

# THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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## I. COUNTRY REVIEW

### A. SOUTH ASIA

#### SRI LANKA

- **President Mahinda Rajapaksa addresses the UN General Assembly, calls for a rethinking on the international humanitarian laws governing the fight against terrorism; Rajapaksa holds bilateral talks with Iran, Turkey, Qatar, Germany and Norway; Sri Lanka plans its first nuclear power plant by 2030; India-Sri Lanka bilateral trade is on the rise; India, Sri Lanka discuss jointly marketing coir products**

President Mahinda Rajapaksa and his delegation visited New York to attend the 65th session of UN General Assembly summit. Rajapaksa addressed the UN General Assembly on September 23 where he called for a rethinking on the international humanitarian laws governing the fight against terrorism.<sup>1</sup> On the sideline of the UN Summit meeting, he held talks with his Iranian counterpart President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Rajapaksa also held bilateral talks with Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, President of Turkey Abdullah Gul, as well as Chancellor of Germany.<sup>2</sup> As outcomes of bilateral discussions, the Emir of Qatar agreed to support Sri Lanka's request for Observer Status in the Organization of Islamic Nation. He has also responded favourably to Rajapaksa's request to supply Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) to Sri Lanka for developmental needs and help in the development of tourism sector.<sup>3</sup> However, agenda of bilateral meeting between Turkish President Gul and President Rajapaksa included Turkish assistance to Sri Lanka in the construction and tourism sector as well as relaxation of taxes by Turkey on the import of tea from Sri Lanka.<sup>4</sup>

During his visit to the United Nations, President Rajapaksa also participated in the three day United Nations sessions on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sixth Annual Meeting of the Clinton Global Initiatives (CGI).<sup>5</sup> On the sideline of the sessions on MDGs, President and his delegation met Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and Norwegian Development

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<sup>1</sup> "President calls for rethink on fight against terrorism", *The Sunday Observer*, September 26, 2010 at <http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2010/09/26/fea003.asp>

<sup>2</sup>"MR's Address in UN Today", *Daily Mirror*, September 23, 2010 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/print/index.php/news/front-page-news/22267.html>

<sup>3</sup>"Qatar Backs SL Bid for Observer Status", *Daily Mirror*, September 22, 2010 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/print/index.php/news/front-page-news/22201.html>

<sup>4</sup> "Turkey to Assist Lanka in Construction Field", *Daily Mirror*, September 24, 2010 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/print/index.php/news/news/22393.html>

<sup>5</sup> "SL to be Developed on Buddhist Values" *Daily Mirror*, September 23, 2010 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/print/index.php/news/front-page-news/22268.html>

Minister Eric Solheim. During the meeting, Norway showed interest for investment in the social and economic sectors of Sri Lanka.<sup>6</sup>

Sri Lanka is planning to construct its first nuclear power plant of 1,000 MW by 2030 aimed at generating cheap electricity to draw large investments and boost its post-war economy. Sri Lanka's Secretary of the Ministry of Power and Energy M.M.C. Ferdinando stated, "We have received government clearance to set up a nuclear power plant of 1,000 MW."<sup>7</sup>

With regards to India-Sri Lanka economic ties, trade between both the countries has increased significantly following the implementation of Free Trade Agreement. Reports noted that during the first seven months of 2010, Sri Lanka's exports to India have increased by 45 % and India's exports to Sri Lanka by 41%.<sup>8</sup>

In other developments, Coir Board of India Chairman V.S. Vijayaraghavan and other officials met with a 19-member official delegation headed by the Sri Lankan Minister of Sports, Youth Affairs and Rural Industries and Rural Development Udalamatta Gamage at the Coir House in India and sought the support of the Sri Lankan Government to evolve a joint marketing strategy of collective bargaining in the growing global market for coir and coir products. The two countries combine account for 80 per cent of the total world production of coir.<sup>9</sup>

## MALDIVES

- **Maldives Vice President attends UNGA summit at New York; Maldives and the United States sign "Acquisition and Cross Service Agreement"; Costa Rica and Maldives establish diplomatic ties**

