

SHUMAILA RAFIQ

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Summary:

Bangladesh: A court in two separate cases yesterday sentenced nine militants of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) to life term and 20 years' rigorous imprisonment under Arms Act and Explosive Substances Act. Bangladesh's former military ruler Hussain Mohammed Ershad may escape punishment for violating the country's constitution following his meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina after which he "looked quite happy", his aides said. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday once again said her government is preparing a list of errant activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League to bring them to book. On July 16, Sheikh Hasina issued Chhatra League activists the same warning at a Awami League Central Working Committee meeting. The number of cutaneous anthrax patients keep rising in Bangladesh, with 21 more people found to have contracted the infectious disease on Thursday morning, pushing the total count to 254. Bangladeshi officials say an army major has been dismissed for carrying hundreds of bottles of illegal cough syrup. Reza Shah Mohammad Zillullah was found guilty of transporting the syrup - locally known as Phensedyl - by a military court following his arrest last month. Bangladesh registered a ten percent rise in its exports to India, a latest report shows. Exports to the largest neighbour India were \$302 million in 2009-10 when better trade ties were discussed at the level of the prime ministers in January. NTPC Limited and Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) have signed an MOU for mutual

co-operation for development of Power Sector in Bangladesh. NTPC said it may setup a 1320 MW coal based power plant in Bangladesh in joint venture with BPDB for mitigating the power shortage of Bangladesh. The Asian Development Bank said that it will provide USD 100 million loan for a cross border electricity initiative between India and Bangladesh, which is expected to provide impetus for increased power trading in the South Asian region. Terrorist outfits of northeast India have been trying to shift their base camps from Bangladesh to Myanmar following a crackdown by the Bangladeshi Army and paramilitary, the Tripura police chief said here Friday.

Nepal: Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal has started diplomatic consultations on the current row over the mandate and the tenure of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN). Nepali Congress, the second largest party in the Constituent Assembly and a main constituent of the current ruling coalition, is all set to adopt a tough policy against the Unified CPN (Maoist), alleging the latter of using the ongoing peace process for, as what it called, "strategic purpose" in order to capture state-power. The former revolutionary communist, Mr. C.P. Mainali who is leading the splinter Nepal Communist Party-Marxist Leninists Party has revealed the largest party in the Constituent Assembly, Unified Maoists' had offered him an amount worth 5 Crore rupees if his nine parliamentary members voted in favor of Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, as the country's next prime minister. "A Prime Minister who has already resigned no longer poses legal and moral authority to participate in the United Nations' General Assembly," says former foreign minister Ramesh Nath Pandey. CPN (UML) chairman Jhala Nath Khanal on Friday claimed that the prime ministerial candidates of Nepali Congress and Unified CPN (Maoist) will again taste defeat in the sixth round of election set for September 5. Miffed with the UML for staying neutral in the elections for the post of Prime Minister and helping the state of indecision prolong, Nepali Congress (NC) and Unified CPN (Maoist) have refused consent to present a full budget to the caretaker government. Minister for Culture and Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. Minendra Rijal, on Thursday criticised the caretaker government of which he is a part for trying to release the budget for the current fiscal year. Some volunteers from Israel's ZAKA rescue and recovery organisation have arrived in Nepal to assist in the recovery and identification of an American Jewish tourist who was killed in the Agni Air plane crash in Makawanpur district. According to The Jerusalem Post, the UN-recognised organisation sent the team after the Nepali authorities failed to recover and identify the badly charred remains of Irina Shekhets, 30. Investigators searching the site of a plane crash near Nepal's capital Kathmandu in which 14 people died have found the plane's black box data recorder, a civil aviation official said Wednesday. Minister for Labour and Transport Management (MoLTM) Mohamed Aftab Alam has said that his ministry is seriously concerned over migrant workers' problems and is ready to help solve the problems between Nepali workers and their employers. Concerned at pressure on the country's forex reserves, Nepal government has put a ban on import of gold. The move came into effect from Friday in order to protect the foreign currency reserves under pressure due to steep rise in import of the yellow metal. a clutch of media groups in Nepal have mounted a vicious campaign against premium Indian companies based in that country — allegedly because

they are not getting advertisements. And though the Nepalese publishers say this is due to diplomatic pressure, New Delhi has continued to deny the charge.

