists. The PM expressed these views with Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the NATO secretary general, who called on him at the Prime Minister's Secretariat.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\22\story_22-7-2010_pg1_1)

Krishna concedes Pillai's ISI statement was 'ill-timed'

Daily Times, July 22, 2010.

After Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh 'admonished' Home Secretary GK Pillai for his statement against the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) that many believe put the India-Pakistan talks in jeopardy, External Affairs Minister SM Krishna admitted that the "remarks were ill-timed". Krishna said Pillai "would have been wiser" if he had not commented on the issue when he was in Islamabad. "When the two foreign ministers met after the Mumbai attacks, there was a special significance of the meeting. Everyone privy to whatever was happening in the government of India ought to have known that the right kind of atmosphere from India's side should have been created for the talks to go in a normal manner, but unfortunately this episode happened," he said.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\22\story_22-7-2010_pg1_5)

US concerned over ISI-Taliban link

Deccan Herald, July 22, 2010.

Holbrooke added that the US perceived the Lashkar-e-Toiba dangerous for the international community as the Taliban and al-Qaeda are. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and External Affairs Minister S M Krishna met on the sidelines of an international conference on Afghanistan in Kabul. Holbrooke, who was present during the Clinton-Krishna meet, told journalists here that America's improving relations with India and Pakistan were in the interests of the two South Asian countries as Washington wanted better ties between New Delhi and Islamabad. "The truth is that the US has better relations with India and Pakistan than the two countries have with each other. It's in the interest of both the countries," he said.

(Source: <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/83237/us-concerned-over-isi-taliban.html>)

LeT as dangerous as Taliban, Al-Qaeda: Holbrooke

Deccan Herald, July 22, 2010

When we talk about major terrorist groups we consider it as dangerous as other groups," Holbrooke said when suggested that the US did not appear to be keen on

tackling LeT on the same lines as Taliban and Al Qaeda. "We understand, as government, that it (LeT) is a threat and we talk about it all the time with Pakistani military (asking them) to deny their territory to this organisation," said Holbrooke, who arrived here yesterday after a visit to Islamabad. The Special Envoy said, "We all know what it (LeT) did and what they want to do." He identified LeT as a part of terror conglomerate comprising Afghan Taliban, Pakistani Taliban and Haqqani network. "Taliban has almost become a brand," he observed. "Under intense pressure these groups seem to be growing closer to each other. Two or three years ago, they were more distinct than now," Holbrooke said. He said these groups work more closely and help each other as their long-term objective is similar – to hurt western ideologies and create "maximum problems between India and Pakistan.

(Source: <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/83032/let-dangerous-taliban-al-qaeda.html>)

Pak needs to do much more against Haqqani network for Afghan peace: Holbrooke

News Track India, July 24, 2010.

US Special Envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, has said that while Islamabad is cooperating with the US-backed Afghan peace efforts, it was not to the extent sought by Washington. Holbrooke did highlight several areas of progress, including a greater Pakistani military push against militants on its soil, but the Al-Qaida-allied Haqqani network remained a "real problem". "Without Pakistan's participation, this (Afghan) war could go on indefinitely. There's much more cooperation at every level, but I don't want to mislead you... it (cooperation) is not yet where we hope it will be," The Daily Times quoted Holbrooke, as saying.

(Source: <http://newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/170589>)

India agrees to allow Pak inspection of J-K hydropower plants

News Track India, July 24, 2010.

India has agreed to allow Pakistan to inspect the two under-construction hydropower plants on the Indus river in Jammu and Kashmir to quell Islamabad's concerns over their designs. The visit to the Nimmo-Bazgo and Chutak hydropower plants will take place in August. The decision was taken in the periodic talks between the Indus Water Commissioners of the two countries being held in Lahore. Earlier, in May, Pakistan had demanded that its officials be allowed to visit the plants. During the meeting, Pakistan also raised the issue of polluted water inflows from India. Meanwhile, India, Commissioner Aranga Nathan reassured his Pakistani counterpart Jamaat Ali Shah that he would take up the issue with the department concerned in India, The Dawn reports. The two teams also discussed proposals to make the commission more effective to allay a perception that the water pact is losing its utility.

