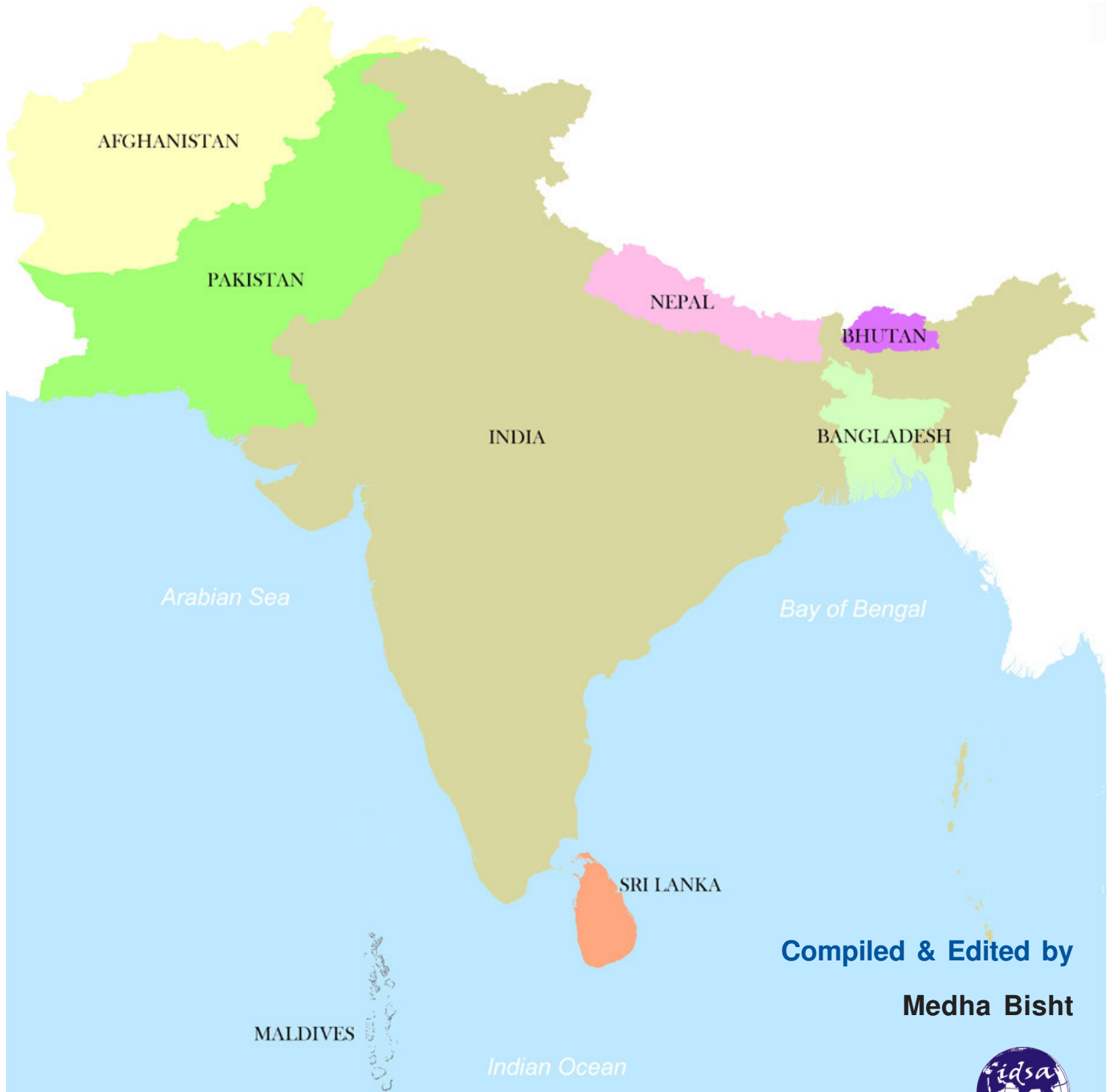


SOUTH ASIA TRENDS

Volume 2 Number 7 September 01-30, 2011

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.



Compiled & Edited by
Medha Bisht



Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

Editor's Note

The eve of September 20, 2011 was a set back to the Afghan peace process, as Burhanuddin Rabbani, Chairman of the High Peace Council got assassinated. With Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claiming responsibility for the assassination, many believe the Afghan crises will be further perpetuated in the coming months. Meanwhile cross border shelling, along with the allegation that the assassination of Rabbani was plotted outside the country has eclipsed the Afghan- Pakistan bilateral relations. Pakistan Prime Minister Gilani on his part has refuted such accusations by stating that "several countries have maintained direct contacts with the Haqqanis. Singling out Pakistan is not fair". This statement was seconded by Major General Athar Abbas's acknowledgement, who argued that, "any intelligence agency would like to maintain contact with whatever opposition group, whatever terrorist organization". He however added that, "there is a huge difference between maintaining contacts with such a group to facilitate peace and supporting it against an ally." Athar Abbas is the spokesman for the Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence.

Meanwhile, the US Treasury Department has slapped sanctions on the Haqqani network. Hajji Faizullah Noorzai, a prominent Taliban financier, his brother Hajji Malik Noorzai, Abdur Rehman, a Taliban facilitator, and Fazal Rahim, a financier of Al Qaeda are amongst those sanctioned. Given the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, India on its part has warned against any "hurry" in withdrawing troops from the country, stating in unequivocal terms that any withdrawal from a combat role in Afghanistan, will be at its own peril.

On Indo-Bangladesh bilateral engagement, Mamta Banerjee's last minute refusal to accompany the Indian delegation proved costly to India's sub-regional diplomacy with her Eastern neighbourhood. While the failing of the Teesta agreement was a reminder to the growing importance of state-centre relations in India's neighbourhood policy, the protests in Assam over the land swap accord, indicates the significance of such trends in near future. Chief Minister of Tripura Manik Sarkar has however said that Tripura will continue developing infrastructure including roads and railways so that it can take advantage of the transit facilities after the agreement and other issues are settled. However, India has agreed to exchange data on water availability in the Teesta river.

With recent internal developments in Karachi, pointing to political turmoil, institutions related to water distribution, management and policy implementation perhaps need attention. The flood crisis in Sindh is just one reminder to channelize attention to this marginalized area disaster preparedness. Various media reports attribute the causes of floods to climate change. Some other factors which have aggravated the crises are the flat terrain with poor drainage capacity and breaches in the Left Bank Outfall Drain in Sindh. The magnitude of impact is seen in the lives of millions of people who have been uprooted across the twenty-three districts of Sindh. As media reports flood the public domain, there is information building up on various water-borne diseases and health problems impinging the lives of the people at large.

Afghanistan

Karzai off to Tajikistan for quartet talks

Pajhwok, September 1, 2011

President Hamid Karzai, heading a high level official delegation, left for Tajikistan to join his Tajik, Russian and Pakistani counterparts in a quartet meeting scheduled for Friday in Dushanbe, an official said. The presidents of Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan are due to meet tomorrow on the international battle against terror and the war on drugs, as well as economic issues, deputy presidential spokesman, Hamid Almi, told Pajhwok Afghan News.

(Source:<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/09/01/karzai-tajikistan-quartet-talks>)

Strategic accord with US should serve national interest: Karzai

Pajhwok News, September 5, 2011

President Hamid Karzai has directed his security advisor to discuss with US officials the proposed strategic cooperation agreement, insisting the pact should serve Afghanistan's national interests, the Presidential Palace said on Sunday. Rangin Dadfar Spanta was directed this at a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) chaired by the president at his Palace on Sunday, the President's Office said in a statement. Interior minister Bismillah Mohammadi told the meeting that special steps were being taken to arrest or eliminate insurgents creating problems for welfare projects.

(Source: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/09/05/strategic-accord-us-should-serve-national-interest-karzai>)

Chinese Company Likely to Win Afghan Oil Extraction Bid

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, September 8, 2011

The Afghan Ministry of Mines said that a Chinese company is likely to win an oil extraction bid in northern Afghanistan. The Chinese company, CNPC International, has offered 15 per cent of oil to the Afghan government - the highest offer to the government – encouraging the ministry of mines to award the contract to the Chinese firm. The Amo river oil deposits exceeds 80 million barrels, according experts. A dozen companies had participated in the tender process and four companies provided their proposals on time, among them CNPC International.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news?post_id=1785)

US not seeking permanent military base in Afghanistan

Times of India, September 8, 2011

The US is not seeking any permanent military base in Afghanistan or a presence that would be a threat to any of its neighbours, the Obama administration said on Thursday. The statement came just before the start of a crucial US-Afghan talks on new strategic partnership. The Afghanistan National Security Advisor, Rangin Dadfar Spanta, is leading a high-power Afghan delegation for the two day talks that started on Thursday. The American delegation is led by the special

representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Marc Grossman and the special assistant to the President for Afghanistan and Pakistan Doug Lute.

(Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/US-not-seeking-permanent-military-base-in-Afghanistan/articleshow/9914250.cms>)

Al Qaeda leaders operate outside Afghanistan: ISAF

Pajhwok, September 11, 2011

Al Qaeda leaders are active outside Afghanistan, but they are unable to conduct major attacks like the 9/11 assaults, a spokesman for ISAF said. Carsten Jacobson told Pajhwok Afghan News during an exclusive interview that they were trying to target Al Qaeda leaders in all parts of the world. The September 11 attacks were carried out with four hijacked airplanes on the Pentagon in Washington and the World Trade Centre in New York, killing nearly 3,000 people and injuring many others.

(Source: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/09/11/al-qaeda-leaders-operate-outside-afghanistan-isaf>)

UN Can Help Facilitate Afghan Peace Talks: Ban

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, September 11, 2011

United Nations' Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the organization can help facilitate peace talks in Afghanistan. He also urged the international community not to abandon Afghanistan as troops withdraw. The UN chief stressed that while foreign combat troops are due to leave Afghanistan by 2014, this should not be seen as a full exit for the global community. "The international community has an obligation to continuously engage with Afghanistan even though ISAF members may withdraw their military engagement," Mr Ban said. "There is very serious insecurity," he added, saying that foreign forces could help strengthen the Afghan National Army and police. There are about 140,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan, 90,000 of which are from the US.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news?post_id=1815)

Security Transition Doesn't Mean Disengagement: Crocker

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, September 12, 2011

The US ambassador, reiterating his country's long-term commitment to Afghanistan, said on Sunday that security transition to Afghan forces from their international counterparts did not mean disengagement. "We are and will remain committed to Afghanistan and the region. We are in this for the long haul. We are transitioning security responsibility to Afghan forces, but transition does not mean disengagement," he said. Addressing an event marking the 10th death anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Ryan Crocker said Afghanistan and the US were working on a strategic partnership document that would define their relationship well beyond 2014 – when the transition process is scheduled to be completed.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news?post_id=1834)

No compromise on media freedom

Pajhwok News, September 13, 2011

A media support group said on Monday a compromise on press freedom in the name of peace talks between the government and insurgents would never be allowed. "Neither President Hamid Karzai nor the Afghan government reserves the right to compromise media freedom," said Siddiquallah Tawhidi, the Nai director. Tawhidi said basic freedoms, including the freedom of expression, could be compromised under the garb of negotiations between the authorities and the Taliban. Political compromises would not only damage the cause of peace but also impinge on 10 years of freedom, he warned, asking the *High Peace Council* to protect basic constitutional liberties.

