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Summary:

Bangladesh: A landmark Supreme Court verdict last week banning "use of religion" in politics has put the onus on the Election Commission (EC) with regard to reviewing the registration of Bangladesh's main Islamic party Jamaat-e-Islam." Instead of expediency politics, the Awami League should take this opportunity to restore the country's original name, 'The People's Republic of Bangladesh', because you cannot be an 'Islamic Republic' and be secular at the same time. Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee will visit Dhaka for a day on Saturday to attend the signing of one-billion dollar credit facility by EXIM bank to Bangladesh for infrastructure projects. The Special Court-3 of Bangladesh Rifles yesterday sentenced 14 BDR soldiers of 8 Rifles Battalion to different jail terms for their involvement in Sunamganj BDR mutiny on February 26 last year. Around 80 people were injured on Sunday as Bangladeshi police fired rubber bullets and teargas, and used batons to disperse angry textile workers protesting for a third day against a new minimum wage they say is too low. Bangladesh has cancelled the registration of 334 NGOs in the last four months on charges of patronising militancy and for alleged corruption and misuse of foreign funds. Garment workers in Bangladesh have returned to work after protests and street battles which followed a proposed pay rise. The 3rd Asian International Trade Expo is being held in Bangabandhu International Conference Center in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka to increase trade and bilateral relations within the Asian nations. India has allowed the export of 300,000 tonnes of non-basmati rice and

200,000 tonnes of wheat to Bangladesh, a government statement said on Friday, as good rainfall and higher planting have boosted crop prospects. The arrest of three Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operatives from a madrassa in Chittagong, one of Bangladesh's largest cities, in November last year, has underlined the expanding reach of the Pakistan based militant group, and security analysts believe that militants are now trying to establish their base in the country to launch attacks on India that could inflame regional troubles. New Delhi has mounted pressure on Dhaka to agree to waive duties on transportation of over-dimensional cargoes (ODCs) from its western side to the north-eastern states across the Bangladesh territory, government officials said. India is asking us to waive duties on transport of ODCs, officials at the Prime Ministers Office said. Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni in Dhaka stated that we have decided to reopen Bangladesh embassy in Afghanistan shortly. The process has been initiated and good news will be shared. India will extend its railway network to two more places along the India-Bangladesh border to improve connectivity between the two countries, a railway official announced on Thursday.

Nepal:The country has been without a leader since Madhav Kumar Nepal stepped down more than a month ago.He said that political in-fighting between his coalition government and opposition Maoist MPs meant he was unable to function.It is the fourth time parliament has failed to nominate a new PM. Uncertainty loomed over Nepal's Maoist supremo Prachanda and his Nepali Congress rival Ramchandra Poudyal failed to win a clear majority in the third round of run-off vote in Parliament today to elect a new prime minister, deepening the political crisis in the country. the two major parties in the fray have refused to give a clear commitment to the Madhesi parties on declaring the southern plains as a single autonomous region. Nepal's Maoist leadership today said it is against interference by any foreign country in the country's internal affairs, but made it clear that it did not see the visit of India's special envoy Shyam Saran to Kathmandu as "an interference in Nepalese affairs".Hours before the fourth round of voting on Friday to elect a new Prime Minister in Nepal, a smaller communist party having nine members in Parliament has split, with the indications that new faction may support the Maoists. The United Nations says it is "deeply concerned" at plans by Nepal's national army and its Maoist counterpart to recruit new soldiers, four years after the end of a bloody civil war. With the son-in-law of Nepal's former King Gyanendra Shah, Raj Bahadur Singh, joining the Nepali Janata Dal, a party that has been labeled as pro-Maoists' party by some interested local and India's "democratic" media close to South Block, pulse beat of some democratic political parties have gone up foreseeing possible alliance between Maoists and former Royalists.Freshly. The Maoists' tit-for-tat move against the recruitment call made by the Nepal Army, has been heavily criticized by the caretaker government and parties affiliated in the government.The United States said Friday it has suspended new US adoptions of Nepalese children, citing flaws in the system used to determine that the children had been abandoned. China and Nepal celebrated the 55th anniversary of diplomatic ties at a reception in Beijing Monday evening.More than 300 guests, including Chinese government officials and foreign diplomats in China, attended the reception, which was co-hosted by the China-Nepal Friendship.

Srilanka: A post-war challenge for Sri Lanka: Dismantling the LTTE overseas and rebuilding a Sri Lankan identity. Sri Lanka defeated the world's first insurgency of the 21st century. The engagement with the diaspora leaders also helped the government to better understand the diaspora needs. Government realized the need to create an information centre to provide sound and timely information for the diaspora. The LTTE exploited the absence of such information. To counter LTTE misinformation, the best government strategy is to maintain a public database especially about the IDPS, detainees, and rehabilitees. To build permanent peace in Sri Lanka, there must be a change in ideality and reality. That is creating the institutions to change the reality on the ground and to counter possible root causes for development of a political motive to move towards separation. A political party in Sri Lanka has accused the government of trying to change the demography in the north taken over by the military following the defeat of Tamil Tiger rebels over a year ago. The opposition in Sri Lanka on Thursday suffered a setback with two prominent parliamentarians announced their support to the government headed by President Mahinda Rajapaksa. The strength of the ruling alliance has now gone up to 146, excluding the Speaker, in a House of 225. Several governing party members and ministers of the Sri Lankan government are to meet with the President today (5) to take action against the controversial deputy minister. Two opposition lawmakers in Sri Lanka defected to the ruling party on Thursday, bringing President Mahinda Rajapakse closer to altering the constitution to allow him to retain power. Hundreds of state government workers protested Thursday against a government minister who tied an official to a tree as a punishment for failing to attend a mosquito eradication program. Sri Lanka Police is to extend the registration of persons currently being carried out in certain areas in Colombo to the rest of the country. The government has taken measures to implement an eco-friendly program to generate electricity in the country and provide it to the public at a reasonable rate. Sri Lanka President Mahinda Rajapaksa today toured the Colombo Port to inspect the progress of the Colombo Port Expansion Project (CPEP) and advised the officials to expedite the ongoing construction work. A United States delegation that visited Sri Lanka to review its GSP process said today that they had a very productive meeting with the Sri Lankan government and other interested parties. A security assessment carried out by the British High Commission in Sri Lanka has concluded that the whole country is now safe for travellers. The US will contribute Rs. 581 million (\$5.4 million) more for demining in Sri Lanka until the next summer, an embassy said Friday.

Detailed News

Bangladesh to review religion-based politics

"It is now the duty of the election commission to review if Jamaat and other such parties could still be registered with them," Law Minister Shafique Ahmad told Gulf News. A senior Bangladeshi minister on Sunday said a landmark Supreme Court verdict last week banning "use of religion" in politics has put the onus on the Election Commission (EC) with regard to

reviewing the registration of Bangladesh's main Islamic party Jamaat-e-Islam. "It is now the duty of the election commission to review if Jamaat and other such parties could still be registered with them," Law Minister Shafique Ahmad told Gulf News. The apex Appellate Division of the Supreme Court declared "illegal" the fifth amendment to the constitution which sought to legitimise the country's post 1975 martial law regimes and allow religion-based politics. Ahmad said the verdict means no political party can carry out their politics on the basis of religion. But the law minister said the EC can do its part by scrapping the Jamaat's registration while the government "under the constitution can do the rest" to disqualify religion-based politicians from participating in mainstream politics.

<http://gulfnews.com/news/world/other-world/bangladesh-to-review-religion-based-politics-1.662568>

India to expand railway connectivity with Bangladesh

Instead of expediency politics, the Awami League should take this opportunity to restore the country's original name, 'The People's Republic of Bangladesh', because you cannot be an 'Islamic Republic' and be secular at the same time. The Bangladesh Supreme Court has courageously restored 'secularism' in the country's constitution. The court also said that religious parties should be banned. The appellate division of the apex court said: "Preamble and the relevant provisions of the constitution in respect of secularism, nationalism and socialism, as existed on August 15, 1975, will revive." That was the tragic date when the young Turks of the army assassinated Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who led the liberation struggle. But the country's Attorney General Mahbubey Alam said the country would however remain an Islamic republic. He also maintained that 'Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim', which is not in the original 1972 Constitution but introduced subsequently by a military-led regime, would be retained. He also said that the country would continue with its present name: the "Islamic Republic of Bangladesh". To defuse a strong reaction by the Islamist parties, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said she had no intention of banning such parties that are recognised by the Election Commission, although the restored portion of the constitution disallows functioning of religious political parties. Bangladesh's largest Islamist party, the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) had collaborated with the Pakistani army during the military operation in 1971. It is also alleged that the JI's youth were responsible for the mass murder of the Bangladeshi intellectuals in 1971. While Sheikh Hasina is right in not jumping to outlaw the religious parties, she would have to find a legal window to resist the implementation of the Supreme Court. Banning political parties does not make sense in a democratic structure as the banned parties can re-launch a party with a new name just like it happened in Turkey. It is also good to keep these parties engaged in the democratic process, otherwise they are likely to go underground and be led by the militants within the party. The Awami League that led the Bangladesh liberation movement had envisaged a democratic secular polity in the country and was fully conscious that democracy sans secularism is incomplete. The move to secularism was also a consequence of the rise of Bengali

ethnic solidarity that negated the basis of the 'two nation theory', which gave an overwhelming role to religion in Pakistan. Exploitation of East Pakistan by West Pakistan contributed to the rise of ethnic politics in Pakistan. Although the Muslim League was born in Dacca (Dhaka) in 1906, it was realised by the Bengali politicians that the political formulation that Muslims of India are a separate nation was incorrect. That was one of the major reasons that led the politicians of the new nation to opt for secularism. According to Saleem Samad's paper on Bangladesh minorities, "The first constitution passed on November 4, 1972, abolished: (a) all kinds of communalism; (b) political recognition of religion by the state; (c) exploitation of religion for political purpose; (d) discrimination on religious ground (Article 2 of the Bangladesh Constitution). The preamble of the constitution emphasised secularism as one of the fundamental principles of state policy. It is obvious that Islam, or for that matter, any other religion, as an individual belief system was not interfered with but its political use and or abuse was barred." So when the Bangladesh Supreme Court gave its verdict in favour of secularism and asked for banning political parties formed on a religious basis, it was upholding the dream of the founding fathers of the Bangladesh constitution. Both Pakistan's and Bangladesh's experience has shown that the formation of political parties on the basis of religion has widened the gulf between various sects of Islam. The manifesto of these religious parties is also in conflict with globally accepted human rights. The logical outcome of the political formulation of declaring a country as an 'Islamic Republic' is that equal rights are denied to the minorities and it gives more space to religious fundamentalism. We have seen both in the case of Pakistan and Bangladesh that the minorities' ratio in the population has been shrinking since 1947. Because of a more tolerant attitude of Bengalis towards the minorities, the migration of Hindus and Christians was less than Pakistan. According to Bangladesh's 1991 census, the religious and ethnic minorities stood at 12.6 percent, as compared to less than 5 percent in Pakistan. The Hindus are 10.5 percent (12.5 million), Christians (0.3 percent), Buddhists (0.6 percent) and other religious minorities (0.3 percent) in Bangladesh. Hindus, mostly Bengali-speaking, are the biggest religious minority community and they are scattered all over the country. Similarly, Christians are also scattered all over, but the Buddhist population is largely concentrated in Chittagong, the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Patuakhali. As the basic secular structure was changed after the 1975 bloody coup, the minorities started feeling insecure and discriminated against. The Khaleda Zia government, which wanted to keep the Islamists appeased, failed miserably in protecting the Hindu minority in the riots that followed the Babri Masjid demolition incident by Hindu extremists in India. The Islamic parties, claiming that she had committed blasphemy, hounded Dr Taslima Nasrin out of the country for recording the brutal killings of the Hindus in her novel Lajja, a charge that cannot be proved even when you go through her novel with a fine toothcomb. Instead of expediency politics, the Awami League should take this opportunity to restore the country's original name, 'The People's Republic of Bangladesh', because you cannot be an 'Islamic Republic' and be secular at the same time. Similarly, to be a true democracy Bangladesh should also treat non-Bengali speaking people of the country equally and expunge such clauses from the constitution that talk about Bengali nationalism instead of Bangladeshi nationalism. Such clauses support

majoritarianism and seclude the minority ethnic groups of the country. Coming back home, our establishment should realise that terrorist attacks by militant Islamic groups and discrimination and victimisation of minorities in Pakistan cannot be stopped unless Pakistan corrects the historic mistake and re-launches itself as a secular democracy. Though their problems are not as compelling as that of Pakistan, Bangladesh's Supreme Court appears to be centuries ahead of its Pakistani peers and the Pakistani establishment.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\08\03\story_3-8-2010_pg3_4

FM to visit Bangladesh on Aug 7

DHAKA: Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee will visit Dhaka for a day on Saturday to attend the signing of one-billion dollar credit facility by EXIM bank to Bangladesh for infrastructure projects. During his 5-6 hour visit, Mukherjee will also call on Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, his counterpart AMA Munith and Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and is expected to review the implementation of the agreements reached between the two countries earlier. "He (Mukherjee) is set to visit Bangladesh on August 7," a foreign ministry spokesman said, adding that the high profile Indian leader was coming on an invitation by Moni. India's High Commission in Dhaka said that during his several hours of stay, Mukherjee will call on Hasina, Moni and Munith. "The Finance Minister of India will witness the signing of the \$1 billion Line of Credit agreement by CMD, EXIM Bank of India and Secretary, Economic Relations Division (ERD) of Bangladesh," the High Commission statement said. The credit deal was agreed upon during Hasina's visit to New Delhi in January this year. The joint communique issued after Hasina's talks with her Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh said the \$1 billion credit will be for a range of projects for development of communication infrastructure, mostly in railway sector, and dredging in major rivers. Mukherjee is also expected to review Indo-Bangla ties as well as decisions taken during the Hasina-Singh talks. Foreign ministry officials said that this would be the first visit by such a senior Indian leader since Hasina's India visit.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics/nation/FM-to-visit-Bangladesh-on-Aug-7/articleshow/6258367.cms>

