

Qureshi urges US to stay in Afghanistan for 5 years

The News, 1 December 2009

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi said the US should not leave Afghanistan for at least five years, Geo News reported Tuesday. Pakistan can cope well with extremism if provided with drone technology; therefore, the US should deliver this technology to the country, he said adding the US drone attacks pose a threat to security and sovereignty of Pakistan. He urged the US not to quit Afghanistan until the mission is completed.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=92560>

LeT denies links to men held in US

The News, 1 December 2009

HELD SRINAGAR: Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) denied on Monday that the two men arrested in Chicago on terrorism charges were among its members. David Headley, a Pakistani-born American, and Tahawwur Rana, a Canadian citizen of Pakistani origin, were arrested in October on charges of plotting attacks in India and Denmark. India has accused both of links to the LeT, the banned group fighting to end Indian rule in Kashmir.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=25854

2 more Bangladeshi criminals arrested in India

Daily Star, 1 December 2009

Two more Bangladeshi top criminals were arrested in India on Monday. An Indian citizen was also arrested for giving shelter to them, a source of Bongaon Police Station in West Bengal said. The arrested Bangladeshi criminals were identified as Milon alias Tapan alias Mukta, 40 and Babu alias Mahfuz, 38, while the Indian as Zia, 36.

http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=20874

Victims and perpetrators of violence in same alliance

Daily News, 1 December 2009

Those who were subjected to violence during the 1987 - 1988 period are now in alliance with the party that created it, said President Mahinda Rajapaksa. There were very few persons who raised a voice against the State horror during this period. The so called Human Rights watchdogs showed reluctance to speak of human rights violations in the South at that time. They only spoke about the Human Rights violations in the North, the President stressed.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/01/news02.asp>

WB bandh brings border business to a halt

Kuensel, 1 December 2009

Businesses along the border towns of Phuentsholing and Samtse came to a standstill yesterday after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) announced a 12-hour strike in the entire state of West Bengal. BJP's state vice president, Sabyasachi Bagchi, told Indian

media that the 12-hour shutdown in the state was called to protest the price hike of essential commodities and electricity tariff. The strike began at 6 am and was lifted at 6 pm yesterday. Traffic in Jaigaon resumed around 6:30 pm.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14104>

**Nepal, US inching towards trade pact
Kathmandu Post, 1 December 2009**

GENEVA, NOV 30 - Nepal has initiated the process for a bilateral trade treaty with the US. On Sunday, Minister for Commerce and Supplies Rajendra Mahato, who is leading the Nepali delegation to the ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Geneva, met US trade representative Ron Kirk and requested for the pact. The two countries have already exchanged the draft of the proposed trade treaty. "We're giving back the draft to the US after making some changes," said Mahato, who hopes to finalise the pact when he travels to the US in February.

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/11/30/top-stories/Nepal-US-inching-towards-trade-pact/2559/>

**Japan's Relationship With U.S. Gets a Closer Look
NYT, 2 December 2009**

Two months after taking power, Japan's new leadership is still raising alarms in the United States with its continued scrutiny of the countries' more than half-century-old security alliance. But this reconsideration is not a pulling away from the United States so much as part of a broader, mostly domestic effort to outgrow Japan's failed postwar order, say political experts here. More important, the analysts say, these stirrings may also be the first signs of something that both Tokyo and Washington should have had years ago: a more open dialogue on a security relationship that has failed to keep up with the changing realities in Japan and, more broadly, in Asia.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/02/world/asia/02japan.html?ref=asia&pagewanted=print>

**Pakistan must 'do more' against militants: Clinton
The News, 2 December 2009**

Washington will press Pakistan to "do more" against all the militant groups threatening Pakistan, its neighbors and the United States, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said Wednesday. "It will be our continuing effort to make the case that the Pakistanis have to do more against all of the insurgent terrorist groups that are threatening them, that are threatening us in Afghanistan and the Afghan people and are threatening other neighbors in the region," Clinton told senators.

<http://thenews.jang.com.pk/updates.asp?id=92636>

**Ulfa founder held in Dhaka
Daily Star, 2 December 2009**

Indian separatist group United Liberation Front of Asom (Ulfa) founder and chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa was arrested in Dhaka on Monday, reports BBC Bangla Service. Quoting Indian intelligence, the BBC Kolkata correspondent reports the Ulfa

chairman along with three to four other leaders was arrested in Gulshan in the capital.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=116156>

JVP cracks

Daily News, 2 December 2009

A major crisis has hit the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) following the decision of the Party's Central Committee (CC) to endorse the candidacy of Sarath Fonseka to run for the Presidency, with serious internal splits within the JVP coming to the surface, according to party insiders. With the grass roots membership collectively raising their voice in protest against the CC decision, JVP leader Somawansa Amarasinghe had skipped the party's Hyde Park rally on November 30.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/02/pol01.asp>

Maoist autonomy agenda worries Prez

Kathmandu Post, 2 December 2009

KATHMANDU, DEC 01 - President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav has expressed serious concern over the main opposition UCPN (Maoist) announcement of declaration of autonomous regions. He has asked Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal to act in time to prevent an unwanted situation. The president is seriously concerned over the decision to set up autonomous regions, "Rajendra Dahal, press adviser to the president said.

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/12/01/top-stories/Maoist-autonomy-agenda-worries-Prez/2599/>

Between the Lines, an Expansion in Pakistan

NYT, 2 December 2009

President Obama focused his speech on Afghanistan. He left much unsaid about Pakistan, where the main terrorists he is targeting are located, but where he can send no troops. Mr. Obama could not be very specific about his Pakistan strategy, his advisers conceded on Monday evening. American operations there are classified, most run by the Central Intelligence Agency. Any overt American presence would only fuel anti-Americanism in a country that reacts sharply to every missile strike against extremists that kills civilians as well, and that fears the United States is plotting to run its government and seize its nuclear weapons.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/02/world/asia/02strategy.html?_r=1&ref=asia&pagewanted=print

Ruling parties of China, Bangladesh pledge more exchanges

People's Daily, 3 December 2009

The ruling parties of China and Bangladesh on Thursday pledged to learn from each other on party and state governance. The pledge came out of the meeting between Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping and Secretary General of Bangladesh Awami League (BAL) Syed Ashraf Islam at the Great Hall of the People Thursday afternoon.

<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6831728.html>

**Bin Laden Not in Pakistan, Prime Minister Says
NYT, 3 December 2009**

The Pakistani prime minister, countering demands to intensify the hunt for Osama bin Laden, said Thursday that he did not believe the fugitive leader of Al Qaeda was in Pakistan, as many Western governments and intelligence agencies assert. The Pakistani official, Yousaf Raza Gilani, spoke at joint news conference with Prime Minister Gordon Brown of Britain just days after Mr. Brown demanded that Afghanistan and Pakistan match plans for increased allied troop levels in Afghanistan by taking tough actions of their own, including a stepped-up effort in Pakistan to capture Mr. bin Laden.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/04/world/asia/04britain.html?ref=asia&pagewanted=print>

**Part of Afghan policy may have negative impact on Pak
The News, 3 December 2009**

Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesman Thursday said that some points of the United States new Afghan policy might have negative impact on Pakistan. The FO spokesman Abdul Basit said this at a weekly briefing here. He said the war cannot be won only through use of force, and that Pakistan does not want the situation in Afghanistan to aggravate. The spokesman said the predator attacks are creating problems in the ongoing war against terrorism.

