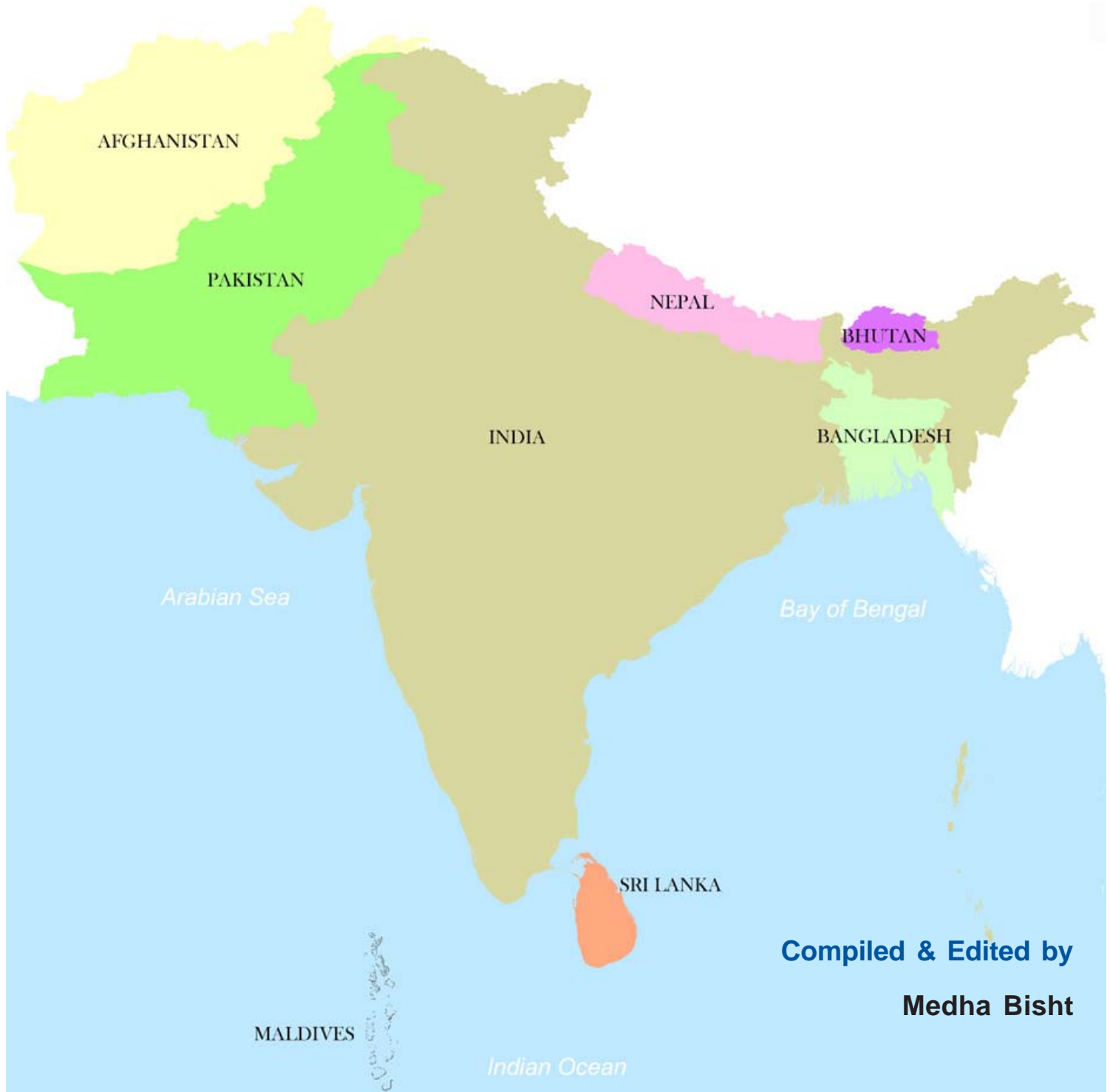


SOUTH ASIA TRENDS

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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

Pakistan experienced the wrath of nature this August, as the ravaging floods continue to destroy lives and infrastructure in Pakistan in great magnitude. According to the reports, flash floods and landslides caused by monsoon rains hit northwestern Pakistan and Pakistani Occupied Kashmir killing almost 1600 people and displacing around 20 million. While power plants have been shut down, thousands of acres of crops have been wiped out. According to the World Food Programme, destruction of wheat and rice could leave almost 6 million people hungry. Even as destruction of this magnitude is taking place, political undercurrents of floods were being felt in various quarters. While the pro-dam lobby advocated the cause of Kalabagh dam, with Shams ul Mulk, former chief of WAPDA, claiming that the Kalabagh dam would have averted the disaster, the United States for its own reasons has been strategizing to leverage its aid policy in order to win the hearts and minds of Pakistanis. John Kerry, the key sponsor of the long term U.S. civilian aid to Pakistan would be soon visiting the flood ravaged areas. Pakistani Army meanwhile has stepped up relief and rehabilitation programmes with great visibility. According a news report, the Army has deployed about 60,000 troops out of a force of 5, 50,000 soldiers. The long term impact of the floods on Pakistan's politics, economic situation and foreign policy will be significant. For the moment Pakistan's military profile has increased tremendously.

Yousuf Raza Gilani accepted a proposal to set up a Commission to investigate the Karachi killings which had claimed the lives of 45 people on August 2, 2010. The cycle of revenge attacks between MQM and ANP were triggered after the assassination of Syed Raza Haider, a provincial politician. Pakistan's Interior Minister, Rehman Malik has accused Sipah-e Sahaba Pakistan and Lashkar-e Jhangvi for the attacks claiming that the groups were known for anti shia violence. A code of conduct was also signed between PPP, MQM and ANP to restore peace in Karachi on August 8, 2010.

A large number of minority leaders in Afghanistan particularly the Uzbeks, Tajiks and Hazaras have warned that the marginalization of the minorities could spark off a civil war in Afghanistan. Meanwhile in his latest counter-insurgency guideline issued by General Petraeus maximum emphasis has been put on the protection of the civilians.

In his visit to Bangladesh on August 7, 2010, Pranab Mukherjee and Sheikh Hasina signed a USD 1 billion credit facility agreement for infra-

structure projects. According to media sources, the amount would be utilised for implementation of 14 projects, related to development of railway infrastructure in Bangladesh, upgrading of Ashuganj river port, construction of roads and bridges to facilitate trans-shipment of Indian goods to its North-Eastern region through Bangladesh, purchase of double-decker buses from India and setting up of power gridline between India and Bangladesh.

Afghanistan

Petraeus Redoubles Efforts to Protect Civilians

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, August 5, 2010.

