

Pak caught, bowled & stumped

Asian Age, 4 March 2009

March 3: Eight people, including six policemen and two civilians, were killed and seven players of the visiting Sri Lankan cricket team were injured when masked terrorists ambushed the cricketers near Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium at about 9 am on Tuesday. The ambush, similar in style to the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, stunned a world already trying to deal with an uncontrollable militant element that is threatening to destabilise Pakistan. Pakistani forces have been battling a wave of militancy in its northwest regions, considered by many to be a safe haven for Al Qaeda. Tuesday's attack demonstrates the Pakistan government's failure to contain these elements, our Delhi bureau reports

No comments from Maoists

Kathmandu Post, 4 March 2009

NAWALPARASI, March 3 - Maoist People's Liberation Army (PLA) cantonments have started recruiting new soldiers after the ruling five parties recently gave the nod to the ongoing recruitment in Nepal Army (NA). But it was not immediately clear whether the recruitment has been endorsed by the party headquarters. Though the Maoist party itself has yet to officially comment on the recruitment, key political parties have come out strongly against the drive saying it violates past pacts, most notably the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of November 2006. The UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) has kept tight-lipped.

Chittagong arms were for ULFA

Hindu, 8 March 2009

DHAKA: Two prime accused in a big arms haul in Chittagong in 2004 have confessed in court that the weapons were being smuggled for the United Liberation Front of Asom and under the direct supervision of its leader Paresh Barua. In the statement to the Metropolitan Magistrate, Chittagong, Mohammad Hafizur Rahman and Din Mohammad said the then Ministers for Home and Industries under the four-party government led by Khaleda Zia and some high officials of the intelligence agencies and the coast guard were well aware of the smuggling which also involved a former MP of the Jatiya Party of Gen. H.M. Ershad and a film director.

LTTE turning desperate: Colombo

Hindu, 8 March 2009

COLOMBO: The Sri Lankan military on Saturday claimed to have killed 101 LTTE cadre in the last 48 hours and said the outfit is making "desperate efforts to prolong its imminent defeat". Three days ago, the military had estimated that the strength of the fighting cadre of the LTTE as less than 500 and that the Tigers were confined to 45 sq km. However, little is known about the fate of an estimated 70,000 civilians trapped in the war zone. The pro-LTTE TamilNet in a report alleged that 281 civilians were killed and several injured in artillery fire by the Army into the "no fire zones". The military denied the charge.

FBI team arrives in Dhaka

Daily Star, 8 March 2009

A two-member team of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the United States arrived in

Dhaka this afternoon to help probe into the carnage at Bangladesh Rifles headquarters. US ambassador James F Moriarty confirmed their arrival, private television ATN Bangla reports. The FBI men came from New Delhi.

“Next 72 hours crucial for Tigers”

Hindu, 9 March 2009

COLOMBO: The Sri Lankan military on Sunday claimed that the war with the LTTE had reached its “final stages” amid reports that the next 72 hours were crucial for the Tigers. The Defence Ministry said that as Mullathivu battles reached their last phase, LTTE made several desperate attempts since Friday dawn to infiltrate the military’s forward defences which left over 100 Tiger cadre killed and as many injured. “LTTE terrorists were preparing for a large scale offensive towards the existing military defences at Palamathalan and north of Puthukkudiyirippu, inducting over 200 cadre including suicide bombers and sea tigers,” it said.

Troops surround Tiger leaders

Daily News, 9 March 2009

More than 50 Tiger cadres were reportedly killed and scores of others injured as 58 Division troops foiled a desperate LTTE attempt to breach the Security Forces defences in Ampalavanpokkanai in the North of Puthukkudiyirippu, once troops advanced 400 metres closer to the Puthumattalan safe zone, military sources told the Daily News yesterday. Military sources confirmed that fierce battles erupted in Ampalavanpokkanai in the South of Chalai and North of Puthukkudiyirippu as desperate Tiger cadres now entrapped in less than 40 square kilo metres made yet another attempt to breach the Security Forces defences for the fourth consecutive day yesterday. “Top rung Tiger leaders Swarnam and Lawrence who were physically present to lead the Black Tiger cadres to breach the Security Forces defences in Ampalavanpokkanai were reportedly entrapped along with 50 other Tiger cadres in the ensuing battle and were making desperate attempts to escape from the area since yesterday morning as Security Forces effectively surrounded them in the area from all fronts”, sources added.