<http://thenews.jang.com.pk/updates.asp?id=92698>

**FO seeks US guarantees against fallout of troop surge
The News, 3 December 2009**

Pakistan while holding out a 'cautious' welcome to President Barack Obama's new strategy for Afghanistan, nevertheless asked Washington to ensure that there would be no fallout for Pakistan, as 30,000 more troops head into Pakistan's neighbourhood. While the broad points of the new Afghan strategy have been discussed with Islamabad, the government feels that now when the strategy is in place, there is need for Washington to 'clarify' and 'coordinate' before the implementation process starts.

http://thenews.jang.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?id=25878

**Ulfa leader offered safe passage
Daily Star, 3 December 2009**

The Indian government has offered peace talks and safe passage to the top rung of the United Liberation Front of Asom (Ulfa). The offers come a day after Ulfa's Chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa was found along the Triupara border by the Bangladesh government. Rajkhowa was handed over to the Indian government and was later flown to Delhi on Tuesday night in a special plane. He now becomes a key player in any discussions for peace.

http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=20910

ACC report highlights systemic flaws
Daily News, 3 December 2009

Action taken report submitted by department of geology and mines Mine & Mineral Management 3 December, 2009 - Forty five of the 100 existing mining leases were obtained illegally, according to an anti-corruption commission report, which says that various systemic weaknesses render Bhutan's 'mine and mineral management system' vulnerable to corruption. The report titled 'Systematic Weakness and Prevention Report' recommends steps to tackle corruption and strengthen the system. The department of geology and mines has taken note of the report and recently forwarded an action taken report to ACC.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14128>

More mules arrested in latest drug bust
Minivan, 3 December 2009

Police have taken two Maldivians into custody at Male' airport after receiving information from India that the pair were carrying drugs. Twenty-five year-old Nishana Rasheed of M. Lansimoog and a 17-year-old girl travelling with her were detained by customs officers after arriving in Male' from Trivandrum in India.

http://www.minivannews.com/news_detail.php?id=7823

Afghans and Pakistanis Concerned Over U.S. Plan
NYT, 3 December 2009

Pakistan — President Obama's timetable for American forces in Afghanistan rattled nerves in that country and in Pakistan on Wednesday, as American diplomats worked to convince the two countries at the center of the president's war strategy that the United States would not cut and run. In Afghanistan, Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta, the only minister who commented on the speech, said the announcement that American troops could begin leaving in 18 months served as a kind of shock therapy, but caused anxiety. "Can we do it?" he asked. "That is the main question. This is not done in a moment. It is a process." In Pakistan, Mr. Obama's declaration fed longstanding fears that America would abruptly withdraw, leaving Pakistan to fend for itself.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/03/world/asia/03pstan.html?_r=1&ref=asia&page_wanted=print

U.S. Troops in Korea 'Will Not Be Rotated' to Afghanistan
Chosun Ilbo, 4 December 2009

The U.S. Defense Department has reportedly notified Korea that it will not transfer American troops stationed in Korea to Afghanistan. Citing an unnamed source at the Defense Ministry in Seoul, Yonhap News reported that the Pentagon's Wallace Gregson, assistant secretary for Asia and Pacific affairs, told his Korean counterpart that the size of U.S. forces in Korea will remain the same.

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2009/12/04/2009120400777.html

LeT men taken to Bangalore to probe 2005 blast
The Hindu, 4 December 2009

The two Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists who were handed over to India on Wednesday were taken to Bangalore on Friday as they had allegedly masterminded a blast in the Karnataka capital in 2005, officials here said. After being handed over by Bangladesh, T. Nazeer alias Nazeer Parvan and his relative Safiquq alias Shafaz Samsuddin, were arrested by the Border Security Force (BSF) troopers from Umkrem near Dawki along the India-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya on Wednesday morning.

<http://beta.thehindu.com/news/national/article60066.ece>

Centre treading cautiously on ULFA talks
The hindu, 4 December 2009

With several top ULFA leaders deported to India from Bangladesh, the Centre is treading cautiously on holding deliberations with the outlawed outfit as it does not want to repeat the 1992 experience when five of the militant leaders, released for talks, used the opportunity to go underground and regroup. Though Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi has favoured safe passage to the group's leaders if they came for talks and Home Minister P Chidambaram showed willingness for dialogue with ULFA if the group abjures violence, it was not clear whether any such peace process will be initiated immediately.

<http://beta.thehindu.com/news/national/article59901.ece>

India to work with Sri Lanka on resettlement of Tamils
The Hindu, 4 December 2009

India on Friday said it would work with the Sri Lankan government to ensure the resettlement of 3,00,000 people displaced in the northern region freed from the LTTE, and was keen to see revival of the political process in the island nation. "We continue to work with the Sri Lankan government to ensure the resettlement of all Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)," External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna said in a statement in the Rajya Sabha.

<http://beta.thehindu.com/news/national/article59961.ece?homepage=true>

LeT real engine of terror in South Asia: India
DAily Excelsior, 4 December 2009

India today said it has conveyed to the US that groups like Lashkar-e-Toiba were the "real engines" of terrorism in South Asia and hoped that America would be more proactive in containing these outfits. Speaking on Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's visit to the US last week and its outcome, External Affairs Minister S M Krishna told both Houses of Parliament that the two countries have expressed commitment to expeditious realisation of full potential of the Civil Nuclear Agreement.

<http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/web1/09dec04/news.htm#1>

Bangladesh did not arrest Ulfa chief: Sahara

Daily Star, 4 December 2009

Home Minister Sahara Khatun on Friday denied recent media reports that Indian separatist group United Liberation Front of Asom (Ulfa) chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa had been arrested in Bangladesh and later pushed back to India. "Since we did not even arrest him, how come the question of pushing him back arises?" the home minister said.

http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=20918

**Navy assists stranded Tamil Nadu fishermen
Daily News, 4 December 2009**

Four Indian fishermen found drifting in their fishing boat near the Maradapuram fishing marshalling point in Karainagar Island yesterday around 10 a.m. were taken ashore by Naval authorities. The fishermen being cared by naval personnel. The four fishermen had set out to sea on November 28 from Kodiyakarei, Nagamawattam, India to fish in the Palk strait. They had lost track of their nets which they had laid in the night and this had resulted in them sourcing the high seas looking for the lost nets.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/04/news42.asp>

**High-altitude Cabinet meeting to begin at 8:30 am
Kathmandu Post, 4 December 2009**

The much-hyped Cabinet meeting will be held in Kalapatthar plateau near Mt. Everest Base Camp at an altitude of 5,242 metres (17,192 feet) at 8:30 a.m. on Friday. Twenty-four Cabinet ministers, including Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, reached Lukla Airport in Solukhumbu district on Thursday to take part in the historic meeting.

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/12/03/top-stories/High-altitude-Cabinet-meeting-to-begin-at-830-am/2674/>

**Bin Laden Not in Pakistan, Prime Minister Says
NYT, 4 December 2009**

The Pakistani prime minister, countering demands to intensify the hunt for Osama bin Laden, said Thursday that he did not believe the fugitive leader of Al Qaeda was in Pakistan, as many Western governments and intelligence agencies assert. The Pakistani official, Yousaf Raza Gilani, spoke at joint news conference with Prime Minister Gordon Brown of Britain just days after Mr. Brown demanded that Afghanistan and Pakistan match plans for increased allied troop levels in Afghanistan by taking tough actions of their own, including a stepped-up effort in Pakistan to capture Mr. bin Laden.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/04/world/asia/04britain.html?ref=asia&pagewanted=print>

**India Announces Plan to Slow Emissions
NYT, 4 December 2009**

With international talks on climate change starting next week in Copenhagen, India

staked out its early position on Thursday by announcing that it would slow the growth of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, while also leaving open the possibility of taking bolder steps if an "equitable" deal can be reached during the negotiations. The Indian initiative, presented in Parliament by the country's top environmental official, means that India has now joined the United States, China, Brazil, Indonesia and South Africa in making a domestic emissions pledge before the Copenhagen talks. Like China, its approach is focused on improving energy efficiency rather than accepting mandatory limits on emissions.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/04/world/asia/04india.html?ref=asia&pagewanted=print>

**India Says It Detained Separatist Leader
NYT, 4 December 2009**

The leader of a deadly insurgency fighting for an independent homeland in India's northeastern state of Assam has been arrested, government officials said Friday. Arabinda Rajkhowa, commander of the United Liberation Front of Assam, had been living in Bangladesh for the past decade, where he enjoyed a measure of protection from Indian authorities by governments hostile to New Delhi. Mr. Rajkhowa's group was at the heart of a violent separatist struggle that has killed about 10,000 people in nearly three decades.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/05/world/asia/05india.html?ref=asia&pagewanted=print>

