

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEW

A. SOUTH ASIA

BHUTAN

(Sep. 20-Oct. 3, 2010)

- **Bhutan puts on hold its order on sending back non-nationals from its border areas; China begins construction of a railway line from Lhasa to Xigaze, bordering India, Bhutan and Nepal; Sashastra Seema Bal; National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) is re-establishing bases in Southern Bhutan**

The order issued by Regional Trade and Industry Office of Bhutan's Ministry of Economic Affairs has been put on hold after Indian embassy took up the issues with Bhutan government. Earlier, Bhutan government had issued orders on August 24, 2010, directing all "trading sectors" in the border districts to "send back all the non-nationals" employed by them "out of the country" by September 30, 2010.¹

Meanwhile, China has started construction work on a strategic rail network to connect the Tibetan capital of Lhasa with the Tibet's second largest city of Xigaze which borders India, Bhutan and Nepal. According to sources, China plans to build a railway line from Xigaze to Chumbi Valley as well.²

Reports noted that National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) militants are re-establishing their bases in southern Bhutan after being flushed out from Bangladesh.³

SRI LANKA

- **IMF completes the fourth review of the Sri Lanka Stand-by Arrangement (SBA); Sri Lanka's inflation rate rose to 5.8 per cent; Government report: 89,000 women were widowed due to war; ICJ questions the continued state of emergency in Sri Lanka; IMBL meeting held between India and Sri Lanka; Sri Lanka initiates dialogue with India on Koodan Kulam nuclear power plant; Bilateral talks with**

¹ "Bhutan puts controversial orders on foreigners on hold," *DNA India*, October 1, 2010, http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_bhutan-puts-controversial-orders-on-foreigners-on-hold_1446168

² "Beijing begins extending rail to Nepal boundary," *Times of India*, September 27, 2010, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Beijing-begins-extending-rail-to-Nepal-boundary/articleshow/6633156.cms>

³ "Bodo separatists planning terror strikes in Assam: police," *Sify News*, September 21, 2010, <http://sify.com/news/bodo-separatists-planning-terror-strikes-in-assam-police-news-national-kjut4cajbdc.html>

Hungary, Portugal and Malaysia; Japanese delegation: Sri Lanka has the capability to attract foreign investment

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has successfully completed the fourth review of the Sri Lanka Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) and disbursed the fifth tranche to the value of SDR 137.8 million (approximately US \$ 212.5 million) on September 24. With this disbursement, a total of US \$ 1,275 million has been received thus far by Sri Lanka on account of the SBA facility that was approved in July 2009.⁴

Reports noted that Sri Lanka's inflation rate, on a year-on-year basis, rose to 5.8 percent in September 2010 for the second month in a row as consumer spending in the country has increased with rising prices.⁵ According to Sri Lanka's Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs report, about 89,000 females were widowed due to the war and had no means of income to support them and their family.⁶

According to the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Sri Lanka has failed to adhere to international law in detaining suspected LTTE cadres. It suggested Sri Lanka's donors and the UN to urge Colombo to improve its human rights situation. It also questions the reasons for continuing the state of emergency. The ICJ however has recognised the progress made in terms of releasing displaced people from camps and in releasing 565 former child soldiers after rehabilitation.⁷

The routine biannual International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) meeting between Sri Lanka and India held on board INS Kurki on September 29. The Navies of Sri Lanka and India had extensive discussion on the issue of strengthening the maritime security in the Palk Strait with a view to stop human smuggling, drug trafficking and other illegal activities.⁸

⁴ "IMF Releases 5th Tranche of \$ 212.5 m", *Daily Mirror*, September 27, 2010 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/print/index.php/business/127-local/22566.html>

⁵ "Sri Lanka Inflation Rises in September", *Colombo Page*, September 30, 2010 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_10B/Sep30_1285856956CH.php

⁶ "Conflict Leaves 89,000 Widows", *Daily Mirror*, September 30, 2010 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/print/index.php/news/front-page-news/22915.html>