Obama hopeful about peeling away some in Taliban

Dawn, 9 March 2009

WASHINGTON: President Barack Obama is holding out hope that US forces in Afghanistan can peel away elements of the Taliban and possibly move them toward reconciliation. There may be such opportunities, but the situation in Afghanistan is more complicated than the challenges the American military faced in Iraq, Obama said in an interview with The New York Times posted Saturday on the newspaper's Web site. US troops were able to persuade Sunni Muslim insurgents in Iraq to cooperate in some instances because they had been alienated by the tactics of al Qaida terrorists. Obama cautioned that Afghanistan is a less-governed region with a history of fierce independence among tribes, creating a tough set of circumstances for the United States to deal with.

Double blow to PLA intake plan

Kathmandu Post, 9 March 2009

KATHMANDU, March 8 - The recruitment drive of the Maoist People's Liberation Army (PLA) combatants received a serious blow on Sunday as the Supreme Court issued a stay order, which

was followed by the Army Integration Special Committee (AISC)'s direction to stop fresh intake. The AISC decision came hours after the apex court issued an interim order to the Office of the Prime Minister and AISC staying the recruitment drive of the PLA combatants. The AISC said the intake violated the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of November 2006. The interim order came in response to a writ petition filed at the apex court challenging the controversial recruitment campaign that began on March 3.

JS security to be beefed up for fear of terror attacks

Daily Star, 9 March 2009

A top-level committee today decided to beef up the security of the Jatiya Sangsad as it observed the parliament with the present security arrangement might face terror attacks any time."We are going to revise the security measures in and around the parliament immediately in a bid to protect the parliament from any possible terror attacks," Deputy Speaker Shawkat Ali told reporters after a meeting of the committee at the parliament. The deputy speaker said everybody including the parliament members would have to go through an explosives detection system installed at the main entrance of the parliament.

LTTE suicide bomber attacks Milad Festival - Akurassa [Updated]

Daily News, 10 March 2009

The latest updates on brutal terrorist attack at the national Milad Festival in Sri Lanka, indicates that 10 civilians were killed and at least 20 others, including a government minister were injured. An LTTE suicide bomber attacked the Jumma mosque at Godapitiya, in Akurassa, in the Matara district around 10.30, this morning (Mar 10). According to the defence sources, the LTTE terrorist has targeted the Islam devotees attending the national Milad-Un-Nabi celebration, held at the mosque. The Milad-un-Nabi, the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed is celebrated as a national festival in Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, hospital sources say Minister Mahinda Wijesekara who was also attending the celebration has suffered injuries, in the explosion. The sources add that another 15 people with injuries have been admitted to the government hospital Matara.

Nepal Maoists fear royalist plot in Delhi

Asian Age, 10 March 2009

March 9: With former Prime Minister and Opposition leader Girija Prasad Koirala scheduled to leave for India on Wednesday, Nepal's ruling Maoist party on Monday said a conspiracy was hatching in New Delhi to reinstate monarchy in the new Himalayan republic. "A new pact is being signed in New Delhi against the Maoist government," said the Janadisha daily, regarded as the mouthpiece of the former rebel party. "The new agreement among regressive forces is meant to combat the elected Maoist government and democratic forces." In 2006, when King Gyanendra was ruling Nepal with the support of the Army, stoking further instability and violence in the insurgency-hit kingdom, New Delhi brokered an agreement between the sidelined political parties of Nepal and the underground Maoists which resulted in the ouster of the royal regime.

Scotland Yard team arrives Wednesday: UK minister

Daily Star, 10 March 2009

A four-member team of the Scotland Yard of the United Kingdom will arrive in Dhaka tomorrow (Wednesday) to help investigate into the incident at the BDR headquarters, the UK Minister for

International Development Mike Foster MP said today. Talking to reporters on his arrival at the Zia International Airport this morning, he said the Scotland Yard jointly with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the United States will assist in the BDR mutiny investigations.