**Pakistan's anti-terror strides cannot be underestimated: Petraeus
The News, 5 December 2009**

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's key strides in fighting terrorism over the past one year cannot be underestimated, head of the US Central Command Gen David Petraeus has said, citing the country's sustained anti-militant campaigns in the northwestern areas at enormous sacrifices. He also said in an interview that intelligence on whereabouts of some top militants — thought to be hiding along the Pak-Afghan border — is sketchy and there has not been a confirmed location for al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden for years.

http://thenews.jang.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?id=25914

**Resettlement of IDPs; Two-thirds complete
DAily News, 5 December 2009**

A total of 169,938 Internally Displaced Persons have been resettled in their native places within a short period providing them along with the provision of health, shelter, sanitary, education co-operative, water, electricity and other facilities in their villages, Disaster Management and Human Rights Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe said. "As a result of the speedy resettlement program the number of IDPs in welfare villages has come down to 112,062 from 282,000," the Minister told a media briefing.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/05/news01.asp>

FDI in existing industries
Kuensel, 5 December 2009

5 December, 2009 - The ministry of economic affairs has decided to allow foreign direct investment in existing industries, provided there is an increase in equity base without the acquisition of existing shares. "Foreign investors can't buy shares, they must create an asset by the addition of capital goods or infrastructure," said the chief industries officer, Loknath Chapagai.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14138>

Mosque Serving Pakistani Military Hit by Attackers
NYT, 5 December 2009

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Attackers lobbed grenades and opened fire on worshipers, mostly active and retired military officials, at a mosque in the garrison city of Rawalpindi during Friday Prayer, striking a further blow against the military establishment as the army pursues militants in the lawless tribal regions along the border with Afghanistan. At least 36 people — including high-ranking military officials — were reported to have been killed and more than 45 wounded, the military said. At least one of the attackers was a suicide bomber, it said.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/05/world/asia/05pstan.html?ref=asia&pagewanted=print>

Ogata: Afghan aid to focus on expanding Kabul
Asahi Shimbun, 7 December 2009

Japan's civilian assistance to Afghanistan, worth up to about 450 billion yen, is expected to focus on a project to expand the increasingly overpopulated capital of Kabul, according to the head of the nation's foreign aid agency. In an interview with The Asahi Shimbun, Japan International Cooperation Agency President Sadako Ogata said the plan to create Afghanistan's "new capital" would help provide jobs to former members of the Taliban.

<http://www.asahi.com/english/Herald-asahi/TKY200912070278.html>

India, Russia sign nuclear deal
The Hindu, 7 December 2009

India and Russia on Monday signed a path-breaking broad-based agreement in civil nuclear field that will ensure transfer of technology and uninterrupted uranium fuel supplies to its nuclear reactors and inked three pacts in the defence sector. The agreements were signed after talks between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev at the Kremlin here, during which they discussed a whole range of issues, including terrorism emanating from Afghanistan.

<http://beta.thehindu.com/news/national/article61503.ece>

PM's India visit deferred
Daily Star, 7 December 2009

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's scheduled visit to India has been deferred following a request from Indian side, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said on Monday. The Indian

government requested premier Sheikh Hasina to defer her visit as Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is due to attend the Copenhagen climate summit in Denmark, the foreign minister told reporters at a press briefing. The new date for her India visit would not be set yet.

http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=20973

**Strike hits life nationwide
Kathmandu Post, 7 December 2009**

The UCPN (Maoist)-called nationwide general strike brought life to a standstill across the country on Sunday. The Maoist party had enforced the strike protesting the death of three people in Friday's police action against squatters in the Kailali-based Dudhejhadi forest.

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/12/06/top-stories/Strike-hits-life-nationwide/2775/>

**Border talks proposed for Jan.
Kuensel, 7 December 2009**

On the request of the members of parliament the Secretary of International Boundaries, Dasho Pema Wangchuk, presented the updated status report on the Bhutan-China boundary negotiations on December 4. Dasho Pema Wangchuk informed the Assembly that in 2008 Chinese soldiers intruded deep inside Bhutanese territory and came many times to the Royal Bhutan Army (RBA) outpost at Lharigang in the Charithang valley. This year the Chinese soldiers had come 17 times to the RBA outpost at Lharigang.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14160>

**CFA: Greatest betrayal
Daily News, 7 December 2009**

The greatest betrayal of the country during the past 60 years was the UNP signing the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) with the LTTE terrorists equating the terrorists force to the legally constituted Armed Forces when the officers of the Armed Forces were asked to shake hands with terrorists and discuss peace, Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa said at an interview with the Sri Lanka Rupavahini telecast on Saturday night. While there were 3,000 odd violations of the CFA all that the Armed Forces could do was to look the other way, the Defence Secretary said.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/07/news01.asp>

**Embezzlement accusations resurface amid World Bank investigation
Minivan, 7 December 2009**

Ibrahim Hussein Zaki, special envoy to the president, has renewed allegations that former president Maumoon Abdul Gayoom has US\$80 million hidden in foreign bank accounts, including US\$40 million in tsunami aid from the Emir of Qatar. The last time the allegation was made, by Hassan Afeef, a former MP and now political advisor to the president, Gayoom successfully sued for defamation and Afeef was fined US\$350.

<http://minivannews.com/politics/2009/12/07/embezzlement-accusations-resurface-amid-world-bank-investigation/>

**U.S. Report on Sri Lanka Urges New Approach
NYT, 7 December 2009**

NEW DELHI — A report on Sri Lanka to be released next week by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee urges a less confrontational approach to that nation, citing strategic American interests in the region. The report says that while the Sri Lankan government has been widely criticized for its handling of the war against the Tamil Tigers, who were fighting for a separate state for the ethnic Tamil minority in northern Sri Lanka, the government has also achieved a measure of progress in resettling the conflict's displaced and rebuilding the war-shattered east of the country.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/07/world/asia/07lanka.html?_r=1&ref=asia

**SB crosses over from UNP
Daily News, 8 December 2009**

UNP National Organizer, Central Provincial Council Opposition Leader and Walapane UNP Organizer S. B. Dissanayake yesterday resigned from all posts of the UNP and declared his unconditional support to President Mahinda Rajapaksa at the forthcoming Presidential Election. Dissanayake joined the Sri Lanka Freedom Party yesterday and said many members of the local government institutions too would join the SLFP and work for President Rajapaksa's victory.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/08/pol01.asp>

**Bhutan presents human rights report
Kuensel, 8 December 2009**

Universal Periodic Review 8 December, 2009 - Bhutan was unanimously commended for its peaceful transition to a parliamentary democracy last year, and on its progress in promoting and protecting human rights (HR), but also faced a range of questions and recommendations from nearly 60 countries on poverty reduction, gender inequality, child labour, minority rights, citizenship regulations, and on the people in the camps in Nepal, when it presented its universal periodic review (UPR) to the human rights council working group on December 4, in Geneva, Switzerland.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14168>

**DQP condemns TVM poll on religious freedom
Minivan, 8 December 2009**

The opposition Dhivehi Qaumei Party (DQP) has condemned a poll on state television about freedom of religion, accusing the government of attempting to allow religions other than Islam into the Maldives and undermining Islamic faith. A press release by the party yesterday states that the poll on a Television Maldives (TVM) programme on Sunday night was "a devious scheme" intended to show that other religions could be practiced.