Srilanka: Sri Lanka's main opposition United National Party (UNP) parliamentarian Mangala Samaraweera today charged that President Mahinda Rajapaksa was heading towards a dictatorship. Sri Lanka's main opposition United National Party (UNP) legislators have expressed their support for the 18th amendment to the Constitution that is to be debated in the parliament next week. The left parties in the ruling coalition of Sri Lanka's government are still undecided regarding the proposed 18th amendment to the constitution. The Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau has decided to establish close relations with embassies of relevant countries to obtain information on migrant Sri Lankan workers. Sri Lanka's Left Liberation Front leader Dr. Wickramabahu Karunaratne urged the people to wear black clothes on September 08, the day when the 18th amendment to the constitution is expected to be passed in the parliament. Sri Lanka's Supreme Court is to deliver its decision on the proposed amendments to the country's Constitution today to the President and the Speaker. Sri Lanka's cabinet on Monday backed changing the constitution to allow President Mahinda Rajapakse to run for office for a third term, opening the way for a vote in parliament. Rajapakse, who oversaw the defeat of the Tamil Tiger rebels last year after decades of civil war, has a firm grip on power and has been criticised for crushing dissent and opposition media. Sri Lanka's military plans to establish military bases in strategically significant places to strengthen the national security further, Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa said Thursday. The Saudi Arabian Embassy in Sri Lanka says that the allegations leveled against the employer by the Sri Lankan housemaid over inserting iron nails to her body have many doubts. The current demining projects in the north were to have more and more teeth as one more Non Governmental Organization (NGO) joined the bandwagon in order to expedite and further expand ongoing humanitarian demining roles, following an initiative taken by Security Forces Headquarters, Kilinochchi. Reuters reported that Sri Lanka's Ceylon Petroleum Corporation is expected to sign a deal to import 720,000 tonnes of gas oil for a year from a UAE based firm. Sri Lanka's Marxist party Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) affiliated National Trade Union Center (NTUC) has commenced discussions with other trade unions and union representatives to jointly fight for winning salary increments for the working masses. The Chief of Indian Army General V. K. Singh is to arrive in Sri Lanka on Sunday (05) on a five-day official visit, Indian media reported.

Detailed News:

9 JMB militants jailed in two Nilphamari cases

A court in two separate cases yesterday sentenced nine militants of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) to life term and 20 years' rigorous imprisonment under Arms Act and Explosive Substances Act. The convicts are Abdur Rashid alias Ashik, 22, son of Lutfar Rahman of Choksagar village of Bogra district, Ohidul Islam alias Sayem alias Al-Mamun, 22, son of Afzal Hossain of Dharma Sagor village of Thakurgaon, Mahfuzur Rahman alias Ibrahim, 26, son of Jafar Ali of Chhit Kutub village of Rangpur, Md Moniruzzaman alias Iqbal alias Selim, 25, son of Md Abdul Haque of Kashua village of Thakurgaon, Ehsanul Haque alias Mejbah, 18, son of Abdul Jabbar of Chhoto Sultanpur village of Dinajpur, Rabiul Islam alias Kamal Hossain, 19, son of Rahimuddin of Titpara village of Nilphamari, Abu Bakkar Siddique alias Nahid, 32, son of Azahar Ali of village Prannagar of Dinajpur, Shahabuddin alias Suja Ahmed Musa, 19, son of late Nazatullah of Kalomati village of Lalmonirhat and Fatook Hossain alias Amzad, 32, son of Waliur Rahman of Titpara village of Nilphamari. One of the convicts, Mahfuzur Rahman alias Ibrahim, died a few months ago in Nilphamari jail. According to sources, the convicts include high ranking JMB operatives of different northern districts of the banned Islamist organisation and Ehsar members. Of them, Abdur Rashid alias Ashik is divisional commander, they said. The prosecution in brief is that Rab-10 received a secret information from Dhaka that the divisional commander of JMB along with other district commanders and Ehsar (full time activist) members assembled at certain places of Saidpur upazila of the district. A team of Rab-10 led by Major Ershadul Haque raided the rail gate area near Saidpur rail station on 6 February 2006 at 9:00pm. During the raid they arrested Nilphamari district commander of JMB Ohidul Islam alias Sayem alias Al-Mamun, Birampur organisational district commander Fatook Hossain alias Amzad and Ehsar member Rabiul Islam. As per the information provided by the arrestees, Rab later arrested six others from the adjacent villages of Saidpur upazila town. The law enforcers also recovered one locally made pipe gun, a pipe gun firing pin, four bullets, power gel, detonators and different electronics and bomb making materials from them. Later two cases were filed against them on 7 February, 2006, one under Arms Act and the other under Explosive Substances Act. Joint District and Sessions Judge Abdur Rashid Mia also the judge of Special Tribunal Court-3 after examining all witnesses and evidence yesterday afternoon sentenced all the nine accused to life term in Arms Case and 20 years rigorous imprisonment in Explosive Substances case. The convicts were also fined Tk 25,000 each in default, to suffer one

year more in jail. JMB's Majlish-e-Shura member Khalid Saifullah was also an accused in the cases but he was exempted as he was hanged earlier in another case with top JMB kingpins Shaikh Abdur Rahman, Bangla Bhai and others.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=153175>

Bangladesh ex-dictator Ershad meets Hasina, may escape punishment

Bangladesh's former military ruler Hussain Mohammed Ershad may escape punishment for violating the country's constitution following his meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina after which he "looked quite happy", his aides said. The meeting Sunday took place at Ershad's instance, three days after the high court invalidated the seventh amendment to the constitution that had ratified Ershad's declaration of the martial law in March 1982.