(Source: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/09/12/no-compromise-media-freedom-nai>)

Elements in Pak Supporting Insurgency in Afghanistan': NATO

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, September 13, 2011

As US sets in motion phased withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan, NATO has said that elements in Pakistan are supporting insurgency in the war-torn country.

The US-led military grouping also said the security situation in both Pakistan and Afghanistan was 'far from satisfactory' even though Osama bin Laden and part of top Al-Qaeda leadership had been brought to justice. "We are certainly not anywhere near the point where the situation in Pakistan is satisfactory from a global or regional security perspective or that the situation in Afghanistan is satisfactory from a global or regional perspective, to have been completely free from the threat of Al-Qaeda," a top American official said.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news?post_id=1845)

Taliban attack Nato HQ, US embassy in Kabul

Hindustan Times, September 13, 2011.

Blasts and gunfire echoed through the Afghan capital Kabul today, as the Taliban said several attackers armed with rocket-propelled grenades and suicide vests were targeting government buildings near the embassy district. At least six loud explosions were interspersed with gunfire around the middle of the day. "There are several armed attackers in Abdul Haq Square," said Mohammad Zahir, head of Kabul's Crime Investigation Unit. Several Taliban attackers armed with rocket-propelled grenades, AK-47s and suicide vests have taken up positions in Kabul, near the embassy district, to attack government buildings, a spokesman for the insurgents said."

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/News-Feed/afghanistan/Taliban-attack-Nato-HQ-US-embassy-in-Kabul/Article1-745087.aspx>)

Al-Qaeda May Flee Afghanistan and S.Asia: Petraeus

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, September 15, 2011.

America's new intelligence chief David Petraeus has predicted that Al-Qaeda leaders may flee Afghanistan and the entire south Asia as they were being pressed hard by American forces. In his first week on the new job as the CIA chief, Petraeus said that within 18-24 months, the core of the Al-Qaeda could be degraded to the point that the group will fragment and exist mostly as a propaganda arm. The CIA chief said that eight of the al-Qaeda's top 20 leaders were killed this year alone, chief among them been their supremo Osama bin Laden.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news?post_id=1873)

Kabul Attack Won't Deter Commitment: US

Afghanistan Daily Outlook, September 15, 2011.

The latest attack on Kabul will not deter the American administration's commitment to the process of transitioning security from NATO-led troops to Afghan forces, the White House has said. "It's important to make clear that this will in no way deter our commitment to the mission, which is to provide for security, as we work to transition a security lead to Afghan national security forces," the White House press secretary said. As that mission has had important success, Jay Carney said, the US continued with and moved towards drawing down surge forces, and further training up and increasing the capacity of Afghan national security forces.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news?post_id=1870)

Prof. Rabbani Killed

Afghan Daily Outlook, September 21, 2011.

Professor Burhanuddin Rabani, Former President and head of Afghanistan Peace, Reconciliation and Reintegration Program (APRRP), set up by Afghan government to work toward a political solution with the Taliban, was assassinated Tuesday evening in Kabul by a suicide bomber concealing explosives in his turban. Four of Rabbani's bodyguards and a key presidential adviser, Mohammad Masoom Stanakzai, also died. Taliban expert and former deputy European Union special representative to Afghanistan, Michael Semple, described the attack as "one of the biggest blows the peace process in Afghanistan has faced". Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed responsibility for the attack outside. "Yes, we carried out the attack on Rabbani but will provide you other details shortly," he told Reuters.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news?post_id=1936)

Afghans mourn assassination; vow revenge

Afghan Daily Outlook, September 21, 2011

Jihadi and political leaders strongly condemned the murder of *High Peace Council* Chairman Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani on Wednesday, pledging to avenge his death.

The ex-president was assassinated along with three members of his panel in a suicide attack on his residence in the high-security Wazir Akbar Khan

neighborhood on Tuesday evening. Marshal Mohammad Qasem Fahim, the first vice president, said it was another outrageous incident. Afghanistan's enemies wanted prevent the march toward peace by silencing a voice of unity, he alleged. He insisted peace efforts would continue.

(Source: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/09/21/afghans-mourn-assassination-vow-revenge>)

2 dead in attack on CIA compound

Pajhwok News, September 26, 2011

One US citizen was killed and another wounded during an attack on a US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) compound, an annex to the US embassy, in the Afghan capital Kabul on Sunday night, the US embassy said on Monday. A US official confirmed to media the attack on the facility previously known as Ariana Hotel, located near the Presidential Palace.

(Source: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/09/26/2-dead-attack-cia-compound>)

Pak Not Responsible for US, NATO Forces' Security: Gilani

Daily Outlook Afghanistan, September 26, 2011

Pakistan Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has said that Pakistan cannot be held responsible for the security of the US, NATO, and ISAF forces in Afghanistan. "Several countries have maintained direct contacts with the Haqqanis. Singling out Pakistan is not fair. Pakistan cannot be held responsible for the security of US NATO/ISAF forces in Afghanistan. While there have been terrorist attacks in Kabul and Wardak, there have also been numerous attacks on Pakistan launched from sanctuaries and safe havens in Nuristan and Kunar in Afghanistan," The Nation quoted Gilani, as saying.

(Source: http://outlookafghanistan.net/news?post_id=1990)

ISAF investigating Pakistani shelling

Pajhwok, September 27, 2011

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is probing Pakistan's artillery shelling into eastern Afghanistan, a spokesman for the NATO-led force said on Tuesday. Afghan officials have accused the Pakistani Army of firing around 600 rockets into Kunar and Nuristan provinces, causing loss of life and property and displacing hundreds of families. An investigating team was established to assess Pakistan's artillery barrage into the two provinces, Carsten Jacobson told Pajhwok Afghan News. Jacobson said the areas pounded by Pakistani forces were far-flung and needed a minute probe.

(Source: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/09/27/isaf-investigating-pakistani-shelling>)

US promises not to leave Afghanistan alone

Pajhwok, September 28, 2011

The US and the international community can no longer afford to commit their past mistake of neglecting Afghanistan after the Soviet defeat, a top Obama

administration official said on Tuesday. As the United States had begun to draw down its forces and transfer the security responsibility to Afghans, it was ever mindful of the country's recent history and the terrible cost of neglect, Deputy Secretary of State William J Burns said, adding none of them could afford to make that mistake again.

(Source: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/09/28/us-promises-not-leave-afghanistan-alone>)

US slaps curbs on Taliban, Haqqani leaders

Pajhwok, September 30, 2011

Continuing with its tightening of the noose around Pakistan-based terror outfits, the US Treasury Department has announced sanctions on five top Taliban and Haqqani leaders. The announcement from the US Treasury Department came on Thursday ahead of the expected designation of the *Haqqani network* as a foreign terrorist organisation, which Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said is in its final stages. Hajji Faizullah Noorzai, a prominent Taliban financier, his brother Hajji Malik Noorzai, Abdur Rehman, a Taliban facilitator, and Fazal Rahim, a financier of Al Qaeda are among those sanctioned.

(Source: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/09/30/us-slaps-curbs-taliban-haqqani-leaders>)

India warns against hurry in troop withdrawal from Afghanistan

Times of India, September 30, 2011

Expressing concern over the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan, India today warned against any "hurry" in withdrawing troops from the country, saying such a move should be done keeping in mind the ground realities and not just to meet any deadline. "For peace, stability and security in Afghanistan, it is imperative that the ongoing transition must be linked to the ground realities rather than rigid timetables. This, the international community in its hurry to withdraw from a combat role in Afghanistan, will ignore at its own peril," India's Permanent Representative to the UN Hardeep Singh Puri said.

(Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/India-warns-against-hurry-in-troop-withdrawal-from-Afghanistan/articleshow/10182046.cms>)

Bangladesh

Mamata to come Dhaka separately

Daily Star, September 1, 2011

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will travel to Bangladesh separately to join Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's delegation during the latter's two-day official visit here. Mamata will join the PM's delegation travelling from Kolkata instead of Delhi, reports our New Delhi correspondent Pallab Bhattacharya.

(Source: http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=31973)

Mamata testy with Teesta, 'won't come'

Bangladesh news, September 4, 2011

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee is not accompanying Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday as she is believed to be not happy with the final draft of the interim Teesta river water-sharing deal. The deal was set to be inked during the high-profile visit of Manmohan beginning Tuesday.

(Source: <http://www.bdnews24.com/details.php?id=205063&cid=52>)

Teesta deal hangs in balance

Bangladesh News, September 5, 2011

Barely 24 hours before the high-profile visit by the Indian prime minister, the fate of the much-hyped deal on sharing of the common river Teesta now hangs in the balance. Indian foreign secretary Ranjan Mathai has said any agreement between New Delhi and Dhaka on sharing of Teesta water would have to be acceptable to the West Bengal government headed by chief minister Mamata Banerjee as well as to Bangladesh. He confirmed that the proposed deal on sharing of water of river Feni between Bangladesh and India were on track. He, however, remained non-committal on the deal on Teesta.

(Source: <http://www.bdnews24.com/details.php?cid=52&id=205145&hb=top>)

India postpones Teesta water sharing deal

Daily Star, September 5, 2011

India has postponed the proposed Teesta water sharing deal with Bangladesh amid opposition from West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Indian foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai told the press in New Delhi Monday afternoon that nothing will be done without acceptance by West Bengal. Talking to The Daily Star following the airing of the news Monday afternoon, Mashiur Rahman, the prime minister's economic affairs adviser, said: "We are not officially informed about this." Indian Tara TV quoted the foreign secretary as saying the pact scheduled to be signed during Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's two-day visit to Dhaka from Tuesday has been scrapped. This is mainly because of the objection raised by the West Bengal chief minister.

(Source: http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=32060)

BNP not against India

Daily Star, September 6, 2011.

During her meeting with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will try to assure him that she is not against India as a whole but against certain policies, party sources said. A number of BNP leaders in return for anonymity told The Daily Star that Khaleda will also stress the need for considering public sentiment before signing any deals. In November last year, Khaleda Zia categorically said her party will not allow any foreign vehicle in

Bangladesh in the name of transit. She also opposed the government plan to set up a power plant jointly with India in Bagerhat.

(Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=201338>)

Reasons for U-turn

Daily Star, September 6, 2011.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has thrown a wrench into the signing of Teesta water-sharing treaty, claiming she has not been consulted about the final draft of the deal. Indian Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai yesterday said no agreement will be signed without consultation with the West Bengal government, reports our New Delhi correspondent. Mathai was speaking at a press conference at the external affairs ministry on the eve of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Dhaka. He said, "The subject of water is a sensitive issue. We have been trying to arrive at an agreement on Teesta, which is acceptable to all parties. "In our federal scheme of things, nothing is done or will be done without consultation with the state government.

(Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=201325>)

Mongla port ready with transit facilities

The Financial Express, September 6, 2011.

Two delegations of Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Nepal and Bhutan visited the Mongla port recently inspect the infrastructure of it as a transit port. The teams expressed satisfaction over all facility and security of the port. The Mongla Port is nearly ready to provide transit to India, Nepal and Bhutan. Sources said that there are loading unloading facilities for 33 ships at a time. The port has 35 river transports to carry those ships and for other uses. There are sufficient space facility for container and frozen goods in the port.