The top US commander in Afghanistan, Gen. David Petraeus, issued a new directive to win the hearts and minds of Afghan people, saying NATO forces “must redouble” efforts to reduce civilian deaths. The emphasis on protection of Afghan people comes a day after Pakistani President Asaf Ali Zardari said the US was losing the war in Afghanistan because it could not win support from the ordinary people. “Every Afghan civilian death diminishes our cause. If we use excessive force or operate contrary to our counterinsurgency principles, tactical victories may prove to be strategic setbacks,” Petraeus said in the directive.

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

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

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, August 5, 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. He warned that Karzai’s push for negotiation with insurgents is a fatal mistake, which could eventually lead to civil war.

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

Pentagon demands Wikileaks return Afghanistan documents

BBC, August 6, 2010

The Pentagon has demanded that Wikileaks remove a trove of secret documents on the Afghanistan war from its website and cancel plans to publish anything more it holds. But a Pentagon spokesman acknowledged the already-leaked documents’ viral spread across the internet made it unlikely they could ever be quashed. “We are asking them to do the right thing,” spokesman Geoff Morrell said. Wikileaks called Mr Morrell “obnoxious” and appealed for public donations. The US military documents released last month detail civilian deaths, friendly-fire episodes and other ground-level incidents. They include allegations the Pakistani intelligence service has backed the Taliban insurgents’ fight against the US-led coalition and the Afghan government, and indicate Taliban fighters have acquired surface-to-air missiles.

(Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-10888993>)

'1325 Civilians Killed in Afghan War this Year'

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, August 9, 2010

According to a report published by AIHRC, the civilian death rates in Afghanistan, mostly committed by the government opposition forces, have been increasing since 2001. Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) says the report is carefully written by its regional, provincial and central offices. The report says 1325 Afghan civilians have been killed in conflicts in the country this year, of which 895 people have been killed by the government opposition forces, 303 by government forces and 127 others by unknown gunmen. The report adds that 96 civilians were killed in January, 189 in February, 127 in March, 122 in April, 181 in May, 294 in June and 316 others in July this year. A total of 899 of those killed are men, 209 are women and 217 are children. "67.5 percent of civilian deaths have occurred due to the attacks by the government opposition forces," a spokesman for AIHRC, Nadir Naderi told reporters.

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

Petraeus Issues Guidelines for Troops in Afghanistan

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, August 9, 2010

The commander of NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has released his counter-insurgency guideline and revised tactical directives ordering troops to protect Afghan civilians, ISAF spokesman Brigadier-General Josef Blotz said. August began with General Petraeus' release of his counterinsurgency guidance and a revised tactical directive," The most important change from last year's guidance is directing subordinate commanders not to further restrict Gen. Petraeus' guidance without his approval, he stated. "This process says the top strategic priority is the protection of population," he noted. However, he said, "Nothing in the guidance prevents commanders from protecting the lives of their men and women as a matter of self-defense where it is determined no other options are available to effectively counter the threat," he further asserted.

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

OIC Help Sought in Peace Restoration

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, August 10, 2010

Religious leaders urged the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) to convene a meeting on bringing peace to Afghanistan. The call was made during a three-day seminar organized by the Ministry of Hajj in Kabul. Around 350 religious scholars from all parts of the country attended the event. A declaration issued at the end of the seminar supported the decisions taken during the Advisory Peace Jirga. It asked the government and its armed opponents to respect the decisions. The participants urged the Muslim world to take steps to find a lasting solution to the problems in Afghanistan.

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

Karzai Meets Kayani, Petraeus

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, August 10, 2010

President Hamid Karzai met Pakistan Army chief, Gen. Parvaiz Ashfaq Kayani, and NATO Commander Gen. David. Kayani is visiting Kabul for a trilateral security meeting among Afghanistan, Pakistan and NATO, according to a statement from the Presidential Palace. A week earlier, media reports suggested the Pakistan Army chief had offered to broker a deal between the Taliban and Kabul if Karzai closed down Indian consulates in Afghanistan. But Karzai's office denied receiving such a proposal.

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

Afghan, NATO Troops Pursue Haqqani Fighters

CBS News, August 15, 2010

More than 20 insurgents including Arab, Chechen and Pakistani fighters have been killed by NATO and Afghan forces who are ramping up operations in the east against a Taliban faction linked to al-Qaida, the international coalition. Separately, three more NATO troops - an American, a Briton and an Australian - died in separate insurgent attacks in the volatile south, officials of the three countries said. The joint force operation began August 11, 2010 against dozens of insurgents holed up in a mountainous area of Zadran district of Paktia province. The operation focused on disrupting the Haqqani network's movement in an area used to stage attacks in the capital, Kabul, and along a highway that links Khost province and Gardez, the provincial capital of Paktia, NATO said.

(Source: <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/08/14/ap/asia/main6771809.shtml>)

Bangladesh

Home-made terror threatens India: report

IBN, August 6, 2010.

Besides "persistent and significant external threats" from groups like Pakistan's Lashkar-e-Taeba and Jaish-e-Mohammad and Bangladesh's Harakat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami-Bangladesh, India faces numerous attacks from domestic terror outfits, according to a new US report. Over 1,000 people have died from terrorist attacks in India in 2009, the report noted." India remained one of the countries most afflicted by terrorism with over 1,000 deaths attributed to terrorist attacks in 2009, primarily in Kashmir, the Northeast, and the Maoist affected 'Red Corridor'", the State Department noted in its annual mandated report on global terrorism. However despite being "clearly committed to combating terrorism, the Indian government's counter terrorism efforts remained hampered by its outdated and overburdened law enforcement and legal systems," the report suggested.

(Source: <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/homemade-terror-threatens-india-report/128329-3.html>)

BNP opposes Bangla govt decision to sign loan deal with India

Economic Times, August 7, 2010.

With India and Bangladesh set to ink a \$1 billion credit facility agreement for

infrastructure projects in this country, main Opposition BNP has accused the government of Premier Sheikh Hasina of striking an "unfair deal." "The government is getting the loan from the Indian bank with an interest rate seven times higher than that from any multinational bank or donor agency," BNP said in a statement, adding the deal for infrastructure projects would eventually benefit India while Bangladeshis would have to repay the loan. BNP standing committee member MK Anwar, MP, who read out the statement late last night, said Bangladesh would incur a net loss of Taka 40,000 crore (Rs 26,452 crore) for the deal and warned that their party would stage street protests if the government signed "an unfair" accord "like this."

(Source: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics/nation/BNP-opposes-Bangla-govt-decision-to-sign-loan-deal-with-India/articleshow/6270146.cms>)

BNP urges govt not to sign credit deal with India

The Nation, August 7, 2010.