<http://minivannews.com/politics/2009/12/08/dqp-condemns-tvm-poll-on-religious-freedom/>

**Pakistan Told to Ratchet Up Taliban Fight
NYT, 8 December 2009**

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration is turning up the pressure on Pakistan to fight the Taliban inside its borders, warning that if it does not act more aggressively the United States will use considerably more force on the Pakistani side of the border to shut down Taliban attacks on American forces in Afghanistan, American and Pakistani officials said. The blunt message was delivered in a tense encounter in Pakistan last month, before President Obama announced his new war strategy, when Gen. James L. Jones, Mr. Obama's national security adviser, and John O. Brennan, the White House counterterrorism chief, met with the heads of Pakistan's military and its intelligence service.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/08/world/asia/08policy.html?_r=1&ref=asia&page_wanted=print

**Twin Attacks in Eastern Pakistan Kill Dozens
NYT, 8 December 2009**

LAHORE, Pakistan — Continuing a string of attacks against civilians and government offices, militants set off two bombs in one of the busiest markets of this eastern Pakistani city, killing at least 54 people and wounding at least 150 others, Pakistani authorities said on Tuesday. A second attack struck at the offices of the Inter-Services Intelligence directorate, Pakistan's main security service, in the central city of Multan on Tuesday morning. At least 9 people were killed and 40 wounded, rescue authorities said. The attacks showed the wide reach of militant attacks in the Pakistani heartland, far from the troubled and lawless border region with Afghanistan.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/09/world/asia/09pstan.html?ref=asia&pagewanted=print>

**Yangon invites investment from Bangladesh
Daily Star, 9 December 2009**

Yangon on Wednesday proposed that Bangladesh set up joint-venture industries and agricultural farms in Myanmar utilizing its huge workforce and Myanmar's abundant land. Myanmar Ambassador Phae Tham Oo made the proposal when he called on Industries Minister Dilip Barua at his office and discussed bilateral issues, including Rohingya refugee problem, maritime-boundary disputes and transport facility for mutual benefit.

http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=21009

**Plain sailing for civil service bill
Kuensel, 9 December 2009**

National Assembly 9 December, 2009 - Much to the surprise of observers, the contentious Civil Service Bill of Bhutan 2009, which was put up to the National Assembly yesterday as a new bill, sailed through easily. Except for one clause -

recruitment of civil servants by agencies - the Assembly finished discussing the bill and is expected to endorse it today. The bill has clarified the issue on control of civil servants in different arms of the government and constitutional bodies.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14176>

**Govt resettlement program satisfactory - Robert Blake
Daily News, 9 December 2009**

United States Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia and Central Asia and former US Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Robert Blake expressed satisfaction with the Government's resettlement program now under way and the new freedom of movement allowed. He said he was pleased with the mine risk education being given to students. Blake made these comments during his visit to the Menik Farm relief centre yesterday morning.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/09/news03.asp>

**Maoists withdraw nationwide strike
Kathmandu Post, 9 December 2009**

KATHMANDU, DEC 08 - Pressured from several quarters, the main opposition UCPN (Maoist) on Tuesday withdrew its nationwide strike scheduled for Wednesday. The national shutdown, which included closure of all forms of transportation and industries, was called by the Maoist sister organisation All Nepal Federation of Trade Union (ANFTU) demanding 40 percent increase in wages and 100 percent in benefits for wage earners.

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/12/08/top-stories/Maoists-withdraw-nationwide-strike/2834/>

**Taliban Warn Korea Over Troops to Afghanistan
Chosun Ilbo, 10 December 2009**

The Taliban on Wednesday sent an open warning message to the Korean government over its decision to send fresh troops to the war-torn country. According to the dpa news agency, the Taliban said in a statement e-mailed to media, "If they send their forces to Afghanistan..., then they should also be prepared for bad consequences."

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2009/12/10/2009121000449.html

**Dhaka for fair regional share
Daily Star, 10 December 2009**

Bangladesh demanded more balanced regional distribution of Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects yesterday at a meeting as sidelines of UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen. Dr Asaduzzaman, a member of Bangladesh delegation, raised the issue and asked the president of the COP to explain measures taken by the CDM projects. He said a higher threshold should be taken for small-scale project activities.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=117238>

Women's role in politics minimal in Lanka
Daily News, 10 December 2009

Sri Lanka displays positive aspects regarding its population, other than in one area: the number of women in politics. This disclosure was made at the joint commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the 40th Anniversary of the United Nations Population Fund held at Cinnamon Grand Tuesday. The ICPD report was released on the occasion. Sri Lanka displays just one negative trend out of the fourteen ICPD indicators, namely the number of seats in Parliament held by women.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/10/news44.asp>

MoIC takes a 'calculated risk'
Kuensel, 10 December 2009

The ministry of information and communications (MoIC) has decided to reopen the 350 km Phuentsholing-Gelephu-Samdrupjongkhar highway, going through North Bengal and Assam, to Bhutanese buses. "It'll be more convenient and cheaper for people to travel in Bhutanese buses," said MoIC minister Lyonpo Nanda Lal Rai. Currently passengers use mainly Bhutanese taxis that charge between Nu 500 to Nu 700 per passenger from Phuentsholing to Samdrupjongkhar or up to Nu 400 to Gelephu. Buses could charge Nu 125-150 for the whole route.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14188>

'Indian decision to supply arms divisive'
Kathmandu Post, 10 December 2009

The Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR), a Delhi-based regional human rights organisation, has expressed deep concern over India's decision to resume military supply and training to Nepal Army following joint-secretary level talks in Kathmandu from Dec. 4. India had cut military aid after former king Gyanendra took power in February 2005. "The timing of resumption of military aid is absolutely inappropriate," said ACHR Director Suhas Chakma. "This decision is highly divisive in divided Nepal and will only encourage the Nepal Army to play more proactive political role and further harm the dangerously stalled Nepal's peace process."

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/12/09/top-stories/Indian-decision-to-supply-arms-divisive/2870/>

Female circumcision occurring in Addu atoll, reveals AG
Minivan, 10 December 2009

Attorney General Husnu Suood has said the practice of female circumcision in the name of Islam has been revived in Addu atoll. Speaking at a human rights function last night, Suood said although there have been significant successes in human rights in the past six years new problems and violations were emerging, "especially atrocities against women and children".

<http://minivannews.com/politics/2009/12/10/female-circumcision-occurring-in-addu->

atoll-reveals-ag/

**5 U.S. Men Arrested in Pakistan Said to Plan Jihad Training
NYT, 10 December 2009**

SARGODHA, Pakistan — Five young Muslim American men arrested here Wednesday were on their way to the heart of the Taliban sanctuary in Pakistan's tribal areas with the intention of training to fight against American troops in Afghanistan, Pakistani police authorities said Thursday. The men, a tight circle of friends in their late teens and their 20s from the Washington suburbs, had been in contact through YouTube with a Pakistani militant with links to Al Qaeda before arriving in Pakistan on Nov. 30, said the Pakistani officials, who had firsthand knowledge of the case. After touching down in Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city, the men tried to join an extremist Islamic school near Karachi and approached another extremist organization, Jamaat-ud-Dawa, in the eastern city of Lahore, the officials said.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/11/world/asia/11inquire.html?_r=1&ref=asia&pagewanted=print

**BIMSTEC adopts convention to combat terrorism, insurgency
The Hindu, 11 December 2009**

PTI External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna speaking at a press conference in New York. BIMSTEC, on Friday, adopts convention to combat terrorism, insurgency. File Photo: PTI. The seven-nation BIMSTEC grouping on Friday adopted a convention to combat terrorism and insurgency, a step that is expected to add teeth to India's action against militancy, particularly in its north east. Foreign Ministers of India, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Thailand and Nepal signed the Convention on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Trans-National Organised Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking at the 12th BIMSTEC Ministerial meeting here.

<http://beta.thehindu.com/news/national/article63493.ece>

**Govt to encourage single-child families
Daily Star, 11 December 2009**

A draft population policy advocates introducing "single-child families" at national level by 2015 to avoid a serious socio-economic debacle due to the country's ever-increasing population. The draft policy, now in the final stage with the health and family welfare ministry, strongly suggests involvement of at least 20 other ministries for its implementation.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=117383>

**Korea downgrades travel advisory
Daily News, 11 December 2009**

Ambassador Asitha Perera thanked the Korean Government for withdrawing the arms embargo on Sri Lanka as well as reducing the travel advisory on Sri Lanka. The Ambassador reiterated this when Navy Commander Vice Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe along with Rear Admiral Kim Dong-Kyun (from the ROK Navy) and a delegation of Naval officers from Korea and Sri Lanka paid a courtesy call on the Ambassador on Sunday.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/11/news21.asp>

**2 in 100 bribed Nu 5,000
Kuensel, 11 December 2009**

In 2008, two out of every hundred Bhutanese paid an average of Nu 5,000 each in bribes to avail services, according to the national integrity assessment report (NIAR) of the anti-corruption commission (ACC). Of the total, 56.25 percent of respondents who gave bribes said that they had offered them to express their gratitude to officials for 'doing what they are supposed to do,' while 45 percent indicated that they offered to maintain 'future relationships'.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14201>

**Maoists fire back at govt
Kathmandu Post, 11 December 2009**

A day after the Cabinet accused the UCPN (Maoist) of breaching the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the Maoist party fired back, saying the government had breached Tuesday's understanding between the prime minister and UCPN (Maoist) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal. The two had agreed to find a common ground to resolve the current political stalemate. At Thursday's meeting, the Maoist leadership also decided to go ahead with its already-announced plan of declaring autonomous states. The Maoists plan to declare Kochila and Limbuwan autonomous states. As part of their third-phase protest, the Maoists have decided to declare 13 autonomous states on Dec. 11-18.