(Source: http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=148596&date=2011-09-07)

Manmohan stresses integrated sub-regional cooperation

Daily Star, September 7, 2011.

Visiting Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh on Wednesday emphasised integrated sub-regional cooperation among Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan for rapid development of this region. Manmohan made the remark when he met President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban. About investment, the Indian PM said his country is keen to increase its trade, investment and cooperation in various sectors of Bangladesh, including power, in the future. Manmohan also stressed the need for mutual cooperation between India and Bangladesh for implementing effective counterterrorism strategy between the two countries.

(Source: http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=32114)

I'm committed to signing Teesta deal: Manmohan

Daily Star, September 8, 2011

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad and top brass of the 11-party alliance of left-leaning parties yesterday conveyed their displeasure to Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and called upon him to sign the Teesta water sharing deal with Bangladesh soon. Leaders of Jatiya Party and the 11 parties, also components of the Awami League-led grand coalition, made the urge separately as they called on the visiting Indian premier at the city's Sonargaon Hotel. In reply, Manmohan assured the leaders of inking the Teesta water agreement soon.

(Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=201525>)

PM says sorry for Teesta, promises new formula

Business Standard, September 8, 2011

At Dhaka University this morning, the seat of both ferment and higher learning, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh apologised for India and Bangladesh's inability to come to an agreement on sharing the waters of the Teesta and Feni rivers, but promised that Delhi would not be found lacking in soon finding a viable formula. "Both sides worked very hard to arrive at a solution that would be acceptable to all," Manmohan Singh said, referring to the last-minute breakdown of talks with West Bengal chief minister, adding, "Unfortunately, these efforts did not meet with success within the time available."

(Source: <http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/pm-says-sorry-for-teesta-promises-new-formula/448454/>)

Bangladesh's main oppn calls Singh's visit "failure"

MSN News, September 8, 2011

Bangladesh's main opposition BNP today called Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's Dhaka visit largely "a failure" due to "weak diplomacy" of the Hasina government, while the mainstream media said the deferring of the Teesta water-sharing pact dealt a "severe blow" to bilateral ties. "Even though the government terms the visit historic, Bangladesh did not get anything worthwhile," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told a press briefing, a day after Singh concluded his maiden visit here. He said BNP wanted to blame Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government for "weak diplomacy."

(Source: <http://news.in.msn.com/international/article.aspx?cp-documentid=5423195>)

Assam protests India-Bangladesh land exchange

Zee News, September 8, 2011

The land swap accord between India and Bangladesh has triggered angry protests in Assam with border villagers, student groups and the opposition calling it an 'act of betrayal' and vowing not to let the territories be handed over to Bangladesh. Under the deal, India would get back 111 disputed enclaves under adverse

possession of Bangladesh, while 55 such enclaves would go to Bangladesh. "The deal is nothing but an act of betrayal.

(Source: http://zeenews.india.com/news/assam/assam-protests-india-bangladesh-land-exchange_730515.html)

Let's focus on achievements

Daily Star, September 11, 2011

Chief Minister of Tripura Manik Sarkar said the Indian prime minister's recent visit to Dhaka may have had more misses than hits but the achievements should not be overshadowed by disappointments. His remarks came after India backed off from the Teesta water-sharing deal during Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's two-day Dhaka visit. The Teesta deal postponement also led to the Feni water-sharing deal being shelved and deferment of the exchange of letter of intent about India's transit facility, which India has been pressing for. Manik favoured stressing on the achievements that came out of the summit meeting instead of focusing on the failures.

(Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=201956>)

Dredging gone hibernating

Daily Star, September 13, 2011

Gross negligence in conducting timely dredging to keep the ferry channels in the Padma navigable has led to the disruption of ferry services between Mawa and Paturia, causing sufferings to thousands of people. Officials of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC), which operates the ferry service, said they had repeatedly warned Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) in the recent past about rapid loss of navigability of the Padma and the Jamuna, but nothing was done timely to dredge and keep the ferry channels fit for service.

(Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=202262>)

Enclave people declare 10-day agitation

Daily Star, September 16, 2011

Enclave people of Bangladesh and India yesterday declared a 10-day agitation programme from 23 September demanding early implementation of the enclave exchange deal between the two countries. Chairman of Shalbari Indian enclave Sirajul Islam announced the programme at a press conference held of Garati enclave in Panchagarh Sadar upazila. Chairman of Puthimari enclave Toslimuddin, Joy Prokash of Nagirganj enclave, Mokhlesar Rahman of Kajoldighi enclave, Abul Hossain of Natoktoka enclave were present.

(Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=202660>)

Trade with Nepal awaits a big leap

Daily Star, September 18, 2011

Bilateral trade between Bangladesh and Nepal is likely to increase significantly as India has recently allowed Bangladesh an additional rail transit route to land-locked Nepal. The route between Rohanpur of Bangladesh and Singabhad of India will be used to facilitate transit traffic between Bangladesh and Nepal. Bangladesh and India signed an addendum to a 1978 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between themselves on September 6 in this regard. Finance ministry officials hoped the trade volume will shoot up after a high-level meeting between the two countries scheduled for next November in Dhaka.

(Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=202931>)

Mahanta stages dharna against Indo-Bangla pact

Times of India, September 20, 2011

There's no let-up in protests against the recent land-swap deal signed between India and Bangladesh. In a token agitation on Monday, former chief minister and AGP leader Prafulla Mahanta staged a dharna at city's Gandhi Mandap and torched a copy of the deal to register his opposition to the Centre's decision to give away a major chunk of Assam's land to the neighbouring country. Mahanta said he chose Gandhi Mandap as the protest venue because the Father of the Nation had showed his love for Assam. "

(Source: http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-09-20/guwahati/30179909_1_tarun-gogoi-agp-leader-dispur)

Teesta water deal to be signed soon: Hasina

Hindustan Times, 21 September, 2011.

Prime minister Sheikh Hasina has said India and Bangladesh will soon ink a pact on Teesta water sharing, but refused to specify any timeline for the landmark deal. "I will not mention any specific timeline for it. Rather, I will say that it is a matter of time. The two countries will ink the Teesta deal through discussion," Hasina told top leaders of the ruling Awami League in the capital.

(Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Teesta-water-deal-to-be-signed-soon-Hasina/Article1-747259.aspx>)

Bangladesh banning Jamaat-e-Islami

Blitz, September 24, 2011.

Ruling Bangladesh Awami League government is actively considering banning Jamaat-e-Islami from political activities in the country. It was disclosed by a number of highly placed sources in the ruling party. Top policymakers of the ruling party has lately taken up the issue of banning Jamaat very seriously following the recent muscle-flexing of this Islamist party on the street of the capital city as well as other parts of Bangladesh, which according to local intelligence sources is the "clear

sign of Jamaat's gaining tremendous strength in staging any sort of destructive policies against the ruling party."

(Source: <http://www.weeklyblitz.net/1835/bangladesh-banning-jamaat-e-islami>)

Our land in adverse Bangla possession coming back: Gogoi

IBN Live, September 26, 2011

Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi today hit out at Opposition parties for their "campaign against the recent Indo-Bangladesh land swap agreement." Countering the opposition to the land deal, Gogoi accused the Asom Gana Parishad, BJP and All Assam Students Union of being "rather pro-Bangladesh by opposing the return of Assam's land as agreed in the land swap deal." "Our land in adverse possession of Bangladesh is coming back to us and they don't want it! They want the area should instead remain in possession of Bangladesh," Gogoi told a Congress rally here. "The AGP, BJP and AASU have woken up now when the agreement has been signed to reclaim our land. Did they ever make any proposal for getting back our land?" he asked.

(Source: <http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/our-land-in-adverse-bangla-possession-coming-back-gogoi/835255.html>)

Indian FIs do not favor Bangladesh imports

Fashion United, September 26, 2011

While the Indian government and many top Indian brands may be gung ho about signing an agreement with Bangladesh to allow duty-free access of 46 textile as well as 15 non-textile items, banks and financial institution (FIs) in India are not so upbeat about it. In fact, many Indian banks and FIs have been given subtle guidelines to discourage importers from opening letters of credit for the import of textile products from Bangladesh. Reason: more than 200,000 people manufacturing apparel in 5,000 factories is fearing tremendous adversity following the signing of the trade protocol.

(Source: <http://www.fashionunited.in/news/apparel/indian-fis-do-not-favor-bangladesh-imports-260920112537>)

Ulfa chief Paresh Baruah a millionaire, reveal documents

Times of India, September 27, 2011

Times Now has accessed papers detailing of Ulfa army commander Paresh Baruah's investments. Documents reveal how Paresh Baruah invested millions in Bangladesh. From investments in real estate, shipping, textile, power to medical care firms, sources have told TIMES NOW that Baruah has a widespread financial network in Bangladesh and so does not want to return to India. A dreaded terrorist on the run, the whereabouts of Paresh Baruah the Ulfa army commander is unknown. Even as he remains elusive, documents with Times Now show that Baruah invested millions in Bangladesh.

(Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Ulfa-chief-Paresh-Baruah-a-millionaire-reveal-documents/articleshow/10137052.cms>)

China favours regional connectivity

Daily Star, September 27, 2011

China favours regional connectivity for the benefit of the South Asian countries, Chinese Ambassador in Bangladesh Zhang Xianyi said yesterday. The ambassador said China likes to be connected to Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Thailand, Myanmar and Laos. Asked about the proposed transit between Bangladesh and India, he said "It is an issue between Bangladesh and India but in principle China always supports connectivity if it is good and beneficial for all the countries." Zhang dismissed media reports that China is withdrawing waters from the Yarlungzangbu river, known as the Brahmaputra in Bangladesh and India. "

(Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=204181>)

Bangladesh gains from China's rising cost base

Asia Times, September 28, 2011.

Bangladesh is proving to be one of the winners in global trade as China loses its position as the world's lowest-cost manufacturer of consumer goods due to increasing labor costs and an aging workforce, according to KPMG International. Other new sourcing locations attracting international companies include India, Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia.

While "no single country can match the scale of China, countries such as Bangladesh have large low-wage workforces that are now starting to be employed, while Southeast Asian countries are making moves to remove tariffs and customs restrictions," says a KPMG report, "Product Sourcing in Asia Pacific: New locations, extended value chain".

(Source: http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/MI28Df01.html)

Bangladesh government claims detecting terror fund from Kuwait and Saudi

Blitz, September 28, 2011

Bangladesh government has detected an annual inflow of US\$ 15 million suspected terror funding from dubious sources in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, which came to International Islamic University [IIU] situated in Chittagong in the country as "grant". Pro-Vice Chancellor of IIU, Abu Bakar Rafique has been arrested on his way to Kuwait from Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittagong. It is alleged that, IIU was connected with a number of leaders of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami and some of the leaders of the party were receiving monthly honorarium or allowances from it.

(Source: <http://www.weeklyblitz.net/1847/bangladesh-government-claims-detecting-terror>)

Hasina felt indebted to India for support: Wiki

Zee News, September 29, 2011.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina felt "indebted" to India for supporting her during her imprisonment under the previous military-backed interim regime,

and had authorised her adviser to open an exclusive channel of negotiation with New Delhi, unknown even to the Foreign Ministry.

(Source: http://zeenews.india.com/news/nation/hasina-felt-indebted-to-india-for-support-wiki_734125.html)

India, Bangladesh to exchange Teesta river data

Economic Times, September 30, 2011.