The former military strongman's aides told The Daily Star that Hasina "asked Ershad not to worry much about his fate". They told the newspaper that their leader "looked quite happy coming out of the meeting". Ershad was earlier quoted by media as telling aides that he would seek Hasina's "blessings" and tell her that "past is past". Ershad, 82, is a lawmaker whose Jatiya Party is a constituent of the ruling Hasina-led alliance. Ershad, then the army chief, filled the political vacuum caused by the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman in May 1981. But he took power directly as the chief martial law administrator in 1982, later got himself elected president and went on to rule as the country's longest-serving head of the state. He ruled till December 1990.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/Bangladesh-ex-dictator-Ershad-meets-Hasina-may-escape-punishment/articleshow/6460064.cms>

PM again warns BCL wrongdoers

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday once again said her government is preparing a list of errant activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League to bring them to book. On July 16, Sheikh Hasina issued Chhatra League activists the same warning at a Awami League Central Working Committee meeting. The premier was yesterday speaking at a discussion organised by BCL at the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre marking the August 15. "We are collecting information and preparing a list of Chhatra Shibir and Chhatra Dal activists who infiltrated into BCL and are committing violence in public universities and colleges," said Sheikh Hasina, also the ruling Awami League president. She said some BCL leaders gave shelter to Shibir and Chhatra Dal activists over factional feuds in the BCL. These feuds must stop. "Refrain from any sort of criminal activities, otherwise you [BCL activists] will be arrested and brought to book," Hasina said, adding, "There are some people who claim to belong to the ruling party and do wrong things. You must be careful about them." She also asked BCL leadership to immediately expel the troublemakers. The AL chief directed BCL activists to work with devotion and patriotism to revive the lost glory of student politics and build a prosperous digital Bangladesh. She urged Chhatra League activists to concentrate in studies. "You must be educated and qualified, as an illiterate leader cannot contribute much in developing a nation. Reminiscing the glorious days of student politics and people's respect for student leaders, she said it is

unfortunate for the government that military dictators have destroyed student politics. She said, "General Ayub Khan, Ziaur Rahman and Ershad destroyed the student politics giving arms and money to students. Among them, Ziaur Rahman spoiled the overall ethics of politics for which many politicians now get involved in politics to earn money." The defeated forces of the 1971 Liberation War killed the Father of the Nation and destroyed the constitution and democracy, she continued. Hasina also thanked the Dhaka University vice chancellor for cancelling Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's expulsion in 1950 from the university. Addressing the discussion, AL presidium member Obaidul Quader said a conspiracy is still on to repeat the tragedy of August 15, 1975. The government should bring qualitative changes in its activities to reply to opposition threats of anti-government movements.

He urged BCL leaders to prepare themselves to implement the charter for changes, which the AL chief promised in the election manifesto. He also urged the premier to set up a research university named after Bangabandhu to ensure quality education. DU Vice Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique said every BCL activist should be self-rectified if they want to build a "Golden Bengal" as dreamt by the Father of the Nation. They should be careful so that no one can tarnish their image. He said, "Every Chhatra League activist will have to be responsible and use every moment of their time properly." Bangabandhu made a nation independent, as he had valued his time, said the DU VC, adding, "So you [BCL activists] need to take an oath to serve the nation as Bangabandhu did." During his speech, Prof Siddique demanded that the government bring the convicted fugitive killers of Bangabandhu back to the country. He also urged the government to expedite the trial of war criminals. Chittagong University professor Hamida Banu, renowned journalist Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, BCL General Secretary Mahfuzul Haider Chowdhury Roton also spoke at the discussion chaired by BCL president Mahmud Hasan Ripon.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=153155>

Anthrax cases among humans in Bangladesh on rise, 33 animals dead

The number of cutaneous anthrax patients keep rising in Bangladesh, with 21 more people found to have contracted the infectious disease on Thursday morning, pushing the total count to 254. Mahmudur Rahman, chief of Bangladesh's Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) under the country's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, told Xinhua Thursday, the disease has so far spread to four out of the country's 64 districts. With 21 new cases detected on Thursday morning, he said, "records of the IEDCR till today (Thursday) morning confirmed 254 infected people." They are all infected with cutaneous anthrax, Rahman further said. The anthrax outbreak first started in Bangladesh's Sirajganj district, some 134 km northwest of capital Dhaka, in late August and later it spread to the neighboring Pabna district.

At the latest, the disease has spread to two more Sirajganj's neighboring districts -- Tangail and Kushtia -- this week. Anthrax is a highly contagious disease, usually transmitted on people through contact with meat, blood or skin of an animal that has been infected. Health officials said

most of the anthrax infected people in the districts informed them that they have either consumed or come in contact of meat of animals that were slaughtered after fallen ill on different occasions. Rahman said most of the previously anthrax infected people have almost recovered from the disease which has caused wound-like black lesions on the skin. He however confirmed nobody died of the disease. But an official from Live Stock Department control room said 28 cows and 5 goats have died of anthrax in Sirajganj and Pabna since the outbreak of the disease. Apart from this, the control room's duty officer Md. Aatur Rahman said 34 animals were also anthrax infected in the districts. The official said a total of 137,343 animals including 118,795 cows and 15,254 goats have so far been vaccinated in Sirajganj and Pabna districts since the outbreak of anthrax. But the official claimed the disease has remained under control in the districts as there are no fresh report of outbreak. Regarding the measures in Tangail and Kushtia districts, he said steps are underway also to contain the outbreak of the disease in the districts. "Till now there is no information in our hands whether any animal infected or died of the disease in the districts. We'll very soon get information as local officials are conducting survey, " the official said. He said officials concerned across the country have already been asked to strengthen monitoring so that no farm or domestic animal can be slaughtered before proper test.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/health/2010-09/02/c_13475497.htm