Maldives Vice President Dr. Mohamed Waheed attended 65<sup>th</sup> Session of UNGA and UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Summit in New York.<sup>10</sup> During his visit to New York, Dr. Waheed met President of Hungary Pal Schmitt, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme Helen Clark and

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<sup>6</sup> "Sri Lanka President Discusses Northeast Development with Norwegian leader", *ColomboPage News Desk*, September 22, 2010 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_10B/Sep22\\_1285164774CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_10B/Sep22_1285164774CH.php)

<sup>7</sup> "Sri Lanka to Build 1-GW Nuclear Power Plant by 2030", *Reuters*, September 20, 2010 at <http://in.reuters.com/article/idINSGE68J0E620100920>

<sup>8</sup> Significant Increase in Trade between India and Sri Lanka, *ColomboPage News Desk*, September 24, 2010 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_10B/Sep24\\_1285305297CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_10B/Sep24_1285305297CH.php)

<sup>9</sup> "India, Sri Lanka to Jointly Market Coir Products", *Daily Mirror*, September 20, 2010 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/print/index.php/business/127-local/21882.html>

<sup>10</sup> "Come up with Targeted Support for Small Island States, Maldives tells UN Summit", *Asian Tribune*, September 23, 2010 at <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/09/23/come-targeted-support-small-island-states-maldives-tells-un-summit>.

Executive Director of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Yury Fedotov.<sup>11</sup>

Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) Vice Chief, Brigadier General Farhath Shareef and US Pacific Command's Logistics and Engineering Director Brigadier General Derek K Williams signed the "Acquisition and Cross Service Agreement" at Bandos Island Resort. According to the agreement, both the US command and the Maldives armed forces will assist each other in joint military exercises.<sup>12</sup>

In other developments, Maldives and Costa Rica established diplomatic ties on September 21.<sup>13</sup>

## B. EAST ASIA

### JAPAN

- **Reports: Japan plans to increase the size of the Ground Self-Defense Force by 13,000 members; Japan and China remain at loggerheads over a row involving a Chinese fishing boat and Japan Coast Guard vessels; Prime Minister Kan makes pitch for Japan's permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council**

Reports noted that Japan's Defense Ministry is considering an increase in the size of the Ground Self-Defense Force by 13,000 members. According to Defense Ministry and the Self-Defense Force sources, this is to be undertaken in order to improve its ability to deal with the fluid security situation in East Asia, international terrorism and disasters.<sup>14</sup>

On the regional front, Japan and China remained at loggerheads over a row sparked by recent collisions involving a Chinese fishing boat and Japan Coast Guard vessels off the disputed Senkaku Islands.<sup>15</sup> In further developments, Beijing effectively rejected Japan's call for high-level talks to address rising bilateral tensions in the wake of a ship collision earlier this month near the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea. "Unless the Japanese side corrects mistakes and releases the Chinese captain unconditionally, it is unavoidable that

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<sup>11</sup> "Vice President meets UNDP Administrator", *Miadhu*, September 27, 2010 at <http://www.miadhu.com/2010/09/local-news/vice-president-meets-undp-administrator/>; "Vice President Meets the President of Hungary", *Miadhu*, September 24, 2010 at <http://www.miadhu.com/2010/09/local-news/vice-president-meets-the-president-of-hungary/>

<sup>12</sup> "US Pacific Command, MNDF Sign Military Assistance Agreement", *Haveeru Online*, September 22, 2010 at <http://www.haveeru.com.mv/english/details/32426>

<sup>13</sup> "Costa Rica, Maldives set diplomatic ties", *FOCUS News Agency*, September 22, 2010 at <http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n230927>.