India and Bangladesh will exchange data on water availability in the Teesta river, an official said. The two countries were not able to ink an accord on sharing of the Teesta river water during the Sep 6-7 visit of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Dhaka.

The Daily Star reported that Bangladesh will ask India for 15 years' data on water availability in the Teesta. New Delhi has asked for similar data. "We were supposed to exchange the hydrological data for a permanent treaty. But Dhaka was keen on signing an interim treaty while we collect and analyse the data," Sheikh Wahiduzzaman, secretary to the water resources ministry of Bangladesh, was quoted as saying.

(Source: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics/nation/india-bangladesh-to-exchange-teesta-river-data/articleshow/10182650.cms>)

Bhutan

Danish assistance ends

Kuensel, September 1, 2011.

After 22 years, the country's second biggest development partner, Denmark, is phasing out its program assistance to Bhutan, with a final commitment of 50M Danish kroner (Nu 440M). The 50M is the Danish government's assistance for the transition period from July this year until June 2015. On August 30, a high level biennial consultation, which is also the last, was held between the Bhutanese and the Danish government to review bilateral cooperation. "This year's consultation is significant as it's the final consultation in the present format, prior to phasing out of the Danish programme country assistance to Bhutan," a joint press statement from the foreign ministry stated. From 1989 until the end of the 10th Five Year Plan, the total Danish assistance to Bhutan amounts to 1.9B Danish kroner (Nu 16.72B).

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=20630>)

Bhutan should mainstream climate change

Kuensel, September 5, 2011.

Bhutan's environmental policies, which are admired world over, are at risk of reversal from the threats of climate change. This is a challenge to which the Bhutanese must rise to, although it's not of its making, stated the recently launched Human Development Report. "Sustaining Bhutan's human development progress must form a national priority and the basis for international cooperation," the report stated. "Actions to address climate change by the government should now be

aligned by the Five Year Plans. At the moment, there is no specific national policy or program for climate change adaptation and mitigation for Bhutan to guide external assistance, apart from the National Adaptation Plan of Action.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=20663>)

“Emulate Japanese engineers”

Kuensel, September 9, 2011.

The quality of bridges constructed by Japanese should be an example for Bhutanese engineers, the works and human settlement minister, Yeshey Zimba, said. Although Bhutanese and Japanese engineers share the same technical knowledge, Lyonpo said, the workmanship the Japanese exhibit was appreciable. “I’d urge Bhutanese engineers to learn from them,” he said. Bhutan has sought the Japanese government’s help to finance and construct the Maokhola bridge in Gelephu, because a bridge over Maokhola needs technical expertise to make it resist annual floods.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=20708>)

Wikileaks releases cables on bhutan: American Embassy Uncovers Smuggling Of Bhutanese Citizens To The Us

September 9, 2011.

Of the several cables released by Wikileaks on Bhutan, three cables show how large numbers of Bhutanese citizens are illegally being smuggled to the United States of America under the guise of cultural troupes and tourist visas. It says Bhutanese people are organizing human smuggling. A 2010 cable says that a group of so called Bhutanese cultural performers was the front for human smuggling to the US. The trip was organized by Sonam Phuntsho (proprietor of Sonam Kuenphen School in Bumthang) and his son Gyembo Dorji.

(Source: <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/?p=7451>)

wikileaks: druk air’s nu 4.5mn frozen for violating us sanctions on myanmar

Business Bhutan, September 10, 2011

The military regime of Myanmar and Druk Air has something in common – both would benefit from the economic sanctions being lifted on Burma by the United States. A Wikileaks cable says that in 2003, the United States government froze US\$ 97,707 (Nu 4.5mn) of Druk Air’s money which was in the process of being transferred to Myanmar. The money was for the Myanmar Civil Aviation Department to pay navigation charges for using their airspace. All Druk Air flights to Bangkok and back have to use the Myanmar airspace.

(Source: <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/?p=7453>)

A few might-drag-feet projects

Kuensel, September 10, 2011

The country may not be able to complete all of its 10-hydropower projects to generate 10,000MW by 2020, as has been its aspiration. Druk Green Power Corporation officials fear some of the hydropower projects may be delayed. Corporation's chief executive officer, Dasho Chhewang Rinzin, said the 1,800MW Kuri-Gongri power project, at the confluence of Kurichu and Dangmechu in Kengkhar, Mongar, probably the biggest plant planned in the east, might be delayed by a year or two.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=20729>)

Bad geological make up at punatshangchu I site poses major construction hurdles

Business Bhutan, September 10, 2011

The ongoing construction of the Punatsangchu I hydropower project is experiencing unexpected hiccups due to the unstable composition of the geological strata of rocks putting engineers' skills and patience to test. Since the construction work began at the hydro project site in March 2009, engineers had to reorient the location of the power house by 90 meters to avoid shear zones. The earlier feasibility studies conducted for the project had not revealed the presence of shear zones, say engineers.

(Source: <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/?p=7486>)

Remaining carbon neutral means sacrificing potential revenue

Business Bhutan, September 11, 2011.

A conspicuous fallout to Bhutan's commitment to remain carbon neutral for all times to come, that was made at the 15th session of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, is that it may result in potential revenue loss for the country. A recent report 'Bhutan National Human Development Report 2011, Sustaining Progress: Rising to the Climate Challenge' revealed that Bhutan's declaration to remain carbon neutral comes at a cost.

(Source: <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/?p=7484>)

India, Bhutan step up border vigil to check movement of ultras

Rediff News, September 16, 2011.

With militants belonging to anti-talks faction of National Democratic Front of Bodoland and Kamatapur Liberation Organisation trying to strike fresh routes along the thickly forested and rugged terrain on the India-Bhutan border in North East and North Bengal (West Bengal), both the countries have decided to mount vigil along the border. Land-locked Bhutan shares a 605 kilometer border with India and out of that a major portion lies along the boundaries of Assam, West

Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh. The anti-talks faction of the NDFB ultras have a strong bastion along the border with Bhutan in North Assam, while the KLO ultras too are active along the border in North Bengal areas.

(Source: <http://www.rediff.com/news/report/india-bhutan-step-up-border-vigil-to-check-movement-of-ultras/20110916.htm>)

Dispensing with the armed escort

Kuensel, September 21, 2011.

Bhutanese travelling through Assam, India, to reach destinations along the southern border, may not have to spend time waiting to be escorted by Indian security services. The Bhutanese government has proposed that the escort service be lifted. "Lifting the security escort services by sashastra seema bal (SSB) to Bhutanese civilian convoys travelling through subsidiary routes off NH (national highway) 31 in Assam was one of the main issues discussed at the seventh Bhutan India meeting on border management and security last week in New Delhi," the secretary for home and cultural affairs ministry, Dasho Penden Wangchuk, who led the seven-member delegation from Bhutan, said.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=20851>)

Lyonchhoen meets PMs of Kuwait and Albania

Lyonchhoen Jigmi Y Thinley met with the prime minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in New York yesterday afternoon. Lyonchhoen thanked the prime minister for the Kuwait government's support extended to Bhutan over the years, and in particular for the very generous assistance that Bhutan received in the aftermath of a severe cyclone and earthquake in 2009. The two leaders discussed several issues of mutual concern and interest. Lyonchhoen also met with the prime minister of Albania, Dr Sali Berisha, at the UN building in New York, marking the first high level contact between the two countries.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=20848>)

Lyonchhoen speaks at Asia Society

The Kuensel, September 21, 2011.

Speaking to about a hundred people at the Asia Society headquarters in New York yesterday on "Bhutan's role in promoting peace and prosperity in South Asia", Bhutanese PM Jigmi Y Thinley said that one thing Bhutan has done and continues to do is to hold on to its dream - a yearning - for a South Asia that is peaceful, cooperative, prosperous and happy. "For a small country, it is not with modesty that I declare Bhutan's ability as being limited by economic and demographic incapacities among others," Lyonchhoen said.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=20845>)

Korean aid for Bhutanese dharamsala

Kuensel, September 24, 2011.

Bhutan received USD 10,000 from Korea Lotus association for world enlightenment as a token support to lay the foundation for building a Buddhist temple and guesthouse for Bhutanese pilgrims at Rajgiri district in Bihar, India.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=20898>)

A joint foundation project

Kuensel, September 25, 2011.

The Tarayana foundation will soon receive a sum of 35,000 euro from Austria-based ALSTOM Foundation to buy and distribute eco-stoves for rural communities in the central district of Dagana. A project titled "Kingdom of Bhutan, Eco-Stoves for a Rural Community" was signed between the ALSTOM and Tarayana foundations on September 20. The committed amount will start to be disbursed by the end of October this year. "Due to the limited electrification and accessibility of the sparsely populated and poor area, most households rely on burning of wood and other biomass for cooking and heating," Tarayana foundation's secretary general, Chimi P Wangdi, said. "As a result, remaining forest areas are continually degrading and in-house and environmental smoke pollution is substantial."

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=20902>)

No dent despite downsizing

Kuensel, September 27, 2011

The downsizing of the proposed 4060 MW Sankosh hydropower project by almost half, as decided during the seventh empowered joint group (EJG) meeting in New Delhi last week, will not affect Bhutan's target of generating 10,000 MW by 2020. "There is enough cushion and the total capacity of the ten projects will still be higher than 10,000MW, while some are expected to be increased in capacity," department of energy officials said. According to their calculations, even with Sankosh's generation slashed, total capacity will be around 10,045 MW. But downsizing Sankosh to a 2,585 MW project makes it economically viable in terms of cost and the rate at which it can sell the energy generated. The dam's height will be reduced from the earlier 265m to 225m concrete gravity dam, which will bring down overall cost by 30 percent.

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=20924>)

Maldives**MenaFN.com, September 27, 2011**

The Maldives government said that since the country planned to become the world's first carbon neutral nation, by 2020, the country would plan to generate 60 percent of electricity from solar power, reported Xinhua News. The government added that shifting to the use of solar would enhance Maldives' energy security since the

country had large quantity of sunshine, moreover, around 80 percent of the used electricity could be generated from renewable energy without raising the cost of energy. It also said that since the country's economy depended on imported oil, whenever oil price rose the nation suffered, therefore, it would save the Maldives a lot of money when it would generate electricity from solar power. It is worth noting that the country will invest between USD3 billion and USD5 billion over the next decade to develop solar power.

(Source: <http://www.power-eng.com/news/2011/09/1507273988/maldives-plans-to-generate-60-of-electricity-from-solar-power.html>)

Contentions put to rest

Kuensel, September 28, 2011

The empowered joint group meeting held last week in New Delhi put an end to the contentions between the Indian public sector units (IPSUs) and Druk Green Power corporation. It was decided that implementation of joint venture power projects will be governed by the laws and regulations of Bhutan. A memorandum of understanding to this effect between the two public sector units will be signed in October this year, according to officials of the economic affairs ministry. Initially, the IPSUs had raised several issues on royalty payment, project ownership and reversion period, which means the transfer of projects to Bhutan after the concession period. "The issues were raised on the grounds of project viability," economic affairs secretary, Dasho Sonam Tshering said. "The IPSUs considered the projects wouldn't be viable if they have to pay royalty."

(Source: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=20933>)

India, Bhutan sign MoU on electoral cooperation

Zee News, September 28, 2011.