Bangladesh officer sacked over cough syrup 'transport

Bangladeshi officials say an army major has been dismissed for carrying hundreds of bottles of illegal cough syrup. Reza Shah Mohammad Zillullah was found guilty of transporting the syrup - locally known as Phensedyl - by a military court following his arrest last month. He has also been sentenced to one year in prison. The use of the cough syrup is banned in Bangladesh because of widespread abuse. The liquid syrup contains opium-based codeine as one of its main constituents and is said to relax the nerves and causes sleepiness. Some experts say since drinking alcohol is not permitted for Muslims in Bangladesh the syrup is used as an alternative to alcohol. Reza Shah Mohammad Zillullah was arrested by police in mid-July on charges of transporting hundreds of bottles of the syrup in the north of the country. Thousands of bottles of the syrup are smuggled into Bangladesh mostly from neighbouring India, where it is legal and in some areas can be bought over the counter.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11148118>

Bangladesh's exports to India go up

Bangladesh registered a ten percent rise in its exports to India, a latest report shows. Exports to the largest neighbour India were \$302 million in 2009-10 when better trade ties were discussed at the level of the prime ministers in January. Exports to other neighbours barely account for 2.7 percent of the total, touching \$431 million, New Age newspaper said quoting the government's Export Promotion Bureau's Evaluation Survey. Remaining almost static over the year, exports to

Pakistan were worth \$78 million. Exports to Nepal increased by 9 percent to \$8.8 million, to Bhutan by 72 percent to \$2.2 million, to Myanmar by 9 percent to \$10 million and to Sri Lanka by 26 percent to \$24 million. Exports to the Maldives increased almost five folds to \$0.7 million but exports to Afghanistan declined by 37 percent to \$3.7 million.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/Bangladeshs-exports-to-India-go-up/articleshow/6467440.cms>

NTPC, Bangladesh sign MoU for power development

NTPC Limited and Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) have signed an MOU for mutual co-operation for development of Power Sector in Bangladesh. NTPC said it may setup a 1320 MW coal based power plant in Bangladesh in joint venture with BPDB for mitigating the power shortage of Bangladesh.

ADB to provide USD 100 million loan for Indo Bangla power project

The Asian Development Bank said that it will provide USD 100 million loan for a cross border electricity initiative between India and Bangladesh, which is expected to provide impetus for increased power trading in the South Asian region. The Manila headquartered bank's board has approved loan for the Bangladesh-India Electrical Grid Interconnection Project, which is scheduled for completion by December 2012. ADB in a statement said that "The funds will be used to build a 40 kilometer 400 KV transmission line, along with a high voltage direct current substation and connecting loop, linking the western electrical grid of Bangladesh with India's eastern grid." The project is expected to result in flow of at least an additional 500 MW of power to Bangladesh by 2012. It would be beneficial for the country where less than half of its 15.6 crore people have access to power. Sultan Hafeez Rahman director general (South Asia department) of ADB said that "Connecting the two grids will demonstrate the substantial economic benefits that come from enhanced regional cooperation and help to address energy gaps across the region." ADB's loan from the Asian Development Fund will take care of around 63% of the total costs project of USD 156.8 million. The loan has a 32 year term, including a grace period of eight years, with interest charged at 1% annually during the grace period and 1.5% per annum for the rest of the term.

http://www.steelguru.com/indian_news/ADB_to_provide_USD_100_million_loan_for_Indo_Bangla_power_project/163371.html