BDR court jails 14 for mutiny in Sunamganj

The Special Court-3 of Bangladesh Rifles yesterday sentenced 14 BDR soldiers of 8 Rifles Battalion to different jail terms for their involvement in Sunamganj BDR mutiny on February 26 last year. The rebels were handed down prison terms between four months and six years and were also fined Tk 100 each. The convicts are subedar major Gouranga Chandra Das, nayek subedar Abul Hossain, havildars Md Abdul Jalil, Md Badiul Alam and Md Maniruzzaman, nayek Md Harun Ur Rashid, nayek assistant Md Abdul Wahid, lance nayeks Md Hiru Ullah Khan, Abdur Rahim, Biplab Kumar Pandit and Omar Faruque and sepoy Maniruzzaman Sheikh, Sumon

Marma and Toriqul Islam. The 3-member panel led by BDR Director General Major General Rafiqul Islam delivered the judgment at 12:05pm at the court set up at Sylhet BDR headquarters. The two other members of the panel were Lt Col Md Akhtaruzzaman and Maj Md Maksudul Alam. The 14 accused on February 26 morning last year took control of the armoury and magazine at the battalion making propaganda about army's move towards the BDR battalion. The mutineers also spread rumours and misguided the others. With the restoration of command in BDR, Deputy Assistant Director of the battalion Md Abdul Wahid filed complaints against the rebels. The court framed charges and took testimony of 20 prosecution witnesses on June 28 after prosecutor Lt Colonel Tajul Islam Thakur, also the Commanding Officer of the battalion, placed before the judges. The prosecutor read out the complaints and separately narrated the role of the accused during mutiny. All the accused claimed themselves innocent and pleaded not guilty. They also filed written arguments in favour of their claims. The judge mentioned although the accused had pleaded themselves not guilty, the judgment was decided on the basis of video footages, still photos of February 26 incidents and arguments. He also thanked the media for helping the court providing the video footages. The court ordered sending all the accused to the Sunamganj district jail. Special PPs advocate Md Belayet Hossain and advocate Mosharraf Hossain Kajol, advocate Gazi Zillur Rahman and advocate Rezaul Karim assisted the prosecutor. Deputy Attorney General Md Selim represented the attorney general.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=149239>

Bangladesh police break up textile workers' protest

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urges workers not to indulge in activities which may destroy the key export sector. **DHAKA:** Around 80 people were injured on Sunday as Bangladeshi police fired rubber bullets and teargas, and used batons to disperse angry textile workers protesting for a third day against a new minimum wage they say is too low. Bangladesh's garment industry employs more than 3.5 million workers, the majority of them women, and is the second biggest employer after agriculture. Factories in Bangladesh make garments for international brands such as JC Penney, Wal-Mart, H&M, Kohl's, Marks & Spencer, Zara and Carrefour. But the sector has been hit by frequent violence and shutdowns in recent months. The latest protests were called by unions rejecting a new minimum wage of 3,000 taka (\$43) a month announced by the government on Thursday. The new minimum is nearly double the previous amount, but still far short of the 5,000 taka the workers demanded. Police said a violent mob gathered at Ashulia and Savar, in the capital Dhaka's northern suburbs, blocking a highway for several hours, jeering at police and pelting them with bricks. Protesters also barricaded a highway at Narayanganj, east of the capital, and battled with police, witnesses said. Dozens of factories were closed on Sunday, a police officer at Ashulia said, adding that protesters attacked vehicles and broke into shops and looted goods. Nearly 250 people, including policemen, were injured in similar violence over the past two days at Ashulia and other areas near the capital. **Activities:** Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Saturday urged workers not to indulge in activities that might destroy the key export

sector which contributes some 80 percent of the country's annual \$16 billion export income. She said continuing unrest that often disrupted production and damaged manufacturing plants, would not benefit workers, but instead could threaten their livelihoods. Hasina asked workers to return to work peacefully while factory owners said they would reopen closed plants if order were restored. Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, representing more than 4,500 garment factories said they would be compelled to close down factories permanently if the situation did not improve. Home Minister Sahara Kahtoon accused unnamed conspirators of trying to "destroy the vital employment and export sector as part of a bigger plan to destabilise the country and detract democracy." "We will find out the conspirators and give them exemplary punishment," Sahara said on Sunday. "I urge all Bangladeshis to remain vigilant against conspiracies by vested quarters," she said in a reference usually made to opposition political parties. Reuters

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\08\02\story_2-8-2010_pg20_3

Registration of 334 Bangladesh NGOs cancelled

Bangladesh has cancelled the registration of 334 NGOs in the last four months on charges of patronising militancy and for alleged corruption and misuse of foreign funds. The government's NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) has seized moveable and non-moveable property of these organisations, which were operating in the name of social welfare, charity and voluntary work. The move is significant as NGOAB had cancelled only 56 foreign-funded NGOs since 1990, The Daily Star said Thursday. Media reports say the government's drive is to ensure that foreign funds flowing into the proliferating NGOs are not diverted to activities that hurt Bangladesh. Authorities last year recovered arms and ammunition from a mosque and a seminary on Bhola island run by a NGO with headquarters in London, headed by a Bangladeshi expatriate. Speaking on condition of anonymity, an NGOAB official said some organisations were supposed to run their activities in orphanages and religious places. But the intelligence agencies and NGOAB investigators did not find any such activities and feared that the NGOs were involved in militant activities. Financial mismanagement, complaints by donors, squabbles among NGO managers and complaints from beneficiaries were among the reasons for the drive. The drive is continuing and more NGOs are likely to be shut, officials said.

<http://sify.com/news/registration-of-334-bangladesh-ngos-cancelled-news-international-kifp4cjchea.html>

Bangladesh's garment workers return to factories

Garment workers in Bangladesh have returned to work after protests and street battles which followed a proposed pay rise. The European Union and the United States are the biggest markets for the country's garments, with exports worth about \$12bn in 2009. Companies such as Walmart, Tesco, Marks & Spencer and H&M have been attracted by the low cost base.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-10883412>

3rd Asian Int'l Trade Expo held in Bangladesh

The 3rd Asian International Trade Expo is being held in Bangabandhu International Conference Center in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka to increase trade and bilateral relations within the Asian nations. Organized by the Bangladeshi wing of Conference and Exhibition Management Services Limited (CEMS), a global event management company, the trade exhibition started on August 2 and will close on August 8. Gazi Abdur Razzak, manager of CEMS Bangladesh, told Xinhua on Tuesday that 82 exhibitors from seven countries including Bangladesh, India, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore and Sri Lanka with exhibit profile like consumer electronics, food and beverage, household products, fashion and accessories, arts and crafts are participating in the annual Asian International Trade Expo this year. He said "The Asian International Trade Exhibition has started its journey from 2008. This is the 3rd phase of the exhibition. Following the success of our first and second exhibition, we have been inspired to continue this exhibition." Razzak said, Asia is considered to be the fastest-growing region in the world. The real driver of the world economy has been Asia, which has accounted for over half of the world's growth since 2001.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/business/2010-08/03/c_13428343.htm

India OKs 500,000 T grain export to Bangladesh

India has allowed the export of 300,000 tonnes of non-basmati rice and 200,000 tonnes of wheat to Bangladesh, a government statement said on Friday, as good rainfall and higher planting have boosted crop prospects. India, which curbed grain exports in recent years to head off domestic price rises, made the announcement after two global suppliers cancelled deals to ship some 65,000 tonnes of Black Sea wheat to Bangladesh after Russia curbed grain exports. Wheat prices surged to a two-year high after drought-stricken Russia barred shipments, but Chicago Wheat futures declined on Friday amid end-of-week profit-taking. Indian grain will be shipped under a diplomatic deal by state-run Food Corp of India (FCI) at its "economic cost", which includes the price paid to farmers and the cost of storage and transportation, the government said. A Mumbai-based trader working with an international trading firm said the economic cost works out to about \$340 a tonne, about the same as the current commercial rates in the neighbouring country. On Aug. 5, Swiss firm Nibulon made the lowest offer at \$319 a tonne, including cost and freight, in a Bangladesh tender to import 50,000 tonnes of wheat.

LARGE STOCKS OF GRAIN

India, one of the world's leading producers and consumers of wheat, rice, sugar and vegetable oils, banned non-basmati rice exports in 2008 and wheat shipments in 2007 to improve domestic supplies, but it allowed small quantities to be shipped to neighbouring countries including Bangladesh and Nepal. India's grain stocks have increased after four successive strong harvests of wheat, but the government, struggling to calm inflation and facing street protests against rising prices, has not allowed free export of wheat and rice. Its wheat stocks on July 1 had risen to 33.6 million tonnes from 17.1 million tonnes a year ago, while rice inventory jumped to 24.3 million tonnes from 9.8 million. Government officials say if rice output from this year's summer-sown crop is good, India may further ease controls on grain exports. In 2009, India's rice output fell as the country faced the worst drought in nearly four decades, but this year output is expected to rise as the vital June-September monsoon, which irrigates 60 percent of Indian farms, has revived in recent weeks and total seasonal rainfall is barely 2 percent below normal. Rainfall was 16 percent below normal in the middle of July, but the monsoon has intensified significantly, wiping out the deficit in key crop regions. This year, the planting area under rice, cane and cotton has expanded by 8-10 percent from last year. Vijay Setia, president of the All India Rice Exporters' Association said export of grain from the stocks of the government's Food Corp. of India would not be inflationary as it would not affect the demand-supply situation in the market.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-50687420100806>

ISI-backed LeT establishing junction in Bangladesh to launch attacks on India

The arrest of three Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operatives from a madrasa in Chittagong, one of Bangladesh's largest cities, in November last year, has underlined the expanding reach of the Pakistan based militant group, and security analysts believe that militants are now trying to establish their base in the country to launch attacks on India that could inflame regional troubles. The LeT, which carried out the deadly November 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, is believed to be working swiftly to prepare a base for itself in Bangladesh from where it can target India easily. The Bangladesh government has been trying hard to check the spread of the extremist group, but the country's internal political squabbling is making the task difficult. "Unfortunately, Bangladesh has become the junction point of people who are interested in militancy. It is not likely to be eradicated very soon. The two major political parties have never been able to come to a common approach to the problem," The Christian Science Monitor quoted a former army official and a security analyst Syed Muhammed Ibrahim, as saying. US military experts and Western military officials have also raised concerns over the LeT's expanding movement. "Right now our concern is the movement of Lashkar-e-Taiba, and specifically their positioning in Bangladesh and Nepal, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka," Admiral Robert Willard, head of the US Navy's Pacific Command, had told a recent Senate hearing. "What LeT has been able to do is lay a very solid foundation in Bangladesh. They're playing for the longer game. They're building up the infrastructure, building

up the support networks," said John Harris, a terrorism expert at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. The greater cause of worry, as underlined by the official who led the last November raids on the Chittagong madrasa, is the arrested extremists' claim of getting assistance from the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). "They explained that the ISI helped them with the preparation of their passports. They were taken to Pakistan for training. They are all here to organize attacks against India," the official, who requested anonymity, said. (ANI) <http://sify.com/news/isi-backed-let-establishing-junction-in-bangladesh-to-launch-attacks-on-india-news-international-kigrOfafaeh.html>

Bangladesh to waive duties transport of Indian goods to northeastern states

Dhaka, Aug 6 (APP)- New Delhi has mounted pressure on Dhaka to agree to waive duties on transportation of over-dimensional cargoes (ODCs) from its western side to the north-eastern states across the Bangladesh territory, government officials said. India is asking us to waive duties on transport of ODCs, officials at the Prime Ministers Office said in Dhaka Friday. An adviser to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the official said, is in favour of waiver of duties on transport of ODCs on the plea that it is a one-time deal between the two countries. Apparently it is a one-time deal to allow India to transport ODCs via Bangladesh. But according to Article 22 of the joint communique issued on January 13 during Hasinas visit to New Delhi, it is a deal for a "longer term transportation of ODCs, which has long-term implications, another government official said. Bangladesh agreed, during Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Monis visit to New Delhi in September, 2009, to provide India access to Ashuganj port in Bangladesh to facilitate transport of Over Dimensional Consignments for the Palatana power project in the Indian state of Tripura. During Sheikh Hasina's visit to New Delhi in January this year, the two sides agreed to declare Ashuganj in Bangladesh and Silghat in India ports of call. In a joint meeting in April, both sides agreed that Bangladesh would collect duties under the Bangladesh customs laws. Subsequently on May 31, the two sides amended the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade' and added Ashuganj and Shilghat as ports of call. Bangladesh has eventually allowed multi-module transit to India after adding Ashuganj as a new trans-shipment point between the two countries. As per the new arrangement, India can now carry its goods not only by waterways but also by road and rail transports from one part of its territory to the other via Bangladesh. The Dhaka-Delhi agreement allowed India to carry goods to Ashuganj port by ferry and from where they could be taken to the north-eastern India by road transports and railway. According to the deal, the new route would be Kolkata-Holdiya-Raimongal-Mongla-Kaukhali-Barisal-Hizla-Chandpur-N arayangang-Boirab Bazar- Ashuganj. From Ashuganj, goods would be carried by trucks and tractor-trailors or by railway to the Akhaura-Agartala border. The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has set duties by a statutory regulatory order (SRO) on June 10 for trans-shipment and transit of goods through Bangladesh. The duties would be 10,000 taka per TEU container if the cargo is transported by road or rail in such containers and 1,000 taka per tonne if transported by covered vans or trucks or in bulk by non-container ships and trains. The NBR circular also says that controlled items like arms and

ammunition, alcoholic drinks and narcotics, endangered species of plants and animals, and other commodities with a ban on their import will not be allowed for trans-shipment or transit. The SRO also said that Bangladesh customs officers must know and would have the authority to check what goods were being trans-shipped or in transit. A Bangladesh Tariff Commission member said, 'Bangladesh stands to lose a large amount in revenue if duties are waived on the Palatana-bound ODCs as it would set a precedent to allow India to transport both public and private cargoes between their western and eastern regions.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=111979