India and Bhutan have extended their cooperation on electoral cooperation and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Chief Election Commissioners of both the countries. As per the MoU, signed between India's Chief Election Commissioner S Y Quraishi and Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan Dasho Kunzang Wangdi, the two countries have agreed to exchange knowledge and experience, information, material, expertise and technical knowhow, training of personnel and development of human resources in electoral matters for a period of five years. The two have also decided to take up joint initiatives and provide assistance to others.

(Source: http://zeenews.india.com/news/nation/india-bhutan-sign-mou-on-electoral-cooperation_733948.html)

Cuba Headlines, September 29, 2011

In the framework of the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly underway in New York, Cuba and the Kingdom of Bhutan established diplomatic relations.

The Cuban Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bruno Rodriguez, and the Acting Foreign

Minister of Bhutan, Daw Penjo, penned on Monday at the UN headquarters, the agreement marking the official beginning of bonds between their countries. Cuba currently maintains diplomatic relations with 184 countries out of 193 UN member states, according to a report published by Granma newspaper today.

(Source: http://www.cubaheadlines.com/2011/09/29/33972/cuba_and_bhutan_settled_diplomatic_relations.html)

EC grants license to create Gayoom's Progressive Party

Haveeru, September 8, 2011.

Elections Commission today granted the license to create former President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom's Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM). In a statement, the commission said the license was granted as the required 50 out of the 703 signatures submitted along with the application were found to be authentic. Under Article six of the regulation on political parties, PPM should get 3,000 signatures and apply to register the party within nine months, the commission added. The commission stressed that the party is also required to hold a meeting with a minimum number of 300 attendees in order to take decisions on the party's charter and manifesto.

(Source: <http://www.haveeru.com.mv/english/details/38119>)

Democracy growing, but gender equality a key issue: UNDP

Minivan News, September 15, 2011

Youth in civil society were widely recognised as a key factor for democratic growth in the Maldives. UN Advisor on Social Cohesion and Governance, Ferdinand von Habsburg-Lothringen, delivered the opening speech. "Civil society in the Maldives is impressive. It is an important avenue for young people to engage with their community and to hold leaders accountable," he said. Habsburg-Lothringen noted that "democracy is still a new concept in the Maldives, and will take many years to mature," and encouraged the Maldivian government to enact "crucial" laws, such as the penal code. Gender equality remains one of the biggest issues in the Maldives, said Habsburg-Lothringen. He noted that only 5 of the 77 MPs are female.

(Source: <http://minivannews.com/politics/democracy-growing-but-gender-equality-a-key-issue-undp-25645>)

Maldives assures support for Sri Lanka amidst UN allegations

Haveeru, September 27, 2011

Vice President Dr. Mohammed Waheed Hassan has assured to Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa that the Maldives would back Sri Lanka, which has come under fire by the United Nations and several western countries over allegations of war crimes and violations of human rights. A senior Sri Lankan government official who is currently in New York attending the 66th session of the UN General Assembly told Haveeru that President Mahinda Rajapaksa met with Vice President Waheed in New York during the weekend in which he discussed several issues.

(Source: <http://www.haveeru.com.mv/english/details/38442>)

Meet to set agenda for SAARC summit

The Himalayan Times, September 29, 2011

Senior officials, experts and academia from all eight member-states of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) are meeting in the Maldives on October 8-9 to find ways and means to strengthen SAARC's institutional mechanism and facilitate regional cooperation and integration. Former SAARC secretary generals, heads of SAARC divisions of the member-states, directors of the SAARC Secretariat, representatives from the regional academia, civil society and experts on ASEAN and EU institutional mechanisms are taking part in the two-day brainstorming on the regional bloc's activities in its 25-year history and future course, said Dr Niranjana Man Singh Basnyat, spokesperson for the SAARC Secretariat.

(Source: <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Meet+to+set+agenda+for+SAARC+summit&NewsID=304362>)

European Union welcomes Maldives ratifying the Rome Statute

Asian Tribune, September 30, 2011

European Union welcomes Maldives ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The 118th accession to the Rome statute by Maldives on 21 September 2011, represents an important milestone in advancing towards universal ratification of the International Criminal Court. Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, issued the following statement: "I warmly welcome the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court by the Maldives on 21 September 2011 and congratulate the Government of the Maldives on its achievement. With its decision, the Maldives once more confirmed its commitment to the rule of law.

(Source: <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2011/09/29/european-union-welcomes-maldives-ratifying-rome-statute>)

Nepal

Speaker suggests PM okay budget soon

My Republica, September 1, 2011.

Speaker Subas Nembang has urged Prime Minister Dr Baburam Bhattarai to take the initiative to endorse the government's annual budget through parliament. The budget was presented by finance minister in the outgoing government Bharatmohan Adhikari. Nembang told the prime minister that there was no point delaying endorsement of the budget as parliament had already endorsed the vote-on-account bill that mandates the government to spend one-third of the budget. Nembang suggested to the prime minister to hold talks with other political parties on endorsing the budget. He has called the next parliamentary meeting for September 5.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=35469)

Nepal's former Maoist rebels hand over their weapons

BBC News, September 2, 2011

Nepal's governing former Maoist rebels have handed over their weapons to a multi-party committee tasked with overseeing the peace process. The move follows the swearing in of Maoist Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai on Monday. The handing over of the weapons marks a major step towards completing Nepal's five-year-old peace process.

(Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-14753201>)

Admit wrong doing, we'll join govt: CP Gajurel

My Republica, September 5, 2011

UCPN (Maoist) Secretary CP Gajurel said on Sunday the internal dispute recently surfaced in the party could be resolved if party Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Vice-chairman and Prime Minister Dr Baburam Bhattarai admit that the party's decision to hand over the keys of arms containers was 'flawed'. Speaking at a program in the capital this afternoon, Gajurel, who is close to Vice-chairman Mohan Baidya, the faction led by whom has decided to stay out of the government, said the protest drive being launched by the faction is not for revocation of the decision but for countering the move that he said has come against the party line.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=35617)

New Nepal PM to visit India

Times of India, September 7, 2011.

Nepal's new Prime Minister Dr Baburam Bhattarai, whose election last month generated widespread interest and enthusiasm in India and sparked hope in Nepal after the failure of three earlier governments, will pay his first official visit to India, possibly end of this month. While the exact dates are yet to be finalised, Bhattarai's wife Hisila Yami told journalists on Wednesday that he would avail of Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's invitation to visit New Delhi on his return from New York on Sep 24. The 57-year-old premier will be attending the 66th UN General Assembly that opens on Sep 13. The new Indian ambassador to Nepal, Jayant Prasad, called on Bhattarai on Wednesday, his first since Bhattarai won the election on Aug 28, to discuss the visit and its agenda.

(Source: http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-09-07/south-asia/30122196_1_bhattarai-pushpa-kamal-dahal-prachanda-hisila-yami)

Gachchhadar unveils security plan

My Republica, September 8, 2011

In a bid to improve law and order in the country, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) on Wednesday unveiled relief and reform programs. Aimed at strengthening security and good governance in the country, the new measures are expected to instill a sense of safety and security among the people. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs Bijay Kumar Gachchhadar unveiled the

programs at a press meet in the presence of chiefs of three security agencies and Secretary of MoHA Leelamani Poudel at Singha Durbar. The relief and reform programs are divided into immediate, mid-term and long term. As per as the immediate program, MoHA will control criminal activities including abduction, rape and ransoms.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=35706)

NC accepts expert panel with riders

My Republica, September 9, 2011

The Nepali Congress has reviewed its position on the state restructuring commission and officially decided to accept formation of an expert panel on federalism, a development that paves the way for consensus among the political parties on a state restructuring mechanism. But the main opposition party has attached riders for the formation of such a panel, saying that there should be progress on the key contentious issues of the peace process such as modality of integration and rehabilitation of Maoist combatants, numbers, standard integration norms and relief and compensation to those affected by the Maoist armed conflict, according to NC General Secretary Prakash Man Singh.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=35778)

Dahal-Bhattarai camp driving Baidhya to despair

The Himalayan Times, September 9, 2011

The sooner leaders of the Unified CPN-Maoist stop airing their dirty linen in public, the better it is for the party, and for the country that is floundering to achieve peace and the constitution. Factionalism has once again surfaced in the party, with Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Vice-chairman and Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai trying to drive Senior Vice-chairman Mohan Baidhya and leaders close to him into a corner, and the two factions trading barbs against each other. The infighting in the party these days is reflected in what the leaders say, which even may go up to the extent that 'a section in the party is trying to split the party'.

(Source: <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Dahal-Bhattarai+camp+driving+Baidhya+to+despair&NewsID=302184&a=3>)

(Interview) 'Party's principles are being compromised'

My Republica, September 11, 2011.

Maoist senior Vice chairman Mohan Baidya has vociferously opposed the party's move to hand over the keys of the arms containers to the Special Committee. The meeting was supposed to take some important decisions, including the handover of the keys of the weapons containers to the Special Committee. How far was it justifiable to defer the CC meeting? Some disputes and debates have surfaced over issues including the keys handover. So there is no point in joining the government

without settling these disputes first. While talking about the peace process, there are two issues that need attention.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=35856)

PM: Categorization prior to resolving integration issues

My Republica, September 12, 2011

Prime Minister Dr Baburam Bhattarai on Sunday said the government wants to start categorization of Maoist combatants on the basis of whether they opt to join the security agencies or be rehabilitated in the society, prior to resolving all the major contentious issues pertaining to integration. The prime minister said he is not for further delaying the task of categorization as it is already too late to commence the work. "I am also for commencing the tasks of categorization only after resolving all the major contentious issues. But we failed to settle the issues even after holding several rounds of meetings," the prime minister said while responding to lawmakers' queries at the meeting of parliament's State Affairs Committee (SAC) on Sunday.

Indian envoy meets PM

My Republica, September 13, 2011

Indian Ambassador to Nepal Jayanta Prasad has called on Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai at the latter's office in Singha Durbar on Tuesday. The duo are expected to hold discussions on the recent verdict of the Patna High Court, which convicted ten Maoist leaders on charges of treason. The PM is likely to request clemency for the convicted Maoist leaders.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=35955)

PM terms next 2 months as crucial for peace, statute

The Himalayan Times, September 16, 2011

Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai urged the political parties to cooperate in concluding the pending works of the peace and constitution drafting tasks in the next two months on Friday. Addressing the nation in the legislature parliament today, he also reiterated on the completion of the remaining tasks of the peace process and preparing the first draft of the constitution as per its earlier commitments. Urging the parties not to obstruct his efforts to move the peace process forward, he, however warned of dreadful consequences if parties failed to complete the tasks of peace and constitutional drafting. In his first address to the nation after his appointment as PM, he termed the next two months period as challenging and decisive.