Opposition BNP strongly protested the government decision to sign US\$ 1 billion credit with Indian private Exim Bank with high interest rate and tight conditions in presence of Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee here today (Saturday). on August 7, 2010. BNP standing committee member MK Anwar said it was earlier known that the Indian government will give the credit. Now it was known that a private bank of India is providing the loan." He said such loan could be arranged from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and many multinational banks by paying a service charge of 0.25 percent only." Yet, the Government is taking the loan from Indian Exim Bank with interest rate of 1.75 percent. Apart from interest, Bangladesh will have to pay 0.05 percent of 'commitment' fee to the Exim Bank. If the loan was taken from any international bank, the country won't need to pay such fee."

(Source: <http://ebiz.ittefaq.com/issues/2010/08/07/all0221.htm>)

US praises Bangladesh's anti-terrorism efforts

Daily Times, August 8, 2010.

The US has lauded Bangladesh of its efforts to deny domestic and trans national terrorists safe haven and targeting opportunities in Bangladesh. It said the government also acted on its pledge to focus serious attention on Bangladesh's counter-terrorism needs, which resulted in the arrest of several high-profile terrorism-related figures in Bangladesh, including some from Lashkar-e-Taiba (LT). In an annual Country Reports on Terrorism 2009 released in Washington DC on Thursday, the State Department said that immediately after taking office in January 2009, the government began a crackdown on domestic and trans national terrorist groups. As a result, Bangladesh and India improved their counter-terrorism cooperation during the year, which led to the arrest of several senior members of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), an anti-India insurgency group. In November, the report said Bangladesh arrested several extremists alleged to have ties to Lashkar-e-Taiba (LT), the organisation believed responsible for the November 2008 Mumbai attack, Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami-Bangladesh (Huji-B) and other

extremist groups. "The arrests were evidence of the government's efforts to deny trans national terrorists safe haven targeting opportunities in Bangladesh," the report added. Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), the banned domestic militant extremist group responsible for a wave of bombings and suicide attacks in late 2005, remained a threat. During the first three months of 2009, authorities arrested several suspected JMB members and uncovered weapons caches that included grenades and chemicals that could be used to make explosives.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\08\08\story_8-8-2010_pg20_3)

Pranab reviews growing India-Bangladesh ties

The Hindu, August 8, 2010

Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee made a brief visit to Dhaka on August 7, 2010 for talks with Bangladesh leaders on the growing cooperation between the two neighbours . Witnessed by Pranab Mukharjee, Bangladesh finance minister and Prime Minister's economic affairs adviser Mashiur Rahman, the agreement was signed by chief of the EXIM Bank of India and Secretary of Bangladesh's Economic Relations Division (ERD) . The amount will be utilised for implementation of 14 projects, mostly related to development of railway infrastructure in Bangladesh, upgrading of Ashuganj river port, construction of roads and bridges to facilitate trans-shipment of Indian goods to its North-Eastern region through Bangladesh, purchase of double-decker buses from India and setting up of power gridline between India and Bangladesh.

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article558208.ece>

Bhutan

Extremists gaining ground in Bengal's Dooars region

Economic Times, August 9, 2010.

The nationwide attention towards Maoist activities is missing in one critical geographical area. This is the Dooars region in North Bengal. A fluid political situation – with many separatist movements, a shattered socio-economic condition, near-zero government attention – has already made the forest-clad and tea-dependent hilly region a fertile ground for Maoists' consolidation. With Nepal in the northwest and Bangladesh in the southeast, Dooars has always remained a major corridor for extremists between Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan across the 'chicken neck' that connects the entire northeastern region with the rest of the country.

(Source: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics/nation/Extremists-gaining-ground-in-Bengals-Dooars-region/articleshow/6278620.cms>)

Bhutanese refugees leave Nepal to resettle in Britain

Earth Times, August 9, 2010

Thirty-seven Bhutanese refugees left the Nepalese capital Kathmandu August 9, 2010, to resettle in Britain. They were selected from refugee camps in Nepal, following an offer by the British government to resettle some 100 Bhutanese refugees in 2010, the International Organization for Migration, the British embassy and the

UN refugee agency UNHCR said in a joint statement.

(Source: <http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/news/338657,leave-nepal-resettle-britain.html>)

PM assures Nepal's support to democratic struggle in Bhutan

Nepal News, August 10, 2010

The caretaker Prime Minister, Madhav Kumar Nepal said that the government of Nepal would always extend its support for the democratic struggle of Bhutanese citizens. "We are always of the opinion that there must be genuine democracy in Bhutan," PM Nepal told a delegation of Druk National Congress (DNC) Bhutan that met him. "Nepali people have deep sympathy for the suffering of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal," he added.

(Sources: <http://www.nepalnews.com/main/index.php/news-archive/2-political/8258-pm-assures-nepals-support-to-democratic-struggle-in-bhutan.html>)

Picture Story

Kuensel, August 15, 2010

National security advisor to the prime minister of India, Shiv Shankar Menon, and Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao were on a one-day visit met prime minister Lyonchhoen Jigmi Y Thinley in his office on August 13, 2010. Mr Shiv Shankar Menon said that they have come to Bhutan to further strengthen the relationship between the two countries. He congratulated Lyonchhoen on a successful SAARC summit in Thimphu and said that it was clearly one of the best organised and memorable events, and quite an achievement.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16417>)

Nepal

NDFB scours Nepal for land

Telegraph India, August 4, 2010.

Outfit plans to set up base in new country The anti-talks faction of the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) is touring Nepal to set up base there and carry forward its armed movement for a sovereign Bodoland, just months after setting up its general headquarters in Myanmar. According to documents available with The Telegraph, the outfit's general meeting last month had decided on the move.

(Source: http://www.telegraphindia.com/1100805/jsp/northeast/story_12771549.jsp)

Ex-royals join Nepal democratic fray

Hindustan Times, August 4, 2010.

Having been reduced to ordinary citizens two years ago after a 240-year reign, Nepal's former royals are slowly testing the country's fluid political waters. In a development that could have far-reaching implications, Raj Bahadur Singh, son-in-law of Nepal's last king Gyanendra Shah, has joined Nepali Janata Dal, a small

political outfit with links to Maoists.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Ex-royals-join-Nepal-democratic-fray/Article1-582406.aspx>)

Indian envoy arrives in Nepal to help sort out political limbo

Monster and Critics, August 5, 2010.

Indian envoy Shyam Saran arrived in the Nepalese capital Kathmandu to help sort out the political stalemate to choose a prime minister. 'The prime minister of India has sent me here as an envoy so that I can, along with his excellency Ambassador Rakesh Sood, hold extensive meetings with the political leaders in the country to see whether or not there is some way in which we can built consensus,' Saran told the media when he arrived at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan Airport.