Concerns over Reopening of Bangladesh Embassy in Kabul

On July 31 Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni in Dhaka stated that we have decided to reopen Bangladesh embassy in Afghanistan shortly. The process has been initiated and good news will be shared. According to the minister an official team will visit Kabul to select the mission building offered by Afghanistan. Bangladesh mission in Kabul was shut down sometime in 1989. Bangladesh embassy or consulates would be opened in Brazil, Nigeria, Sudan, Sierra Leone and Portugal. Presently, Bangladesh has 47 missions abroad. She said it is necessary to expand Bangladesh missions abroad considering the interest of Bangladeshi citizens living there and enhancing economic cooperation. Reportedly, staff of the Bangladeshi embassy has been trained by New Delhi. A team comprising very senior officials of Bangladesh have visited Indian embassy located in Kabul. There are reports that India would also provide staff in Bangladesh embassy. In fact Indian Intelligence has already got ingress in Bangladesh foreign office and same tactics will be adopted while launching of new embassy in Afghanistan. Government should keep her eyes open on Bangladesh embassy when it starts working. Since there are chances that RAW agents may comfortably use this embassy as their shelter while fomenting terrorism in Pakistan, Iran, China and Afghanistan. It is also point of concern amongst true Bangladeshi people that sitting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajid is trying to religious touch from the society and also has more orientation in establishing the closest ties with India. She has recently issued instructions for the removal of Islamic Books written by famous scholar Madoodi. She has also put the local leaders behind the bar, who were protesting against her un-Islamic thoughts. The Bangladesh Supreme Court's judgment nullifying the 5th Amendment to the Constitution enacted in 1977 is seen as a milestone in restoring the constitutional course of the nation's history. Bangladesh supreme court under the influence of present government nullified 5th amendment which was incorporated in the constitution in General Ziaur Rahman's tenure. Reportedly, Mrs. Hasina has already constituted a 15-member parliamentary committee to draft a vital amendment in view of the Supreme Court's ruling. The main theme has been given to the committee to promote secularism which means end of Islamic culture in Bangladesh. According to the media reports and reliable recourses Mrs. Hasina has instructed to his staff to close the chapter of water and border conflicts with India. In fact we can say that Hasina Wajid again started Honey Moon Period of relationship with India. The survey conducted by a local agency revealed that 98% Bangladesh are not ready to leave un-Islamic culture on the

name of secularism. They also hate undue interference of India in Bangladesh affairs. In short Mrs. Hasina Wajid seems to be under grave influence of RAW since the agency helped her in coming into power again. She will not be able to refuse her masters for using embassies against Pakistan, China, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. Mrs. Hasina's popularity as a political leader is also speedily falling down because of her Indian-tilting policies. http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showheadlines.php?subaction=showfull&id=1280858518&archive=&start_from=&ucat=1&var0news=value0news

India to expand railway connectivity with Bangladesh

AGARTALA: India will extend its railway network to two more places along the India-Bangladesh border to improve connectivity between the two countries, a railway official announced on Thursday. The two places are Sabroom in southern Tripura, 135 km from Agartala, and Akhaurah in western Tripura, just 6 km from the Agartala railway station - the newest station of the Indian railways, coming on the country's rail map in October 2008. Bangladesh operates regular train services on its side up to Akhaurah and various other places, just opposite several sub-divisional towns in Tripura. "A team of officials of IRCON (Indian Railway Construction Company) have recently visited Dhaka and held talks with Bangladesh government and railway ministry officials to finalise alignment of the 13-km Agartala-Akhaurah connecting rail line," Northeast Frontier Railway additional general manager Vipin Jha told reporters. Of the 13-km proposed link railway line to connect with the Bangladesh railway network through Akhaurah railway station, 5.4 km falls in Indian territory and the remaining portion in Bangladesh. "After approval of the alignment, the railway ministry would sanction the project," Jha said, adding that the two countries had already agreed to connect Agartala-Akhaurah by railway line, for which a survey had been completed in 1999. The construction of the proposed Akhaurah-Agartala railway link, financed by India, was agreed during the three-day visit to India by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in January this year. India and Bangladesh had resumed regular train services in April 2008 - after 43 years - through Gede in West Bengal's Nadia district and Darshana in Bangladesh. The rail journey between Kolkata and Dhaka covers a distance of 406 km. The service was suspended after the 1965 war between India and Pakistan when Bangladesh was then Pakistan's eastern wing. Jha said the ongoing works of railway connection upto Sabroom would be completed by March 2014. The proposed railway station would be just 75 km away from the Chittagong international port in southeast Bangladesh. He said that the broad gauge line, works for which are now on, would reach south Tripura's district headquarter Udaipur by December 2012. According to the NFR officials, 58 per cent of the conversion work from metre gauge to broad gauge from Assam's Lumding to northern Tripura's Kumarghat have been completed. Over Rs 2,000 crore has already been spent for the purpose.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/news-by-industry/transportation/railways/India-to-expand-railway-connectivity-with-Bangladesh/articleshow/6261364.cm>

Nepal

Nepal fails to elect new PM for a fourth time

Politicians in Nepal have again failed to elect a new prime minister.

The country has been without a leader since Madhav Kumar Nepal stepped down more than a month ago. He said that political in-fighting between his coalition government and opposition Maoist MPs meant he was unable to function. It is the fourth time parliament has failed to nominate a new PM. A fifth round of voting has now been set for 18 August. The result comes despite high hopes that the fourth round of voting in parliament would be successful. Although Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal - or Prachanda - won more votes than his rival from the Nepali Congress party, it was still not enough to secure a majority.

Power vacuum

This is because many of the smaller parties abstained from voting, saying they felt neither candidate was acceptable. Earlier this week, the Indian government sent an envoy to Nepal to help try to broker a deal between the three main parties that dominate politics in the country, but even this was not enough to break the stalemate. Many parliamentarians say they have lost faith in the selection process. "My view is these three parties should stay away from the government and focus on the constitution," said MP Sunil Pant, "and someone from the smaller parties, maybe from the young generation or women, should be a good candidate."

As time passes, there are fears that a prolonged power vacuum could weaken the state and lead to increased instability in a country recovering from a long civil conflict.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-10898117>

Prachanda, Ramchandra Poudyal fail to get majority in Nepal PM run-off poll

Uncertainty loomed over Nepal's Maoist supremo Prachanda and his Nepali Congress rival Ramchandra Poudyal failed to win a clear majority in the third round of run-off vote in Parliament today to elect a new prime minister, deepening the political crisis in the country. In his third attempt to become the new prime minister, Prachanda failed to get majority support as he managed only 259 votes in 601-member parliament. The Constituent Assembly, which also serves as the interim parliament, also failed to elect Poudyal who received 124 votes in his favour and 246 against. During the voting today, which was delayed due to last minute negotiations among the parties, 186 lawmakers remained neutral and abstained from voting. As the votes secured by Prachanda was less than 50% of the total voters, his candidacy was rejected, Subhash Nemwang, chairperson of the Constituent Assembly, said. He could not secure the required 50% plus votes necessary to get elected. The Parliament has been adjourned with the Work Management Committee of the Parliament set to decide on the next meeting to elect the prime minister. Prachanda received 259 votes in the election, which was delayed for several

hours today to give party leaders time to broker a last-minute deal, while Poudyal won the support of 124 of the 599 members present in the Constituent Assembly.

Earlier today, the third largest party CPN-UML and the UDMF alliance of four Terai-based Madhesi parties with 84 lawmakers decided to remain neutral and abstain from voting as in the earlier two rounds. "We have decided to remain neutral during today's voting," said Rajendra Mahato, Sadbhavana party president and minister for commerce. "As we needed more time for discussion, we have decided to remain neutral," he added. CPN (UML) general secretary Ishwor Pokharel underlined his party's commitment to remain neutral in the voting. We will abstain from voting today, UML general secretary Ishwor Pokharel told PTI. Most of the other smaller parties also decided not to cast their votes. The UDMF alliance of four parties -- Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF), MPRF Democratic, Terai Madhes Democratic Party and Sadbhavana Party — have maintained that they would support the party that provides a clear roadmap to conclude the peace process and addresses demands of the community from the southern Terai region, including greater economic and political rights for them. The pro-Terai parties argue that people in the Madhesi-dominated southern plains have long been treated as second-class citizens in Nepal, where hill-origin elites dominate politics, the security forces and business. They have demanded greater economic and political rights, including more representation in the state structure. However, both the major parties in the fray have refused to give a clear commitment to the Madhesi parties on declaring the southern plain as a single autonomous region. The country has been in political limbo since the June 30 resignation of prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, who is currently heading a caretaker government. The Nepal Maoists, who ended their decade-long civil war in 2006, have claimed the leadership of new government as it is largest party in Parliament with nearly 40% of the seats. 58-year-old Prachanda had also lost the election on July 23, getting only 241 votes in favour and 113 against. The lawmakers had rejected him for the post in the July 21 election as well when he had bagged 242 votes in favour and 114 against, failing to touch the magic figure of 301. Poudyal too crashed out of the race, receiving just 123 votes in favour and 243 against. CPN-Maoist is the single-largest party with 238 MPs, while Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have 114 and 109 seats respectively in the Constituent Assembly, whose two-year term was extended by one year on May 28.

http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_prachanda-ramchandra-poudyal-fail-to-get-majority-in-nepal-pm-run-off-poll_1417986

Prachanda, Poudyal defeated in PM poll; next vote on Aug 18

The Madhesi alliance of four parties -- Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF), MPRF Democratic, Terai Madhes Democratic Party and Sadbhavana Party -- had maintained they would back the party that provided a clear roadmap to conclude the peace process and addressed demands of the Indian-origin community from the southern Terai region, including greater economic and political rights for them. However, the two major parties in the fray have refused

to give a clear commitment to the Madhesi parties on declaring the southern plains as a single autonomous region. The country has been in political limbo since the June 30 resignation of Madhav Kumar Nepal, who is currently heading a caretaker government. CPN-Maoist, which ended its decade-long civil war in 2006, is the single largest party with 238 seats in the Constituent Assembly, while Nepali Congress has 114 members in the House whose two-year term was extended by one year on May 28. The first round of voting for Prime Minister was held on July 21 while the second round took place on July 23. Both Prachanda and Poudyal had been defeated in all four rounds so far.

<http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/prachanda-poudyal-defeated-in-pm-poll-next-vote-on-aug-18/210201.html>

Nepal Maoists against "interference" by foreign country

Shirish B. Pradhan Kathmandu, Aug 6 (PTI) Nepal's Maoist leadership today said it is against interference by any foreign country in the country's internal affairs, but made it clear that it did not see the visit of India's special envoy Shyam Saran to Kathmandu as "an interference in Nepalese affairs"."We have not taken negatively the recent visit by the special envoy of a neighbouring country to Nepal," Narayankaji Shrestha "Prakash", the Vice president of Unified CPN-Maoist, told PTI after Saran wrapped up his three-day visit to Nepal. Saran, the special envoy of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, today underlined the need for consensus among the deadlocked political parties to resolve the standoff over Parliament's failure to elect a new prime minister for the fourth time in a month."We dont want any foreign country to interfere in our internal affairs", Shrestha underlined."I think that the current visit is not an interference of India in Nepalese affairs. What we want is to end the past bitterness in our relations with India," Shrestha said.During his talks with top political leaders, Saran, a former Indian ambassador to Nepal, called for unity among democratic forces in the country.Shrestha said the Maoists leadership was "hopeful that the visit would not bear any negative outcome"."We are hopeful that the visit would not bear any negative outcome", he said, adding we have to wait and see what type of effect it will leave on the Nepalese people.In the past, the Maoist leadership has been critical of India for "inferring" in Nepal and some of the key bilateral pacts. They have demanded the revision of the 1950 Peace and Friendship Treaty on the basis of "changed scenario" and resolving the border row over Kalapani and Susta.Shrestha told PTI that the Maoist leadership was for India to review its policies towards Nepal so that the bilateral ties reach a new height."We want India to review its policies towards Nepal so that the relations between Nepal and India and India and the Maoist party will improve and rise to a new height," he underlined, adding "We have also told this to Sharan during our talks".So far as the role played by India is concerned "Nepalese people have not taken it positively," he pointed out. India has been interfering in our affairs in the past, he said, adding "now we hope that the attitude will be changed." Saran met Maoist supremo and former Prime Minister Prachanda, Nepali Congress acting president Shushil Koirala and the party's vice president Ramchandra Poudyal, CPN-UML

Chairman Jhalanath Khanal and other leaders amid the deadlock among the political parties to resolve the standoff over Parliament's failure to elect a new prime minister for over a month. .
<http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/nepal-maoists-against-interference-by-foreign-country/211146.html>

CPN-Marxist Leninist splits ahead of PM election in Nepal

Hours before the fourth round of voting on Friday to elect a new Prime Minister in Nepal, a smaller communist party having nine members in Parliament has split, with the indications that new faction may support the Maoists. The new party named CPN-ML(Socialist) was formed after the split of the CPN-Marxist Leninist-led by C P Mainali. The party-led by politburo member of the main party Jagat Bahadur Bogati has four members in the Constituent Assembly which has 601 members. The members of the new party are Sharda Nepali, Yadubansha Jha, Tilak Thapa and Ganesh Chaudhari. The CPN-ML (Socialist) party is likely to cast vote in favour of UCPN-Maoist chief Prachanda during today's voting. Meanwhile, CPN-Marxist Leninist chief Mainali blamed the Maoists for hatching conspiracy to divide the party. Prachanda and Nepali Congress vice president Ramchandra Poudyal are in the race for the top post.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/cpnmarxist-leninist-splits-ahead-of-pm-election-in-nepal/656932/>

UN 'concerned' by expansion of Nepal, Maoist armies

The United Nations says it is "deeply concerned" at plans by Nepal's national army and its Maoist counterpart to recruit new soldiers, four years after the end of a bloody civil war.