(Source: <http://newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/170717>)

Only politics of reconciliation can resolve issues: PM

Daily Times, July 26, 2010.

Politics of reconciliation is the only way the country can come out of the current crises, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani said. Talking to reporters at the Prime Minister's House, Gilani said all political parties and institutions had to join hands to bring the country out of the crises. The prime minister said the PPP-led government was following its manifesto and fulfilling its promises to the masses. He said the PPP wanted to go forward taking all parties and the institutions along with it, adding that only the civilian government could tackle the challenges facing the country.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\26\story_26-7-2010_pg1_1)

Karzai-Kayani dialogue 'a good thing': Holbrooke

Daily Times, July 26, 2010.

Dialogue between Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Chief of Army Staff Ashfaq Kayani was "a good thing" for US objectives in the region, US envoy Richard Holbrooke said. The US special envoy brushed aside concerns that Karzai was seeking to cut a separate deal with Islamabad in anticipation of a US withdrawal. He said a meeting in late May between Karzai and General Kayani was "a good thing, not a bad thing." "As long as they had no dialogue, you couldn't get anywhere," Holbrooke said. "Now, in the Kayani-Karzai meeting, the American commanding general of ISAF, NATO was there, then General Stanley McChrystal. I'm sure General Petraeus (the current US commander) will continue to play the same role, if not more so. And I have talked to David (Petraeus) about that," he said.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\26\story_26-7-2010_pg1_3)

PML-N thrashed in Sargodha by-polls, fails to re-win seat

Daily Times, July 27, 2010

In what appeared to be an indication of the party's dwindling popularity in the province, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was inflicted a crushing defeat in July 26, 2010 by-polls in PP-34 Sargodha constituency, one of PML-N's home battlegrounds. According to a private TV channel, the PML-N lost its seat to an independent candidate, Ijaz Kahlon. Quoting unofficial results, the channel reported that Kahlon received 15,967 votes as opposed to his rival, who got 14,717 votes. The PML-Quaid and the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) backed the independent candidate in the by-polls. After Kahlon was declared the winner, police raided his place and arrested three people on charges of aerial firing. The court had rendered the seat vacant after PML-N's MPA Chaudhry Rizwan Gul was declared ineligible after his degree was proved to be fake. Later, the Election Commission had announced by-polls in the constituency, the channel reported.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\27\story_27-7-2010_pg1_5)

US military aid to Pakistan could be used against India: Antony

Daily Times, July 27, 2010

India said that the scale of US military assistance to Pakistan was “disproportionate” to Islamabad’s needs and warned it could be used to target them. Defence Minister AK Antony said he had raised New Delhi’s concerns during talks last week with visiting US National Security Adviser James Jones and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen. “We feel that there is every possibility of diverting this sophisticated equipment against India,” he was quoted as saying at the Press Trust of India. India has previously protested the proposed delivery of unmanned US drones to Pakistan.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\27\story_27-7-2010_pg1_10)

AJK PM resigns, blames federal govt

Daily Times, July 27, 2010

Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan tendered his resignation, the third AJK PM to do so since 2006. The AJK president has accepted the resignation and summoned the AJK Legislative Assembly’s session on July 29 to elect a new leader of the House. Haider announced his resignation ahead of the crucial vote on a no-confidence motion that was moved by Muslim Conference (MC) President Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, who himself is a contender for the top slot. Before resigning, Haider accused the federal government of “being part of a conspiracy” to oust him. “I refused to bow before their illegal orders and raised a voice for the rights of the people of AJK on a number of issues, especially the Mangla Dam,” he said. Haider was elected PM on October 22, 2009. He succeeded Sardar Yaqoob Khan (January 2009 to October 2009) and Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan (July 2006 to January 2009).

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\27\story_27-7-2010_pg1_6)

Elements in Pakistan provoking J&K protests: Maken

The Hindu, July 28, 2010.