(Source: http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/southasia/news/article_1575517.php/Indian-envoy-arrives-in-Nepal-to-help-sort-out-political-limbo)

India not interfering, Shyam Saran tells Nepal Maoists

Hindustan Times, August 5, 2010.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's special envoy to Nepal Shyam Saran on August 5, 2010 assured the Maoist leadership that India was not interfering in formation of next government in the Himalayan nation. In a meeting with Maoist leaders at Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda's' residence, Saran stated that India was interested in peace, stability and consensus among parties to draft the next constitution. After failing in three rounds of voting, Nepal's Constituent Assembly will again attempt to elect a new prime minister on Friday.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/News-Feed/nepal/No-interference-in-government-formation-Saran-tells-Nepal-Maoists/Article1-582540.aspx>)

Nepal prepares for fourth round of election for prime minister today

Nepal News, August 6, 2010.

Nepal could well be on its way to make it to the Guinness Book of World Records for holding the most number of election for a prime minister in a span of few weeks and still failing to elect one. Following three fruitless rounds of election for a prime minister, the country is all set to hold the election for the fourth consecutive time at the legislature parliament today. The previous three elections held on July 21, July 23 and August 2 had failed to elect a prime minister.

(Source: <http://www.nepalnews.com/main/index.php/news-archive/1-top-story/8139-nepal-prepares-for-fourth-round-of-election-for-prime-minister-today.html>)

UML likely to vote Nepali Congress

Review Nepal, August 9, 2010.

The intra-party differences within the CPN-UML have reached on a new height as dissident faction led by influential leader KP Sharma Oli has reached on the conclusion to vote the Nepali congress on the upcoming prime Ministerial runoff.

Central Committee (CC) meeting slated from August 11 would take the decision, claims a senior leader preferring anonymity on Monday. However, established faction led by chairman Jhala Nath Khanal has been claiming that UML will be neutral on the prime Ministerial runoff unless the parties try for forming majority based government.

(Source: http://www.reviewnepal.com/detail_news.php?id=722)

Nepal PM asked to explain Indian embassy 'threat'

Hindustan Times, August 9, 2010.

A Nepali lawmaker's charge that he was threatened by two senior officials of the Indian embassy in Kathmandu has prompted a parliamentary committee to summon caretaker Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal and Foreign Minister Sujata Koirala. The Indian embassy has rubbished the allegation as baseless". Nepal's Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Relations and Human Rights has summoned Nepal and Koirala to look into allegations by Maoist MP Ram Kumar Sharma that he was threatened by a senior official from the consular section of the Indian embassy as well as the ambassador last week."

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Nepal-PM-asked-to-explain-Indian-embassy-threat/Article1-584325.aspx>)

BJP delegation meets PM; convey concerns on Nepal situation

Times of India, August 14, 2010

A BJP delegation led by former party chief Rajnath Singh met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to convey its concerns over the political situation in Nepal and backed efforts to restore democracy in that country. Making a strong pitch for democracy in Nepal, Singh told the Prime Minister that the BJP would back every decision of the government with regard to relations with its eastern neighbour.

(Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/BJP-delegation-meets-PM-convey-concerns-on-Nepal-situation-/articleshow/6310472.cms>)

Masked accord of RPP-Nepal and Maoists to revive Monarchy: Gurung

Telegraph Nepal, August 15, 2010.

Chandra Bahadur Gurung, central committee member of Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal beamingly said while addressing a media interaction program in the district of Gorkha, August 14, 2010, that a "tentative masked agreement" to revive Nepal Monarchy in ceremonial form have already been reached in between his party-the RPP-N, and the Unified Maoists' party.

(Source: http://www.telegraphnepal.com/news_det.php?news_id=8114)

Pakistan

Banned militant outfits destabilising Karachi: Malik Thirsty Pakistan gasps for water solutions

Dawn, August 4, 2010.

Interior Minister Rehman Malik promised sustained 'targeted actions' against per-

ceived terrorists in Karachi in a speech to the Senate on Tuesday as he seemed sure of links between two banned sectarian groups and Waziristan-based Taliban for violence in the country's commercial capital. Reporting to the upper house for the second time in as many days about the Karachi situation after the assassination of an MQM provincial legislator there on Monday, the minister said interrogation of a key suspect had revealed a 'new nexus' of Sipah-i-Sahaba and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi groups with Taliban based in South Waziristan and plans to kill politicians and ignite clashes between two political parties. But despite these clues, he said, authorities were keeping an 'open mind' while a joint team of investigating agencies was working to fix responsibility for the shooting to death of Sindh assembly member Raza Haider and his police guard, which triggered more deadly overnight violence involving supporters of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement and the Awami National Party.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/12-malik+terms+karachi+violence+as+conspiracy-bi-06>)

Politician's murder sparks wave of Karachi killings

Times of India, August 4, 2010.

Gunmen killed at least 45 people in Pakistan's largest city after the assassination of a local politician set off a cycle of revenge attacks. Dozens of vehicles and shops were set on fire as security forces struggled to regain control of Karachi. Schools were closed and most business ground to a halt today in the southern city of more than 16 million, Pakistan's main commercial hub. Karachi has a history of political, ethnic and religious violence and has long been a hideout for al Qaida and the Taliban. The latest violence came after Raza Haider, a provincial politician, was shot dead along with his bodyguard in a mosque while preparing to offer prayers yesterday in the Nazimabad area. Mr Haider was a member of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, the political party that runs the city and represents mainly descendants of Urdu-speaking migrants from India who settled in Pakistan when it was created in 1947. The MQM's main rival is the Awami National Party, a secular nationalist party whose main power centre is Pakistan's north-west and whose base is the ethnic Pashtun community living in Karachi.

(Source: <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20100804/world-news/politician-murder-sparks-wave-of-karachi-killings>)

Pakistan violence: Arrests of Islamists in Karachi may not actually signal crackdown

Christian Science Monitor, August 4, 2010

Police in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi have arrested dozens of alleged Islamist hardliners suspected in the assassination of a local political leader, according to reports. The killing of Raza Haider, a provincial parliamentarian and member of the secular Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) party, outside his mosque on August 2, 2010 sparked deadly rioting that has paralyzed Pakistan's financial hub. On August 4, 2010, the death toll rose to 63 as the city of 18 million people remained on almost total lockdown. In addition to the dead, dozens more have been injured. Pakistan's Interior Minister Rehman Malik was quick to pin the

blame on banned sectarian militant outfits Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LJ), which both have a history of anti-Shia violence in the city.