Both armies have begun moves to expand their forces in recent weeks, sparking fears of a possible slide back to conflict in the troubled Himalayan nation, which has been without a government for more than a month. The UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) said recruitment by either army would breach the 2006 peace agreement that ended the war between the Maoist guerrillas and the state. "UNMIN is deeply concerned at reports that the Nepal army and the Maoist army plan to undertake fresh recruitment," said a statement issued late Tuesday. "UNMIN has written to the government and the UCPN-M (Maoist party) advising them to respect past agreements and to act in this matter with good faith towards the United Nations." UNMIN was set up in 2007 with a mandate to oversee the peace process, which has faltered in recent years as mistrust between the Maoist party and their political rivals has grown. Thousands of former Maoist fighters confined to camps around the country after the war are still waiting for an agreement between the parties on integrating them with the national army. Negotiations on their future have stalled completely since the government collapsed in June under intense pressure from the Maoists, the largest party in parliament.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jKg9nblXlK-5197JL3lAwwXxiwXQ>

Nepal Political Parties are Major threat to Nepali Nationalism: Thapa

“It is nothing but India’s direct interference in the internal matters of Nepal”, commented Kamal Thapa, the former Royal Minister for Home Affairs. Mr. Thapa, Chairman of Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal who is currently in London, UK, told Nepali reporters there that the untimely visit of the Indian special envoy to Nepal, Shyam Saran, definitely tantamount to interference in the internal matters of Nepal which has raised question marks on the very independence and sovereignty of our country.

“I deplore his untimely visit to Nepal”, said Thapa while talking to Kantipur in London. He also said that with the signing of 12-points agreement in New Delhi, foreign interference in Nepal has become a regular phenomenon. “Instances of foreign interference have increased dangerously because of the submissive attitude of our own political parties”, Thapa lamented. “The submissive mentality of the political parties of Nepal is the biggest threat to Nepali Nationalism”, Thapa summarized.

http://www.telegraphnepal.com/news_det.php?news_id=8072

Indian Mission Fails: Next Nepal PM Election August 18

The result of fourth round of election was obvious to the entire world when India’s Prime Minister’s so-called emissary with special mandate, Shyam Saran, landed in Kathmandu ‘uninvited’ August 4, 2010 to settle disputes between Nepal’s political parties. Nepal’s submissive political parties once again failed to provide the country with a Prime Minister. Yes just a prime minister let alone drafting the Constitution. None of the prime ministerial candidates, Pushpa Kamal of Unified Maoists’ Party and Ram Chandra of Nepali Congress today, August 6, 2010, failed to show majority-301 votes, in their favor thus the fourth round of election ended without result. Pushpa Kamal could get mere 213 votes in his favor and Ram Chandra was favored only by 122 parliamentarians. Of the total 468 attending parliamentarians, 99 voted against Dahal and 156 preferred to stay neutral. Of the total 561 attending parliamentarians, 245 voted against Poudel and 194 preferred to stay neutral. Dahal, in the third round of election had garnered 259 votes. This does mean, in summary, the Indian emissary, Lord Shyam Saran, performed the job assigned by his country well which was to further “destabilize” this country. How the Indian regime awards **Shyam Saran-the destroyer of Nepal**, for his Himalayan success in ensuring Pushpa Kamal’s defeat will have to be watched?

Fifth round of election for Nepal PM post is set for August 18, the day around which India celebrates its National Independence. To recall, Pushpa Kamal was elected Nepal PM by the parliament 2008 August 15. By the way, 15th of August is India’s Independence Day.

http://www.telegraphnepal.com/news_det.php?news_id=8074&PHPSESSID=f517fc71dca0af38f5dafd9afbed0f9c

Nepal Maoists establish close ties with Royalists: Minister Mahat

With the son-in-law of Nepal’s former King Gyanendra Shah, Raj Bahadur Singh, joining the Nepali Janata Dal, a party that has been labeled as pro-Maoists’ party by some interested local

and India's "democratic" media close to South Block, pulse beat of some democratic political parties have gone up foreseeing possible alliance between Maoists and former Royalists. Freshly, weekly newspapers have begun revealing that the Maoists' leaders are in close contact with the former King through various channels and have virtually assured the former Nepal sovereign of reinstatement of Monarchy in Nepal in ceremonial form. The Maoists' camp is yet to refute claims made by the media. One of the fortnightly, mainly identified for its anti-Monarchy stance in the past and also known for its sharp criticism against the Maoist now, had brought a story analyzing possible alliance between Maoists and royalists. Interesting analysis though. "It has been more than two years since the country is declared republic overthrowing monarchy", said Prakash Saran Mahat of Nepali Congress, "But, the royalists are still heavily engaged in politics in a domineering manner." "There is intense battle going on in between the Democratic parties and the Royalists", claimed Mahat addressing a press-meet in Janakpur, August 5, 2010. He also said that Maoists are the real representatives of Royalists. Dr. Mahat is the energy minister and is presumed to have drained "enough energy" from the Ministry for generations to come.

Sources at the Nepal Electricity Corporation claim that every second man in the NEA office is a Mahat "man".

http://www.telegraphnepal.com/news_det.php?news_id=8073&PHPSESSID=f517fc71dca0af38f5dafd9afbed0f9c

Nepal Maoist want a parallel government, PLA staffing call criticized

The Maoists' tit-for-tat move against the recruitment call made by the Nepal Army, has been heavily criticized by the caretaker government and parties affiliated in the government. While the government and its affiliated parties have claimed the recruitment call by Nepal Army a normal process, they have criticized the Maoists' call for recruitment in the PLA stating that it was a move to constitute parallel government. "Attention of the government of Nepal has been drawn towards the recruitment call by a Political party, which will have severe impact in the security situation of the country", says a statement issued by Ministry of Defense. The central committee member of Nepali Congress and Minister for Culture Mr. Minendra Rijal commented that the Maoists' recruitment drive makes it clear that the party of the ex-rebel do not want to transform themselves into a Civilian party.

Nepal's Political Solution: Out-of-the-Box Thinking Needed

Samuel P. Huntington wrote in 1870 that there are two identifiable important stages in the modernization of the feudalistic traditional system. He writes, "The first challenge of modernization to a dispersed, weakly articulated and organized, feudalistic traditional system is to concentrate the power necessary to produce changes in traditional society and economy. The second problem is then, to expand the power in the system to assimilate the newly mobilized and politically participant groups, thus creating a modern system. The monarchy following the ancient form is generally not an active and interventionist and is content with collection of taxes

and maintenance of law and order."On the contrary, Dr DL Seth writes in his book "State, Nation and Ethnicity: Experience of the Third World Countries". The modern state's expanding power penetrates almost every vital sphere of social life including education, culture and mass media, which are directly relevant to the production of state nationalism."Having seen Nepal's tryst with democracy, it becomes quite evident that Nepal did not go through the stages as suggested by Samuel P. Huntington from being a monarchy to democracy. It alternated from being monarchy to full blown multi party democracy between 1951 and 2008. I do hope that the democracy will last now, although there are yet murmurs for the return of the monarchy in Nepal. Why has Nepal fallen prey to such extremes, from people's reverence to the monarchy at one end to the other extreme of dethroning the monarchy and bringing in the governance by the people and for the people? Why did democracy fail in earlier occasions in 1951 and 1990? Seeing what is happening now with the political parties and having seen the change of the Prime Minister in the short span of time (post 2008 election), there is doubt whether even this chance will last for the people to say this is the people's government. Each party is trying to defend its turf over the national interest and that is the reason why the pro-monarchy group sees a chance to make a comeback.Let us now examine what went wrong in all those occasions when the democracy had a chance to prevail in the country. Can we learn from history and find a solution for the third opportunity to succeed?The nation needs matured and experienced leaders and a relatively educated population for the democracy to succeed. Sir Winston Churchill was against granting full democracy to India. His plea to the parliament was that India and Indians were not ready to absorb and fully participate in the democratic system.His assessment might have been based on the general perception of the country at that time which did not have a good rate of literacy, yet he missed an important aspect of governance and that was the matured and experienced leadership of India in the likes of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel, Maulana Azad Kalam and many more leaders who had been leading the movement for independence of India. Also India was exposed to partial democracy when they held elections for various State Councils in 1946. So India was ready with multi party democracy with its matured leaders.Nepal's foray into democracy did not have that advantage in 1951. The leaders were those who had seen and learnt the lessons of democracy from India. They did not have the leaders who had international exposure in diplomacy even in the subsequent brush with the democracy in 1990, nor did it go through the suggested two stages of graduation from monarchy to democracy. (Samuel P. Huntington) The results were catastrophic in previous two occasions and one is not too sure of the result after 2008.But history alone is an inefficient teacher and a guide. The world has changed since the time of Samuel P. Huntington. Lots of time and space can be telescoped in the present day world with the help of electronic means and gadgets. There are no boundaries limiting the learning for those who wish to learn. Therefore it is very important that the leaders of Nepal rise themselves to the higher form of leadership, governance and diplomacy. The leaders of Nepal failed the people of Nepal because of their inadequacy for governance. Most of the leaders follow blindly the Indian (UK) model of democracy without the requisite wherewithal and statesmanship required of leaders. They have tried to follow multi

party system of democracy whenever the chance was afforded to them. If Nepal wants democracy to succeed, the leaders, therefore, need to think of an "Out of the Box" solution. The repetition of the same shall not work. This is the time when the Constituent Assembly has been mandated to write new constitution for the country, that it must provide a solution which should last, should work for the people and empower every aspect of human development and economic growth. If the chance is lost, Nepal will be pushed back 200 years from where recovery may be near impossible. Think of the seventies in the last century, when Nepal was enjoying a new place in the sun. It was a time of "Hare Rama Hare Krishna". Foreigners were thronging Nepal, a new found Shangri-La from the materialistic world of the West. Tourists were competing to be in Nepal which brought prosperity, and foreign aid was pouring in. The economy was looking up. All was lost because of few misguided and ill-advised sons of the soil. The multi-party system of democracy has failed Nepal multiple times and it is doing so even now after the 2008 elections. Every time the Prime Minister of Nepal was forced to resign for extraneous considerations, it was a slap in the face of democracy. Imagine 13 Prime Ministers in about 15 years thereby giving just about one year for each of the Prime Ministers.

Can anybody in their right frame of mind think any development as possible in such a situation? 25 political parties for a small nation with population of just about three crores? Every party has its regional interest and therefore they do not support the national agenda. In fact there is no national agenda and therefore there is no progress in any front or field except to defend its own interest and turf. Yet these parties can cripple the smooth flow of national routine by calling "Bandhs" and "Strikes" making the people and the country hostage for their small and partisan interests.

If the multi party system has not worked and we still want to have democracy, then the answer lies in adopting a "Two Party" system of democracy. Elect your government which will have its fixed term with no fear of being toppled. It can then concentrate in nation building and empowering its people, rather than trying to manage coalition partners to survive another day. The Chief Executive of the nation will have only one agenda and that is to take the nation forward in the comity of nations. With the stable nation, economic growth will be ensured, international aid will be more willingly coming in, tourists will begin to seek their destination in Nepal again and, God willing, the nation will empower its people in the international human index. There are more pros than cons in two party democracy and governance. Here are some of the advantages of the two party system of democracy over the multi party system.

A two party system will have nationwide reach and appeal and support for either party. Multi party systems tend to encourage regionalism.

The Govt formed from the two party system will be quite stable and predictable as the parties will have to make their national agenda quite clear before the election.

With a two party system one is sure that the candidate who wins almost always has a majority of the votes. In a multi party system a candidate can be elected even though voted by a small minority.

In a two party system both the parties will have to align the population to their thinking and ideology thereby making both the parties more moderate and better able to rule.

A two party system prevents the inequities of split voting. For example, suppose there are two Communist party candidates and a Nepali Congress. Two communist candidates will divide the communist votes, and therefore a Nepali Congress candidate may win, even though most voters are communists.

It will be easier for the voters to choose a candidate in a two party system, especially when there are still a large number of voters who do not have an adequate education level to distinguish from the long list of candidates.

A two party system will create a very strong "Opposition Party" which is very essential in a functional democracy.

Control of election expenditures will be easier with two parties and therefore there will be less corruption.