Northeast militants shifting to Myanmar from Bangladesh

Terrorist outfits of northeast India have been trying to shift their base camps from Bangladesh to Myanmar following a crackdown by the Bangladeshi Army and para-military, the Tripura police chief said here Friday. Following the arrest and surrender of Bangladeshi trained militants in Tripura and getting inputs from various intelligence agencies, it was confirmed that the northeast militants are changing their base camps from Bangladesh to Myanmar,' Director General of Police Pranay Sahay told reporters. The matter was discussed in the conference of directors general and inspectors general of police that was held in New Delhi last week, he said. 'Before they can shift their base, the Bangladesh government may be persuaded to take appropriate actions to nab the northeast India militants taking shelter in that country,' Sahay said. 'Almost all major separatist outfits of northeast, including ULFA (United Liberation Front of Asom), cadres of both factions of NSCN (National Socialist Council of Nagaland), PLA (People's Liberation Army of Manipur), and NLFT (National Liberation Front of Tripura) had either already fled or were slipping out to Myanmar as the Bangladesh army launched a decisive campaign against them,' he said. Giving a specific instance, Sahay said: 'Recently Bangladesh army dismantled three NLFT camps in Khagracherry area in southeast Bangladesh and flushed out the militants before building their own helipad in the camp locations. 'However, many militants and top leaders are still holed up in Bangladesh,' he said in an indirect reference to ULFA leader Paresh Barua, NLFT supremo Ranjit Debbarma, Biswamohan Debbarma and others. He said Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had said at the conference that Tripura is the best governed state in the country in terms of curbing terrorism. 'Our success in combating militancy was discussed and praised at the DGPs' conference in New Delhi. In fact, Tripura and Andhra Pradesh models in effectively countering the militancy menace were highly appreciated,' said Sahay. 'In 2008, there were total of 1,561 militancy related incidents which came down to 1,297 in 2009. This year so far 464 incidents were reported and total casualty stood this year at 15.' The DGP said that few years back, the terrorist-infested area in Tripura was 70 percent and now it has reduced to 7 to 8 percent of the entire northeastern state, bordering Bangladesh. The DGPs' meet also dwelt on the emerging threat of Pakistan's ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) spy agency-sponsored terrorism in Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Bangladesh where some 'modules' were reported to have already come up. The Tripura police chief said that while the 'ISI threat is real' in northeast India he did not foresee much of a Maoist scare in the region. 'All such possibilities are being monitored at proper levels and pre-emptive actions were accordingly taken.'

<http://sify.com/news/northeast-militants-shifting-to-myanmar-from-bangladesh-news-national-kjdtEdfbddd.html>

Nepal

PM Nepal starts diplomatic consultations on UNMIN mandate

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal has started diplomatic consultations on the current row over the mandate and the tenure of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN). He held separate meetings with acting US ambassador to Nepal, Patricia Mohani, British ambassador John Tucknott and Japanese ambassador Tatsuo Mizuno Friday and discussed the possibility of the UN mission with a limited role. According to PM Nepal's press advisor Bishnu Rijal, PM Nepal mentioned during the discussions that the peace process was supposed to complete in the six months and that the continued monitoring of UNMIN on Nepal Army has been hampering its organisational capacity. Saying that the atmosphere is building up for extension of UNMIN's term by reducing its current mandate to ensure that the NA is kept out of its monitoring, PM Nepal urged the ambassadors for help in this regard. The ambassadors on their part said the decision of the government taken on the basis of political consensus would be acceptable to them. The US and the UK are the permanent members of the UN Security Council, which will take a decision on the UN's presence and its role based on the decision of the parties to the peace process. Majority of the ruling parties are in favour of extending the term of UNMIN, which expires on September 15, but with a changed mandate, ensuring that the Nepal Army is kept out of its monitoring. On the other hand, the UCPN (Maoist) has said it won't accept changes in the current mandate of the mission.

<http://www.nepalnews.com/main/index.php/news-archive/1-top-story/8892-pm-nepal-starts-diplomatic-consultations-on-unmin-mandate.html>

NC to rally against Maoists to prevent it from capturing 'state power

Nepali Congress, the second largest party in the Constituent Assembly and a main constituent of the current ruling coalition, is all set to adopt a tough policy against the Unified CPN (Maoist), alleging the latter of using the ongoing peace process for, as what it called, "strategic purpose" in order to capture state-power. Concluding that it can no longer cooperate with the Maoists given the latter's clear intention to capture state-power, NC has proposed in its political dossier to be presented at the party's upcoming 12th General Convention that the party should adopt a strict policy against the Maoists. In the dossier, NC has also declared various protest programmes including nationwide assemblies and exposure campaigns to prevent Maoists from achieving their goal of grabbing state power. "The Maoists have used the entire peace process for strategic purpose, their sole aim being to impose ultra-leftist totalitarianism in the country after capturing the state power," states the political dossier. The NC's political dossier further states that the role of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has not been effective and has made the issue an agenda for discussion during the party's general convention.

Nepal Royalist-Maoist quarter seduced my party MPs: C. P. mainali

The former revolutionary communist, Mr. C.P. Mainali who is leading the splinter Nepal Communist Party-Marxist Leninists Party has revealed the largest party in the Constituent Assembly, Unified Maoists' had offered him an amount worth 5 Crore rupees if his nine parliamentary members voted in favor of Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, as the country's next prime minister. "I was made the offer through our own central committee member", he said and added, "The offer came from the Royalist-Maoist quarters." "The Maoists' leaders split our party because I rejected their offer and I told them that there was no alternative to the politics of consensus", said Mr. Mainali. Mr. Mainali also revealed that the Maoists' party had made another huge offer, ten times higher to the amount they offered this time, when Madhav Nepal led government was taking shape. Mr. Mainali was making a lecture at an interaction program held in Bhaktapur, September 2, 2010. Interestingly, his former party colleagues who deserted him very recently blame Mr. Mainali as to have already turned into a capitalist. Some even claim that Mr. Mainali is amassing wealth through the ministry of Land Reforms. This ministry is being headed by Mainali's party member-Mr. Dambar Shrestha. A man who is himself drenched in corruption sees others in a manner that suits him most. Holier than thou approach. Veteran Communist leader Mainali is answerable to these allegations. He must bring out the facts. Earlier the better.