14 killed in LTTE suicide attack

Hindu, 11 March 2009

COLOMBO: Fourteen civilians were killed and 46 others, including a Minister, injured when a suspected cadre of the LTTE blew himself up at a mosque at Akurassa in Matara district in the Southern Province, 160 km from the Sri Lankan capital. Minister for Posts and Telecommunications Mahinda Wijesekara and the former Chief Minister of the Southern Province, H.G. Sirisena, were seriously injured. They were flown to Colombo. The Defence Ministry said here the suicide bomber targeted a procession, held to mark the birthday of Prophet Mohammad, as it approached the mosque. Three other Ministers, who were part of the procession, escaped unhurt. The condition of several of those injured is said to be serious.

Pentagon Rethinking Old Doctrine on 2 Wars

New York Times, 15 March 2009

WASHINGTON — The protracted wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are forcing the Obama administration to rethink what for more than two decades has been a central premise of American strategy: that the nation need only prepare to fight two major wars at a time. For more than six years now, the United States has in fact been fighting two wars, with more than 170,000 troops now deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan combined. The military has openly acknowledged that the wars have left troops and equipment severely strained, and has said that it would be difficult to carry out any kind of significant operation elsewhere. To some extent, fears have faded that the United States may actually have to fight, say, Russia and North Korea, or China and Iran, at the same time. But if Iraq and Afghanistan were never formidable foes in conventional terms, they have already tied up the American military for a period longer than World War II. A senior Defense Department official involved in a strategy review now under way said the Pentagon was absorbing the lesson that the kinds of counterinsurgency campaigns likely to be part of some future wars would require more staying power than in past conflicts, like the first Iraq war in 1991 or the invasions of Grenada and Panama.

Pakistan, India, Afghanistan fates linked: US senator

Daily Times, 21 March 2009

WASHINGTON: The fates of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan are interlinked, Senator Carl Levin, chairman of the US Armed Service Committee said on Friday, emphasising that improvement in Pakistan-India relations is the key to stability in South Asia. Levin, a leading Democrat lawmaker, said Pakistan and India faced common threats. "In South Asia, the interests and fates of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan are linked. The Mumbai attacks last November, and the aftermath, remind us that tensions still exist between India and Pakistan, and stability between these two countries is vital to stability in the region," he said. His remarks came as media reports said Washington had asked New Delhi to pull back troops from its border with Pakistan, to ease bilateral tensions. The US believed lowering tensions over Kashmir between the two neighbours was essential to allow Pakistan to focus on Afghanistan.

Pillay draws Nepal, Rwanda parallel

Kathmandu Post, 23 March 2009

KATHMANDU, March 22 - The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights compared the incidents of serious HR violations in Nepal to that of Rwanda and said she would take up the issue at the Special Session of Human Rights Council on Thursday. Talking to reporters in Kathmandu at the end of her five-day maiden visit Sunday, Navanethem Pillay said she heard several cases of HR violations, "similar and painfully reminiscent" of the dozens that she had heard during her eight years working with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Rights activists say the High Commissioner's move holds meaning in Nepal's context, as the Council, after Thursday's discussions can pass some resolutions to bring Nepal under its scrutiny.

Video footage of Pilkhana killing, looting found

Daily Star, 23 March 2009

BDR mutiny probe coordinator Faruk Khan today said the investigators got some films containing the massacre at the Darbar Hall and looting by BDR men. Khan, the minister for commerce, did not give details on how and when the video footage were retrieved. Earlier, he chaired a meeting of three committees investigating the last month's carnage in Pilkhana with the recent deaths of BDR men and progress of the investigation on the agenda.

LTTE lose Iranapalai

Daily News, 23 March 2009

Security Forces yesterday brought the LTTE's last operational centre, Iranapalai under their full control. The highly fortified Iranapalai, which had been surrounded by massive earth bunds had been fully captured after fierce battles, military sources added. The Media Center for National Security said the Iranapalai junction and its central area had been completely brought under Army control after breaching the final earth bund built by the Tigers to protect the area. The Tigers had built the earth bund with the twin purpose of denying further access to security forces and to prevent civilians from leaving the area.