Keeping in mind all the arguments given above, it is evident in my opinion that Nepal needs to adopt a "Two party" democratic system of governance. If there are still reservations in a two party system of democracy for Nepal, the "Constituent Assembly" mandated to write the Constitution for Nepal can add a review of the system after 20 or 30 years of its existence. By that time the benefit of education, health and economic development of two party system would have percolated to most citizens of the country. That is the time when the people of Nepal will be more capable in making decisions to choose the right leaders and the system of governance, be it a two party system or multi party system of democracy. Let there be a prominent Communist party to occupy one hemisphere of the political niche on one hand and let there be one on the right of the centre, or the extreme right on the other hand. I say this because to me it looks that presently people of Nepal are very inclined to communist ideology. Another party can be the Nepali Congress or any other which has a large support base. Let the people of the country whom they want to rule decide for the full term. Let there be no doubt in the minds of the leaders or the general public as to which side the country is going. Avoid confusion. Respect the verdict of the people once and for all and for the full term of the Government. How to make "Two Party" system work and the practical details can be discussed if it is agreed in principle, that a Two Party system can be considered as an alternative for political governance in Nepal. Ideas in this article are to shake up the minds of the right thinking people to do something which works and takes the country to a higher level of development of its people and economy.

<http://newsblaze.com/story/20100806094408zzzz.nb/topstory.html>

US suspends new adoptions in Nepal

The United States said Friday it has suspended new US adoptions of Nepalese children, citing flaws in the system used to determine that the children had been abandoned. The State Department and the US Citizenship and Immigration Services said in a joint statement they have

"decided to suspend adjudication of new adoption petitions and related visa issuance for children" listed as abandoned. Rosemary Macray, a State Department spokeswoman, told AFP all cases are effectively frozen as "all of the Nepali children that we have seen being matched with US families by the government of Nepal have been reported to be abandoned." The joint statement said US officials checking abandonment cases often found documents to be "unreliable," citing examples where data on children's birth certificates "has been changed or fabricated." They also often had trouble contacting Nepalese officials named in reports of abandonment, it said. "Police and orphanage officials often refuse to cooperate with consular officers' efforts to confirm information by comparing it with official police and orphanage records," it said. "Without reliable documentation, it is not possible for the United States government to process an orphan petition to completion," it said. Macray said around 80 adoption cases were in the pipeline before the suspension took effect Friday and they were being adjudicated on a case-by-case basis. In March, the US government warned its citizens against adopting children in Nepal, saying it had "grave concerns" about the reliability of that country's adoption system. Nepal introduced new adoption legislation in 2008 following reports of widespread abuses of the system by unscrupulous agents who were effectively trafficking children overseas for profit.

China, Nepal celebrate 55th anniversary of diplomatic ties

China and Nepal celebrated the 55th anniversary of diplomatic ties at a reception in Beijing Monday evening. More than 300 guests, including Chinese government officials and foreign diplomats in China, attended the reception, which was co-hosted by the China-Nepal Friendship Association, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), and Nepalese embassy in China. Chen Haosu, president of the CPAFFC, said in a speech that the years since China and Nepal forged diplomatic ties had witnessed continuous development of their traditional friendship and friendly cooperation as well as frequent high-level exchanges. Political, economic, trade and cultural relations were closer than ever, Chen said. The two nations, which treated each other on an equal footing, had harmonious coexistence and long-term friendship. Nepalese Ambassador to China Tanka Prasad Karki said that Nepal and China, as good neighbors, all-weather and reliable friends, as well as partners of common development, had maintained sound bilateral ties. Nepal wanted to further learn from China's experience in social and economic growth and enhance its mutually beneficial cooperation with China. China and Nepal forged diplomatic ties in 1955. They established a comprehensive partnership of cooperation at the end of 2009.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-08/02/c_13426927.htm

Srilanka

A post – war challenge for Sri Lanka: Dismantling the LTTE overseas and rebuilding a Sri Lankan identity Sri Lanka defeated the world's first insurgency of the 21st century.¹ On May 19,

2009, the country achieved a great strategic and moral triumph by militarily defeating the LTTE,” said Professor Rohan Gunaratna. In a keynote address delivered at the Auditorium of the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute on the invitation of the Nandadasa Kodagoda Memorial Trust Professor Gunaratna further said, “The theory that a political solution is a prelude to defeating an insurgency articulated by Western theorists and scholars was shattered. After three decades of fighting a cruel and costly insurgency, peace finally returned to Sri Lanka. He observed that whether peace will endure and future prosperity will be achieved will depend on the ability and willingness of the political leaders of the country to work together across the party divide to build a new Sri Lanka. “Given below the full text of the address by Rohan Gunaratna, Professor of Security Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore:

It is my distinct privilege to deliver the 13th Desamanya Professor Nandadasa Kodagoda Oration this evening. Professor Kodagoda was an intellectual giant of our times. Born in Ahangama in the Galle District in 1929, he was educated at the Ahangama Village School, Nalanda Vidyalaya (till the onset of the 2nd World War) and at Mahinda College, Galle. He received his medical education at the Colombo Medical Faculty and became a doctor in 1954. He served in Galle and Karawanella for two years as a medical doctor and joined the Faculty of Medicine in Colombo in 1956 as a junior lecturer. His postgraduate qualifications included a MD (Ceylon), DMJ, MRCP (UK) and FRCP (UK). He was Senior Lecturer in Forensic Medicine, Professor in Forensic Medicine, Head, Department of Forensic Medicine, Dean of the Colombo Medical Faculty for two terms and Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo. Professor Kodagoda functioned as the Chairman of the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board for two terms and as the Acting Director of the Institute of Indigenous Medicine. He was also the founder Chairman of the Alcohol & Drugs Information Centre (ADIC). Although Professor Kodagoda retired from university life in 1995, he remained active continuing his lifelong passion as a keen and an effective mass communicator in public health issues using both the radio and the TV. He was awarded national honours, Kalaa Keerthi in 1986, Deshamanya in 1992 and Vishwa Prasaadini in 1995. He was also awarded honorary Fellow of the National Academy of Science. As a student at Ananda College in Colombo, I met with Professor Kodagoda. He inspired a generation of students like me by his prolific writings and talks. What touched me most was his deep interest in national and international issues, and the need for all of us to be educated formally and informally on such matters before they affect us. As such, I like to share my own views about a challenge facing Sri Lanka after the defeat of the LTTE.

The Context:

Sri Lanka defeated the world’s first insurgency of the 21st century.² On May 19, 2009, the country achieved a great strategic and moral triumph by militarily defeating the LTTE. The theory that a political solution is a prelude to defeating an insurgency articulated by Western theorists and scholars was shattered. After three decades of fighting a cruel and costly insurgency, peace finally returned to Sri Lanka. Whether peace will endure and future prosperity

will be achieved will depend on the ability and willingness of the political leaders of the country to work together across the party divide to build a new Sri Lanka.

The failure of Sri Lankan leaders to govern a multi-ethnic and a multi-religious society since independence precipitated Sri Lanka's ethno-political conflict. Sri Lanka's political masters compromised Sri Lanka's long term national and strategic interests for short term political gain. Unless Sri Lankan politicians build the understanding to never again to play ethnic and religious based politics, poison the ground by radicalizing its youth, and reinforce ethnic and religious divisions, the country is likely to suffer a repetition of its unfortunate past. Sri Lanka celebrated the end of the war but a segment of radicalized Sri Lankans both at home and overseas resent this victory. The terrorist threat to Sri Lanka has diminished but has not ended. The LTTE threat has declined in Sri Lanka, but it is on the incline overseas. The LTTE had two organizational bases – the domestic or the territorial base, from which it recruited, and, the foreign or the diaspora base, from which it generated the funds. To prevent a disconnect the LTTE exercised exceptional control over these two bases through intense and sustained propaganda and punishing dissent, at times brutally. After the LTTE was dismantled in the banks of the Nandikadal lagoon, the group very quickly reorganized itself overseas. Regarded once as the world's most ruthless terrorist and guerrilla group, the LTTE after one year, is steadfastly re-emerging in Western cities. The LTTE is acting through three fronts – the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam led by Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran in New York, Global Tamil Forum led by Father S. J. Emmanuel in the U.K. and the criminal faction led by Perinbanayagam Sivaparan alias Nediyan in Norway. The LTTE leaders, offices and assets overseas are largely intact. The LTTE-controlled diaspora campaign contributions and carefully orchestrated constituency pressure/electoral compulsions compel the U.S., U.K., Norway and a few countries to turn a blind eye to LTTE activities. Although the LTTE leadership in Sri Lanka has been decapitated, the LTTE's global network poses an enduring and a long term threat to the stability and security of the country. The LTTE ideology is intact, its financial infrastructure is operational, and its vicious propaganda machine is impactful. For sustainable peace and stability, the long term ideological and the operational threat posed by the LTTE will need to be carefully managed.

To harness the hard earned gains of militarily defeating the LTTE, government must quickly develop a strategy of working towards engaging both the international community as well as the resident and non-resident Sri Lankan populations. Fourteen months have passed since May 2009, but we still need a concept, a master plan, or a national road map of crafting a future of prosperity for all Sri Lankans. While security is essential to setting the conditions for such success, a lasting victory comes from a vibrant economy, broad-based political participation, and restored hope.³ The likely future trajectory of the LTTE will depend on the government's ability to continue to work with the Tamil population, move fast and reach out to the Tamil diaspora and invest the time and resources to co-opt the Tamil political opposition both at home and abroad. The art of politics is not only to work with friends but also engage the opposition, the pockets of adversaries, and even past, present, and future enemies – this includes even those infected and still suffering from the Eelam ideology and seeking pathways to lead to a respectable mainstream

life. To craft a road map to unify the country through nation building will de-legitimize and effectively invalidate the vicious ideology that spawned and sustained the violence that plagued Sri Lanka during 30 years. The government's highly visible strategy of attrition of the past must be replaced by a high profile strategy of proactive engagement.

The New Political Landscape:

My presentation seeks to map contours of Sri Lanka's new political landscape and what we must accomplish in a post-War phase to stabilize Sri Lanka with a short- to mid-term strategy. Today, every Sri Lankan must comprehend the new political reality and benefit from the peace dividend before us. The most dominant actors at play are the government, the international community and the remnants of the LTTE. The LTTE remnants seeking to reorganize include three components: (i) the LTTE group (dismantled), (ii) the LTTE network (active), and (iii) the LTTE movement (active). Let us examine each one of these components that took our country backwards by three decades.⁴

The LTTE as a group:

The LTTE as a group is militarily vanquished. Although its ideology is intact, the component that was physically based in Sri Lanka is no longer operational as a coherent group. The conduct of the LTTE leadership in the final phase of battle demonstrated its true face of being willing to sacrifice its own support base and potential support base. Despite every Tamil family voluntarily or involuntarily providing a family member and resources, the Tamil public confidence in the LTTE that was meticulously built through years of systematic indoctrination was shattered. Instead of respecting the fifth No Fire Zone (NFZ), the LTTE held nearly 280,000 Tamils as hostages. When the LTTE persisted and eventually started to shoot the civilians who wanted to flee, the Sri Lankan military was able to breach the LTTE human shield and launch an operation to rescue them. The angry Tamil civilians rescued by the Sri Lankan forces identified several thousand LTTE leaders, members and helpers. While over 10,000 LTTE cadres were killed, a total of 12,500 LTTE leaders, cadres and helpers who did not wish to fight either surrendered or were spotted by the Tamil civilians in the welfare centres.

Although government was highly criticized for holding and screening the civilians, its strategy of preventing a re-infiltration and re-radicalization of the community was effective. Today, except a few thousand civilians who are free to leave the open welfare centres, every Tamil civilian have been resettled. Ironically, one part of the UN lobbied by the LTTE called and campaigned side by side with the LTTE fronts for early release of IDPs, while another part of the UN pressurized the government to delay the releases because of the slow pace of demining. Some leaders of international organizations, foreign governments, non-governmental organizations and a segment of the press exposed to LTTE's powerful propaganda towed the LTTE line when they spoke of "concentration" and "internment" camps. This includes some poorly informed think tanks in Colombo that even propagated this view. Despite the status of the economy of a country recovering from conflict, government even provided a resettlement allowance and continue to assist those IDPS. In recent history, no country has resettled such a significant number of the displaced in such a short period of time. Government appointed one of its ablest commanders

Major General Kamal Gunaratna, the General Officer Commanding the 54 Division, as the Competent Authority of the IDPS, a task he admirably accomplished. Likewise government skilfully launched a multifaceted rehabilitation program under the guidance of the former Justice Minister Milinda Moragoda and Secretary of Defence Gotabhaya Rajapaksa to engage the LTTE followers.⁵ Away from the glare of the international media, government has today released all the disabled and student rehabilitees and has started the process of releasing the women rehabilitees. Unless there is a terrorist attack, government is likely to release over half of those undergoing rehabilitation within the next year. To prevent recidivism, it is paramount for government to continuously engage this vulnerable segment of our population. To ensure complete reintegration back to the community, there should be a separate authority to monitor their re-entry and maintain the engagement. Although the Commissioner General of Rehabilitation and his dedicated staff has treated the rehabilitees in the most humane way, the government has yet to get the re-entry piece into the community especially the long term monitoring part worked out. To prevent a relapse to the old ways, governments' reintegration staff should work with the families, community and religious leaders, business and NGO communities. Extensive interagency collaboration is necessary to ensure that each one of the rehabilitees has a job and is never again trapped and once again misguided by the vicious and the intolerant ideology of the LTTE. The LTTE network overseas in partnership with a few Tamil political leaders at home seeks to re-poison another generation of Tamil youth.

If government is strategic in its thinking, the LTTE as group is unlikely to re-emerge in Sri Lanka in our life time. As long as government continues to re-orient its combat forces to developing the north and east and expand its intelligence strength, government will be capable to detect LTTE individual operatives and emerging support cells both at home and overseas especially in Tamil Nadu. In addition to focusing on economic growth and strengthening the partnership with Tamil parties, a powerful national and military intelligence service at home is the key to securing Sri Lanka in the coming years.