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/12/10/top-stories/Maoists-fire-back-at-govt/2909/>

**Al-Qaeda fleeing SWA, says Gates
The News, 12 December 2009**

KIRKUK, Iraq: US intelligence shows militants linked to al-Qaeda and other groups have been fleeing South Waziristan in the face of a Pakistani military offensive, Defence Secretary Robert Gates said on Friday. "We see some evidence in the intelligence that Pakistani forces are forcing al-Qaeda and some of the other terrorists out of South Waziristan and they are fleeing, and some of them are talking about going back into Afghanistan," Gates told US troops during a visit to Kirkuk city.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=26049

**PM goes to Copenhagen tomorrow
Daily Star, 12 December 2009**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will leave here for Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, tomorrow to attend the ongoing United Nations Climate Change Conference. Hasina who will lead a high-profile Bangladesh delegation to the conference leaves here tomorrow night for Dubai enroute to Copenhagen by an Emirates Airlines flight.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=117537>

Dangerous conspiracy

Daily News, 12 December 2009

There is a very grave situation in the country with the most dangerous conspiracy afoot since independence. It was a Washington consensus nomination putting together the unholy JVP-UNP extreme Left extreme Right combination, Constitutional Affairs and National Integration Minister D.E.W. Gunasekera said yesterday. Addressing the UPFA press conference at the Mahaweli Centre, Colombo, the Minister said all reactionary national and international forces mysterious and unseen have come together.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/12/pol01.asp>

Bhutan pledged to carbon neutrality

Kuensel, 12 December 2009

As Bhutan showcased its environmental friendly projects at the sidelines of the Copenhagen climate change conference yesterday, it also made a pledge in Thimphu, by signing a declaration, to follow and be guided by a strong sense of conservation ethics and remain a carbon neutral country. The declaration calls for global attention to Bhutan's commitment to preserving its rich eco system and in return is asking for support for its mitigation and adaptation measures to adapt to climate change.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14207>

HRCM called to investigate past injustices

Minivan, 12 December 2009

President Mohamed Nasheed has called upon the Human Rights Commission of Maldives (HRCM) to investigate and uncover the injustices of the past to fulfill its mandate. In his weekly radio address yesterday, President Nasheed said although the commission's regulations stated that it could only investigate incidents dating from two years before its formation, the law gave HRCM the authority to conduct investigations before 2001.

<http://minivannews.com/politics/2009/12/12/hrcm-called-to-investigate-past-injustices/>

Request for Indian Military Hardware

Kathmandu Post, 12 December 2009

New Delhi will not provide lethal military hardware to Nepal in the near future and the recent news that India will provide tanks and Insas rifles to Nepal is misleading, according to an official with the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. The Indian claim comes on the heels of concerns expressed from various quarters, pointing out that resumption of supplies of Indian arms, put on hold since the royal takeover in 2005, will further endanger the already shaky peace process. It also violates the spirit of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/12/11/top-stories/Request-for-Indian-Military-Hardware/2941/>

Nepal, China to promote friendship exchange
People's Daily, 13 December 2009

With the purpose of promoting friendship exchanges, Nepal and China have agreed to boost up friendly exchange programs in people-to-people level. World Culture Net (WCN)-Nepali Center for International Exchange signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) on Friday to promote friendly exchanges between Nepal and China.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6840308.html>

Lack of coordination with Pakistan unfortunate: US general
The News, 13 December 2009

ISLAMABAD: A senior US military official Saturday termed lack of coordination with Pakistan army over "repositioning" of its troops along the Pak-Afghan border "unfortunate". Brig General Michael Linnington, the chief planner at the ISAF Joint Command (IJC) Headquarters, Kabul, did acknowledge that "three US border posts were re-positioned for more effective coordination" in the recent past.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=26060

1,100 die in custody since Rab comes in
Daily Star, 13 December 2009

About 1,100 people were killed in custody since formation of the Rapid Action Battalion in 2004 with the actions of the law enforcement agencies touted as 'crossfire', 'encounter' or 'shootout'. Two human rights organisations, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, BLAST, and Ain O Salish Kendra, ASK, will submit this data to the High Court on Monday ahead of the hearing on a rule regarding extra-judicial killing. The organisations had decided to fight a legal battle in a bid to stop extra-judicial killing and included them as added parties to the case when the government denied any extra-judicial killing.

http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=21088

Dangerous conspiracy
Daily News, 13 December 2009

Extreme Left-Right combination: There is a very grave situation in the country with the most dangerous conspiracy afoot since independence. It was a Washington consensus nomination putting together the unholy JVP-UNP extreme Left extreme Right combination, Constitutional Affairs and National Integration Minister D.E.W. Gunasekera said yesterday. Addressing the UPFA press conference at the Mahaweli Centre, Colombo, the Minister said all reactionary national and international forces mysterious and unseen have come together. Minister D.E.W. Gunasekera. They are full of contradiction for a set purpose of defeating President Mahinda Rajapaksa with two slogans. The first was the abolition of executive presidency and the second preservation of democracy, he said.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14212>

Maldives will receive Guantanamo prisoners, says President Minivan, 13 December 2009

President Mohamed Nasheed has said the Maldives will take prisoners released from Guantanamo Bay, the controversial American prison in Cuba that houses terror suspects. In his weekly radio address on Friday, the president said the Obama administration came into power pledging to close down the prison and release a number of detainees.

<http://minivannews.com/politics/2009/12/13/maldives-will-receive-guantanamo-prisoners-says-president/>

PM terms stable Afghanistan 'common Pak-US goal' The News, 14 December 2009

ISLAMABAD: The US Centcom Commander General David Petraeus called on Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani here at the PM House on Monday and briefed him about the contours of new Afghan policy announced by President Obama recently and took the government of Pakistan into confidence. During the meeting Chief of Army Staff, General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani assisted the Prime Minister.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=93540>

HC counts 11 extra-judicial killings since suo moto issued Daily Star, 14 December 2009

As many as 11 incidents of extra-judicial killings took place in the country since the High Court issued a suo moto rule on the government against the deaths in custody on November 17. The court on Monday expressed concern over the persistence of extra-judicial killings despite its rule upon the government. It asked Attorney General Mahbubey Alam to take initiatives to ensure that no such killing takes place till the next hearing on the rule set for January 9.

http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=21106

Dagachu bids again for CDM status Kuensel, 14 December 2009

The 114 MW Dagachu hydropower project is resubmitting its proposal to the clean development mechanism's (CDM) executive board to be considered as a CDM project. Bhutan's certifier, designated operational entity (DOE), the United Nations appointed third-party, will submit additional information and justification on Dagachu as required by the board.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14221>

Two more states are 'born' Kathmandu Post, 14 December 2009

Going ahead with its state declaration plan, the UCPN (Maoist) on Sunday announced Tharuwan and Seti-Mahakali states in the Mid and Far-West. The move comes two days after the declaration of Kochila and Limbuwan states in the East. Maoist Secretary CP Gajurel declared the Tharuwan Autonomous State comprising Banke, Bardia, Dang, Kailali and Kanchanpur districts in Nepalgunj, while another party

leader Posta Bahadur Bogati announced in Dipayal the Seti-Mahakali Autonomous State comprising seven hill districts of the Far-West.

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/12/13/top-stories/Two-more-states-are-born/3002/>

**American to be deported for alleged missionary activity
Minivan, 14 December 2009**

Maldives police have said they are seeking the deportation of a foreigner who allegedly sought to spread Christianity on the island of Kinbidhoo in Thaa Atoll. Missionary activities are illegal under Maldivian law, as is the possession of non-Islamic religious materials beyond those ascribed for 'personal use'.