<sup>14</sup> "Defense Ministry eyes boosting GSDF by 13,000" *Japan Times*, September 21, 2010 at <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20100921a2.html>

<sup>15</sup> "5TH LD: Japan, China remain at loggerheads over detention of Chinese skipper+" *Associated Press*, September 21, 2010 at [http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9IC9PNG0&show\\_article=1](http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9IC9PNG0&show_article=1)

bilateral relations will deteriorate further," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said in a statement.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, President Obama and Southeast Asian leaders sent China a firm message over the territorial disputes. They called for freedom of navigation in seas that China claims as its own. Meanwhile, Obama pledged to play a strong role in regional affairs.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile Prime Minister Kan made Tokyo's pitch for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council. He said that the non-nuclear country which has suffered the devastation of atomic bombings deserves a seat on the council in the 21st century. In his speech to the general debate session of the U.N. General Assembly, Kan expressed Japan's resolve to play a more responsible role for the peace and security of the international community.<sup>18</sup>

## TAIWAN

- **Chinese PM hints at reducing the number of its missiles targeting Taiwan; Taiwan welcomes the statement**

According to Taipei-based media reports, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao has suggested that mainland missiles pointing at Taiwan could one day be removed. Reports noted that when asked about withdrawing Chinese missiles targeting Taiwan, Wen said, "I believe the issue you mention will eventually be realized." Wen made these remarks in New York while meeting with Chinese-language media.<sup>19</sup>

It is estimated that the Chinese military has more than 1,600 missiles aimed at the island. But recent reports in Taiwanese media have noted that the People's Liberation Army may boost the number of short-range ballistic and cruise missiles facing Taiwan to 1,960 before end of 2010.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, Taiwan has welcomed the Chinese Prime Minister's statement. Talking to reporters in capital Taipei on Friday, Taiwan's Prime Minister Wu

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<sup>16</sup> "5TH LD: China rejects Japan's call for high-level talks+", *Japan Today*, September 22, 2010 at <http://www.japantoday.com/category/politics/view/china-rejects-japans-call-for-high-level-talks>

<sup>17</sup> "Obama, ASEAN leaders send China message over disputed territories" *The Japan Times*, September 26, 2010 at <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20100926a7.html>

<sup>18</sup> "LEAD: Kan makes Japan's pitch for U.N. Security Council seat+" *Associated Press*, September 24, 2010 at [http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9IEHB480&show\\_article=1](http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9IEHB480&show_article=1)

<sup>19</sup> China hints missiles targeting Taiwan 'could be axed', AFP, 24 September 2010, at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5idermpTBQWBWi0fO36xwRhT98MQg>

<sup>20</sup> "Taiwan welcomes Wen's remarks on missiles", *The China Post*, September 25, 2010 at <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/china-taiwan-relations/2010/09/25/273854/Taiwan-welcomes.htm>

Den-yih described his Chinese counterpart's gesture as "a good thing and a sign of kindness," but wanted to begin removal of the missiles as soon as possible.<sup>21</sup>

## SOUTHEAST ASIA

- **Prime Ministers of Thailand and Cambodia meet in New York on the sidelines of the ASEAN-US Summit; Malaysia and Brunei to strengthen bilateral relations further**

Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva and his Cambodian counterpart Hun Sen met on September 25 following the ASEAN-US summit hosted by US President Barack Obama. The meeting of the two Prime Ministers was significant as the bilateral relations between the two states are currently going through a turbulent phase over the Phreah Vihear dispute. During the meeting, while emphasizing on working out strategies through existing mechanisms (e.g., increased people to people exchange-media, academics and civil groups) to strengthen their relationship, both the leaders agreed that there would be no movement/deployment of forces on the borders. Noting that swift containment or resolution of conflicts on the border was necessary, the leaders also agreed to continue exchanging information and keeping communication channels open and meet at various venues of ASEAN leaders' meeting on a regular basis.<sup>22</sup>

During the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Leaders' Consultation between Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and the Sultan of Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah held at Seri Perdana (Malaysia) on September 21, both the countries emphasized on the tremendous potentiality in strengthening the bilateral ties beyond the Commercial Arrangement Area (CAA) as well as concerning the states of Sabah and Sarawak. Their joint statement also mentioned about the possibility of the neighbouring states' joining hands with a third country to explore and exploit oil and gas, and cooperate in the development of down stream industries. While taking note of the progress of the of discussions of the Joint Malaysia-Brunei Darussalam Land Boundary Technical Committee, the two leaders urged the committee to conclude Terms of Reference and MoU on the Joint Demarcation and Survey of the Land Boundary by the end of 2010. The two leaders agreed on several other matters as well, including the intensification of bilateral discussion on ways and measures to enhance cross-border trade and flow of goods between the two states, etc. and looked forward to the launching of the Frequent