The LTTE Network Overseas:

The LTTE as a group has been rendered impotent at home. Nonetheless, the second component of the LTTE – its network overseas - has survived. The network's activities that supported the terrorist campaign in Sri Lanka have moved to the diplomatic and international arena. They lobby not only governments but also the U.N., World Bank, IMF and other important stakeholders in international affairs. The network presents a short term (1-2 years) nuisance and an irritant and dependent on government response, a mid- to long-term threat (5-10 years). Although factionalized into three entities, these factions cooperate, at times, fight. To ensure compliance, the LTTE shadow leader Nediyan who heads the criminal network threatens and conducts acts of violence against other LTTE leaders and activists. The three factions are no longer genuinely interested in the welfare and well being of Tamils including those affected by the war. Their leaders, Nediyan, Rudrakumaran and Emmanuel are interested in building their personal and political power and financial strength. As the activists and assets of the LTTE are located overseas, its network of front, cover and sympathetic

organizations are not within the reach of the Sri Lankan law enforcement. Due to an inherent weakness of the Sri Lankan government's overall strategy, in parallel with the security forces and the intelligence agencies that dismantled the LTTE in Sri Lanka, there was no similar fight overseas. Like the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of External Affairs must develop a vision and a mission that they too must play their role by making it their personal fight. The former foreign minister Lakhman Kadirgamar, PC, a Tamil himself, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during his tenure understood the threat from overseas and the need to counter it. Nonetheless, the working culture of Sri Lankan Foreign Service and other associated systemic factors of the service did not make it its single most important mission to dismantle the LTTE overseas. Unfortunately in the run up to the final Wannu operation, most career foreign service officers appeared in the shadows without forcefully representing Sri Lanka's interests and rebutting the LTTE and others influenced by its black and grey propaganda. There was no structure in place in the Ministry of External Affairs of appointing, promoting and rewarding based on merit, ability and performance in this domain. As such most career foreign service officers and political appointees did not adequately understand the importance of and hence did not embrace the responsibility of working closely with key international partners. To ensure that the LTTE presence is dismantled in the countries to which they are appointed, they must proactively identify and build adequate working relationships with the influential leaders in the political establishment, security and intelligence services, law enforcement authorities, human rights groups, think tanks, media and the Tamil community. To this date, when LTTE generates false report there is no established practice to monitor, counter and rebut the adverse publicity within six hours. As government neglected this crucial dimension, the LTTE network was able to convince some host governments and host communities of "ethnocide," "genocide," and "war crimes," activities that were not perpetrated by the government and labels that Sri Lanka never deserved. Furthermore, the LTTE interfaced, interlocked, and galvanized a segment of the Tamil population overseas and used them as pawns to wage their vicious and malicious propaganda campaign. The configuration of the LTTE network overseas evolved dramatically even before its defeat at home. The successor to K.P., Manivannan Veerakulasingham alias Castro, headed LTTE's international network since 2003. Raising funds under the pretext of relief and rehabilitation, the LTTE invested the bulk of its finances in arms procurement from North Korea and propaganda in the West. Although the bulk of the LTTE ships have been destroyed, its propaganda network is still intact. Dismantling the LTTE infrastructure and countering the false propaganda can be accomplished by two principal methods.

First, government should create platforms and institutions in northern and eastern Sri Lanka to engage LTTE leaders and their activists overseas. Ideally working with the parliamentary opposition, government should build a mechanism, to invite these misguided LTTE leaders to witness for themselves the unprecedented economic development in the north and east, the humane treatment of the displaced and the rehabilitees, and create opportunities for their participation. Ironically, most Tamils including those who contributed to the LTTE and protested in Western capitals are tired and they want to visit their loved ones or return home to invest. In

the larger interest of peace and national reconciliation, the President should grant an amnesty to those who engaged in not so serious criminal activity in support of the LTTE. Government should build a mechanism through its missions abroad to ensure that their travel is facilitated and they are engaged in a manner to facilitate others to re-enter the Sri Lankan mainstream. Sri Lankan political opposition should declare its support to the government for such a mechanism including to engage with Rudrakumaran, Father Emmanuel and Nediyanwan. If they or other high ranking figures of the LTTE's international network remains stubbornly uncooperative notwithstanding sincere attempts by the government, should be totally left out of the political discourse and thereafter exposed to the law enforcement authorities of their countries of domicile to be dealt with for their criminal activities.

Second, government should expand the mandate of its national and military intelligence services to operate overseas both to develop its coverage of terrorist support and operational activities. While the dominant strategy should be to engage, it is native for Sri Lankans to think that LTTE network abroad will not plan and prepare acts of terrorism overseas for striking in Sri Lanka. Although most Tamils including those radicalized see the sense of pursuing non violence to achieve their goals, there are a few fanatics with the mindset within the three factions determined to resort to violence. Already, LTTE cells in India and Malaysia that supported acts of terrorism in Sri Lanka have been detected. As an LTTE hardcore is active overseas, they need to be closely monitored and appropriate actions taken. There should be dedicated desks to every country and not every region where there is LTTE personnel, infrastructure and activities.

Such desks should work closely with the diplomatic, political, intelligence, law enforcement - police, border control, and others - judicial and other branches of government. After 9-11, if there is a will, there are sufficient political commitment and mechanisms available globally to bring to justice anyone who is seeking to spawn, support and sustain terrorism.

Sri Lanka was fortunate that by 2005, virtually all countries in the developed West and Europe had proscribed the LTTE. We will be failing in our duty, if we fail to recall with gratitude the untiring efforts of the late Minister Kadirgamar with regard to successfully satisfying foreign leaders that the LTTE was no mere 'liberation or freedom organization', by a 'criminal terrorist outfit'. It is the international proscription on the LTTE, which made it difficult for any foreign government to directly criticize the Government of Sri Lanka for its resolve to militarily demolish the LTTE. If we are serious in our current determination to continue to take all meaningful measures to eliminate the LTTE's remaining tentacles located overseas, it is of paramount importance that Sri Lanka ensures that countries which have proscribed the LTTE continues to have on board the proscription, and countries such as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa proscribes the LTTE. It is vital that diplomatic measures aimed at achieving this objective, should be implemented following a comprehensive understanding of the divergent mechanisms in place in such countries. In certain countries the authority to designate an organization as an 'International Terrorist Organization' or as a 'Terrorist Organization' (and thereby proscribe it), rests with the Executive i.e. the Head of State, Minister of Defence or some other official of the executive. In certain other countries, the designation of an organization and

thereby proscribe it should be done through legislative action i.e. by passing a law. In certain other countries, there is a need for both the central government and the federal government and their respective Parliaments to collaborate in this regard. Australia is one such example.

This means that, proscription or designation, is basically a political decision taken in the backdrop of factual circumstances such as the conduct of the organization. Under these circumstances, if we are to ensure that the LTTE remains proscribed and countries such as Australia which has not yet proscribed the LTTE proscribes it, Sri Lanka has to necessarily have a positive diplomatic and political relationship with such countries.

Furthermore, apart from continuing to brief those governments regarding continuing activism (aimed at re-activating terrorist operations) by LTTE organizational manifestations in those countries, Sri Lanka needs to have a better ground situation. This means that the government should in good faith necessarily address the genuine political needs of the Tamil minority. Foreign leaders should necessarily perceive that the Government of Sri Lanka is acting reasonably and will effectively protect the interests of Tamil people, in the aftermath of a full elimination of the LTTE. Now that an armed conflict does not exist, the only legally tenable way in which LTTE activists could be neutralized and thereby prevented from continuing to engage in LTTE activities, is by successfully prosecuting them for their terrorist and other criminal activities. Sri Lankan authorities have been somewhat successful in that regard, by launching successful prosecutions against LTTE hardcore activists in Sri Lankan courts and thereby getting them imprisoned to serve terms of imprisonment, and by promoting investigations and prosecutions against LTTE activists who operated on foreign soil. Both due to keen interest shown by local authorities and due to initiatives of foreign intelligence and law enforcement agencies, successful prosecutions have been launched against LTTE activists in Canada, United States of America, United Kingdom, France, Italy, India, and Australia. If LTTE activists are to be kept at bay and dissuaded from engaging in LTTE activities on foreign soil, these investigations and prosecutions have to necessarily continue. However, now that LTTE activists operating in developed countries appears to have satisfied foreign powers that they are no longer engaging in terrorist or otherwise illegal activities on foreign soil and that their activities are limited to lobbying and political activism, the challenge for Sri Lanka would become considerably difficult. Though we as Sri Lankans will steadfastly argue that a Tiger never changes his stripes and hence LTTE activists would use political activism only to camouflage their determined efforts aimed at reviving the LTTE as a violent force, it is likely that foreign powers would prefer to adopt a 'wait and see' attitude and not continue to arrest LTTE activists, particularly since LTTE activists no longer pose a threat to the normal law and order in countries in which they presently operate. Therefore, Sri Lankan authorities would necessarily have to turn towards the Sri Lankan criminal justice system, to have LTTE operatives investigated, arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned. One major barrier in this regard, appears to be that Sri Lankan courts do not have extra-territorial jurisdiction, to try persons such as LTTE operatives who have committed offences overseas, and not engaged in any illegal activities on Sri Lankan soil. It would be important for Sri Lankan authorities to pay due regard to this weakness of the Sri

Lankan criminal justice system and adopt legislative reform so as to vest extra-territorial jurisdiction in Sri Lankan criminal courts and to amend the substantive criminal law of Sri Lanka to recognize as punishable offences LTTE activism overseas.

Radicalized Segments of the Diaspora:

A million Sri Lankan Tamils live overseas but only those exposed to LTTE propaganda voluntarily supported LTTE's violent agenda. Although not all of them suffered from the war and was traumatized, the developments at home affected the entire diaspora to different degrees. Except for the pre-1983 migrants, it is very likely that a considerable percentage of the diaspora had lost a loved one or suffered humiliation – the subject of a cordon and search operation, a mistaken arrest, a rude remark by a member of another community. In war, everyone suffers - even those who flee the war zone. Not every family can leave the affected areas – nonetheless, many left behind their loved ones. What happens at home is reflected overseas. Additionally, the LTTE exploited the incidents of violence and magnified it for propaganda value. The aim of the LTTE was to generate support, to different degrees. The LTTE indoctrinated segments of overseas Tamils both for lobbying and campaigning against the Sri Lanka government but also to raise funds. The LTTE funded its military campaign in Sri Lanka and political campaign overseas with funds raised and military goods procured from abroad.

The bulk of LTTE's budget was diaspora contributions both voluntary and forced. Although most did not contribute voluntarily, due to LTTE's implicit coercion an appreciable segment of the diaspora contributed to the LTTE financially. The radicalized segment of the diaspora needed a return for their investment – that was Tamil Eelam, the imaginary state Prabhakaran created in their minds. The most indoctrinated believed that the LTTE was indestructible and Prabhakaran was invincible. They prayed for him, his portrait adorned the walls of their homes, and paraded his image even in countries the LTTE was blacklisted. Even a narrow segment of the diaspora saw Prabhakaran as God and Tamil's savoir. Upon his death, they mourned. Their grief turned into suffering, anger, and resentment. To recoup that deep sense of loss, the LTTE created on paper a transnational government. Those who needed to fight back have joined this hollow idea which even the LTTE theoreticians know is not a recognized concept in public international law and pragmatic international affairs. It is only a political platform for overseas LTTE activists to retain their respective identities and to continue to harness the resources of the Tamil diaspora by blinding them in the belief that following the utter failure in waging a war, a transnational government in exile is a pathway to a state of Tamil Eelam. Only 10% of the diaspora voted for the Transnational government ideal. Those who were vulnerable to high degrees of indoctrination emerged as the most committed. Amidst this community of the indoctrinated, the tiny hardcore that specifically funded the fight – meaning, insisted that their contribution is to mount attacks, present a threat today. Until a terrorist attack is carried out in Sri Lanka, they feel deeply unhappy. The hardcore need the LTTE to be reconstituted and witness Sri Lanka's return to violence. Nonetheless, this hardcore group is unrepresentative of the spirit of the larger diaspora that want to do something good for their brethren and positive for their land of birth and heritage. They too had suffered from the LTTE and the war, like most other Sri Lankans.

The best strategy to de-Eelamize the Tamils influenced and indoctrinated requires an effective strategy to dismantle the ideology that spawned and sustained the violence that plagued Sri Lanka during 30 years of conflict. Until then, the Tamils exposed to LTTE propaganda will be conceptually uncomfortable even with the idea of a united Sri Lanka. Thus to rebuild a Sri Lankan identity it is essential to engage the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora communities. As the diaspora is not monolithic, the Sri Lankan governments' response to the diaspora challenge should be multipronged. First, the best antidote for an active diaspora is to facilitate and encourage service to community and country. Whether galvanized by war or energized by LTTE propaganda, the government should eventually create a separate Diaspora Department headed by a top civil servant to encourage and facilitate the return and assist in the resettlement of Tamils and to help them to contribute towards economic and social development of their own brethren.

The bulk of the diaspora waited for this moment either to focus their energy and resources towards Sri Lanka or to return to their motherland. The government should make use of this opportunity to facilitate the innate desire of every diaspora to invest in the people or the infrastructure in the north and east. To engage the larger Tamil diaspora communities in 15 countries, the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka should create points of contact for the diaspora at Sri Lankan missions or tourism offices overseas to channel that investment to AGA divisions in the north and east.

Following the Afghan model, the diaspora as well as the host country should build a development partnership with a conflict affected AGA division. In addition to challenging the LTTE fund raising, such a positive engagement will help channel resources in a constructive manner. Working with NGOs and with the private sector, government can maximize the opportunities. To prompt diversion of resource in such a direction, the Sri Lankan government should create such mechanisms and the President himself should continue to request Sri Lankans and those of Sri Lankan heritage living overseas to return and unite. It is important to remember that one of the greatest resources Sri Lanka has is its human resources, a significant portion of it presently lives outside the country.