(Source: <http://thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=PM+terms+next+2+months+as+crucial+for+peace%E2%80%9A+statute&NewsID=302995>)

PM Bhattarai, CA chair meet

My Republica, September 26, 2011

Prime Minister Dr Baburam Bhattarai and Constituent Assembly Chairman Subash Nembang has agreed to continue works related to the peace and constitution writing processes even on public holidays. They reached the understanding to spend extra time for completion of the twin tasks during a meeting held at the PM's official residence in Baluwatar, shortly after PM Bhattarai returned from New York this morning, the PM's aide Bishwodip Pandey informed. As per the understanding, political parties will hold discussions to resolve the contentious issues of the peace process and constitution writing even though the House session is scheduled to convene only on October 13.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=36524)

I didn't mean to conclude peace in 45 days: PM

My Republica, September 27, 2011

Contradicting what he earlier committed himself to, Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai said on Monday that he never claimed he would complete the peace process within 45 days of his elevation to the helm. The prime minister, speaking at a press meet upon his arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA), asserted that he had committed himself to concluding the major tasks of the peace process within 45 days of a broad political consensus being reached in this regard. "It was never said that the major tasks of the peace process would be completed unilaterally within 45 days. I meant that the major tasks would be completed within 45 days from the day a political consensus is built vis-à-vis the peace process," Bhattarai said. He argued that his statement had been "misunderstood."

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=36557)

'Maoist-Madhesi 4 Point deal: Disintegrating Nepal'

Telegraph Nepal, September 28, 2011

The United Marxist Leninist Party has issued a press statement deploring vehemently the anti-national remarks made by Nepal's sitting Defense Minister Sarat Singh Bhandari. Bhandari the other day had threatened to split 22 Tarai districts of the country from the nation-state of which he is himself a minister. The UML statement signed by officiating party chairman Bam Dev Gautam has said that the Defense Minister's remark was against national interest, national unity and territorial integrity of the country.

(Source: <http://www.telegraphnepal.com/headline/2011-09-28/maoist-madhesi-4-point-deal:-disintegrating-nepal.html>)

Gupta defends Bhandari's controversial remark

My Republica, September 28, 2011

Madhesi People's Rights Forum-Democratic (MPRF-D) Chairman and Minister

for Information and Communications Jaya Prakash Gupta has called on all not to take at its face value the recent statement made by his fellow party leader and Defense Minister Sharat Singh Bhandari. Speaking to reporters at Biratnagar airport on Wednesday, Gupta said Bhandari's statement was symbolic and was made in a different context. "We have no thought of disintegrating Nepal." "It is only that the [United Democratic] Madhesi Morcha wants to see the Madhes as a separate province, keeping intact the territorial integrity of Nepal," Gupta added.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=36620)

Nepal to host SAARC governors' symposium

My Republica, September 29, 2011

Nepal is hosting SAARC Governors Symposium in 2012, during which chiefs of the central banks of the eight South Asian countries will discuss monetary policies and challenges faced by the central banks of the region. The decision to hold the annual symposium in Nepal was taken when top central bank officials of the region met in Washington DC earlier this week, Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) said. NRB Governor Dr Yuba Raj Khatiwada attended the meeting of SAARC governors held on the sideline of the annual meetings of the World Bank (WB) Group and International Monetary Fund (IMF) from September 23 to 25.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=36683)

Party rift brings Prachanda, Baidhya together

Himalayan Times, September 30, 2011

Chairman of the UCPN (Maoist) Pushpa Kamal Dahal and senior Vice-chairman Mohan Baidhya held discussion regarding the intra-party rift at the latter's residence in Gonggabu, today. Vice-chairman Baidhya and some other leaders in the party have been protesting the party decision of handing over the keys of the PLA cantonments to the government as well the four-point agreement signed between the UCPN (Maoist) and Madhes-based parties. The leaders have intensified the meetings in view of resolving the differences of opinion after the central committee meeting called to discuss on this issue was postponed.

(Source: <http://thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Party+rift+brings+Prachanda%26sbquo%3B+Baidhya+together+&NewsID=304444>)

Deuba portrays party prez as hindrance to consensus

My Republica, September 30, 2011

Senior Nepali Congress leader Sher Bahadur Deuba on Friday accused party President Sushil Koirala of creating hurdle in a consensual resolution of the intra-party feud over dissolution of the party's four sister organizations. Speaking to media persons after consulting party cadres close to him at his residence in Budhanilkantha today, Deuba described Koirala as the hindrance to consensus building, saying the party president rejected the 'middle-path' proposal by the

Pakistan

taskforce earlier formed to settle the dispute. The six-member taskforce had proposed to give respectable berths to the heads of the four dissolved sister wings, namely Nepal Tarun Dal, Nepal Mahila Sangh, Nepal Adibasi Janajati Sangh and Prajatantra Senani Sangh.

(Source: http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=36709)

India and Pakistan Exchange Fire in Kashmir

New York Times, September 1, 2011

Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged fire over the border that divides the disputed province of Kashmir late Wednesday night, military officials in both countries said Thursday. Each accused the other of starting the shooting. Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas, the Pakistani Army spokesman, said that Indian soldiers had killed three Pakistani soldiers in a volley of gunfire that was "totally unprovoked." But Col. J. S. Brar, a spokesman for the Indian Army in Kashmir, said that the shooting began over an infiltration attempt by Pakistani militants on Tuesday night and that Indian troops had fired across the contentious border only after incoming fire wounded one of their soldiers. An Indian officer was killed, he added.

(Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/02/world/asia/02kashmir.html?_r=1&ref=world)

Pakistan to follow Saudi de-radicalisation policy: Malik

IBN Live, September 2, 2011

With radicalisation deepening its roots in Pakistan and becoming a major worry, Interior Minister Rehman Malik today said the country will follow the policy of de-radicalisation being pursued by Saudi Arabia. "We want to remove concepts of extremism from the society and it is our aim to eliminate the groups of terrorists with their nefarious designs and affiliation with political groups or extortionists in one way or the other," Malik said. He said the policy of Saudi Arabia will be followed to tackle extremism.

(Source: <http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/pakistan-to-follow-saudi-deradicalisation-policy-malik/808750.html>)

Imposing tax on agri tube wells criticised

Pakissan, September 3, 2011.

Agri Forum Pakistan Chairman, Muhammad Ibrahim Mughal has alleged that the government has levied Sales Tax through electricity bills for agricultural tube wells, which will put a financial burden of rupees six on the growers of Pakistan. Mughal severely criticised bureaucrats for taking such a decision and said such people who are oblivious of ground realities making life hard for the growers. He alleged that such decisions would ruin the agriculture. In a statement, he stated that there are around 175,000 agricultural tube wells in the country and the government has imposed sales tax in their electricity bills from the current month.

(Source: <http://www.pakissan.com/english/news/newsDetail.php?newsid=24989>)

Issues with MQM pinching PPP for 2 years: WikiLeaks

Dawn, September 5, 2011.

Former Sindh minister Dr Zulfikar Mirza burst against the Muttahida Qaumi Movement last month but the issues had been pinching the ruling party hardliners for almost two years, reveals WikiLeaks. A secret cable sent by then US consul general Stephen G. Fakan in Karachi to Washington through its Islamabad Embassy on February 9, 2010, shows that both the Pakistan People's Party and the MQM had constantly been discussing the contentious issues of the local government system in Sindh and the law and order situation in Karachi with the Americans for two years.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/05/issues-with-mqm-pinching-ppp-for-2-years-wikileaks.html>)

Issue of Karachi violence must be resolved, says CJ

Dawn, September 5, 2011

A special bench of the Supreme Court on Monday heard the suo motu case on the killings in Karachi, DawnNews reported. The bench, headed by Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, comprises of Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali, Justice Sarmad Jalal Usmani, Justice Amer Hani Muslim and Justice Ghulam Rabbani. During the hearing, the court said that the material that the court had sufficient material to proceed on the case. Chief Justice Iftikhar expressed displeasure on the absence of Attorney General Maulvi Anwarul Haq from today's proceeding.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/05/sc-resumes-hearing-on-karachi-killings-case.html>)

Repaired canals unlikely to sustain floods

Pakissan, September 5, 2011.

Chairman of the Monitoring Committee on Rehabilitation Works on Canals and Dykes Dr Ahmad Ali Shah on Sunday expressed apprehension about right bank canals' capacity to sustain floodwater when it would be released into the system because of what he called unsatisfactory repairs carried out since last year floods.

(Source: <http://www.pakissan.com/english/watercrisis/flood/repared.canals.unlikely.to.sustain.floods.shtml>)

IMF not pushing for agriculture tax reforms

Pakissan, September 5, 2011

The international monetary fund's (IMF) \$11.3 billion standby arrangement facility with Pakistan did not specify agriculture tax reform which leads to negligible revenue from the agriculture sector. According to the WikiLeaks this sensitive cable was sent by the US Ambassador Anne W. Patterson in March 2010. It said that income from agriculture accounts for 21 per cent of GDP and is technically subject to income tax, but actual revenue from agriculture is negligible. Much of the domestic criticism of the IMF programmeme is the accusation that the IMF is requiring agricultural tax reform.

(Source: <http://www.pakissan.com/english/news/newsDetail.php?newsid=24978>)

Water could take 2 to 3 months to dry up: NDMA

Pakissan, September 5, 2011.

As this year's monsoon spell continues to inundate more areas causing massive flooding and affecting millions of people and property, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has said that flood water may take up to two to three months to dry up. The NDMA said that once the water recedes, affected areas will be surveyed in detail. According to the NDMA, so far 88 people have died, 80 per cent of banana, date, chilli, sugar cane and cotton crops have been destroyed and nearly 100,000 cattle heads have either died or are missing.

(Source: <http://www.pakissan.com/english/news/newsDetail.php?newsid=24977>)

Sindh floods cause \$7 billion losses

Pakissan, September 6, 2011.

The floods triggered by heavy monsoon rains in Sindh have caused an estimated loss of \$7 billion to the agrarian economy of the country as over 2.5 million bales of cotton, 2 million tons of Irri-6 rice, 4 million tons of sugarcane and many other small crops have been destroyed besides, killing 0.1 million cattle head in the province.

(Source: <http://www.pakissan.com/english/news/newsDetail.php?newsid=24993>)

Floods Destroy Southern Pakistan

NDTV, September 7, 2011.

Floods continue to cause chaos across Pakistan's southern province of Sindh following heavy rains over the past week. According to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority the floods have affected over two million people, made hundreds of thousands homeless, and caused the deaths of at least 132. [Maluka Bibi, Flood-affected victim]: "We were asleep when the water came. All our belongings were destroyed. We managed to get some of our stuff out in a boat, but we have suffered heavy losses." Authorities have announced compensation packages for victims and asked troops to "stand by."

(Source: http://english.ndtv.com/ntdtv_en/news_asia/2011-09-07/floods-destroy-southern-pakistan.html)

Pakistan, Kazakhstan agree on joint efforts against terror

Daily Times, September 7, 2011.

Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, on Wednesday, agreed to counter common challenges of terrorism and extremism by reinforcing bilateral cooperation to ensure regional stability and prosperity. The hour-long meeting held at the Akorda Palace encompassed a whole gamut of issues, including the need for evolving collective strategies to promote regional stability, besides enhancing cooperation in the fields of trade, communication and energy. Prime Minister Gilani, whose visit is being termed as significant for reviving

relations with Kazakhstan after 16 years, discussed with President Nazarbayev ways to cement relations by joining hands for region's development.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C09%5C08%5Cstory_8-9-2011_pg7_3)

Karachi killings case: IB submits report

Dawn, September 9, 2011

The hearing of the suo motu case on the killings in Karachi on Friday was adjourned till September 13, DawnNews reported. The special bench of the apex court, headed by Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, includes Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali, Justice Sarmad Jalal Usmani, Justice Amer Hani Muslim and Justice Ghulam Rabbani. During Friday's hearing, Sindh Advocate General Fateh Malik told the court that 40 per cent of the police force had political affiliations. He added that 38 out of 44 cases have been registered.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/09/karachi-killings-case-ib-submits-report-hearing-adjourned-till-sept-13.html>)

Gilani for expediting import of gas, power from Iran

Daily Times, September 9, 2011

Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani on Thursday emphasised the need for expediting the projects of gas pipeline and import of 1,000MW electricity from Iran to Pakistan. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on a whole gamut of Pak-Iran relations spreading over trade, energy, communications, rationalisation of tariff and combating terrorism, which posed grave dangers to the security, economic advancement not only for the two countries but also for the entire region.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011\09\09\story_9-9-2011_pg1_3)

All political parties have armed groups: CJP

Daily Times, September 9, 2011

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry on Thursday remark that "all the political parties have formed armed groups and the current situation is very critical". A larger bench of the Supreme Court, comprising CJP Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali, Justice Sarmad Jalal Osmany, Justice Amir Hani Muslim and Justice Ghulam Rabbani, was hearing the suo motu case regarding the target killings and violence in Karachi. The CJP further said, "If the criminal factor is eliminated from political parties, a peaceful atmosphere can be restored across Sindh, especially in Karachi." It is the responsibility of the citizens to maintain law and order in the city, he said.

(Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011\09\09\story_9-9-2011_pg1_2)

Pakistan seeks Bramdagh's extradition

Dawn, September 11, 2011.

The government has asked the Swiss authorities to reject the plea for political asylum made by Bramdagh Bugti, who heads an outlawed Baloch rebel group, and extradite him to Pakistan. The authorities have yet to hear from Berne about their request, but they say the initial response of the Swiss government was that of consideration. Bugti, 30, heads the separatist Baloch Republican Party and its militant wing, the Baloch Republican Army. He has been accused of attacks against settlers in Balochistan, government installations and armed forces. The 'proofs' of his involvement in subversive activities have also been handed over to the Swiss officials, an official said. He is the second rebel leader whose asylum has been officially opposed by the government. Islamabad had previously tried to block Hyrbyair Marri's application for asylum in the United Kingdom.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/11/pakistan-seeks-bramdaghs-extradition.html>)

Climate change blamed for Sindh flooding

Dawn, September 11, 2011.

A weather scientist on Friday blamed climate change for the unprecedented torrential monsoon rains in Sindh that have caused severe flooding in the 16 districts of Sindh province. "If we look at the frequency and the trend of the extreme weather events impacting Pakistan then it is easy to find its linkage with climate change," said Dr. Qamar uz Zaman Chaudhry Advisor, Climate Affairs in a statement here. The pattern of recent extreme weather events in Pakistan show clear indication of increased frequency and intensity of such events in Pakistan which is in line with the international climate change projections, he added.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/11/climate-change-blamed-for-sindh-flooding-2.html>)

Evacuation ordered as new breaches in dykes add to woes

Dawn, September 12, 2011

The Badin administration issued a warning to people of 12 union councils to vacate their homes and water gushing from breaches in canals and drains entered Mirpurkhas town and several villages in Thatta on Sunday as there appeared no end in sight to devastation caused by heaviest ever rainfall in the province's history. In Badin, unhindered upstream water flow continued to increase pressure on the embankments of the overtopping Left Bank Outfall Drain, forcing the administration to issue a warning to the people of 12 union councils, including Shadi Large, Khoski, Pangrio and Malkani Sharif towns, for evacuation. The warning was given after Saturday midnight through loudspeakers.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/12/evacuation-ordered-as-new-breaches-in-dykes-add-to-woes.html>)

Pakistan post-monsoon cotton outlook

Pakissan, September 12, 2011

Pakistan may have lost up to two million cotton bales, or about 13 percent of its estimated crop, due to heavy monsoon rains during harvesting in major producing

region Sindh, government and industry officials said on Friday. Officials now estimate between 13 and 13.5 million bales of 170 kg (378.8 lb) each in the 2011/12 financial year against an expected bumper harvest of 15 million bales for the world's fourth largest cotton producer. Cotton is Pakistan's main cash crop, contributing 1.4 percent to GDP, and a drop in output will likely make it difficult to achieve a 4.2 percent GDP growth target in the current financial year that started on July 1.

(Source: <http://www.pakissan.com/english/news/newsDetail.php?newsid=25009>)

141 killed, 4 mln homeless as floods hit S Pakistan

Xinhua, September 12, 2011

At least 141 people have died and four million people have become homeless in the recent rains and floods that have hit the southern part of Pakistan since August, reported local TV channel Express on Sunday. The report quoted the Pakistan's prime minister as saying in a late Saturday night televised address that the scale of destruction caused by the rains in the country's southern Sindh province was much higher than the initial estimates. The prime minister required international cooperation for actual assessment of the losses and called for the international community's support for the flood-affected people in the country.

(Source: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-09/11/c_131132686.htm)

Pakistan, Iran to expedite gas, power projects

Dawn, September 13, 2011

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has agreed with Iranian President Mehmoūd Ahmadinejad on Monday that the gas pipeline project and the import of 1000MW electricity from Iran should be expedited because Pakistan was facing an acute shortage of energy which was hampering its economic growth. During a meeting at the President House, the two leaders also agreed to enhance cooperation in trade and economy and security and intelligence sharing. They agreed to allow private sectors to play a role in developing their economies and to set up a mechanism to remove bottlenecks, if any.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/13/pakistan-iran-to-expedite-gas-power-projects.html>)

Army geared up for rescue, life saving operations: ISPR

The Army has been deployed on rescue and life saving operations in Southern Sindh and have further geared up services along with a deployment of fresh troops to help those affected by the floods. An ISPR statement on Monday said that since last one month troops have been committed to interior Sindh for the rescue of the marooned populace and providing medical care at various field medical camps. The operation is being conducted through boats, vehicles and Army Helicopters. Corps Commander Lieutenant General Muhammad Zahir Ul Islam visited the sensitive flood affected areas in a hectic day long tour on Monday in which he visited Khoski, Pangrio shadi Taj areas of Badin district.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/12/army-geared-up-for-rescue-life-saving-operations-ispr.html>)

Sri Lanka calls for elimination of terrorism, extremism and separatism for ensuring South Asian Regional Stability

Asian Tribune, September 13, 2011

The leader of the Sri Lankan delegation Senior Minister for International Cooperation Dr. Sarath Amunugama addressing the first South Asian Forum of the special ministerial sessions of SAARC countries being held in New Delhi has vehemently condemned the New Delhi High Court bomb attack. He has said that Sri Lanka experienced the most ruthless and heinous terrorism for three decades until it was totally annihilated by President Mahinda Rajapakse in May 2009 and made the country free from terrorism. He has emphasized the need to eliminate terrorism, extremism and separatism in the region of South Asia for maintaining regional stability.

(Source: <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2011/09/12/sri-lanka-calls-elimination-terrorism-extremism-and-separatism-ensuring-south-asian->)

US stiffens opposition to Pak-Iran gas pipeline project

Dawn, September 16, 2011

Despite reiterating its support for Pakistan's efforts to overcome its energy crisis, the United States did not make any commitment during two days of talks here to finance the \$11 billion Diamer-Bhasha dam or to persuade its oil and gas companies to invest in the country's gas exploration and development projects. As if that was not enough, the US delegation at what has been termed US-Pakistan energy dialogue stiffened its opposition to the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project now in the implementation phase and asked Islamabad to intensify its efforts to develop its own indigenous hydrocarbon resources to avoid possible impact of US and UN sanctions against Iran. The US delegation is led by Special Envoy for International Energy Affairs Carlos Pascual.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/16/us-stiffens-opposition-to-pak-iran-gas-pipeline-project.html>)

Setback in the water dispute

Dawn, September 19, 2011.

Pakistan has failed to secure a stay order from the International Court of Arbitration in its August 25 meeting in The Hague against India's construction of the Kishanganga hydroelectric project. Its legal team was unable to convince the jury about the harm the Indian dam will cause to a similar thrice bigger, Pakistani project in the Neelam valley. This setback for Pakistan means a decisive gain for India in the battle for dams and, barring some miracle, Pakistan, for all practical purposes, is poised to lose the case.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/19/comment-and-analysis-setback-in-the-water-dispute.html>)

India, Pakistan trade ministers to meet on September 25

The Hindu, September 20, 2011.

Pakistan Commerce and Trade Minister Makhdoom Amin Faheem will arrive in India on September 25 to hold high-level talks with Commerce Minister Anand Sharma on taking the bilateral trade and strategic economic cooperation to a new level, including working on easing visa restrictions for businessmen from both sides. Mr. Fahim will reach New Delhi on September 25 on a six-day visit at the invitation of Mr. Sharma. Both trade ministers are likely to hold a number of sessions during the six-day talks. These are a follow up of the Secretary level talks held in Islamabad in April.

(Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/article2470831.ece>)

Business conclave: Delegation leaves for Nepal

Pakistan Tribune, September 20, 2011.

A large delegation of Pakistani businessmen left for Nepal on Tuesday to attend the 4th Saarc Business Leaders Conclave on September 20-22, a statement said. Saarc Chamber of Commerce and Industry is organising the meeting in collaboration with Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry and in partnership with Friedrich Naumann Stiftung. The World Bank will be the knowledge partner, it said. The theme of the conference will be "Peace and Prosperity through Regional Connectivity."

(Source: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/256550/business-conclave-delegation-leaves-for-nepal/>)

PM vows to rehabilitate 7.3 million flood affected people

Dawn, September 21, 2011

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani on Wednesday said the government would do all within its means to bring normalcy back to the lives of the 7.3 million people affected by the recent floods. Chairing a meeting of the federal cabinet here, the prime minister said there was an urgent need to cater for food, shelter and medicines. "We have to employ all our energies and resources for relief and rehabilitation of the people," Gilani told his cabinet colleagues.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/21/pm-vows-to-rehabilitate-7-3-million-flood-affected-people.html>)

'Strategic assets': ISI must disengage from proxies: Mullen

Pakistan Tribune, September 21, 2011

Days before he retires as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen has said that Pakistan's premier intelligence agency has been supporting 'proxies' as a strategy. Addressing the audience at the think-tank Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Mullen adopted a critical tone and focused on the Inter-Services Intelligence agency's (ISI) links with proxies in the regions, which he said was part of their strategy. "The ISI has to make this decision to strategically disengage.

(Source: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/256790/us-tells-pakistan-to-disengage-from-proxies/>)

India can continue all but permanent works on Kishenganga: ICA

The Hindu, , September 25, 2011.

India can “continue with all works” related to the Kishenganga hydro-electric project in Jammu and Kashmir except any permanent work on the riverbed that may inhibit restoration of the river’s full flow, the International Court of Arbitration has said. In an interim ruling issued on Friday, the court in The Hague, which was approached by Pakistan, said it was necessary to lay down certain interim measures in order to “avoid prejudice to the final solution” of the dispute as provided under the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960.

(Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2484518.ece>)

India told to stop work on Kishanganga dam

Dawn, September 25, 2011.