The Government today said it was aware of anti-India elements based in Pakistan provoking the people of Jammu and Kashmir with the support of certain sections of secessionist groups based in the state. Minister of State for Home Ajay Maken informed the Rajya Sabha that these anti-India elements were provoking people on various pretexts to arouse public sentiments. “The statements of All Party Hurriyat Conference (Abbas) and All Party Hurriyat Conference (Geelani) in the media and LeT across the border in this regard are documented,” he said. Mr. Maken said the average annual quantum of arms and ammunition and money coming to Kashmir cannot be quantified but during 2009, Rs. 76,84,600 in cash and cheques worth Rs. 50,000 had been seized, which was being carried through hawala channels and cases have been registered.

(Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article538497.ece>)

US Congress rejects pullout of troops from Pakistan

Dawn, July 29, 2010

The US Congress has overwhelmingly rejected a resolution demanding the withdrawal of US troops from Pakistan. The measure, moved in the House of Representatives, was sponsored by two anti-war Republican congressmen – Dennis Kucinich (Ohio) and Ron Paul (Texas) – and was in reaction to reports that the US was running a secret war in Pakistan. The lawmakers argued that any war effort not approved by Congress violated the War Powers Act. It was voted down 38-372. Thirty-two Democrats and six Republicans voted for the measure. Four congressmen voted “present”, three Democrats and one Republican. The vote took place days after newspapers published leaked documents suggesting that Pakistani intelligence had cooperated with extremist groups while simultaneously accepting US aid to fight terror.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/us-congress-rejects-pullout-of-troops-from-pakistan-970>)

Obama Reviews Afghanistan-Pakistan Situation

RTT News, July 30, 2010

U.S. President Barack Obama reviewed the current situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, along with the recently-held U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue in Islamabad, with his top national security aides, the White House said later in the day. This was the seventh regular meeting that Obama convened on Afghanistan and Pakistan. “The meeting began with an update on the situation in Afghanistan where they discussed the success of the recent Kabul conference, including the absence of significant security disruptions, and the steps that were announced to move forward on strengthening governance and pursuing reintegration.

(Source: <http://www.rttnews.com/Content/Policy.aspx?Id=1376668&SM=1>)

Cameron sparks ‘terror’ row with Pakistan

Daily Times, July 30, 2010

Pakistan’s ambassador to Britain accused Cameron of “damaging the prospects of regional peace”, while Foreign Office spokesman Abdul Basit in Islamabad said Pakistan was saddened by the comments. Cameron once again defended his comments. “I think it’s important, as I say, to speak frankly about these things to countries that are your friends,” Cameron said in an interview with British broadcasters, adding that he would “do so in the future” as well. Asked whether he regretted damaging relations with Pakistan ahead of the visit of President Asif Ali Zardari to Britain next week, he said, “I don’t accept that they have been damaged... I look forward to discussing these and other issues (with Zardari).

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\30\story_30-7-2010_pg1_11)

Water in Mangla Dam at dangerous level

Daily Times, July 30, 2010

Scores of houses were flooded after water levels in the Mangla Dam lake rose to dangerous levels. The water level in Mangla dam is rising as a result of floods in the rivers that fall into the reservoir due to continued torrential rains in catchment areas. Boher Colony, Kunjri Colony, Khoo Colony and the Kharak village near Mirpur city have been affected by the water from the lake. The district administration has warned the residents of these areas to shift to safer places. The water level in the dam reached the highest level of 1,202 feet.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\30\story_30-7-2010_pg1_3)

Pakistanis See India as Biggest Threat: Survey

Wall Street Journal, July 30, 2010

While India and the rest of the world frets about Pakistan-based Taliban militants, people in Pakistan are significantly less concerned about the extremists seizing power than a year ago, new research has found. Indeed, most Pakistanis sampled (53%) said they saw India as the biggest threat to the country versus 23% for the Taliban and 3% for al Qaeda. In the poll, released yesterday by the Pew Research Center in Washington D.C., 51% of respondents said they were very worried about extremists taking over the country, down from 69% a year ago. The survey found 54% of respondents felt the Taliban posed a serious threat to the country compared with 73% a year ago. As for al Qaeda, 38% of people saw them as a serious threat versus 61% a year ago.