Second, the government should also engage the radicalized segment of the diaspora and not permit them to live in that state of continuous ignorance. Government needs to create platforms for engaging them through diaspora meetings both at home and overseas. The government convened the first such meeting for nine Tamil diaspora leaders in May 2010. The meeting provided both the government an assessment of the extent of LTTE indoctrination and in return the diaspora leaders realized the humane approach government had adopted in resettling the displaced and rehabilitating the LTTE leaders and cadres in custody. Furthermore, these leaders visited the north and east and saw for themselves the unprecedented development as well as the cordial relationship between the government including the military and the civilian population. The Minister of External Affairs G.L. Peiris and the Secretary Defence Gotabhaya Rajapaksa assured them that the war had ended and everyone must work towards a common identity as Sri Lankans. The diaspora leaders underwent a cognitive and emotional shift after they spoke to the doctors and the displaced who were rescued from the last

No Fire Zone and the LTTE detainees. Many of them realized rather than be informed that the cycle of violence that destroyed the north and east was reinforced by their contributions. By continuing the engagement of meetings and visits and facilitating security and opportunities of diaspora leaders, the radicalized segment of the diaspora can be guided. The same leaders that influenced the diaspora to imagine that there was genocide, has the best chance of correcting this misperception. If properly guided by a leader with the correct understanding, that sense of wrong, guilt or shame is sufficient to create a spark to devote the rest of their life to serve those who suffered in the north and east.

The engagement with the diaspora leaders also helped the government to better understand the diaspora needs. Government realized the need to create an information centre to provide sound and timely information for the diaspora. The LTTE exploited the absence of such information. To counter LTTE misinformation, the best government strategy is to maintain a public database especially about the IDPS, detainees, and rehabilitees. Of the two principal approaches that can be used by the government to accomplish this feat, both engagement and enforcement is necessary. Especially in a post war context, engagement of Tamils at home and overseas should be the preferred tool. The battle to win hearts and minds cannot be fought with guns, tanks, ships and aircraft. Engagement leads to genuine transformation but enforcement only to strategic calculation. Genuine departure from abandoning an ideology comes not from repression and fear but understanding and facilitation. That is creating attractive pathways so irresistible where an individual exits and transforms from one ideology to another. A bad idea can only be replaced with a better idea. Such strategies to reducing the costs of leaving can be created by creative leaders in government and government working in partnership with the private sector. Although to fight terrorism enforcement is the best strategy, engagement is the best strategy to dissuade support for terrorism. Such a strategy is beginning to work. Rajan, the former LTTE leader in Malaysia revealed: "During my father's time we fought politically, my generation fought militarily, at least the generation of my children and grandchildren must campaign peacefully. That is our hope." To disband LTTE's highly destructive ideology, the government must create platforms for former militant leaders who repent such as K.P. to articulate their points of view publicly. Certainly some of those holding extreme views regarding the conflict on both sides of the divide, neither understand nor endorse such a strategy. To prevent the political opposition from attacking the idea, the government should adopt a bipartisan approach when taking the process forward. Otherwise, as the Sri Lankan culture of confrontational politics dictates, the political opposition may not support it. Ideally, on matters of foreign policy and national security bipartisanship should prevail.

A Paradigm Shift:

To build permanent peace in Sri Lanka, there must be a change in ideality and reality. That is creating the institutions to change the reality on the ground and to counter possible root causes for development of a political motive to move towards separation. This can be only achieved by a sincere appreciation by all regarding the multiple pluralities of our diverse society and by recognizing and enforcing absolute equality. Not only should there not be discrimination, there

should not even be the opportunity to give rise to a perception of possible discrimination. To achieve this goal, there has to be indeed a degree of attitudinal change in all Sri Lankans. Respect to the other and tolerance should be the cornerstones of our routine behaviour.

Recognition and protection of human rights, democracy, mechanisms to ensure good governance and optimal devolution of executive and legislative functions of government within the framework of a single sovereign Sri Lanka, should necessarily be the basic principles of the new Constitution of Sri Lanka. This in my view, is the pathway for the establishment of sustained peace, and the realization of a truly Sri Lankan identity wherein no person of this blessed nation would ever want to move towards separation all over again. It is through such change that we can achieve sustainable peace, and move towards national unity and prosperity of our beloved country.

Footnotes

¹Professor Ahmed Hashim, counter-Insurgency specialist, Naval War College, U.S.A. personal communication, LTTE Rehabilitation centre, Vavuniya, June 13, 2010.

²Professor Ahmed Hashim, counter-Insurgency specialist, Naval War College, U.S.A. personal communication, LTTE Rehabilitation centre, Vavuniya, June 13, 2010.

³Counterinsurgency in Detention Operations for Military Police Internment/Resettlement and Combat Support Battalions/Brigades, Version 2.0, United States Army Military Police School, March 2009 p. 15. My source of knowledge for this presentation is drawn from a review of government and other documents on the LTTE and several hundred LTTE leaders, members and helpers that I debriefed since 1984. In addition to an interview with Velupillai Prabhakaran in August 1987, I debriefed key leaders including Selvarasa Pathmanathan alias Kumaran Pathmanathan alias K.P., who succeeded Prabhakaran as well as the parents of Prabhakaran. My interview with Prabhakaran is published in, Rohan Gunaratna, War and Peace in Sri Lanka (Institute of Fundamental Studies, Sri Lanka, 1987)

<http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/08/05/post---war-challenge-sri-lanka-dismantling-ltte-overseas-and-rebuilding-sri-lankan-i>

Is the Govt. ‘trying to change’ demography in the North and the East, “The major Tamil political party in Sri Lanka has accused the government of trying to change the demography in the north taken over by the military following the defeat of Tamil Tiger rebels over a year ago.

The TNA also accused the government of breaching pledges made to India and the international community over resettling internally displaced people (IDP). Suresh Premachandran, MP, said nearly 75 percent of the affected IDPs are Tamils of Indian origin who were chased away from the upcountry in 1977 and 1983 racial riots. “Displaced people are not allowed to resettle in their ancestral lands,” says the Tamil National Alliance (TNA). Mr. Sumanthiran who recalled a statement by the military chief of plans to establish special villages in the north for predominantly Sinhala military families, questioned whether the intention of the government is

to change the demography in the”The above statements by the TNA imply few serious misconceptions and disinformation about Sri Lankan history and the actions of the Government. Firstly it implies that the said land where military and other settlements are purported to be coming up belonged to the Tamils (who never think they are a part of this country) and it is their traditional Home Land on earth where no member of any other community can step in while the Tamils want to live, work and own property all over the Island. Secondly they were taken over illegally by the Sri Lankan Government by force through military operations and as such the Sri Lankan Government has invaded the Tamil land. Thirdly the military and other installations required for national security of this country should not be established in the North or the East. Fourthly the Sri Lankan government has no right to take the necessary steps to safeguard its national security or territorial integrity.

Fifthly the government is doing this to change the demography of the north and the east, which they consider as their historical Home Land (where as the Tami Home Land is actually found in South India)

Sixth the IDPs are denied resettling on their own land and they are being discriminated.

Seventh there are no Tamils officers in the armed forces. Those Estate Tamils who are there are people who have been chased out from the Sinhala areas by the Sinhalese and they are not people who were selectively and meticulously settled on these barren crown lands by the TNA led communal Tamil politicians during the past few decades, in collaboration with the old CWE leadership as an important part of their EELAM programme. The Estate Tamils who are there in the N&E are also traditional land owners in those regions.

Finally no community other than the Tamils has a right to settle down or live in the north or the east of Sri Lanka as the final goal of these Tamil politicians is the establishment of the Tamil EELAM covering these two provinces.

It is more than clear that the bottom line of all these allegations and arguments is communal Tamil politics which is fanning communal hatred against the Sinhalese and the Government which they have been engaged from early 1920s that culminated in mass destruction and untold misery during the last 30 odd years.

Why can't these modern Hanumans learn a lesson from what has happened during the past few decades as a direct retribution of their follies and at least now stop this communal hatred against the Sinhala people and also learn to live with other communities in this country without trying to set communal fire again, that will drag this country from bad to worse.

Are they not the people who have brought misery and destruction firstly to the Tamil and then to the entire country during the last 90 odd years starting from 1920s? How long are they going to follow this same path of destruction, never ending enmity and misery? To begin with, who gave this part of the country exclusively for Tamils and at what stage of history of this Island nation? Other than for a very short period in the medieval times before the arrival of the Portuguese in the unusually long span of 2500 year Sri Lankan history, do they know that the entire country had been ruled by Sinhala Kings as one country, sometimes with minor regional kingdoms under the suzerainty of one King reigning over the whole Island? Also do they know that even the last

four Nayakar Kings of Kandy (whom the present day Tamils politicians claim to be Tamil Kings) were crowned as Sinhala Kings with Sinhala names only after they took an oath in front of the Mahanayaka Theros of the two chapters at the Nathadevala premises to protect the Buddha Sasana and carry on the duties of the State in accordance with the customs and traditions of the Sinhale Kingdom,? None of them reigned as Rajasinhams but they all were Rajasinhās; Nayakkars transformed in to Sinhala nationals.If they declined to adapt they would never have been Kings in this country. Do they know that what an 11 year old non-Hindu boy (Chelvanayagam) who migrated from Singapore and his anti Sri Lankan anti-Hindu outfit has invented as Sri Lankan history (the history of the Tamil EELAM) is a diabolical fabrication of myths that will never be accepted by any sensible historian as long as the sun and the moon shall last? Have they forgotten that through out history both Sinhala and Muslim people also have been living in these areas, the north and the east?

Don't they realize that both Sinhalese and Muslims have a right to live any where in this country as much as a Tamil man or a woman has to do so? Are they not aware that the government of the country has a legal right to take over any land any where in the country for a public purpose? Even though it is inordinately late by centuries, in my opinion the Government is doing the right thing just now by relocating the Sinhala people on their ancestral lands after 1000 odd years since they were chased out from the Dry Zone low lands by the Magha invaders in the 12th century.

Where were these TNA politicians when Pirapaharan was butchering thousands innocent people. Have they ever made any statement to any media on his atrocities committed at least against their own community? Why can't these petty minded power hungry communal politicians at least now come to terms with reality and stop this disastrous one way traffic without making this country once again a land of brutal killing and disaster.

Have you people ever made any statement regarding the resettlement of Sinhala and Muslim people who were chased out from the north and the east from their traditional lands and got displaced long before these Tamil IDPs who were displaced only last year due to atrocities committed by your own hero Pirapaharan since 1983? Communal segregation and hatred my dear friends will never take us any where. You have to learn to live with other communities in peace. If you find it impossible the only alternative for you is to go back to India that you call your own country and worship as your motherland and live in the lap of luxury of Karunanidhi without sowing the seeds of communal hatred making this blessed country a virtual hell once again to everybody. Regarding the settlement of Sinhala people in the northern and Eastern areas I would like to make this clarification not only for the benefit of the TNA but also for all those national and international sections who are ignorant of the real facts on this issue. The whole Island was populated by the Sinhala people before 1200 AD. And it was as a result of Magha invasion of the 12th century those who survived were forced to abandon their once prosperous traditional home land and migrate to the south west of the Island. Ever since, these lands have remained thick jungle, inhabited by wild animals, except for few isolated settlements in the interior with sporadic pockets of coastal settlements of Tamils on the littorals.

The Colonial powers particularly the Dutch brought south Indian Malabar settlers in large numbers to Jaffna to work on their tobacco plantations and the British made several unsuccessful attempts to populate these areas with south Indians. During the Kandyan Kingdom Senarath settled Muslims in large numbers in the eastern Panampattu area as a favour to those who fled Portuguese repression and atrocities from the South West. So whatever settlement whether it is the so-called colonization (which should have been properly named re-settlement) or the resettlement of those who were chased out by the LTTE in recent times are only all re-settlement of original settlers on their own ancestral home lands. Therefore no one should try to distort historical facts for political or other reasons. Resettlement of Sinhala people is only a natural rectification of historical injustice done to the original settlers of these lands. Therefore no one, either here or outside, has any moral or ethical right to accuse the government on this issue.

The TNA also accuses the government of Sri Lanka that it has breached pledges made to India and the international Community. As regard to any pledge the government has made to India or the so-called International Community, we do not know. But even if the government had given any promise, I can state categorically here that neither India nor the International community has any legal or moral right to interfere with our domestic affairs. These politicians may be making this kind of stupid statement to win over their sympathy for the future EELAM. But I can vouch you that that is only a day dream that will never come true on the soils of this land of the Sinhalese. Sri Lanka is an independent sovereign State. As such no international law could be binding on us unless we have subscribed to it. This country will be governed by laws enacted by our legislators based on its customs and legal practices that guarantee justice and equality before law to its own citizens. Therefore no other country could dictate terms to us. The TNA and all those minorities who live in a world of imagination of their own with only their physical bodies here (which also are floating around the world wooing for support for their dream EELAM) with their minds and eternal love to India should understand this naked truth. What I find difficult to understand is as to why those in authority not taking any action to ban these communal political parties along with all such other communal and separatist groups who are trying to ruin this beautiful Island nation by sowing the seeds of ethnic hatred and animosity that perpetuate ethnic conflict and destroy political stability. These are the two key factors that hinder nation building. Our governments should have nipped it in the bud in 1947 when Chelvanayagam officially declared his Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi meaning Lanka Demala Rajaya Paksaya. What we are paying dearly today is for the sins and gross negligence and short sightedness of those who ran the country at that time. In order to hood wink the Sinhalese the architects of this new communal party labeled it as the Federal Party in English. But our rulers did not have eyes to see through the future dangers of this communal monster. What force on earth prevents a government elected by its majority people in taking such bold decisions in the long term interests of the country's destiny? It is a tragedy that minorities in Sri Lanka of late try to identify as distinctive nations (Jati) For example as Demala Jatiya and Muslim Jatiya. Historically this notion is identified as a new development that has emerged towards the latter part of the colonial period. Probably it is a sad legacy handed down from colonial administration. Because prior to 1815 there was only one

nation (Jatiyak) in this country and that was Sinhala. The country was known as Sinhale and the Europeans called it Ceylon meaning the land of the Sinhala people. In fact this was the name used to describe this country up to 1972. From time immemorial it had been Sinhala or Lankadeepa. It will definitely continue to be so until the last Sinhala man is buried under the good earth.