⁷ "ICJ Chastises Sri Lanka over LTTE Detainees", *The Island*, September 28, 2010 at http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=7759

⁸ "Sri Lanka – India Discuss Strengthening Maritime Security", *Sunday Observer*, September 30, 2010 at [http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2010/09/26/oostory.asp?sid=20100930_10&imid=SLNavy.jpg&dt=\[Septem ber%2030%202010\]](http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2010/09/26/oostory.asp?sid=20100930_10&imid=SLNavy.jpg&dt=[Septem ber%2030%202010]); "Indo-Lanka IMBL Meeting Today", *Daily News*, September 29, 2010 at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2010/09/29/news32.asp>

The Sri Lankan government initiated a dialogue with Indian authorities on the Koodan Kulam nuclear power plant that is being set up in Tamil Nadu.⁹ President Mahinda Rajapaksa held bilateral discussions with Hungarian President Pal Schmitt, Portugal Prime Minister Jose Socrates, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.¹⁰ President Rajapaksa requested Portugal PM Socrates to return Sri Lankan archeological finds which were brought to Portugal when the countries had relations in the past. The Portugal PM stated that necessary steps will be taken in this regard.¹¹

In other developments, according to a delegation of Japanese MPs who met Prime Minister D.M. Jayaratna at his official residence, Sri Lanka is at the forefront of developing countries which has the capability to attract foreign investment.¹²

MALDIVES

- **China surpasses UK and Italy in terms of number of tourists visiting Maldives; President Nasheed meets with German delegation to discuss a joint environmental project; UK opposes Maldives' seabed claim; Resolution to appoint a special rapporteur to promote and protect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association; President Nasheed holds meeting with a delegation from US Department of Justice; President Nasheed meets with Ambassador of Finland in New Delhi**

China is the highest contributor to the tourist arrivals to the Maldives as it covers 15.3 percent of the total the total tourists arrivals. According to Tourism Ministry of the Maldives' statistics, China has surpassed UK and Italy which contribute 14.9 per cent and 12.6 per cent respectively to the total tourists arrivals in Maldives. Tourist arrivals from Europe have decreased, the report added.¹³

⁹ "Safety Concerns over TN Nuclear Plant", *The Sunday Leader*, October 3, 2010 at <http://www.thesundayleader.lk/2010/10/03/safety-concerns-over-tn-nuclear-plant/>

¹⁰ "President meets Hungarian Leader", September 27, 2010 at <http://www.president.gov.lk/news.php?newsID=1147>; "Portugal to Help Develop SL Tourism", September 27, 2010 at <http://www.president.gov.lk/news.php?newsID=1146>; "Malaysia- Sri Lanka to Build Business Partnerships", September 27, 2010 at <http://www.president.gov.lk/news.php?newsID=1144>

¹¹ "Portugal to Help Develop SL Tourism", September 27, 2010 at <http://www.president.gov.lk/news.php?newsID=1146>

¹² "Foreign Investment: SL Ahead of Developing Countries", *Daily Mirror*, October 2, 2010 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/print/index.php/news/news/23105.html>

¹³ "China Dominates Maldives Tourism Market", *Haveeru Online*, September 28, 2010 at <http://www.haveeru.com.mv/english/details/32541>

President Mohamed Nasheed met with German Ambassador to the Maldives, Mr Jens Plötner and members of the appraisal mission of German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) to the Maldives on 28 September.¹⁴ They had discussions on the development of a joint environmental project.¹⁵

The UK Foreign Office expressed its “formal opposition” at the United Nations, to a Maldives’ claim for an expanded tract of the Indian Ocean seabed that may encroach upon British overseas territory.¹⁶

The Maldivian delegation in the 15th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva introduced a resolution to appoint a Special Rapportuer to promote and protect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association across the world on behalf of the Czech Republic, Indonesia, Lithuania, Mexico, Nigeria and the United States which was unanimously adopted by the Council.¹⁷