(Source: <http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2010/07/30/pakistanis-see-india-as-biggest-threat-survey/>)

India should talk with Pakistan over Kashmir: Haqqani

Daily Times, July 30, 2010

Pakistani Ambassador to the US Hussain Haqqani renewed Pakistan's support for the Kashmiris' right to self-determination and asked India to enter into result-oriented talks with Islamabad towards resolution of the decades-old Kashmir conflict.

"For us the most important thing is the rights of the Kashmiri people - we are committed to finding a resolution to the Kashmir dispute," Haqqani said at an international conference at the Capitol Hill, the seat of the US Congress. Pakistan, he said, was serious about resolving the longstanding conflict and expects reciprocity from New Delhi, as Islamabad wanted good relations with its eastern nuclear-armed neighbour.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\07\30\story_30-7-2010_pg7_12)

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka opposition leader says government taking steps to resolve ethnic issue

Colombo Page, July 21, 2010.

Sri Lanka's opposition leader Ranil Wickremasinghe has said that the government was taking steps to resolve the ethnic issue in both the northern and eastern provinces and has expressed concern at the plight of the internally displaced Tamils and their rehabilitation, an Indian media report said. Indian English daily The Hindu reported that Wickremasinghe responding to journalists in Chennai has said that the issue of the advisory panel appointed by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon should be debated in parliament. The opposition leader has told the reporters that opposition parties in Sri Lanka are recommending an Executive Prime Minister post over the Executive President.

(Source: http://www.colombopage.com/archive_10B/Jul21_1279688611JR.php)

PM, Karunanidhi's letters on Sri Lankan Tamils' plight a drama

Sify News, July 22, 2010.

The exchange of letters between Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the problems faced by Sri Lankan Tamils is a 'drama turning out to be a mega serial,' AIADMK chief J.Jayalalithaa said. 'On the 3rd of July, he (Karunanidhi) penned a letter to the prime minister asking him to do something to save the Tamils of Sri Lanka. On the 9th of July, the prime minister sent a reply to Karunanidhi assuring him that the centre was ready to do whatever was necessary to resolve the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka,' she said, according to a party statement here. Citing Karunanidhi's letter to the prime minister last week, Jayalalithaa termed it as an 'open admission that the Sri Lankan Tamils are still in a state of acute distress'.

(Source: <http://sify.com/news/pm-karunanidhi-s-letters-on-sri-lankan-tamils-plaint-a-drama-news-national-khwqadiabjg.html>)

Vietnam to establish diplomatic mission in Sri Lanka

Colombo Page, July 25, 2010.

Vietnam is to establish a resident diplomatic mission in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo early next year, government media reported today. Dao Viet Trung, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Viet Nam has expressed his country's readiness to reopen a mission in Colombo to his Sri Lankan counterpart, Deputy Minister of External Affairs Geethanjana Gunawardena in Hanoi recently. Deputy Minister Gunawardena was in Hanoi leading the Sri Lankan delegation to the 17th Session of the ASEAN Regional Forum last week.

(Source: http://www.colombopage.com/archive_10B/Jul25_1280073525CH.php)

US Backs UN Panel on Sri Lanka; Robert Blake Says

Nidahasa, July 25, 2010.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert Blake,

ending a one-day official visit to Sri Lanka, said United States also backs the United Nations panel on Sri Lanka. "Sri Lanka has a unique opportunity to forge a lasting peace and prosperity after decades of war," Blake said. "It is only an advisory panel to U.N. Secretary General and it is not investigatory or judicial role at any time. U.N. has many experience with many parts of the world and that experience can help Sri Lanka," he added.

(Source: <http://news.nidahasa.com/news.php?go=fullnews&newsid=1059>)

British Tamils seek boycott of defiant Sri Lanka

Tamil Net, July 25, 2010.