Election defeated caretaker Nepal PM heading for 65th UNSG meet

"A Prime Minister who has already resigned no longer poses legal and moral authority to participate in the United Nations' General Assembly," says former foreign minister Ramesh Nath Pandey. "The caretaker Prime Minister cannot take any policy level and concrete decision", says Pandey adding, "his participation will be irrelevant and that will only drain the national exchequer." The election defeated Nepal's caretaker Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, say reports, is heading towards New York to attend the 65th United Nations' General Assembly leading a jumbo delegation. The delegation will comprise of at least 30 people, it is expected. "Since the next government will not be binding to the proposals submitted by Mr. Madav Nepal at the UNGA, the attending participants from other friendly countries will not take him seriously", also says Mr. Pandey. "His participation will be a jocular one", Pandey opines. Mr. Nepal had earlier in 2009 led a 22 member delegation to New York. Expense to the tune of NRs. 16,315,362.00 was made during the last trip
http://telegraphnepal.com/news_det.php?news_id=8210

Khanal says sixth round of PM election too won't yield any result

CPN (UML) chairman Jhala Nath Khanal on Friday claimed that the prime ministerial candidates of Nepali Congress and Unified CPN (Maoist) will again taste defeat in the sixth round of election set for September 5. Khanal said that as his party remains steadfast in its neutrality stand in the prime ministerial election, the sixth prime ministerial election won't also

yield any result. Speaking at a programme in Bhaktapur this afternoon, he said that the prime ministerial candidates of both parties are in the fray just for the plum post of prime minister rather than forging a national consensus and that his party won't support any of them. He said even if any between the two muster enough support to be victorious in the election then the country will stand to lose as both constitution drafting and peace process will fail. NC vice-chairman Ram Chandra Poudel and Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal are again contesting with each other for the post of prime minister in the sixth round of election slated for September 5. The Maoist party is learnt to have reached a decision to either withdraw its candidacy or not participate in the election at all if the sixth round of election turn into a fiasco like the previous ones.

NC, UCPN (Maoist) refuse consent for full budget

Miffed with the UML for staying neutral in the elections for the post of Prime Minister and helping the state of indecision prolong, Nepali Congress (NC) and Unified CPN (Maoist) have refused consent to present a full budget to the caretaker government. Finance Minister Surendra Pandey had sought NC and UCPN (Maoist)'s consent for full budget through Constituent Assembly chairman Subash Chandra Nemwang saying the lack full budget was hindering the development process and could cause problem in paying salary to government employees. NC chief whip Laxman Ghimire said, how can we accept a proposal by a UML minister when the UML itself has become the main cause of indecision by staying neutral at the PM elections. Likewise, Maoist whip Posta Bahadur Bogati said, the party would not consider passing the full budget until the issue of Prime Minister is finalised. Meanwhile secretary at the finance ministry Rameshwar Khanal said, the constitution does not stop the government from presenting a full budget. Speaking at an interaction programme in Kathmandu Wednesday Khanal said, although there is a tradition to present the budget after the policies and programmes of the government, such practice is not mandatory. He also said, the government employees would get the Dashain bonus and the salaries from the advance budget itself.

Current caretaker govt has no right to release budget: Minister

Minister for Culture and Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. Minendra Rijal, on Thursday criticised the caretaker government of which he is a part for trying to release the budget for the current fiscal year. Minister Rijal, who was speaking at a programme organised by Nepal Press Union in Kaski district, said that the caretaker government has no right to release the budget and accused CPN (UML) which leads it of being responsible for the current state of indecisiveness the country is in. He further said that UML is becoming a major hindrance towards forging national consensus to form a new government due to its decision to remain neutral in the prime ministerial

election. The neutrality stand of the UML, Minister Rijal said, makes him suspect that the party wants to continue to remain in the government even after the resignation

Israeli team in Nepal to find Jewish tourist's remains

Some volunteers from Israel's ZAKA rescue and recovery organisation have arrived in Nepal to assist in the recovery and identification of an American Jewish tourist who was killed in the Agni Air plane crash in Makawanpur district. According to The Jerusalem Post, the UN-recognised organisation sent the team after the Nepali authorities failed to recover and identify the badly charred remains of Irina Shekhets, 30. The forensic experts could not identify the mortal remains of the victims collected from the crash site and brought to Kathmandu as none of the bodies was intact but severed and charred. The ZAKA team is working in full cooperation with the Chabad House in Kathmandu, which is coordinating the recovery efforts with the local authorities, and the Foreign Ministry's situation room, which assisted the team in obtaining the necessary visas, the daily reported on August 31. The ZAKA volunteers have secured Shekhets's dental records from the US for identification purposes. It is expected that Israeli backpackers currently at the Kathmandu Chabad House will join the ZAKA volunteers in their search of the crash site. All 14 people—eight Nepalis including three crew members, four Americans, one Briton and one Japanese—on board were killed when the Agni Air Dornier aircraft crashed in a remote village in Makawanpur on August 24. The aircraft that was heading to Lukla on the lap of Mount Everest was returning to Kathmandu after failing to land there due to bad weather. The cause of the crash is yet unknown.