President Mohamed Nasheed met a delegation from the United States Department of Justice, who visited the Maldives to make a prison assessment on September 28.¹⁸ In other developments, President of the Maldives Mohamed Nasheed met with Ms Terhi Hakala, Ambassador of Finland accredited to the Maldives in New Delhi and discussed on issues like climate change, renewable energy and human rights.¹⁹

MYANMAR

(Sep. 20-Oct. 3, 2010)

- **Myanmar officials now allow Aung San Suu Kyi to vote in upcoming elections**

Myanmar officials said that detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi would be entitled to vote in the upcoming election, despite earlier statements that she would be barred from taking part. Raising confusion over the Nobel Peace

¹⁴“President Meets German Ambassador”, September, 28 2010 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/4/?ref=1,5,5351>

¹⁵ “Germany and Maldives Making Progress on Joint Environmental Project”, *Minivan News*, September 29, 2010 at <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief>

¹⁶ “UK Signals Opposition to Maldives’ Seabed Claim”, *Asian Tribune*, September 30, 2010 at <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/09/30/uk-signals-opposition-maldives%E2%80%99-seabed-claim>

¹⁷ “UN to Increase Protection of Right to Free Assembly”, *Minivan News*, October 3, 2010 at <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief>

¹⁸ “President Meets US Justice Department Team on Prison Assessment”, *Haama Daily*, September 28, 2010 at <http://www.haamadaily.com/englishdetails.php?news=19237>

¹⁹“President meets Finnish Ambassador”, October 3, 2010 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/4/?ref=1,5,5392>

laureate's rights and the interpretation of the electoral laws, an official told that Aung San Suu Kyi and her two live-in maids will get the right to vote.²⁰

B. EAST ASIA

CHINA

(SEP. 20-OCT. 3, 2010)

- **China's lunar probe successfully launched; The PLA and the US military are likely to hold talks; The PLA Navy and the Australian Navy conduct joint exercise; The Chinese and the Thai Special Forces to conduct joint drill; China honed its capabilities in recently concluded SCO exercise; China and Germany organize a seminar on military medical science; Military law be made a separate legal branch, demand experts; The UN and China jointly conduct seminar for senior commanders; The PLA allows foreign delegates to visit an armored division**

The control center at the Xichang satellite launch site in southwest China's Sichuan Province announced on Friday that China's lunar probe Chang'e-2 was successfully launched.²¹ Qian Lihua, Director of the Foreign Affairs Office with the China's National Defense Ministry said on Tuesday that the Chinese and US militaries would conduct dialogue and exchange in the future. He said that the talk would include an annual meeting on maritime military safety and consultations on defense. However, he did not specify the time. Lihua made these remarks during talks with Michael Schiffer, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia.²²

Reports noted that the "Luoyang" guided-missile frigate and the No. 725 towing ship of the North China Sea Fleet of the Navy of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the visiting "Warramunga" frigate of the Australian Navy conducted a joint military exercise in the Yellow Sea on September 23. The exercise mainly covered subjects like formation communication, joint maritime search and rescue, formation movement and artillery fire against sea targets.²³ However, China's Defence Ministry issued a statement on Tuesday that the

²⁰ "Myanmar officials now say Suu Kyi can vote in poll", *AFP*, September 23, 2010 at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jnogA112irGOVQfGrTMJe581XqwQ>

²¹ "China announces successful launch of 2nd lunar probe", *PLA Daily* (Online), October 2, 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-10/02/content_4307076.htm.

²² "China, U.S. militaries will have dialogue, conduct exchange: Chinese National Defense Ministry official", *PLA Daily* (Online), September 29, 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-09/29/content_4305501.htm.