Generals move Supreme Court

Kathmandu Post, 24 March 2009

KATHMANDU, March 23 - Eight Brigadier Generals of Nepal Army who were given retirement last week filed a joint writ petition at the Supreme Court on Monday demanding nullification of the government decision and extension of their job. The retired generals have demanded they should be rolled back to their positions since the non-extension of their tenure violates Army Act 2006 and Army Regulations.

US wants Afghanistan 'exit strategy'

Daily Times, 24 March 2009

BRUSSELS: US special envoy Richard Holbrooke met NATO allies on Monday to outline Washington's policy review for Afghanistan, after President Barack Obama said it would contain an exit strategy and greater emphasis on economic development. "What we can't do is think that just a military approach in Afghanistan is going to be able to solve our problems," Obama said in an interview with CBS TV's '60 Minutes'. "So what we're looking for is a comprehensive strategy. And there's got to be an exit strategy ... there's got to be a sense that this is not perpetual drift."

'Iron Gate' ordeal begins today
Kathmandu Post, 25 March 2009

'Iron Gate' ordeal begins today

KATHMANDU, March 24 - Hundreds of Maoist PLA combatants will be sitting alongside regular students for the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exams that begin on Wednesday. According to the Office of the Controller of Examination (OCE), the total number of examinees stands at 412,081. Of them, 364,591 are regular, while 47,490 are exempted students. The exams will get over on April 2. The number of examinees this year has gone up by 45,040 from the previous year. While Kathmandu has the highest number of SLC examinees (27,684), the thinly populated district of Manang has just 56.

10 hydropower projects finalised
Kuensel, 25 March 2009

Bhutan and India have agreed to a final list of 10 hydropower projects with a total capacity of 11,576 MW to be constructed in Bhutan by 2020. This was decided during the visit of the economic affairs minister Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk to India recently. Of the 10, six projects with a total power of 9,340 MW will be carried out between the two countries on the 'inter governmental model' of 40 percent grant and 60 percent loan. The remaining four with 2,236 MW will be on the joint venture model, whereby public sector companies from both the countries will carry out the project. "We are, however, keeping on top of the target 10,000 MW a cushion of 1,576 MW just in case some projects are unfeasible, or there are other problems," said Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk. During the Delhi meeting, it was also decided that the next project to be implemented right after Punatsangchu 1 would be the Mangdechhu 720 MW.

War crimes to be tried under Int'l Crimes Act 1973: Minister
Daily Star, 25 March 2009

UNB, Dhaka The government decided to try the war criminals under the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act of 1973, signalling a significant development in the country's political arena 38 years after the Independence. Law Minister Shafique Ahmed disclosed this today (Wednesday) while talking to reporters after an inter-ministerial meeting on the trial of war criminals. The investigation process for holding the trial "has already started," he said. Those who were involved in killing, loot, arson, rape, detention or forcing people into leaving the country during the Liberation War will be brought under this act

LTTE 'finished', says Minister Muralitharan
Minivan News, 25 March 2009

In an interview with the UK's 'The Guardian' former LTTE military commander, Minister Vinayagamoorthis Muralitharan alias Karuna Amman says the LTTE is "finished", having lost more than 90% of its fighters. Speaking to its Colombo correspondent, Muralitharan said around 1,500 surviving rebels, who have made their last stand on a sliver of the north-east coast, are surrounded by 65,000 troops of the Sri Lankan Army, with no way out. At the height of their powers the Tigers could muster more than 15,000 men at arms. "It is a do or die battle for the LTTE," the paper quoted Muralitharan. "The battle is now street to street and door to door."