British Prime Minister David Cameron be handed a memorandum on behalf of UK's Tamil community urging his government to support an international probe into war crimes in Sri Lanka, and to pressure the Colombo government to resettle in their homes tens of thousands of Tamils still languishing in refugee camps, and allow international access to thousands held in its prisoner-of-war camps. The UK is also being urged to boycott Sri Lanka till Colombo complies with international law. The handover follows a march and 'midnight vigil' outside 10 Downing Street staged Friday night by thousands of supporters of the campaign who marked the anniversary of the 1983 'Black July' anti-Tamil pogrom.

(Source: <http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=32289>)

A senior Indian official to visit Sri Lanka to assess progress of resettlement

Colombo Page, July 27, 2010.

A senior official of India's Ministry of External Affairs will visit Sri Lanka to assess the progress of the resettlement and rehabilitation process of Tamils in Sri Lanka's Northern and Eastern Province, an Indian media report said. India's English daily The Hindu reported that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in a letter has informed the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi of the measure to send the Ministry official to Sri Lanka. In the letter dated July 22, the Prime Minister has said that the Ministry official would India's High Commissioner in Sri Lanka and local authorities. "The move to send the official was a measure of our continuing interest and the importance that we attach to this issue," Prime Minister Singh has written to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister has written to the Prime Minister earlier urging the central government to do more to restore the lives of the displaced Tamil people in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.

(Source: http://www.colombopage.com/archive_10B/Jul27_1280208752CH.php)

Lanka to oppose Ban's re-election

Daily Mirror, July 28, 2010.

The Sri Lankan government is to oppose the re-election of Ban Ki-moon as the UN Secretary General and will also seek the support of several other countries for this

move, a senior government minister told Daily Mirror online on condition of anonymity. The cabinet minister said that Sri Lanka would seek the support of countries such as India, Russia, Brazil, China and various developing countries and launch campaigns in these countries soon, to oppose the reappointment of Mr. Ban to the post of UN Secretary General. "Sri Lanka will not vote him in after his latest decision to appoint his expert panel. Sri Lanka will also discourage other countries in the region from voting for him," the minister said. "The government will begin the campaigns soon after discussions with the respective governments," he added.

(Source: <http://www.dailymirror.lk/print/index.php/news/front-page-news/16908.html>)

Majority of Tamil diaspora backing government's efforts: Sri Lanka

The Hindu, July 30, 2010

The Sri Lanka government maintains that the Tamil diaspora is now divided into two groups and the majority is supporting its efforts towards improvement of the living standards of Tamils in the northern and eastern provinces. Government spokesman and Media and Information Minister Keheliya Rambukwella told a news conference here on Thursday that the group representing the Tamil diaspora, which was forced to fund the militant activities of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, was now willing to contribute to the welfare of the war-displaced civilians. The Minister was referring to an interview given to a local daily by Kumaran Pathmanathan alias KP, who succeeded V. Prabakaran as LTTE chief until he was taken into custody by the Sri Lankan security agencies in August last year.

(Source: <http://www.hindu.com/2010/07/30/stories/2010073061161300.htm>)

15 Sri Lankan fishermen apprehended by Indian Coast Guard: Three fishing boats seized

Asian Tribune, July 30, 2010.

Indian Coast Guard has arrested 15 Sri Lankan fishermen and apprehended three fishing boats on charges of illegal fishing in Indian waters. Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Veera' of Tuticorin station located at 80 nautical miles off south west coast of Kanyakumari. Commandant Udhal Singh, Coast Guard Station, Tuticorin, said the boats, which had been seized, were "Kumudumali", "Ramani" and "Pombi Kumar". The Coast Guard had increased its surveillance to thwart any such incident, Mr. Singh added. Interrogations revealed that the boats were engaged in fishing when apprehended and no suspicious documents had been found. The arrested persons were handed over to the local police.

(Source: <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/07/30/15-sri-lankan-fishermen-apprehended-indian-coast-guardthree-fishing-boats-seized>)