(Source: <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2010/0804/Pakistan-violence-Arrests-of-Islamists-in-Karachi-may-not-actually-signal-crackdown>)

Pakistan's Zardari says 'losing war' against Taliban ahead of David Cameron meeting

Christian Science Monitor, August 4, 2010.

What was intended by Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari as a quiet five-day trip to Britain has become a glaring international spectacle for the president, whose country is in the throes of an epic flood and an epic war. Today, two British Pakistani members of parliament, Khalid Mahmood and Lord Ahmed, an influential figure, canceled a meeting with Zardari, saying it was an inappropriate time for a visit. Zardari's generals, who scotched a British visit after Mr. Cameron's comments, also opposed his trip. Chatham House analyst Farzana Shaikh in London says that "this will not be an easy visit. [Zardari] comes to Britain in the face of furious opposition in Pakistan to the trip, including his allies.... The Cameron comments gave him an opportunity to bow out without losing face. But he has a knack for being out of the country when he is most needed."

(Source: <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2010/0803/Pakistan-s-Zardari-says-losing-war-against-Taliban-ahead-of-David-Cameron-meeting>)

Anti-India activities would hurt ties, say Krishna

Daily Times, August 5, 2010.

Indian External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna on said that he had made it clear to Pakistan that any further terrorist attack emanating from Pakistani soil on India would cause immense harm to the normalisation process. Krishna, while addressing the Lok Sabha, said that India has nothing to shy away or hide from. He said that if Pakistan wants to improve ties with India it had to stop cross-border terrorism. India is willing to discuss everything with Pakistan and wants to solve all the issues, the external affairs minister added.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/world/12-anti-india+activities+would+hurt+ties+say+krishna-bi-06>)

US: Pakistan al-Qaeda is top threat

AlJazeera English, August 6, 2010

The core leadership of al-Qaeda in Pakistan was the primary threat to US homeland security last year, according to a US state department report. The annual "Country Reports on Terrorism", states that al-Qaeda is becoming a greater force in Africa, where it threatens many nations, particularly in the north of the continent and Somalia. However, it said that in Pakistan the al-Qaeda network had suffered "several significant setbacks" in 2009, due to extensive Pakistani military offensives.

(Source: <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/americas/2010/08/201085193744181434.html>)

Britain and Pakistan smooth over terrorism row

Reuters, August 6, 2010.

Britain and Pakistan agreed on to do more together to fight Islamist militancy, smoothing over a diplomatic spat that followed British criticism of Pakistani efforts in countering extremism. British Prime Minister David Cameron had said on a trip to India last week that Pakistan should not “look both ways” in combating militant groups, sparking anger in Islamabad and putting a strain on relations between the two countries. The dispute has overshadowed President Asif Ali Zardari’s visit to Britain this week. But, after meeting Cameron at his rural English official residence, the Pakistani leader said the diplomatic friendship would “never break, no matter what happens.”

(Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6751WE20100806>)

Half a million flee as floods threaten Sindh

Dawn, August 6, 2010.

Pakistan went on red alert for extreme flooding in its rich agricultural south, evacuating half a million people from at-risk areas as the UN warned of the “daunting” scale of the disaster. The nearly two-week-old crisis has affected 4.5 million across the largely impoverished country hard hit by Taliban-linked violence, after floods washed away entire villages and killed at least 1,600, according to UN estimates. Authorities in the densely populated southern province of Sindh were busy evacuating villagers, warning that major floods in the next 48 hours threatened hundreds of communities in the fertile basin along the swollen Indus river.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/04-sindh-floods-evacuations-qs-03>)

Pakistan floods threaten power plants

Dawn, August 6, 2010.

Massive flooding in Pakistan has threatened electricity generation plants, forcing units to shut down in a country suffering from a crippling energy crisis, officials said Friday. Flood water reached to the boundary wall of the 1,200-megawatt Kot Addu Power Company plant late Thursday,” the director general of the state-owned Pakistan Electric Power Co., Mohammad Khalid, told AFP. “Now only three units out of 12 are working and producing only 300 megawatts of electricity,” Khalid said. But the water was receding, he said. Khalid said that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, three grid stations in Dera Ismail Khan, Swat and Shangla were shut down by the floods.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/12-pakistan+floods+threaten+power+plants-bi-07>)

PM agrees to set up commission for Karachi killing

Dawn, August 7, 2010

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani accepted on Friday a proposal to set up a commission to investigate the recent target killings in Karachi and bring the culprits to

justice. Mr Gilani, who separately met ANP and MQM delegations at the Chief Minister's House, urged the coalition partners to stop blaming each other and assured them that those involved in the killing of Syed Raza Haider and other innocent people would be brought to justice. He reiterated his concern over large-scale killings in the city and stressed the need for maintaining law and order with courage and determination. According to sources, the idea of setting up a commission came up at the prime minister's meeting with an ANP delegation led by Afrasiab Khattak. Mr Gilani ordered that the commission should complete its work soon. The ANP presented its grievances and urged Mr Gilani to order payment of compensation to the families of the people killed and those whose shops, trucks and other vehicles had been torched.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/19-malik-hosts-anpmqm-talks-pm-agrees-to-set-up-commission-for-karachi-killing-probe-780-hh-10>)

MQM, ANP agree on 'code of conduct' for peace in Karachi

Dawn, August 8, 2010.

After days of targeted killings, the PPP, MQM and ANP signed on Saturday a 'code of conduct' to restore peace in Karachi. The parties resolved to sit together and address core issues concerning the city. Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani broke the news about the signing at a news conference at the Chief Minister's House after meetings with Sindh's coalition partners and top officials of law-enforcement agencies. It was signed by Rashid Rabbani of the PPP, Raza Haroon of MQM, Afrasiab Khattak of ANP and Interior Minister Rehman Malik. Mr Gilani, who had arrived here on Friday afternoon, said the leadership of three parties had agreed to take extra measures for creating an environment conducive to political harmony and addressing the core issues. He ruled out the possibility of inducting military for maintaining law and order in the city and said that political leadership was mature and wanted to strengthen democracy. The prime minister said that a 'third force' was involved in the Karachi violence, but unlike the interior minister, he did not identify the force.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/06-mqm%2C-anp-agree-on-code-of-conduct-for-peace-in-karachi-880-rs-01>)

Landslides kill more people in Pakistan

Press TV, August 8, 2010.

The dire situation in the flood-ravaged Pakistan is deteriorating as landslides sweep across the northern part of the country, killing more people. As the number of people affected by the flooding exceeds 15 million, some 28 bodies were found on Sunday from rubble after landslides in Gilgit-Baltistan in the far north of the country. According to administrative official Mohammad Ali Yougwi, up to 40 people were feared dead in the town of Skardu, where many houses destroyed and perished as the result of heavy landslides. The latest development has stymied rescue efforts by the aid workers who are struggling to bring food and aid to millions of people across the country. According to officials, many helicopters were grounded

due to torrential rains while the entire Swat Valley was cut off, making transportation of humanitarian supplies an ordeal for rescuers.