<http://minivannews.com/society/2009/12/13/american-to-be-deported-for-alleged-missionary-activity/>

**Questions About N.Korean Arms Transport Multiply
Chosun Ilbo, 15 December 2009**

A Georgian cargo plane seized by Thai authorities with 35 to 40 tons of North Korean weapons had undertaken similar transports for the North three or four times before, press reports said Monday. Thai daily The Nation said pilot Mikhail Petukhov admitted the destinations were Sri Lanka and the Middle East and he had flown similar consignments three or four times.

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2009/12/15/2009121500401.html

**Obama resists drone strikes in Pakistan
The News, 15 December 2009**

WASHINGTON: US media reports have revealed that President Barack Obama, during situation room meetings at the White House to review the US strategy on Pakistan and Afghanistan, did express concern over the idea of expanding drones attacks to Quetta and other urban centres of Pakistan. The White House has not confirmed or denied the report.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=26089

**Obama phones Hasina, says US to stand by Bangladesh
Daily Star, 15 December 2009**

US President Barack Obama Monday night phoned Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and hoped that she would play an important role in the Copenhagen climate summit. Obama assured her that the US government would stand beside Bangladesh in its battle against climate change.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=117923>

**President defends Security Forces
Daily News, 15 December 2009**

President Mahinda Rajapaksa yesterday stressed he will never betray the Security

Forces and is ready to face any accusation on behalf of the Security Forces that made tremendous sacrifices for the nation. The President was addressing representatives of over 64 Trade Unions at Temple Trees yesterday. He said he will not allow the war heroes to be taken before a war crimes tribunal.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/15/sec01.asp>

1 b dollar bid for Education City Kuensel, 15 December 2009

A Kolkata-based company Infinity infotech parks limited has proposed to invest a billion dollars or Nu 47 billion in creating an 'Education/Knowledge City' in Bhutan. The project, by far the largest FDI investment proposal, aims to bring in the branches of around 15 to 30 top universities, along with 40,000 foreign students, into a 1000-acre education city.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14230>

Top brass meet offers ray of hope Kathmandu Post, 15 December 2009

Top leaders of the three major parties—the UCPN (Maoist), Nepali Congress (NC) and the CPN (UML)—met on Monday, agreeing to meet again at NC President Girija Prasad Koirala's residence on Tuesday for finalising the content of the draft resolution motion prepared to end the political deadlock. Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and NC Vice-Chairman Ram Chandra Poudel were among the leaders who attended the meet. Koirala, Dahal, UML Chief Jhala Nath Khanal, and six members of the taskforce assigned to prepare the draft will take part in Tuesday's meet.

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/12/14/top-stories/Top-brass-meet-offers-ray-of-hope/3035/>

Maldives President fires up rally at Copenhagen Minivan, 15 December 2009

President Mohamed Nasheed galvanised thousands of environmentalists at a 350.org rally in Copenhagen yesterday, vowing to persevere until a politically binding climate change treaty was attained. "I refuse to believe that a better world isn't possible," said 42-year-old Nasheed at Klimaforum, the global civil society counterpart of the official UN conference.

<http://minivannews.com/environment/2009/12/15/copenhagen/>

Rebuffing U.S., Pakistan Balks at Crackdown NYT, 15 December 2009

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Demands by the United States for Pakistan to crack down on the strongest Taliban warrior in Afghanistan, Siraj Haqqani, whose fighters pose the biggest threat to American forces, have been rebuffed by the Pakistani military, according to Pakistani military officials and diplomats. The Obama administration wants Pakistan to turn on Mr. Haqqani, a longtime asset of Pakistan's spy agency who uses the tribal area of North Waziristan as his sanctuary. But, the officials said,

Pakistan views the entreaties as contrary to its interests in Afghanistan beyond the timetable of President Obama's surge, which envisions reducing American forces beginning in mid-2011.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/15/world/asia/15haqqani.html?ref=asia&pagewanted=print>

USFK Could Face Overseas Deployment from 2013
Chosun Ilbo, 16 December 2009

The U.S. Forces Korea may face action elsewhere under the concept of "strategic flexibility" once a scheme to keep personnel in the country for three years has been fully implemented, a diplomatic source in Washington said Tuesday. But the source added that this will not include Afghanistan, at least in the short term. Under pressure from the U.S. in 2006, Korea agreed to allow the USFK to be deployed abroad as part of the Bush administration's plan to cut military spending. The concept of "strategic flexibility" in Asia was modeled after the U.S. forces in Germany's dispatch to the Balkans during the war there in the 1990s.

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2009/12/16/2009121600990.html

President foiled country's division
Daily News, 16 December 2009

Under the leadership of President Mahinda Rajapaksa those who had attempted to divide the country failed. But the statements made by the Opposition candidate had only pleased the divisive forces at home and abroad, UPFA General Secretary and Education Minister Susil Premajayanth said yesterday. Addressing the UPFA press conference at the Mahaweli Centre, Colombo he said people would not wish to give high responsibility to the Opposition candidate though he was aspiring to be a leader of the country as his statements were harming the country.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/16/pol01.asp>

Govt. to mull over UPR proposals
Kuensel, 16 December 2009

Co-leader of the Bhutanese delegation, former minister Kinzang Dorji, with Bhutan's permanent representative to Geneva, Yeshey Dorji, at the review 16 December, 2009 - Bhutan did not accept or reject any of the recommendations it received during its human rights (HR) universal periodic review (UPR) held on December 4, Geneva, Switzerland. Although the government could have accepted or rejected recommendations on an interim basis during the adoption process of its UPR outcome report, delegation leader and special envoy of the prime minister, Kinzang Dorji, said the government would provide decisions on the recommendations only during the 13th session of the HR council to be held in March, 2010.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14240>

Circus in parliament as MPs reject bill banning sale of alcohol
Minivan, 16 December 2009

Parliament has narrowly rejected a bill outlawing the sale of alcohol in inhabited

islands, airports and other places frequented by Maldivians. Of the 57 MPs in attendance, 28 voted against proceeding with the legislation, while 23 voted in favour and six abstained.

<http://minivannews.com/politics/2009/12/16/circus-in-parliament-as-mps-reject-bill-banning-sale-of-alcohol/>

Khaleda wants 25pc more carbon cut
Daily Star, 17 December 2009

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday hoped that the Copenhagen climate conference would bring an international global charter with the developed nations promising to cut carbon emission by 25 percent more than they promised in the Kyoto Protocol. She said Bangladesh is one of the countries to be worst affected by climate change and it would not be possible for Bangladesh to face this challenge alone without unity and solidarity among the people of the whole world.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=118192>

Nominations today
Daily News, 17 December 2009

Twenty three candidates the largest in a Presidential race so far in Sri Lanka will submit their nominations to contest the January 2010 Presidential poll to Elections Commissioner Dayananda Dissanayake at the Elections Secretariat in Rajagiriya between 9 am and 11 am today. Of the twenty three candidates, 18 are from recognized political parties and the rest Independents. However, the focus will be on the two main contenders President Mahinda Rajapaksa who is seeking a second term in office and Sarath Fonseka of the National Democratic Front. Large crowds of supporters of the two main rivals are expected to converge near the Elections Secretariat where police have put in place special security arrangements.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/17/pol01.asp>

His Majesty to visit India
Kuensel, 17 December 2009

His Majesty King Jigme Khesar will make his first state visit to New Delhi, India, from December 21 to 26 at the invitation of the president of India, Pratibha D Patil. During the visit His Majesty will meet and hold talks with President Pratibha D Patil, vice president Mohammad H Ansari, prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh, foreign minister S M Krishna and other senior government officials and political leaders.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14250>

Maoist move continues
Kathmandu Post, 17 December 2009

NUWAKOT, DEC 16 - The Maoist autonomous declaration campaign on Wednesday reached the Capital, from where party Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal declared the Newa Autonomous State that includes Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur districts. The day also saw Maoist Vice-Chairman Baburam Bhattarai declare the Tamsaling Autonomous State comprising 10 districts, taking the number of Maoist-

declared states to 10. Announcing the Newa Autonomous State, Maoist Chairman Dahal warned of establishing a parallel government if anyone dared to oppose federalism. "State declaration is line with the spirit of the Constituent Assembly and the Interim Constitution," Dahal said.