<http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Israeli+team+in+Nepal+to+find+Jewish+tourist's+remains&NewsID=256081>

Black box found at Nepal plane crash site

KATHMANDU — Investigators searching the site of a plane crash near Nepal's capital Kathmandu in which 14 people died have found the plane's black box data recorder, a civil aviation official said Wednesday. The small Agni Air plane crashed in heavy rain last week on its way back to Kathmandu airport after poor visibility prevented it from landing in Lukla, a tiny high-altitude airstrip used as a gateway to the Everest region. Six tourists -- four Americans, a Japanese and a British citizen -- were among those who died when the plane smashed into a valley south of Kathmandu, killing everyone on board. "I can confirm that the flight data recorder of the crashed aircraft was found on Tuesday," the head of the civil aviation authority Ram Prasad Neupane told AFP. "Police are still searching for the cockpit voice recorder and the government investigation team has started its work." Reports said the black box was found buried around 25 metres (80 feet) under a crater formed when the plane crashed into a field last Tuesday and smashed into small pieces. Thousands of travellers fly into Lukla, 140 kilometres (90 miles) northeast of Kathmandu, every year to access the stunning Himalayan range that forms Nepal's

northern border with Chinese-controlled Tibet. A five-member commission formed by the government to investigate the cause of last week's crash has been given two months to prepare its findings.

Labour Ministry ready to resolve problems of Nepali migrant workers

Minister for Labour and Transport Management (MoLTM) Mohamed Aftab Alam has said that his ministry is seriously concerned over migrant workers' problems and is ready to help solve the problems between Nepali workers and their employers. Nepali workers are found to have been involved in protests under different unions, which are creating problems between them and their employing companies. Currently, problems relating to Nepali migrant workers have emanated in Libya, Malaysia, Iraq and Afghanistan. Around 900 Nepali workers have not got over two months' salary from their employers in Libya while Malaysian companies have stopped hiring Nepali workers following a protest that involved over 5,000 workers, according to reports. Over 400,000 Nepalis are said to be working in Malaysia and the destination has been absorbing 40 percent migrant workers in recent months. Similarly, the growing illegal migration of Nepalis workers to Iraq is also something that has worried the government. It is estimated that over 300 Nepali workers are reaching the destination every day. Minister Alam also said that the MoLTM is planning to make public the Top Bahadur Singh Committee report on the gruesome killing of Nepali workers in Iraq and subsequent vandalism and looting of foreign employment agencies in Kathmandu on September 1, 2004. Outsourcers have been demanding the government to make public the report and compensate them for the loss.

<http://www.nepalnews.com/main/index.php/business-a-economy/8891-labour-ministry-ready-to-resolve-problems-of-nepali-migrant-workers.html>

Nepal bans gold import to save forex reserves

Concerned at pressure on the country's forex reserves, Nepal government has put a ban on import of gold. The move came into effect from Friday in order to protect the foreign currency reserves under pressure due to steep rise in import of the yellow metal. "The decision will remain in effect till further notice," Ganesh Dhakal, joint secretary at ministry of commerce and supplies was quoted by local media. The decision was taken following a request from Nepal's central bank as despite controlling the supply of gold available in the market, gold import has hurt the foreign currency reserves. Nepal Rashtra Bank limits supply of gold to 10 kilograms daily. But flow of forex due to gold import has nearly trebled to NRs 39.4 billion in the past one year in comparison to last year. The ministry stated that Nepal has enough forex to finance merchandise export for another eight months. But the ban was imposed in order to check outflow of forex due to gold import. Nepal is facing a large trade deficit due to sharp rise in import and decreased

exports. In view of the coming festival season, gold is in very high demand and the ban might lead to sharp rise in prices and smuggling from across the border. On Thursday, 4.29 kg of gold worth NRs 13 million was seized by police at Birgunj in the Indo-Nepal border as it was being smuggled into Nepal in a car.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Nepal-bans-gold-import-to-save-forex-reserves/Article1-595550.aspx>