Bomb Kills 9 Civilians in Afghanistan
New York Times, 25 March 2009

KABUL, Afghanistan — An explosive device ripped through a minibus on Wednesday, killing nine civilians and wounding seven others on a road frequently used by security forces and international troops in eastern Afghanistan, the police said. Abdul Quayom Baqizoy, the provincial police chief of Khost, said the passengers on the bus, traveling from the town of Zazimyan, included women and children. Seven, one of them a woman, were killed instantly and two more died on the way to the hospital, Mr. Baqizoy said. Seven more people were wounded, of whom six were hospitalized, two of them in critical condition.

UK eyes Pakistan with new strategy against terrorism

Daily Times, 25 March 2009

LONDON: Britain faces an increased threat of a chemical or even nuclear terrorist attack, officials said on Tuesday, highlighting the risks from extremists in Pakistan and Somalia. Unveiling a new counter-terrorism strategy, they said the Al Qaeda network was becoming weaker, but warned its ideology would survive and of the growing threat from 'self-starting' militants, and of attacks using chemical, biological or atomic weapons. "There is the potential (for such an attack), given the international situation, what we believe to be the aspirations of some international terrorists," said Home Secretary Jacqui Smith.

PM: We're against totalitarian rule

Kathmandu Post, 26 March 2009

KATHMANDU, March 25 - Prime Minister and Unified CPN (Maoist) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal on Wednesday reiterated his party's commitment to multi-party democratic competitive politics, rule of law, press freedom, human rights and federalism and said the Maoists take these as fundamental norms and principles of the new constitution. Presenting his party's official views on fundamental norms, values and principles to be incorporated in the new constitution at the Constitutional Committee in the CA, Dahal said some are still questioning Maoist commitment to multi-party democracy.

Bhola militants' den financier Faisal held

Daily Star, 26 March 2009

Law enforcers yesterday (Wednesday) arrested the financier of the London-based NGO Green Crescent, which runs the madrasa-cum-orphanage in Bhola that turned out to be a mini-ordnance factory Tuesday. Shafique Ahmed, father-in-law of Bangladeshi expatriate in London Faisal Mostafiz, told The Daily Star that he had been informed by Faisal's relatives that Faisal was picked up yesterday from a house in the capital. However, as of filing this report at about 1:00pm today (Thursday), the law enforcers did not make any announcement about the arrest.

A place called home

Daily News, 26 March 2009

Security Forces captured a safe house of Pottu Amman, while engaged in counter terrorist operations in the general area South of Iranapalai on Tuesday. According to military sources, troops of the 20th Gajaba Regiment under the 58 Division captured the safe house used by Pottu Amman and Kapil Amman. Military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said troops also found a jeep believed to have been used by Pottu Amman.

Afghan Strikes by Taliban Get Pakistan Help, U.S. Aides Say

New York Times, 26 March 2009

WASHINGTON — The Taliban’s widening campaign in southern Afghanistan is made possible in part by direct support from operatives in Pakistan’s military intelligence agency, despite Pakistani government promises to sever ties to militant groups fighting in Afghanistan, according to American government officials. The support consists of money, military supplies and strategic planning guidance to Taliban commanders who are gearing up to confront the international force in Afghanistan that will soon include some 17,000 American reinforcements.

Report asks US to identify regional dimension of Pakistan’s security

Daily Times, 26 March 2009

Report asks US to identify regional dimension of Pakistan’s security

WASHINGTON: The United States must prevent a power vacuum in Afghanistan that could destabilise Pakistan, an influential Washington think tank said on Tuesday. The Centre for American Progress also recommended an integrated regional effort to address the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and the Tribal Areas. It called on the Obama administration to “implement policies that recognise the regional dimension of Pakistan’s security challenges”

Pakistani and Afghan Taliban Unify in Face of U.S. Influx

New York Times, 27 March 2009

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — After agreeing to bury their differences and unite forces, Taliban leaders based in Pakistan have closed ranks with their Afghan comrades to ready a new offensive in Afghanistan as the United States prepares to send 17,000 more troops there this year. In interviews, several Taliban fighters based in the border region said preparations for the anticipated influx of American troops were already being made. A number of new, younger commanders have been preparing to step up a campaign of roadside bombings and suicide attacks to greet the Americans, the fighters said. The refortified alliance was forged after the reclusive Afghan Taliban leader, Mullah Muhammad Omar, sent emissaries to persuade Pakistani Taliban leaders to join forces and turn their attention to Afghanistan, Pakistani officials and Taliban members said