²³ "Chinese and Australian navies hold joint military drill", *PLA Daily* (Online), September 25, 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-09/25/content_4303531.htm

Chinese and the Thai Special Forces would hold a joint anti-terrorism training from October 6 to 20, 2010. It said that the drill, code-named “Strike-2010”, would take place in Guilin of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.²⁴

In another development, China has tested its long-distance air attack capabilities in recently concluded SCO drill in Kazakhstan.²⁵ Chinese troops tested their mobility and transportation capabilities too in this exercise.²⁶ Meanwhile, the Second Military Medical University in Shanghai organized the 5th China-Germany Seminar on Military Medical Science on September 27. The seminar was jointly sponsored by the health departments of the Chinese and German militaries. The seminar, in which more than 100 delegates from Chinese and German military medical services participated, focused on the reform of medical service training and medical support for diversified military actions.²⁷

Reports noted that the well-known law experts and scholars of China have recently demanded that military law be made an independent branch of China’s legal system. They were participating in a Seminar on “Military Law and Socialist Law System with Chinese Characteristics”, held at the Legal Affairs Bureau of the Central Military Commission (CMC) on September 25.²⁸ The reports from this seminar suggested that in the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), a unified and tiered military legislation system had been established within the framework of China’s legislation system, making significant contributions to the building of the socialist law system with Chinese characteristics.²⁹

Recently, Peacekeeping Center of the Ministry of National Defense of the People’s Republic of China and the United Nations (UN) jointly organized a training course for the peacekeeping action senior commanders. The 19 middle and high ranking military officers from the Chinese People’s Liberation Army

²⁴ “China, Thailand to hold third joint anti-terrorism training”, *PLA Daily* (Online), September 29, 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-09/29/content_4305500.htm

²⁵ “China tries long-distance air attack mode in SCO drill”, *PLA Daily* (Online), September 21, 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-09/21/content_4301782.htm.

²⁶ “Chinese army hones transportation skills at SCO war games”, *PLA Daily* (Online), September 23, 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-09/23/content_4302611.htm.

²⁷ “China-Germany seminar on military medical science held”, *PLA Daily* (Online), September 28, 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-09/28/content_4305030.htm

²⁸ “Experts suggest independent status for military law”, *PLA Daily* (Online), September 27, 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-09/27/content_4304568.htm

²⁹ “Unified and tiered military legislation system established in China”, *PLA Daily* (Online), September 26, 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-09/26/content_4304042.htm

(PLA) attended the training course. This is the first UN peacekeeping action senior commanders training program that China has ever organized.³⁰

In other developments, in a bid to throw its transparent image, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) facilitated the visit of 22 correspondents from 18 overseas Chinese-language broadcasting institutions and international organizations to an armored division under the Beijing Military Area Command (MAC) of the PLA on September 26.³¹

JAPAN

- **Japanese PM Kan voices concern regarding China's defence spending and its maritime activities; Kan calls Beijing to free a remaining Japanese detainee; China plans to regularly deploy its fisheries patrol boats near the Senkaku Islands; Russia slams Japan's condemnation of Medvedev's planned visit to the Kuril Islands; Japan plans to completely withdraw from Iran's largest onshore oil field; Japan to have a close eye on political developments in North Korea**

Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan has voiced concern regarding China's defence spending and its maritime activities and urged it to act as a "responsible member of the international community". This statement comes at the backdrop of the gravest row in years, which has been sparked by a maritime incident near a Japanese-administered disputed island chain, called Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China which is claimed by both sides.³²

In further developments on the Japan-China row, Prime Minister Kan called on Beijing to free a remaining Japanese detainee who has not been released. This statement came after a few hours of the release of three Japanese nationals. China freed three of the four Japanese men held for allegedly filming a military site but warned Tokyo to stop making "irresponsible remarks" over the standoff.³³

In another development, China has decided to regularly deploy its fisheries patrol boats near the Senkaku Islands in an apparent reaction to the arrest of a Chinese fishing boat captain near the Japanese islets in September 2010. It was

³⁰ "China's first UN peacekeeping senior commanders training course held", *PLA Daily* (Online), September 21, 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-09/21/content_4302125.htm

³¹ "Foreign correspondents visit armored division", *PLA Daily* (Online), September 27, 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-09/27/content_4304605.htm