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<sup>21</sup> "Taiwan Welcomes Chinese Move To Remove Missiles Facing It", *RTT News*, 24 September 2010, at <http://www.rttnews.com/Content/GeneralNews.aspx?Id=1428094&SM=1>

<sup>22</sup> "PM meets Hun Sen in New York", *The Bangkok Post*, September 25, 2010, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/198147/pm-meets-hun-sen-in-new-york>

Travelers' Facility (FTF) which is expected to facilitate people-to-people contact between the two countries.<sup>23</sup>

## C. WEST ASIA

### IRAN

- **10 killed and dozens injured in a bomb blast at Mahabad in North-West Iran; US and other western nations stage walkout during Ahmadinejad's remarks on 9/11; United States denounces Ahmadinejad's 9/11 remarks by calling it "abhorrent and delusional"; Iranian speaker called Obama an international villain**

A powerful bomb blast took place near a military parade in the northwestern Iranian city of Mahabad, killing about 10 people and injuring 20 people. The incident occurred near the place where a military parade was being held. West Azarbaijan Governor Vahid Jalalzadeh told that all the victims were women and children. He also added that four of the injured are in critical condition. The parade was held to mark the Sacred Defense Week. However, none of the military personnel were killed in the terror attack, he added.<sup>24</sup>

The US and other western delegations at the 65th UN General Assembly staged walkout in protest against the remarks of the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on 9/11, 2001 attacks. In speech at UNGA summit, Ahmadinejad had said that some saw the 11 September attacks on the US as part of a US conspiracy to protect Israel. The United States denounced his remarks on the 2001 attacks, which killed nearly 3,000 people, as 'abhorrent and delusional.'<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile in a continued war of words between Iran and the United States, Iran's parliament speaker Ali Larijani called US President Barack Obama an 'international villain' since Obama had said that the United States supports the Iranian people's democratic aspirations. Larijani also added that "the Americans are displaying an act that deserves an international evilness medal... Obama

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<sup>23</sup> "Malaysia, Brunei agree There is Good Potential for Future Cooperation", *Bernamea.com*, September 21, 2010 at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsgeneral.php?id=529346>

<sup>24</sup> "Blast hits city in northwest Iran, 10 killed," *Tehran Times*, September 23, 2010, at [http://www.tehrantimes.com/index\\_View.asp?code=227187](http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=227187)

<sup>25</sup> "Ahmadinejad UN speech sparks walk-outs," *BBC News*, September 23, 2010, at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-11402101?print=true>

should know that we do not need his message, what we need is to be able to trust the words he utters.”<sup>26</sup>

## IRAQ

### • Iraqiya party refused to participate any government led by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki

The Iyad Allawi’s Iraqiya faction which won Iraq’s general election has refused to participate in any new government led by current Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki. The decision by Iraqiya faction, which narrowly defeated Maliki’s grouping in the polls, further dampened hopes of formation of a new administration. Iraqiya faction believes that the current type of government headed by Maliki cannot be repeated. Iraqiya which is broadly a secular coalition which had won 91 seats out of the 325-member parliament in the March 7 polls which is only two more than Maliki’s State of Law Alliance, a Shiite grouping. Recently, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had suggested during talks with her Iraqi counterpart Hoshiyar Zebari in New York that Iraq needed to form a government and avoid creating a security vacuum.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> “Obama is an ‘international villain’: Iranian speaker,” *Khaleej Times*, September 25, 2010, at [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/September/middleeast\\_September515.xml&section=middleeast](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/September/middleeast_September515.xml&section=middleeast)

<sup>27</sup> “Iraq election winner rules out working with PM,” *Khaleej Times*, September 25, 2010, at [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/September/middleeast\\_September508.xml&section=middleeast](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/September/middleeast_September508.xml&section=middleeast)