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/12/16/top-stories/Maoist-move-continues/3100/>

**Truth and Reconciliation' Commission proposed for the Maldives
Minivan, 17 December 2009**

A South African-style Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has been put forward as a means of mending political and social divides in the Maldives, following President Mohamed Nasheed's radio address last week calling for the investigation of past injustices.

<http://minivannews.com/politics/2009/12/17/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-proposed-for-the-maldives/>

**Air strip for Indian Air Force in Nepal targets Tibet
People's Daily, 18 December 2009**

According to a report published Wednesday in the Telegraph Nepal, India plans to construct an air strip in Surkhet, Nepal, which is close to the tri-junction, Kalapani, where China meets India in Nepali territory. The move caused great concern from the Chinese side. A military delegation, headed by Jia Xiaoning, deputy chief of the Foreign Affairs Office at China's Ministry of National Defense arrived in Nepal December 14 to conduct negotiations.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6845368.html>

**Development challenge easy for me - President
Daily News, 18 December 2009**

President Mahinda Rajapaksa yesterday said he succeeded in crushing LTTE terrorism and he is confident of developing the country to create a better future for the younger generation. "I carried out the most arduous exercise of eradicating terrorism in the country and I will win the development war to create better future for our posterity", he said.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/18/news01.asp>

**His Majesty accepts nominated Chief Justice
Kuensel, 18 December 2009**

The royal commission's nomination of the former chief justice, Lyonpo Sonam Tobgye, as the chief justice of the first supreme court has been accepted by His Majesty. The six-member royal commission was formed on November 20 at His Majesty's command to establish the first Supreme Court of Bhutan.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14264>

**20 pc Nepali workers in Saudi illegal
Kathmandu, 18 December 2009**

Thousands of Nepalis have become illegal workers in Gulf countries after fleeing their employers and joining new jobs. They flee their jobs when they are not paid the pre-agreed perks and salaries. According to First Secretary at the Nepali Embassy in Saudi Arabia Khadga Prasad Dahal, 80,000 of 400,000 Nepali workers in the Gulf country are illegal. Their woes don't end here. Their illegal status deprives them of legal remedies and facilities like medical expense and insurance claims.

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/12/17/top-stories/20-pc-Nepali-workers-in-Saudi-illegal/3133/>

**U.S. Missiles Kill 15 People Near Border in Pakistan
NYT, 18 December 2009**

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — In an exceptionally heavy barrage by American drones in Pakistan, five Predator aircraft fired 10 missiles at suspected militant compounds along the border with Afghanistan on Thursday. Along with an earlier attack, at least 15 people, including 7 foreigners, were killed, Pakistani security officials said. The stepped-up drone strikes came as the civilian government felt the repercussions of a Supreme Court decision on Wednesday that declared unconstitutional an amnesty for thousands of politicians accused of corruption. On Thursday, the National Accountability Bureau, acting with remarkable speed, prohibited 247 people, including some cabinet ministers, from leaving the country, as corruption cases could be revived against them.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/18/world/asia/18pstan.html?ref=asia&pagewanted=print>

**Editorial: Moving towards peace in Assam?
The Hindu, 20 December 2009**

The facts and circumstances of the return of the chairman of the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom, Arabinda Rajkhowa, its deputy commander-in-chief Raju Baruah (both aliases though their actual names are widely known), with eight others — mostly women and children —, to Assam from Bangladesh on December 4 were surrounded by some controversy. Fugitives from law, they had been living in Bangladesh, with several other leaders and cadres of ULFA, for long. The huge popular interest that greeted their return and the carpet bombing coverage by the media also contributed to the controversy.

<http://beta.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/article67057.ece>

**Use tact and wisdom apart from vigil: Chidambaram to SSB
The Hindu, 20 December 2009**

Sending out a strong message to the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), guarding the porous and open Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders, Union Home Minister P Chidambaram on Sunday said the force needs to use "great tact and wisdom" to execute its duties effectively. "Unlike other borders, these two (Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan) borders present special difficulties. They are open borders. For a border guarding force with an open border... calls for great tact and wisdom apart from being vigilant and strong," Mr. Chidambaram said while addressing troops and

officers during the 46th raising day celebrations here.

<http://beta.thehindu.com/news/national/article67683.ece>

**Parliament atmosphere not congenial, says Delwar
Daily Star, 20 December 2009**

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain on Sunday said the parliament was lacking proper environment and hinted the party might continue to boycott parliament session. "BNP wants to return to the parliament. But we will go to the parliament once the congenial atmosphere is there. It's the government that will create the atmosphere to make the parliament effective," Delwar said at a press briefing at the party office in Nayapaltan.

http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=21205

**Maldives to graduate from 'least developed' country
Minivan, 20 December 2009**

Maldives is set to graduate from a 'least developed country' (LDC) to a 'developing country' by December next year, according to the Minister of Economics and Development, Mohamed Rasheed. Speaking at a press conference, Rasheed said that at a recent World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting in Geneva a ministerial envoy had discussed many issues regarding the transition.

<http://minivannews.com/business/2009/12/20/maldives-to-graduate-from-least-developed-country/>

**Mauritius changes mind on Bangladeshi workers
Daily Star, 22 December 2009**

Island nation Mauritius has withdrawn its earlier decision to send around 6,000 Bangladeshi workers back home. The decision came after a Bangladesh delegation led by Foreign Minister Dipu Moni met the authorities in Mauritius, says a foreign ministry press release on Tuesday. Mauritius government in July announced that they would not renew the job contracts of male Bangladeshi workers after December 31 as its economy was badly hit by the global economic recession.

http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=21249

**Great betrayal
Daily News, 22 December 2009**

The interview given by Sarath Fonseka to the Sunday Leader on December 13, 2009 wherein he alleges that three LTTE leaders who came to surrender with white flags during the final stages of the battle were shot dead by ground troops, has opened an UN probe into possible war crimes charges against the Heroic Forces. United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions Philip Alston in a letter to President Mahinda Rajapaksa has demanded an explanation regarding the allegations made by Fonseka that the Defence Secretary has instructed the Commander of the 58th Brigade of the Sri Lanka Army to shoot those surrendering.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/22/news01.asp>

**BCCI submits updated wish list
Kuensel, 22 December 2009**

The Bhutan chambers of commerce and industry (BCCI), representing various business organisations, submitted a list of grievances to the government last week, mainly revolving around the economic development policy (EDP). On August 5, the prime minister and the cabinet had met the business community to listen to their concerns. The government at the time said that they would look into the issues and responded to the BCCI's proposals in a letter on September 26. "The business community and BCCI forwarded updated grievances, based on what still hasn't been resolved till date," said BCCI vice president, Thinley Palden.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14292>

**New regulations will defend Islam in the Maldives, says Islamic Ministry
Minivan, 22 December 2009**

The Ministry of Islamic Affairs said draft regulations under the Religious Unity Act will incorporate recommendations by Jamiyathul Salaf to "protect and defend Islam in an Islamic state like the Maldives". In a letter sent to the Islamic association yesterday, the ministry said recommendations made by Salaf earlier this month were already included in the regulations currently being reviewed by the attorney general's office.

<http://minivannews.com/society/2009/12/22/new-regulations-will-defend-islam-in-the-maldives-says-islamic-ministry/>

**Govt terms strike 'violent'
Kathmandu Post, 22 December 2009**

KATHMANDU, DEC 21 - The second day of the Maoist-called three-day general strike on Monday passed with no sign of rapprochement between the government and the UCPN (Maoist). On Sunday, the government had termed the protests as getting increasingly "violent" and had decided to tighten security and at the same time initiate high-level political negotiation. The Maoists termed the second day's protest "peaceful" and warned of a "fourth round of protest" if the establishment continued to ignore their demands. An informal meeting of Cabinet ministers, including Deputy Prime Minister Bijaya Kumar Gachhadar, Home Minister Bhim Rawal and Irrigation Minister Bal Krishna Khand on Monday concluded that despite repeated promises from the Maoist leadership, the protest was getting increasingly violent.