³² "Japan PM urges China to be responsible international actor" *Associate Foreign Press*, October 1, 2010 at <http://www.mysinchew.com/node/45786>

³³ "Japan demands China release detainee" *Associate Foreign Press*, October 1, 2010 at http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jDc8_THtstkJd4YXWWPAnvQ4Wvg?docId=CNNG.aa279310a25b273539f08ddd451da663.391

anticipated that the administration of President Hu Jintao would intensify such patrols as a retaliatory measure against the arrest and detention of the captain.³⁴ On the other hand, Russia slammed Japan for its condemnation of a plan for President Dmitry Medvedev's to visit the Kuril Islands by calling it unacceptable.³⁵

In other developments, reports suggest that Japanese government and oil developer Inpex Corp. plan to completely withdraw from Iran's largest onshore oil field project to avoid possible US sanctions.³⁶ Meanwhile Japan has also stated that it will keep a close watch on developments in the leadership in North Korea after its leader Kim Jong Il's third son was appointed as a military general.³⁷

NORTH & SOUTH KOREA

(Sep. 20-Oct. 3, 2010)

- **Korea, Japan, China meet held over regional cooperation; Red Cross officials of both the Koreas fail to reach a deal on reunions between families separated by the Korean War; Russia urges for denuclearization of Korean Peninsula; South Korea, US begin anti-submarine military exercises; North Korea condemns the US and South Korea for holding war games; North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's son, Kim Jong-un, becomes second in command in North Korea's powerful Central Military Commission**

Reports noted that officials from South Korea, Japan and China have met in Seoul to discuss setting up a permanent secretariat for closer trilateral cooperation. Earlier, in May this year, President Lee Myung-bak, then Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao had agreed during their summit to establish the cooperation secretariat in Korea next year to boost the three-way partnership over the next decade.³⁸ Meanwhile, Red Cross officials from North and South Korea met on September 24 in the North Korean

³⁴ "China to up patrols near Senkaku isles" *Yomiuri Shimbun*, September 28, 2010 at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T100927004334.htm>

³⁵ "Russia hits back at Japan over Pacific islands row" *Associate Foreign Press*, September 30, 2010 at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20100930/wl_asia_afp/russiajapandiplomacy_20100930160749

³⁶ "Japan to withdraw from Iran oil project: reports" *Associate Foreign Press*, September 30, 2010 at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jB9vwZSGW8QP6746N6SzLaH4-LYg?docId=CNG.164caa25dc9f9cd73359c4be468ff1ec.d1>

³⁷ "Japan to closely monitor developments in N. Korea leadership" *Associated Press*, September 28, 2010 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9IHBDDGO1&show_article=1

³⁸ "Korea, Japan, China meet over regional cooperation", *The Korea Herald*, September 27, 2010 at <http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20100927000673>

border town of Kaesong but failed to reach an agreement about restarting reunions between families separated by the Korean War.³⁹

Speaking to reporters in Beijing, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called for more efforts to contribute to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. He said that the topic was high on the agenda of talks between Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and his Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao. The two leaders praised Pyongyang's push for putting the stalled six-round talks on the North Korean nuclear problem back on track.⁴⁰

South Korea and the United States launched joint anti-submarine military exercises on September 27, drawing heavy criticism from North Korea. Condemning the exercises North Korean state-run Korean Central News Agency said, "The warmongers blustered that they would conduct intensive training of the strategy, technique and procedures for countering someone's submarine infiltration, openly disclosing that the joint naval military exercises are targeted against the DPRK,"⁴¹

North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's son, Kim Jong-un, became his second in command at the ruling Workers' Party's powerful Central Military Commission on Wednesday. Kim Jong-un, believed to have been born in 1983 or 1984 and given his first public title as an army general. He has also been made a Central Committee member at the first party conference in 30 years, state news agency KCNA said.⁴²

SOUTHEAST ASIA

- **Thailand announces its candidacy for a non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council for the term of 2017-2018; Thai PM to visit Burma to confirm bilateral cooperation; Malaysian PM attends Asem Summit in Brussels**