In New Afghan Strategy, Obama Will Add Troops

New York Times, 27 March 2009

WASHINGTON — President Obama plans to further bolster American forces in Afghanistan and for the first time set benchmarks for progress in fighting Al Qaeda and the Taliban there and in Pakistan, officials said Thursday. In imposing conditions on the Afghans and Pakistanis, Mr. Obama is replicating a strategy used in Iraq two years ago both to justify a deeper American commitment and prod governments in the region to take more responsibility for quelling the insurgency and building lasting political institutions. “The era of the blank check is over,” Mr. Obama told Congressional leaders at the White House, according to an account of the meeting provided on the condition of anonymity because it was a private session

Obama calls President Zardari

Daily Times, 27 March 2009

ISLAMABAD: US President Barack Obama on Thursday called President Asif Ali Zardari and discussed bilateral relations, the security situation of the region, and other matters of mutual interest. The two leaders also discussed matters relating to the fight against militancy, with particular reference to peace in the region, APP reported. Also on Thursday, Obama called

Afghan President Hamid Karzai to inform him that Washington had completed a review of its strategy in Afghanistan, Karzai's office told AFP. agencies

White House Debate Led to Plan to Widen Afghan Effort

New York Times, 28 March 2009

White House Debate Led to Plan to Widen Afghan Effort

WASHINGTON — President Obama's plan to widen United States involvement in Afghanistan came after an internal debate in which Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. warned against getting into a political and military quagmire, while military advisers argued that the Afghanistan war effort could be imperiled without even more troops. American Marines patrolled at a bazaar on Friday in the southwestern Afghanistan town of Delaram. The Marines have tightened security after recent bombings. All of the president's advisers agreed that the primary goal in the region should be narrow — taking aim at Al Qaeda, as opposed to the vast attempt at nation-building the Bush administration had sought in Iraq. The question was how to get there

Obama unveils sweeping new Afghan war strategy, includes Iran in Afghan contact group: Qaeda 'cancer'

Daily Times, 28 March 2009

WASHINGTON: Unveiling a sweeping new strategy for the Afghan war – US President Barack Obama warned on Friday that Al Qaeda was a cancer that could devour Pakistan. “Al Qaeda is actively planning attacks on the US from safe havens in Pakistan ... to the terrorists who oppose us, my message is ... we will defeat you.” “We will insist that action be taken ... one way or another,” he said, indicating that the US would act on intelligence against terrorists if Pakistan does not. He said Pakistan and Afghanistan were inextricably linked. Obama said the US military would also shift the emphasis of its mission to training and expanding the Afghan army.

India, Iran in Obama AfPak plan

Asian Age, 28 March 2009

March 27: US President Barack Obama said on Friday that he plans to further bolster American forces in Afghanistan, increase aid to Pakistan, and for the first time set benchmarks for progress in fighting Al Qaeda and the Taliban in both chaotic countries. In strikingly ominous tones, Mr Obama warned — just as President George W. Bush did repeatedly over the years — of intelligence estimates that Al Qaeda "is actively planning attacks on the US homeland from its safe haven in Pakistan". Among other things, officials said he planned to recast the Afghan war as a regional issue involving not only Pakistan but also India, Russia, China, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and the Central Asian states. His plan envisions persuading Pakistan to stop focusing military resources on India so it can concentrate more on battling insurgents in its lawless tribal regions.