(Source: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=137964§ionid=351020401>)

Suspicious likely to linger in UK-Pakistan ties

Reuters, August 8, 2010

A diplomatic row between Britain and Pakistan over its approach to Islamist militants will hurt intelligence sharing, though in the longer term the ties between the two countries are too tight for it to cause lasting damage. Analysts say remarks made last month in India by Prime Minister David Cameron that Pakistan must not “look both ways” in dealing with militants has caused deep resentment in the Pakistan Army and its Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency. That is unlikely to be alleviated by talks in Britain last week between President Asif Ali Zardari and Cameron, who spoke of an “unbreakable relationship between Britain and Pakistan.”

(Source: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKTRE6771BK20100808>)

U.S. assesses own plans after Pakistan floods

Reuters, August 8, 2010

As flood waters rise in Pakistan, so does U.S. concern over the impact of the disaster on an already fragile economy and how Washington’s robust development plan may be slowed down to deal with the crisis. Another source of unease, say officials and experts, is fallout from the weak response of the civilian government and to what extent the Pakistani military’s attention is being diverted from its fight against militants in the border areas with Afghanistan where U.S. troops are fighting the Taliban. “The financial and other implications of this will be huge and it will slow down our development efforts which are already facing gargantuan uphill battles,” said Pakistan expert Brian Katulis of the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank in Washington. Crops and livestock have been destroyed by the raging waters that have killed at least 1,600 people and disrupted the lives of 12 million – and more rain is forecast. “This will add to budgetary strains as so much infrastructure has been destroyed,” said a senior U.S. official, who asked not to be named. “But we really don’t know the full impact of this or the ramifications yet.”

(Source: <http://in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-50708220100808>)

US arms: India against US ‘blank cheque’ to Pak

Hindustan Times, August 8, 2010

India has conveyed its concern to the US over arms sales to Pakistan and is against giving a “blank cheque” to Islamabad, which could use the sophisticated weapons against it as it did in the past. “We have shared our concerns with Washington. We have said all along that Pakistan cannot be given a blank cheque in such matters,” Foreign Secretary Nirpama Rao said. She said that assistance extended

to Pakistan “ostensibly for counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations could very well be used against India as the history of the last sixty years goes”. The US is “increasingly aware, and alert, and attentive” to India’s concern on this issue, Rao told Karan Thapar in ‘Devil’s Advocate’ programme on CNN-IBN. Apart from the sale of F-16s worth \$ 1.43 billion, the US is also financing \$ 477 million for almost 60 mid-life update kits for its older fleet of F-16s A/B combat aircraft and financing part of 115 M-109 self-propelled howitzers. Pakistan is also getting 20 AH-1F Cobra attack helicopters and 121 refurbished TOW missile launchers from the US, according to Pakistani media reports.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/US-arms-India-against-US-blank-cheque-to-Pak/Article1-583896.aspx>)

No option but to keep talking to Pak: Rao

Times of India, August 9, 2010

Pakistan may continue to deny that its state agencies, particularly ISI, are actively involved in promoting terrorism against India but Delhi has little option but to continue with the dialogue process with Islamabad, foreign secretary Nirupama Rao has said.

In an interview to a TV channel, Rao said, “Look at the international community, look at the international response to the role of agencies connected with the Pakistan state in the pursuit and encouragement of terrorism directed against India, directed against Afghanistan. Today, we are no longer like Cassandras talking about terrorism emanating from Pakistan. There is a widespread groundswell of belief and conviction in the stand that we have taken and acknowledgement by the international community that we are taking the right position.” In a separate response, Rao said India had told the US of its concerns regarding the diversion of American military aid for Pakistan against India. “The US is attentive to our concerns,” she said.

(Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/No-option-but-to-keep-talking-to-Pak-Rao/articleshow/6276471.cms#ixzz0w6Ed9E6E>)

Floodwater swallows Ghousepur town in Sindh

Dawn, August 10, 2010

The town of Ghousepur in Kashmore district has been flooded and almost all residents have moved out. People of Karampur, Dari and Badani have also left the towns and Kandhkot and Thull are being evacuated. The water level at Guddu started receding on Monday evening and its flow upstream dropped to 1,118,428 cusecs from 1,148,728 cusecs in the afternoon. The flow of Indus at Sukkur barrage was reported at 1,130,986 cusecs upstream and 1,094,986 cusecs downstream. The surge caused a breach in the Bunder wall and water started accumulating on a road near the municipal waterworks. However, Rangers and local people plugged the breach.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/19-floodwater-swallows-ghousepur-town-080-hh-03>)

Exceptionally high floods at two barrages

Dawn, August 10, 2010

The Indus river flows at Guddu and Sukkur barrages surpassed all past records on Monday as 'exceptionally high floods' crossed the barrage capacity at Sukkur and remained a little short of designed facility at Guddu, with floods continuing to rise. An engineering expert said the Sukkur Barrage was originally designed by the British to pass 1.5 million cusec of flood water but its design was later reduced by closing down some of its gates for technical reasons. The actual capacity of Sukkur Barrage now stood at 900,000 cusecs but on Monday morning it received 1.13 million cusecs. He said the designed capacity of Guddu Barrage was 1.2 million cusecs which had been reduced by silting and yet it received 1.149 million cusecs.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/19-exceptionally-high-floods-at-two-barrages-080-hh-06>)

Kalabagh Dam could have averted destruction of floods, says Gilani

Daily Times, August 10, 2010

Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Monday said that the deaths and destruction in the floods could have been averted if the Kalabagh Dam had been built. Talking to reporters in Multan after he visited the flood-affected areas, the PM said the government would build the Kalabagh Dam if there was political consensus over the issue. The PM appealed to the nation to come forward to help their fellow countrymen who had lost their family members and property in the floods. "I assure you that the government will do all to help the people affected by the worst-ever floods in the country's history," Gilani said.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\08\10\story_10-8-2010_pg1_3)

Landslides complicate relief efforts in Swat

Dawn, August 10, 2010

Landslides are hampering already troubled relief efforts in Swat, with aid workers using mules or travelling on foot to reach people in desperate need of help. Poor weather has made it difficult for helicopters to deliver food to some parts of the Swat Valley. Many roads have been destroyed and landslides have added to the isolation of many areas. "We have brought in 130 mules to take food supplies to the cut-off valleys," said Major Mushtaq Khan, an army spokesman, adding that bad weather had grounded helicopters for the past two days.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\08\10\story_10-8-2010_pg1_4)

Moreau and Yusufzai, How the Floods Help the Taliban

News Week, August 12, 2010

More than a score of those displaced by the raging floodwaters in the hard-hit northwestern district of Nowshera, some 90 miles west of Islamabad, told

Newsweek that they had received no aid from the government, nor any visits from officials in the more than two weeks since they were driven from their homes. A U.K.-based Islamic charity, the Ummah Welfare Trust, has provided Ali's family and 150 others with tents that are precariously perched by the side of a road on the outskirts of Nowshera town, much of which is still partially or completely submerged. The charity provides tents, two meals a day, and medical care. Many communities in northwest Pakistan, particularly in the hard-hit Swat Valley, are isolated and have received little or no aid. The country's barely adequate infrastructure has been ravaged: hundreds of bridges have been destroyed or made impassible; electricity generation, transformers, and power lines are down; schools and medical facilities have crumbled.