Thailand has formally announced its candidacy for the non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council for the term of 2017-2018. In his statement on this issue, Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya stated that by becoming a part of the group, Thailand aspires to play a greater role in ensuring

³⁹ "Koreas Fail to Reach Deal on Reunions", *The New York Times*, September 24, 2010 at http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/25/world/asia/25korea.html?_r=3

⁴⁰ "Russian FM urges denuclearization of Korean Peninsula", *The Voice of Russia*, September 27, 2010 at <http://english.ruvr.ru/2010/09/27/22541507.html>

⁴¹ "N. Korea rips the U.S. and S. Korea for holding war games", *CNN*, September 27, 2010 at <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/09/27/u.s..skorea.military.exercises/>

⁴² "North Korea leader's son seen set for succession" *Yahoo News*, September 28, 2010 at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20100928/ts_nm/us_korea_north

international peace and security. He further stated that Thailand is keen to join the international community in bridging the divides challenging to peace, security, prosperity, knowledge, and human dignity.⁴³

Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva is scheduled to visit Burma on a one-day visit on October 11 this year to discuss preparation of the border negotiation, connectivity and bridge building. He will also discuss with Burmese officials regarding the progress made on the road building projects at Kho Khareng financed by the Thai government. Myanmar's upcoming national election on November 9 and status of former opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, are also expected to become part of the discussion.⁴⁴

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak has arrived in Brussels on October 3⁴⁵ leading his country's delegation to the 8th Asia-Europe (Asem) Summit to be held on October 4 and 5. This being the first visit by a Malaysian Prime Minister to the EU, is expected to usher in a new phase in greater cooperation between Malaysia and the EU. During the summit, the leaders from Asia and the European states are to discuss a wide range of topics, including global economic governance, sustainable development, sea piracy, counter-terrorism, organized crime and human rights, UN reform, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, etc.⁴⁶

C. WEST ASIA

IRAN

• Iranian forces killed 30 Kurdish inside Iraq; An Iranian court ban Iran's two reformist political parties

General Abdolrasoul Mahmoudabadi of the Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards noted that the Iranian forces crossed into neighbouring Iraq and killed 30 fighters of "terrorists" group. Iran has promised earlier that it would target armed groups on Iraqi soil. But this is a rare case when Iran has actually admitted to an attack. Last week, an explosion in the town of Mahabad in Iran's northwestern Kurdish region had killed 12 women and children during a military parade. Iran

⁴³ "Thailand seeks UNSC seat", *The Bangkok Post*, September 30, 2010, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/198955/govt-announces-candidacy-for-uns-c-seat>

⁴⁴ "PM to visit Burma next month", *The Bangkok Post*, September 30, 2010, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/198938/pm-to-visit-burma-next-month>

⁴⁵ "Najib arrives in Brussels for Asem Summit", *Bernama.com*, October 3, 2010, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=532308>

⁴⁶ "Najib to attend Asem Summit, signals greater partnership with EU", *Bernama.com*, September 29, 2010, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=531289>

had accused the Kurdish separatists for this attack. However, Kurdish groups had denied taking responsibility for it and condemned the attacks. Iran has also blamed Israel, the US and supporters of Iraq's previous regime for supporting the Kurdish groups.⁴⁷

On the domestic front, an Iranian court has barred two leading reformist parties which supported opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi in last year's presidential election. A judiciary spokesman, Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie stated that the Islamic Iran Participation Front and Islamic Revolution Mujahedeen Organisation had been 'dissolved and suspended their activities.' In April, a hardline political watchdog associated with the Interior Ministry had blamed the two parties of undermining national security of the nation.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ "Iran crosses into Iraq to hit bombing suspects," *Khaleej Times*, September 27, 2010, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/September/middleeast_September536.xml§ion=middleeast

⁴⁸ "Iran bans two leading reformist parties," *Khaleej Times*, September 27, 2010, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/September/middleeast_September543.xml§ion=middleeast