<http://www.lankaweb.com/news/items/2010/08/05/is-the-govt-trying-to-change-demography-in-the-north-and-the-east/>

Two MPs join ruling alliance in Sri Lanka

The opposition in Sri Lanka on Thursday suffered a setback with two prominent parliamentarians announced their support to the government headed by President Mahinda Rajapaksa. The strength of the ruling alliance has now gone up to 146, excluding the Speaker, in a House of 225. The alliance is now short of four members for a two-thirds majority required to make amendments to the Constitution. The President's Secretariat here said, "Mr. Prabha Ganeshan of Democratic People's Front and Mr. P Digambaram of the National Workers Front announced their decision to extend support to the government at the Temple Trees today [August 5]. They spoke to the media in the presence of Mr. Rajapaksa and said they considered it their duty to support the government at this crucial juncture." The statement quoted Mr. Ganeshan as saying he had the fullest confidence in Mr. Rajapaksa and he was sure that "he could serve the Tamil people who elected me at the last general election by cooperating with the government". He charged the United National Party with obtaining Tamil votes through false promises and he had completely lost faith in it. The statement quoted Mr. Digambaram as saying he was elected by the estate workers and he decided to extend support to the government to safeguard their interests. However, the opposition while acknowledging the meeting between the MPs and the President however denied reports of the two members throwing their weight behind the government.

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

Sri Lanka's governing party members and ministers to call for action against rogue deputy minister

Several governing party members and ministers of the Sri Lankan government are to meet with the President today (5) to take action against the controversial deputy minister. Cabinet spokesperson, Media Minister Keheliya Rambukwella told a press conference in Colombo that until the meeting with the President takes place, it was not possible to take action against Deputy Minister of Highways Mervyn Silva for his conduct on Tuesday (3). Silva on Tuesday tied a Samurdhi officer to a tree as punishment for not attending a dengue prevention programme

organized by the government in the Kelaniya electorate. According to Rambukwella, action could have been taken against Silva if the Samurdhi officer had lodged a complaint against the incident. Members of the opposition in parliament have strongly criticized Silva's actions.

http://www.colombopage.com/archive_10B/Aug05_1281013988JR.php

Sri Lankan president boosted as MPs defect

Two opposition lawmakers in Sri Lanka defected to the ruling party on Thursday, bringing President Mahinda Rajapakse closer to altering the constitution to allow him to retain power.

The two MPs, both from the minority Tamil community, joined the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) led by Rajapakse, who oversaw the military offensive in which troops defeated separatist Tamil Tiger rebels last year. Rajapakse won a second presidential term in January elections and consolidated his power in parliamentary elections in April. After the defections, his ruling alliance was just four seats short of the two-thirds majority needed to change the constitution to allow him to stand for a third term in office. Three other legislators are already informally backing the government and are expected to defect soon. Rajapakse has strengthened his grip on power since victory over the Tigers last May brought to an end to decades of bloody civil war. Several of his family hold key positions within the government, and he has repeatedly denied crushing political dissent on the island. Sri Lanka's key aid donors, including the United States and Japan, have pushed Rajapakse to enact political reform and to share power with minority ethnic Tamils.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iLwy20wjKHwbRlg3RPkZNMvLMtIA>

Sri Lankan state workers demand probe of minister who tied official to tree as punishment

Sri Lanka — Hundreds of state government workers protested Thursday against a government minister who tied an official to a tree as a punishment for failing to attend a mosquito eradication program. The state workers, known as Samurdhi Development officers, attempted to march along a main road but were blocked by police at Kiribathgoda on the outskirts of Colombo. They staged a protest along the side of the road demanding an investigation of Deputy Minister of Highways Mervyn Silva and a public apology from him. "No one has a right to exercise jungle laws," said Jagath Edirisinghe, a spokesman for the state workers. He said the group would launch an island-wide protest campaign if its demands aren't met. On Tuesday, Silva tied a Samurdhi officer to a tree for failing to attend a mosquito prevention program in his electorate in Kelaniya. Samurdhi officials are responsible for carrying out grass-roots development projects. The incident was widely shown on television and was strongly criticized by labour unions and opposition politicians. The government has launched programs to combat dengue fever, a mosquito-borne disease that has caused 160 deaths and sickened 21,000 people so far this year.

Sri Lanka Police to launch nation wide campaign to register persons

Sri Lanka Police is to extend the registration of persons currently being carried out in certain areas in Colombo to the rest of the country. Police Spokesperson SP Prishantha Jayakody has told the local media today (25) that contrary to certain media reports, the registration programme is being carried out not only in Wellawatte but also in Kirulapona and Kotahena at the moment. He said the registrations were a normal, regular occurrence and that it would be carried out in all parts of the country. Meanwhile, Democratic People's Front (DPF) Leader Mano Ganeshan has accused the police of carrying out these registrations as an act of discrimination against Tamils. When the media had contacted the police two weeks ago when this process started, the police denied any knowledge of the registrations, Ganeshan said. According to the breakdown of events prepared by Ganeshan, on July 8 at around noon, police in the Wellawatte area had made announcements through PA systems fitted on three wheelers, calling for Tamils in the area to register themselves. This occurred in areas including Rudra Mawatha, Veluwanarama Flats area, Hamden Lane, Peterson Lane and W.A. Silva Mawatha. Later on, during the weekend, police and the army had visited Tamil residents in the Wasala and Mayfield roads in the Kotahena area and in the following week, police and army personnel had visited Tamil-owned business premises in the 2nd and 3rd Cross Streets in Pettah, Ganeshan alleged. The registrations, which were initially executed during the war under Section 23 of the Emergency Regulations Act, were relaxed with many of the other emergency regulations recently. However, the police have said that the registrations are being carried out under the Police Ordinance.

Electricity at a reasonable rate, Sri Lanka President promises

The government has taken measures to implement an eco-friendly program to generate electricity in the country and provide it to the public at a reasonable rate, Sri Lanka President Mahinda Rajapaksa said yesterday at the opening of 'Vidulka' National Power and Energy Exhibition and Awarding ceremony held yesterday in the BMICH. Speaking at the occasion, the President said the government aims to provide electricity to each household in the country. President Rajapaksa presented the National Energy Efficiency Awards which recognize the best energy conservation projects that have achieved substantial savings. Sri Lanka's Power and Energy Ministry in cooperation with the Sri Lanka Sustainable Energy Authority has organized the five-day exhibition which will run till August 8th. The main objective of the event is to raise public awareness on saving energy. The energy exhibition is the first ever national exhibition dedicated for energy and it includes more than 100 commercial and institutional stalls.

Power and Energy Minister Champika Ranawaka, Minister Susil Premajayantha, Deputy Minister Premalal Jayasekara, Secretary of the Power and Energy Ministry M.M.S Ferdinando and a large number of foreign and local entrepreneurs and distinguished invitees participated in the ceremony.

Sri Lanka President inspects progress on Colombo Port Expansion Project

Sri Lanka President Mahinda Rajapaksa today toured the Colombo Port to inspect the progress of the Colombo Port Expansion Project (CPEP) and advised the officials to expedite the ongoing construction work. The President, who also holds the portfolio of Ports and Aviation Minister, advised to start the construction work of the proposed project before the end of this year. Instructions were given to remove all used/old vehicles alongside the port area. While appreciating the present progress and the productivity of the container movement, President Rajapaksa directed the authorities to make arrangements to utilize the railway facility to transport containers to minimize the city traffic congestion. The CPEP was launched in 2006 at a cost of Rs. 35 billion. The Sri Lanka Port Authority (SLPA) says this is the largest ever mega-infrastructure development project undertaken by Sri Lanka. The Project involves dredging and breakwater construction sufficient to accommodate three terminals, to be constructed sequentially. The Project includes the establishment of a new marine operations center, relocation of a submarine oil pipeline, provision of navigational aids, and construction of shore utilities.

The CPEP allows Sri Lanka to meet increasing demands of services in the international shipping industry in the Indian Ocean. The Colombo port is a major port in the Asian region. It is situated on a major shipping route between east and west. City Deputy Ministers of Ministry of Ports and Aviation Dayashritha Tissera and Rohitha Abeygunawardana, Secretary of the Ministry, the Chairman of Sri Lanka Ports Authority Dr. Priyath Bandu Wickrama and some of the Board Members participated in the visit.

U.S. Trade Delegation visit to Sri Lanka 'very productive'

Aug 03, Colombo: A United States delegation that visited Sri Lanka to review its GSP process said today that they had a very productive meeting with the Sri Lankan government and other interested parties. Speaking at the conclusion of a two-day visit by a team of US government officials Assistant United States Trade Representative for South Asia Michael Delaney has said that they had very cordial and productive meetings during their visit to Sri Lanka with the Government of Sri Lanka, union leaders, company representatives, and other interested parties. He has commented that the delegation was encouraged by the meetings with the Sri Lankan groups. "We will continue our collaborative process of dialogue, and we look forward to working together on the issue of labor rights in Sri Lanka," the Trade Representative has said. Delaney has said that there have been some media reports which have mischaracterized the United States Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) review process and he would like to clarify the statements. "The United States GSP program is wholly independent of any other countries' review. Our GSP review is solely focused on labor rights. In addition, the GSP trade benefits continue during the ongoing review process," he was quoted in a press release issued by the U.S. Embassy in Colombo. Delaney led an interagency team to Colombo on August 2 and 3 to engage in a dialogue with the Government of Sri Lanka on concerns related to a complaint

under the United States Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program that Sri Lanka is not affording workers internationally recognized worker rights. The United States team included representatives from the Office of the United States Trade Representative, and the Departments of Labor and State. In addition to meeting with the Government of Sri Lanka, the U.S. delegation also met with labor unions, employer associations, and other interested parties. Adherence to international labor standards is mandatory under the United States GSP program. The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) filed a petition in 2008 with the US Government requesting a review of worker rights in Sri Lanka. The organization resubmitted an updated petition last year asking the US Trade Representative (USTR) to remove Sri Lanka from the list of eligible developing countries to receive GSP. As part of the annual review process, on June 30, 2010, the United States accepted the AFL-CIO petition on Sri Lanka to review whether it met GSP eligibility criteria related to worker rights. As part of the review, USTR analyzes petitions to withdraw or limit a country's GSP benefits on criteria including whether a country is taking steps to afford workers internationally recognized worker rights, whether it provides important investor protections including the enforcement of arbitral awards, and the extent to which a country adequately and effectively protects intellectual property rights (IPR). The United States GSP program is designed to promote economic growth in the developing world, providing duty free treatment for over 3,400 products from 131 designated beneficiary countries and territories, including Sri Lanka.

According to the Embassy press release Sri Lanka benefited from GSP treatment on approximately \$116 million of goods in 2009. Products covered under the GSP program include machinery, electrical goods, chemical products, agricultural products, jewelry and much more. Most textile and apparel goods are not eligible for GSP preferential benefits under the program.

UK lifts Sri Lanka travel advice restrictions

A security assessment carried out by the British High Commission in Sri Lanka has concluded that the whole country is now safe for travellers. It is the first time in about 30 years that travel restriction advice has been completely lifted. The British government had previously warned against travelling to northern areas, principally because of the danger of unexploded mines. The Sri Lankan army defeated Tamil Tiger rebels in May last year. The rebels were fighting for a separate state for the island's Tamil minority from their heartlands in the north and east of the country. Their use of suicide bombers, in particular, meant that many countries officially designated them a proscribed organisation. It also meant that tourists were put off from travelling to the country, which is renowned for having some of the best beaches in South Asia. The Sri Lankan government has welcomed the lifting of the travel restriction advice.

Caution remains

"This latest change means we no longer advise against travel to any part of Sri Lanka," a High Commission statement said. "But Britons wishing to travel to the north should be aware that there remains a risk from mines and unexploded ordinance and that they need to obtain permission

from the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence before they travel."The Foreign Office in London is a little more cautious in its advice to travellers.It says that a "general threat from terrorism" remains, despite the defeat of the Tamil Tigers."The government maintains its state of emergency, under which it has extensive anti-terrorism powers, and increased security measures, including checkpoints and a highly visible military presence, remain throughout the country. "Isolated attacks cannot be ruled out and could be indiscriminate," it says.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-10892057>

US helps Sri Lanka to de-mine further

The US will contribute Rs. 581 million (\$5.4 million) more for demining in Sri Lanka until the next summer, an embassy said Friday.These funds follow on the Rs.742 million (\$6.6 million) contribution from the US to four international demining agencies working in the island's north. Tens of thousands of mines were laid by the military and the Tamil Tigers during their long conflict that ended in May last year with the crushing defeat of the Tigers.

<http://sify.com/news/us-helps-sri-lanka-to-de-mine-further-news-international-kigq4decede.html>