(Source: <http://www.newsweek.com/2010/08/12/how-the-pakistani-floods-help-the-taliban.html>)

Pakistan floods cause 'huge losses' to crops

BBC, August 12, 2010

Nazar Muhammad Gondal said significant amounts of the grain, sugarcane and rice harvests had been washed away. Meanwhile a senior religious scholar has said that flood victims living in difficult conditions should not have to fast over the Muslim Ramadan period. And Pakistan's UK envoy has denied that most of the money given for flood defences has been lost to corruption. High Commissioner to London Wajid Hasan dismissed the allegation by pressure group Transparency International, and insisted his government was doing all it could to help people in need. Floodwater triggered by heavy monsoon rains is still surging south along the Indus River, forcing people from their homes. Food Minister Gondal said grain stocks had been destroyed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly North West Frontier) province, but some remained in southern Punjab province. "We have losses in cotton, in sugarcane, in rice, in pulses and in tobacco - these are huge losses for the future," he told the BBC's World Today programme.

(Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-10948275>)

Kerry Sets Visit to Pakistan as US Boosts Flood Aid

Voice of America, August 12, 2010

The State Department says Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry will visit Pakistan next week to survey damage from the country's flood disaster. Kerry is a key sponsor of the long-term U.S. civilian aid plan for Pakistan approved by Congress last year. The United States has sent scores of civilian and military relief workers and experts to Pakistan, but Senator Kerry will be the highest-level U.S. political figure to visit since the flooding began last month. Kerry was a co-sponsor of the five-year, \$7.5-billion civilian aid program to Pakistan approved by Congress last year. State Department officials say the Kerry visit is intended to help raise awareness of Pakistani relief needs among the U.S. public, and to discuss how the Kerry-Lugar-Berman aid plan might be recalibrated to deal with flood related needs.

(Source: <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/Kerry-Sets-Visit-to-Pakistan-as-US-Boosts-Flood-Aid-100582994.html>)

US sentencing of Aafia Siddiqui pushed to September

Dawn, August 12, 2010.

A US-educated Pakistani scientist who was convicted of trying to kill US agents in Afghanistan will be sentenced next month in New York, her lawyers said. "The sentencing has been postponed until September 23," a lawyer for Aafia Siddiqui, Elaine Sharp told AFP. Sentencing had been set for August 16. Sharp also said that last month the defense had sought a lesser sentence than life in prison, citing Siddiqui's mental health. Siddiqui, 37 and a graduate of the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), was convicted in February of grabbing a gun and shooting at US officials who were questioning her at an Afghan police station in July 2008.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/world/us-sentencing-of-aafia-siddiqui-pushed-to-september-jd-04>)

WB to provide \$900m for flood victims

Daily Times, August 13, 2010

The World Bank has agreed to assist Pakistan with an amount of \$900 million for carrying out relief and reconstruction efforts in the flood-hit areas. The announcement was made after a meeting between Finance Minister Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh and World Bank's country director, Rachid Benmessaoud. In the meeting, the scope of the bank's support for the relief and reconstruction work with regard to the recent floods was discussed. The finance minister urged the World Bank to immediately initiate a damage-assessment survey in the flood-affected areas. Benmessaoud assured Hafeez that the process would be started next week.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\08\13\story_13-8-2010_pg1_4)

Zardari visits flood-hit area for the first time

The Express Tribune, August 13, 2010

President Asif Ali Zardari sought to fend off a public outcry over his response to the catastrophic floods countrywide by visiting a flood-hit area for the first time and handing out relief. The president visited Sukkur and was briefed about the damage and relief efforts in the densely populated southern province of Sindh, where the government said on Thursday that waters were receding. PTV broadcasted silent footage of Zardari, wearing a traditional Sindhi cap and patting the head of an elderly woman at a relief camp, before visiting Sukkur Barrage and viewing the water. The government has admitted to being overwhelmed, while Islamic charities have conducted a highly visible aid effort on the ground. Writing in *The Wall Street Journal* on August 11, 2010, Zardari defended his decision not to cut short his overseas tour, saying he had used his talks in London and Paris to drum up desperately needed foreign aid for the tragedy.

(Source: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/38871/zardari-visits-flood-hit-area-for-the-first-time/>)

Pakistan Floods Destroy

ABC, August 13, 2010

Pakistan's army has deployed about 60,000 troops for rescue and relief operations out of a force of about 550,000 soldiers. Doctors say that malaria, diarrhea and gastroenteritis are growing threats. More than 1,600 people are estimated to have been killed in the disaster, and out of 14 million severely affected, as many as 6 million will require longer term assistance. UN calls for \$459 million in aid for 14 million Pakistanis affected by crisis. The scale of the devastation is difficult to comprehend: All 41 bridges in Upper Dir district and more than 60 bridges in Swat district have been destroyed, and seven major landslides are blocking access by road to flood-stricken areas of Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Road access to some areas in the north-west has only just been restored, while some areas of the north-east remain completely inaccessible.

Pakistan's army is playing the leading role in rescue efforts after the worst floods in decades, but it will not divert forces from the battle against Islamist militants, military officials said on Friday.

(Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/International/Books/pakistan-floods-wipe-bridges-roads-world-news-roundup/story?id=11393237>)

Pakistan Says Won't Divert Forces From Militant Fight

New York Times, August 13, 2010

The floods, the country's most severe natural disaster, began two weeks ago and have killed more than 1,600 people, forced 2 million from their homes and disrupting the lives of about 14 million people, or 8 percent of the population. The army has deployed about 60,000 troops for rescue and relief operations out of a force of about 550,000 soldiers. Soldiers in helicopters and boats have plucked numerous survivors from the water that has inundated the Indus river basin. Army engineers are rebuilding broken bridges and washed-out roads while other units have set up relief camps. But there has been worry, especially in the United States, that the Pakistani military would have to withdraw some of its 140,000 soldiers fighting militants in ethnic Pashtun lands in the northwest, along the Afghan border, to help with the floods. The United States needs concerted Pakistani action on its side of the Afghan border as it struggles to suppress a raging Afghan Taliban insurgency supported from militant strongholds in Pakistan's wild northwest. But the military played down that worry. "The involvement of our troops in relief activities will have no impact on our fight against militants," said military spokesman Major-General Athar Abbas.

(Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2010/08/13/world/international-uk-pakistan-floods-military.html?ref=world>)

Pakistan Leader Faces Fury Over Floods

New York Times, August 14, 2010

With Pakistanis bracing for more rain and floods, President Asif Ali Zardari struggled August 13, 2010 to confront a barrage of criticism over his recent visit to

Europe, undertaken while rivers gorged by monsoon rains ravaged large portions of the country – a trip that critics have derided as “insensitive” and a “joy ride.” The flooding, which began in late July, has killed an estimated 1,600 people and affected 14 million, according to relief agencies. Aid agencies and the United Nations warned on that the disaster was still mounting, with devastating outbreaks of water-borne disease an additional likelihood. “We want to warn everyone that the crisis facing Pakistan is enormous,” said Mengesha Kebede, a representative of the United Nations refugee agency. “There continues to be massive destruction as the bloated rivers flow inexorably southwards across the plains.”

(Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/14/world/asia/14pstan.html>)

Suspected US missile strike ‘kills 12 in NW Pakistan’

BBC News, August 14, 2010

A suspected US drone missile strike in Pakistan has killed at least 12 militants in a tribal area near the Afghan border, Pakistani officials say. The strike hit a compound used by militants in Issori village in North Waziristan, the officials said. The region that has become a stronghold of the Taliban and al-Qaeda and has been repeatedly hit by similar attacks. Pakistan publicly objects to the strikes but analysts believe they have the private backing of officials. A BBC investigation in July found that more than 700 people had died in such drone strikes since January 2009, including a number of senior Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders, but the attacks have fuelled anti-American sentiment in Pakistan.

(Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-10977400>)

Gunmen kill 16 in Pakistan attacks: officials

AFP, August 14, 2010

Gunmen shot dead 16 people in two separate incidents in insurgency-hit southwest Pakistan, officials said on August 14, 2010. The first incident took place in Aab-e-Gum area, 75 kilometres (47 miles) southeast of Quetta, the capital of oil and gas rich Baluchistan province, on Friday night. “A group of 30-35 gunmen stopped the bus in Aab-e-Gum area, offloaded passengers at gunpoint and shot dead 10 of them,” top provincial home department official Akbar Hussain Durrani told AFP. He said the bus was travelling to Quetta from the eastern city of Lahore and all those killed in the attack were Punjabi-speaking people. A senior local official in Aab-e-Gum area, Ismail Kurd, confirmed the incident and casualties.

(Source: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ij8LWA4VTxLIMj8bRqohPRUIRog>)

Sri Lanka

LTTE attempting to play transnational terrorist game - Ex US Assistant Secretary

Daily News, August 5, 2010.

The boat carrying around 200 asylum seekers from Sri Lanka heading towards North America was part of an attempt by the Tigers to “create a network again

and play the transnational terrorist game," the Washington Post quoting former US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for South and Southeast Asia James Clad, reported yesterday. "I'm not an advocate for sending people back to their deaths, but that is just not happening in Sri Lanka," he said.

(Source: <http://www.dailynews.lk/2010/08/05/news03.asp>)

Sri Lanka opposition Tamil party suspends crossed-over MP from party

Colombo Page, August 6, 2010.

Sri Lanka's Democratic People's Front (DPF) has decided to suspend the membership of its Colombo District parliamentarian Prabha Ganeshan after he joined the government Thursday. Prabha Ganeshan is the younger brother of DPF Leader Mano Ganeshan. Mano Ganeshan, who is currently in Chennai on a private visit, has expressed shock and dismay at Prabha's move to join the government at a time the leader is overseas. Mano has called for disciplinary action against Prabha and together with the party members decided to suspend his membership.

(Source: http://www.colombopage.com/archive_10B/Aug06_1281074634JR.php)

Two MPs join ruling alliance in Sri Lanka

The Hindu, August 6, 2010.

The opposition in Sri Lanka on Thursday suffered a setback with two prominent parliamentarians announced their support to the government headed by President Mahinda Rajapaksa. The strength of the ruling alliance has now gone up to 146, excluding the Speaker, in a House of 225. The alliance is now short of four members for a two-thirds majority required to make amendments to the Constitution. The President's Secretariat here said, "Mr. Prabha Ganeshan of Democratic People's Front and Mr. P Digambaram of the National Workers Front announced their decision to extend support to the government at the Temple Trees today [August 5]. They spoke to the media in the presence of Mr. Rajapaksa and said they considered it their duty to support the government at this crucial juncture."

(Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article553837.ece>)

Sajith Premadasa is looking to lead the country, as Party leadership is too small for him

Asian Tribune, Augsut 10, 2010.

Sajith Premadasa is said to be vying for the position as the leader of the United National Party, but he pointed out that he was vying for the leadership of the country, as the Party leadership was too small for him. He categorically said that he possess the positive quality of his father and he certainly wants to negate whatever negative things that existed in his father's policy. Sajith Premadasa one of the leaders of United National Party, who was educated at the prestigious Royal College, Colombo and at the London School of Economics, has effectively turned out

to be a challenge to the leadership of Ranil Wickremasinghe, the present leader of the Party.

Source: <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/08/10/sajith-premadasa-looking-lead-country-party-leadership-too-small-him>)

Sri Lanka War Crimes/Tamil Issue hit US State Department again

Assam Tribune, August 13, 2010

While 57 US Congressmen sent a letter to the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressing doubt about Sri Lanka's accountability on alleged human rights violations during the final months of the battle against separatist Tamil Tigers last year, the congressional letter figured in the media briefing at the State Department Thursday August 12 while a question about Sri Lankan Tamil refugees sailing toward Canada. Meanwhile the Government of Sri Lanka after a lapse of eleven months issued a statement regarding the August 2009 "Report to Congress on measures taken by the Government of Sri Lanka and international bodies to investigate incidents during the recent conflict in Sri Lanka, and evaluating the effectiveness of such efforts" by the Office of War Crimes Issues of the State Department issued by Ambassador Stephen Rapp.

(Source: <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/08/13/sri-lanka-war-crime-tamil-issue-hit-us-state-department-again>)