Yarkay seeks another hearing

Kuensel, 30 March 2009

More than two weeks after the Thimphu district court passed judgment on the Yarkay group versus the department of urban development and engineering services (DUDES) and the works and human settlement ministry (MoWHS), the construction company has re-appealed to the court on March 19. In its re-application to the district court, Yarkay stated that, although the judgment was in agreement on most of the issues raised by them, they were not entitled to any

compensation, nor was any action taken against those individuals, who deliberately breached rules and tried to favour a bidder of their choice. "We were denied the work because of this," it stated

Paras 'spills' massacre beans

Kathmandu Post, 30 March 2009

KATHMANDU, March 29 - Ex-crown prince Dipendra had not one but three reasons for killing his father, King Birendra: a thwarted multi-million dollar arms deal, forbidden love and end to absolute monarchy in 1990, according to ex-crown prince Paras. "Nepal Army was looking for a new weapon to replace the Belgian SLR. Dipendra liked the German Heckler & Koch G36 assault rifle, as opposed to the battle-tested Colt M16," said Paras, in his first interview given to The New Paper on Sunday published from Singapore. The ex-prince has been living in Singapore since July 2008 after monarchy was abolished in May.

Troops close in on Safe Zone from three directions

Daily News, 30 March 2009

Heavy fighting raged in the Puthukudiyiruppu East, Iranapalai East and Palamattalan as troops attached to the 53, 58 and 55 Divisions further close in on the Safe Zone from three directions surrounding the Safe Zone amidst thousands of civilians fleeing the Tiger held area seeking refuge in Security Forces controlled areas, military officials told the Daily News yesterday. "The Safe Zone has now been surrounded from all three directions and troops are poised to liberate the civilians trapped inside the Safe Zone clearing paths for them to reach Security Forces controlled areas," a senior military official told the Daily News. Tiger cadres are now fighting within a one square kilometre stretch in the Iranapalai East, the last build up area under LTTE control at present.

Os sued for skewing August 21 attack probe

Daily Star, 30 March 2009

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police today filed a case against three investigation officers of the August 21 grenade attack for their alleged attempts to skew the probe. The accused three retired police officers are Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Munshi Atikur Rahman, ASP Abdur Rashid and Special Superintendent of police Ruhul Amin of the CID. ASP Fazlul Kabir of the CID filed the case with Paltan Police Station at 12:30pm. The grisly attack on August 21 in 2004 killed 22 people including AL's woman affairs secretary Ivy Rahman and injured over 200. It was speculated that the attack had been plotted to assassinate present Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

Maldivians cannot vote abroad, says EC

Minivan News, 30 March 2009

Maldivians living abroad will not be allowed to vote outside of the Maldives in the upcoming parliamentary elections. The Elections Commission (EC) has decided against placing ballot boxes outside of the country to ensure voter secrecy and because there was no precedent of doing so for parliamentary elections in any country within Asia. Mohamed Tholaal, director general of the commission, said both the constitution and the General Elections Act stipulate that votes should be counted at the location of ballot boxes and results immediately announced to prevent election fraud.

Editorial: War on terror?

Indian Express, 30 March 2009

As US President Barack Obama promotes his restructured “Af-Pak” strategy on the international stage this week, India has reasons to be pleased and concerned. The good news from the much touted review, announced by Obama last Friday, comes from his diagnosis of the problem. He has taken on board much of India’s own analysis of the challenges confronting the world in the badlands between the Indus and the Hindu Kush. He agrees with India that Pakistan is the source of Afghanistan’s insecurity and the world must act together to cure Islamabad of its political malaise. In recognising that the borderlands between Pakistan and Afghanistan constitute the single most important threat to global peace and security, arguing that Islamabad is part of the problem rather than the solution, and asking India to join an international concert in managing the Af-Pak region, he has made welcome departures from the American policy towards South Asia since September 11, 2001.

High alert in Kerala after reports of LTTE sneaking in

Hindu, 30 March 2009

Thiruvananthapuram (PTI): A high alert has been sounded across Kerala on Monday following reports of a group of suspected LTTE militants sneaking into the southern state with Police, Navy and Coastguard launching a joint intense search between Alappuzha and Kochi towns. The alert had been sounded since intelligence agencies also corroborated the possibility of a militant group landing in Thyckal Beach near Cherthala, about 30 km South of Kochi, as claimed local fishermen, official sources said. A large contingent of police, including armed commandos, has been deployed on the busy Cherthala-Kochi highway where all the vehicles were being searched. The Navy has pressed two helicopters for aerial surveillance while the Coast Guard boats are searching the off-shore areas.