The International Court of Arbitration (ICA) has barred India from any permanent works on the controversial Kishanganga hydro-electricity project (KHEP) on River Neelum at Gurez in occupied Kashmir in response to Pakistan’s appeal for ‘interim measures’ against the dam which may inhibit the restoration of the river flow to its natural channel, the government announced on Saturday. The arbitration court took the decision on an appeal filed by Pakistan that India was diverting the flow of the river and violating Indus Water Treaty (IWT) between the two countries, said Farhatullah Babar, spokesman for President Asif Ali Zardari, on Saturday. The court of arbitration passed a unanimous order on Pakistan’s application for ‘interim measures’ against the construction of the Kishanganga dam.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/25/india-told-to-stop-work-on-kishanganga-dam.html>)

ISPR does not deny Haqqani Attacks

Major General Athar Abbas, spokesman for the Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence, has acknowledged that Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) had contacts with the Haqqanis, Geo News reported. “Any intelligence agency would like to maintain contact with whatever opposition group, whatever terrorist organization ... for some positive outcome,” he told a foreign news agency in a telephone interview. However, those contacts do not mean that the ISI supports or endorses the organization, he added. “If someone is blaming us [as] the only country maintaining contacts with the Haqqanis, there are others, too,” Abbas said. There is a huge difference between maintaining contacts with such a group to facilitate peace and supporting it against an ally, he said.

(Source: <http://www.geo.tv/Pakistan.htm>)

India-Pakistan trade talks to take cooperation to new level

The Hindu, September 27, 2011

The formal Trade Minister-level talks between India and Pakistan will formally begin on Wednesday when the two nations seek to take bilateral trade and strategic economic cooperation to a new level, including working on easing visa restrictions

for businessmen from both sides. Pakistan Trade Minister Makhdoom Muhammad Ameen Fahim reached Mumbai on Monday on a six-day visit to India at the invitation of Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma. Mr. Fahim will hold talks with the business honchos and political leadership in Mumbai before flying down to Delhi on September 28. Both the Ministers are likely to hold a number of sessions, including business talks.

(Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2488109.ece>)

Taliban insists it controls Haqqanis, not Pakistan

Dawn, September 27, 2011

The Taliban took the unusual step Tuesday of insisting that it, not Pakistan, controls the Haqqani network, with Islamabad under growing US pressure to cut alleged ties with the group. The militia advised Pakistan to prioritise “Islamic and national” interests and stand firm in the face of “America’s two-faced and implacable politics”. “Neither are our bases in Pakistan nor do we need residence outside of our country,” said the English-language statement in the name of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan – the Taliban’s name for itself – on its Voice of Jihad website. “All the military and civilian activities in the country are our own initiatives and our own actions.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/27/taliban-insists-it-controls-haqqanis-not-pakistan.html>)

PM calls for national unity to tackle current challenges

Dawn, September 28, 2011

Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Wednesday underlined the need for national unity and cohesion to tackle the challenges faced by the country. During an address at the Lawyers Convention, organised by the Peshawar High Court Bar Association (PHCBA) at PHC premises, he said that, “we also should unite on a single point agenda for the defense, integrity, solidarity and sovereignty of Pakistan.” “There is no danger to the country if the 180 million people of Pakistan stand united,” he added. He said “Pakistan is our country and we should all unite irrespective of political affiliation and party politics”.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/28/pm-calls-for-national-unity-to-tackle-current-challenges.html>)

Pakistan never backed Haqqani network: ISI chief

Dawn, September 30, 2011

Pakistan’s intelligence chief on Thursday denied US accusations that the country supports the Haqqani network, an Afghan militant group blamed for an attack on the American embassy in Kabul. “There are other intelligence networks supporting groups who operate inside Afghanistan. We have never paid a penny or provided even a single bullet to the Haqqani network,” Lieutenant-General Ahmed Shuja Pasha told Reuters after meeting political leaders over heavily strained US-Pakistani ties. Pasha, one of the most powerful men in the South Asian nation, told the all-

party gathering that US military action against insurgents in Pakistan would be unacceptable and the army would be capable of responding, local media said.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/30/pakistan-never-backed-haqqani-network-isi-chief.html>)

Pakistan and India committed to make dialogue process irreversible: Fahim

Dawn, September 30, 2011

Senior Minister for Commerce Makhdoom Amin Fahim has said that Pakistan and India are committed that they would make the dialogue process irreversible and would continue to move forward for peace and prosperity in the region. According to a message received here from New Delhi (India), Commerce Minister Makhdoom Amin Fahim who is currently visiting India was addressing the participants of "India- Pakistan business conclave," in New Delhi today.

(Source: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/29/pakistan-and-india-committed-to-make-dialogue-process-irreversible-fahim.html>)

Sri Lanka

US is studying implications of Sri Lanka's new anti-terror legislation

Colombo Page, September 2, 2011.

The United States said Thursday that it is studying the implications of the new legislation that came into effect in Sri Lanka to handle the terrorism related issues as the emergency regulations existed for three decades in the country lapsed at the end of last month. The US, welcomed the Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa's proposal to end the emergency rule in the country as a "significant step towards normalizing life for the people of Sri Lanka."

(Source: http://www.colombopage.com/archive_11A/Sep02_1314936928CH.php)

Indian journalist raises issue of 'impending draconian security laws' in Sri Lanka with U.S. State Department

Asian Tribune, September 2, 2011.

The dialogue that progressed between an Indian journalist representing All Headline News (AHN) and India Today Group-owned Mail Today Tejinder Singh and the U.S. State Department deputy spokesman Mark Toner gave the impression that both Mr. Singh and Mr. Toner have seen the new legislation proposed by the Government of Sri Lanka since the withdrawal of the Emergency Regulations last week and that the Indian journalist insinuated that the proposed legislation are rather draconian.

(Source: <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2011/09/02/indian-journalist-raises-issue-%E2%80%98impending-draconian-security-laws%E2%80%99-sri-lanka-us-stat>)

Chinese military equipment producer to build hotel

The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority is positive about the China Aviation Technology Import-Export Corporation's (CATIC) five star hotel project which is

expected to be launch by the end of this year, despite the allegations levelled against it by UNP MP Dr. Harsha De Silva. With the country expecting to attract more than 2.5 million tourists by 2015 the government has begun to sell and lease out land for development in several areas of the country. However, the government recently rejected CATIC's offer to buy the land and is offering instead to lease out the property for 99 years after Dr. De Silva heavily criticised the proposed deal.

http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=33917

Secret Colombo US Embassy diplomatic cable (3/2009) says LTTE blocked civilians leaving battle zone

Asian Tribune, September 9, 2011

The classified diplomatic cable sent from the American embassy in Sri Lanka under the signature of Ambassador Robert Blake to Washington state department dated 19 March 2009 very clearly said that the Tamil Tigers had refused to listen to Norway and other international community nations' appeals to allow civilians to leave the battle zone "instead it has shot civilians who have tried to escape, and engaged in forcible recruitment of progressively younger and older civilians to augment its diminishing cadre."

(Source: <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2011/09/09/secret-colombo-us-embassy-diplomatic-cable-32009-says-ltte-blocked-civilians-leaving>)

HRC sessions: Lanka wants issue taken up in Oct. 2012

The Island, September 11, 2011.

External Affairs Minister, Prof. G. L. Peiris, said that that ongoing moves to take up Sri Lanka's issue at the UN Human Rights Council sessions, scheduled to begin in Geneva today, were not acceptable. Minister Peiris, who was in London last week, told The Island that the Human Rights Council is governed by certain procedures, and that the proper procedure for visiting Human Rights Issues in any country was the Universal Periodical Review (UPR). "That is part of the established procedure of the HRC. UPR is a revolving mechanism and countries come up for review from time to time. In normal course of things, Sri Lanka comes up in October 2012. There is absolutely no reason for Sri Lanka to be taken up in September this year", the minister said.

(Source: http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=34460)

U.S. 'Grand Design' for Sri Lanka: Secret State Department diplomatic cables give a glimpse

September 11, 2011.

In one of the classified diplomatic cables sent by the American Embassy in Sri Lanka by Ambassador Patricia Butenis dated 14 December 2009 following state department assistant secretary Robert Blake's visit to Colombo was the conclusion and determination of the U.S. Foreign Service Cadre that Sri Lanka and her government headed by President Rajapaksa need 'external push and manipulation'

to make them move forward to adopt a policy what the state department, activists of the Tamil Diaspora and some Sri Lankan Tamil politicians envisage.

(Source: <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2011/09/11/us-%E2%80%98grand-design%E2%80%99-sri-lanka-secret-state-department-diplomatic-cables-give-glimpse>)

Sri Lanka to shut down Vavuniya displacement camp

The Hindu, September 21, 2011.

One of the world's largest displacement camps, that housed nearly 300,000 internally displaced people from the conflict with the LTTE, will soon be shut down, Sri Lankan defence ministry announced here on Monday. Preparations have begun to relocate those still at the Manik Farm camp in the northern district of Vavuniya on a 600 acre site elsewhere, the ministry said. "Accordingly, 7,394 IDPs (Internally Displaced People) of 2,097 families presently accommodated at Manik Farm relief village will be resettled in the village, and each family will be provided with 40 perch block of land and a semi-permanent house in Kombavil village enabling them to start their livelihood soon after the resettlement," a statement said.

(Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article2470599.ece>)

SL asks: Can a banned terror group move judiciary in US?

MR meets Indian PM, UN Chief and US Congress

Island, September 26, 2011

The Sri Lankan government yesterday said that in spite of accusing its military of massacring as many as 40,000 civilians, the LTTE had had to depend on an LTTE cadre, Vatsala Devi to move the US judiciary against President Mahinda Rajapaksa and Ambassador Shavendra Silva, former General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the celebrated 58 Division, over war crimes relating to the death of a hardcore terrorist, Thambirajah Ramesh. The LTTE couldn't still find an ordinary family to pursue its destabilisation project, the Defence Ministry said.

(Source: http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=35486)

Sri Lanka loosing daily Rs 5 billion due to poaching by Tamil Nadu fishermen – Sri Lanka Minister of Fisheries

Asian Tribune, September 28, 2011

Daily the country is losing Sri Lankan Rs. 5 Billion due to the poaching by the Tamil Nadu fisherman. We experienced this huge loss for the last 30 years when the country was involved in the ethnic conflict. This situation cannot be allowed to continue any further said Dr. Rajitha Senaratne, Sri Lanka's Minister of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources Development. In the meantime, Sri Lankan Navy spokesman Commander Kosala Warnakulasuriya speaking to *Asian Tribune* said at any cost we will not allow any more the Tamil Nadu fishermen crossing the International Maritime Border Line and stray into Sri Lankan waters and plunder our sea resources.

(Source: <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2011/09/26/sri-lanka-loosing-daily-rs-5-billion-due-poaching-tamil-nadu-fishermen-%E2%80%93-sri-lanka-m>)

Sri Lanka will not hesitate to take unpopular decisions for the betterment of the country - Minister Keheliya

Assam Tribune, September 29, 2011.

The government has nothing to do with the internal crisis of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna and it is solely an internal matter of that party. It is the Commissioner of Election who has the right to decide which group should be accepted as the legitimate representatives of any party and accord the Parliamentary representation as well as the right to represent the party. The party itself has to sort out their own problem. The government has no desire to interfere in this conflict and the doors of the government are widely open for any individual or a group to join or leave the government enshrining the democratic process of this country.'

(Source: <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2011/09/29/sri-lanka-will-not-hesitate-take-unpopular-decisions-betterment-country-%E2%80%93-minister-k>)