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/12/21/top-stories/Govt-terms-strike-violent/3264/>

**Strike Enters Second Day, Paralyzing Most of Nepal
NYT, 22 December 2009**

NEW DELHI — Thousands of Maoist protesters in Nepal enforced the second day of their nationwide general strike on Monday, shouting antigovernment slogans and paralyzing much of the country as businesses remained closed and vehicle traffic was almost nonexistent in the capital, Katmandu. The quieter protests on Monday contrasted with the violent clashes that erupted a day earlier between the police and demonstrators in Katmandu. On Sunday, the police arrested at least 70 people as

officers used batons and tear gas to break up protesters, who were blocking roads and preventing Nepal's prime minister from reaching his residence after returning from the international climate change talks in Copenhagen.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/22/world/asia/22nepal.html?_r=1&ref=asia&page_wanted=print

India will aid in Bhutan's democracy cause
The Hindu, 23 December 2009

Describing Bhutan as "India's closest friend and neighbour," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh presided over the signing of a dozen pacts with Thimphu in the presence of King Jigme Khesar here on Tuesday. In summit-level talks, New Delhi expressed satisfaction with its cooperation in checking the activities of insurgent groups trying to operate from southern Bhutan.

<http://beta.thehindu.com/news/national/article69031.ece>

PM claims no corruption in a year
Daily Star, 23 December 2009

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Wednesday reiterated her government's determination to continue the crackdown on corrupts, claiming that no corruption allegations were raised against any of her cabinet members since the government took office in the last year. "We will complete the first one year of taking the charges of office after a few days. I can say, which you will also admit, that in the last one year nobody has able to bring corruption charges against any minister or the government," the prime minister said.

http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=21263

Hydropower
Kuensel, 23 December 2009

23 December, 2009 - Bhutan and India have agreed that the construction of four hydropower projects, with a total generation capacity of 3576 MW, will begin in 2012. That means that all the 10 agreed projects with a total installed capacity of 11636 MW would be in progress by then, according to Bhutan embassy officials in New Delhi. In a special signing ceremony yesterday in New Delhi, Bhutan's ambassador to India, Major General V Namgyel, and the four Indian public sector undertakings (PSUs) signed memoranda of undertakings to prepare detailed project reports (DPRs) on the 620 MW Amochhu reservoir, the 1800 MW Kuri Gongri, 670 MW Chamkharchhu-I and 486 MW Kholongchhu in the presence of His Majesty the King and the Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14302>

PM's China visit
Kathmandu Post, 23 December 2009

KATHMANDU, DEC 22 - Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal is embarking on his maiden China visit on Dec. 26, with the hope of extracting Beijing's commitment to key infrastructure projects, including hydropower plants. The prime minister will lead

a 29-member team — 14 making up the official delegation and 15 others from the business community. Nepal discussed the agenda with his Cabinet colleagues and select members of the business community at the Prime Minister's Office on Tuesday. During his five-day visit, the prime minister will meet Chinese President Hu Jintao, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao and chair of the National People's Congress.

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/12/22/top-stories/PMs-China-visit/3300/>

**Future of Maldives tourism: exclusive or mid-market?
Minivan, 23 December 2009**

The Maldives is known for its high end world class resorts. Popular among the rich and famous, it seems the right amount of money can buy you some tropical privacy in the modern hectic world. This privacy and seclusion of many Maldivian resorts is what makes them unique. This is what differentiates the Maldives from its competitors, and over the last few years many new exclusive resorts have sprung up.

<http://minivannews.com/business/2009/12/23/future-of-maldives-tourism-exclusive-or-mid-market/>

**Sahara terms 'crossfire' as self-defence
Daily Star, 26 December 2009**

Terming 'crossfire' as the self-defence of the law enforcement agencies, Home Minister Sahara Khatun on Saturday denied the killings in 'crossfire'. "If you consider the definition of 'crossfire' you would see no 'crossfire' is going on and never had been. What is happening is that the members of my law enforcement agencies are forced to shoot miscreants to defend themselves when the miscreants opened fire on them to evade arrest. This is the fact," the home minister said.

http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=21316

**Lanka mired in UNP's debt trap - Minister
Daily News, 26 December 2009**

Sri Lanka is still mired in the debt trap set by the UNP Government of J.R. Jayewardene. Colossal sums obtained as foreign debt is still being paid. One clear example is the loan obtained for the accelerated Mahaweli River Diversion Scheme, Environment and Natural Resources Minister Patali Champika Ranawaka said at the UPFA press conference. "The Jayewardene Government borrowed US\$ 68 million for the Mahaweli scheme and we have already paid installments of the loan with interest accrued up to US\$ 314 million. But we still had to pay back \$ 548 million with the interest added," he said.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/12/26/pol01.asp>

**His Majesty returns today
Kuensel, 26 December 2009**

His Majesty King Jigme Khesar returns today after a historic five-day state visit to India from December 21 to 26, which leaders of the two countries hailed as a

milestone in Indo-Bhutan cooperation. During the visit, 12 agreements covering various sectors, including hydropower projects, were signed. "The signing of the very important documents was a clear reflection of the very special bonds of friendship and goodwill and very close relationship that Bhutan enjoys with India," Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, who accompanied His Majesty, told the Bhutanese media yesterday.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14321>

Maoists gear up for 'exposure campaign'
Kathmandu Post, 26 December 2009

The UCPN (Maoist) on Friday announced commencement of its monthlong nationwide fourth phase of protests — the 'awakening and exposure campaign'. A meeting of senior party leaders, including Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, finalised the campaign to expose foreign interference, especially 'imperialist' India's growing intervention in Nepal's internal affairs. The party has concluded that such interference is hindering the peace and constitution-drafting processes. "Now on, the protests will focus on preserving Nepal's integrity and sovereignty," said a UCPN (Maoist) press statement.

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/12/25/top-stories/Maoists-gear-up-for-exposure-campaign/3394/>

Nepali PM visits Lhasa, kicking off China tour
People's Daily, 27 December 2009

Nepali Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal arrived here Saturday afternoon, kicking off a six-day visit to China at the invitation of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. This was his first official visit to China since he became prime minister of the Himalayan nation in May this year.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6852945.html>

Talks on sharing water with India to resume
Daily Star, 27 December 2009

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday said the government would start talks with India to resolve the problems over the waters of Teesta and other common rivers. The prime minister said this at the national council of the Institution of Diploma Engineers, reports private television ATN Bangla. Sheikh Hasina said her government proved its efficiency since it took office nearly one year ago and that Bangladesh is now safe from the risk of global economic meltdown. She said the government had started work to protect the country from an environmental disaster through freeing the rivers and water bodies from encroachers.

http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=21328

Newa state declared, again
Kathmandu Post, 27 December 2009

KATHMANDU, DEC 26 - Thousands of Newar people staged a rally in the Capital on Saturday and announced a separate Newa Autonomous State comprising the

Kathmandu Valley and surrounding districts. The rallyists were from various political parties. The UCPN (Maoist) had, on Dec. 16, declared the Newa Autonomous State amid confusion and controversy over the border of the state. Representatives of the Joint Newa Struggle Committee (JNSC), the rally organiser, maintained that the earlier declaration had 'failed to include them'.

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2009/12/26/top-stories/Newa-state-declared-again/3418/>

**Fifty inmates transferred to house arrest
Minivan, 27 December 2009**

More than fifty inmates from Maafushi jail serving sentences for the possession of less than three grams of drugs have been transferred to house arrest under a rehabilitation programme, the Department of Penitentiary and Rehabilitation (DPRS) has said.

<http://minivannews.com/society/2009/12/27/fifty-inmates-transferred-to-house-arrest/>

**Myanmar to repatriate 9,000 Rohingyas
Daily Star, 29 December 2009**

Myanmar has identified 9,000 Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh and decided to take them back to their own country, Foreign Secretary Mohamed Mijarul Quayes said on Tuesday. The announcement came at a press briefing after the first day talks of the two-day secretary-level meeting between the neighbouring countries. Bangladesh asked the Myanmar authorities to repatriate the identified refugees as soon as possible, Mijarul said.

http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=21373