Nepal media targets Indian goods again

A CLUTCH OF media groups in Nepal have mounted a vicious campaign against premium Indian companies based in that country — allegedly because they are not getting advertisements. And though the Nepalese publishers say this is due to diplomatic pressure, New Delhi has continued to deny the charge. According to the market buzz, it is the Rs 15-crore Kantipur Media Group that is funneling the anti-India sentiment. For some days now, a section of the Nepalese media has been urging locals to boycott Indian products that control nearly 65 percent of Nepal's consumer goods market. In a special show last week, Kantipur Aaj — the group's TV channel — spewed venom on Dabur Nepal, a subsidiary of the Indian ayurveda goods firm. It alleged that Dabur's Real brand fruit juices were of abysmal quality. A Dabur official, who asked not to be named, however, said the ads were withdrawn only because the tariffs had been raised. "We are worried because it has become a political issue now," he added. Other companies that have withdrawn advertisements from Kantipur Daily are multinationals like Coca-Cola, Pepsi and McDonald's, whose Nepal operations are handled by their Indian arms. "There have been concerns regarding this (Indian joint ventures being 'targeted' by the Kantipur Group) and we have raised the issue with our Nepalese counterparts," said a top official in the Ministry of External Affairs in Delhi, requesting anonymity. Kantipur Daily has taken the line that, had the Indian products actually been good, there would have been no reason for their manufacturers to withdraw the advertisements. But clearly there is a lot more to the campaign than mere ethical objections to Indian products. The paper's editor, Sudheer Sharma, for instance, went on to allege: "The Indian embassy had, in the past, tried to stifle the publication, and our newsprint was stopped at the Kolkata port on its way to Kathmandu some months ago." According to him, New Delhi was doing all this simply because of the paper's political leanings. Trouble started last month after Sagarmatha Television, an independent channel, alleged that Dabur's Real juices had inedible components. This was followed by a series of five frontpage articles in the Left-leaning Naya Patrika, alleging that Dabur's honey products were substandard and contained harmful chemicals. The tabloid also accused Dabur dealers of intimidating buyers who complained against the group. Another publication, Gorkhapatra, considered to be the government's mouthpiece, carried similar reports. However, it was only after Kantipur Daily picked up the story that the Indian embassy in Nepal jumped into the arena in defence of the Indian companies. "They maintain the highest standards of quality, which is proved by the fact that their exports are accepted across the globe. The baseless adverse publicity against the products of such joint

ventures will not only hit the Nepalese economy and exports, but will also deter new foreign direct investments into Nepal,” the embassy said in a statement. And rubbishing the charges made by Kantipur Daily, Apoorva Srivastav, spokesperson for the Indian embassy in Nepal, said: “It is not tenable that we can interfere in the working of the media groups in Nepal. Instead, such groups write adversely about the Indian consulate and distort facts.” But considering that sales so far have not been seriously affected, one can draw only two conclusions: either the products are popular; or the messenger has failed to deliver.

http://www.tehelka.com/story_main46.asp?filename=Bu110910Nepalmedia.asp

Srilanka

Opposition MP accuses Sri Lanka President of violating Mahinda Chinthana

Sri Lanka's main opposition United National Party (UNP) parliamentarian Mangala Samaraweera today charged that President Mahinda Rajapaksa was heading towards a dictatorship. Samaraweera told a press conference that the President was acting against the Mahinda Chinthana. He noted that the mandate given to the President at the last Presidential election was not for the extension of the Executive Presidency. Referring to the announcement by several UNP MPs that they would vote in favor of the constitutional amendments, Samaraweera said the President was acting undemocratically by forcing UNP members to support the constitutional amendments in parliament next week.

http://www.colombopage.com/archive_10B/Sep03_1283524104JR.php

Opposition legislators express support to Sri Lanka's constitutional amendments

Sri Lanka's main opposition United National Party (UNP) legislators have expressed their support for the 18th amendment to the Constitution that is to be debated in the parliament next week. UNP Galle District parliamentarian Manusha Nanayakkara said Friday that he has decided to vote in favor of the constitutional amendments in parliament next week. Nanayakkara told the media that he would vote with the government on the constitutional amendments. He has added that supporting the President could benefit people in the country. Nanayakkara is the latest UNP MP to extend support to the government's effort to bring in constitutional reforms. At a media briefing this morning UNP Badulla District MP Lakshman Seneviratne announced that he would be voting in support of the Draft Bill. His comments came a day after UNP Polonnaruwa District MP Earl Gunasekera said he would support the amendments as well. UNP Kandy District MP Abdul Cader and UNP Polonnaruwa District MP Earl Gunasekera have already said they would vote with the government when constitutional amendments are taken up in parliament next week.

Sri Lanka's left parties in ruling alliance still undecided on constitutional amendments

The left parties in the ruling coalition of Sri Lankan government are still undecided regarding the proposed 18th amendment to the constitution. The Socialist People's Front, a common front in the ruling coalition formed by the Sri Lanka Communist Party, Lanka Samasamaja Party, and the Democratic Left Front, has held several rounds of talks but with no agreement. The dialogue held yesterday also has ended without a conclusion. The left parties are to meet again on September 06 to reach a final decision, says the government MP representing the Democratic Left Front and President's Adviser Vasudeva Nanayakkara. The debate on the Draft Bill will be held on September 08th, the same day it is tabled in the parliament. The vote on the bill will be held following the debate. Left parties earlier vowed not to support moves that strengthen the executive Presidency. However, no Left Front Minister registered protest to the constitutional amendments at the cabinet meeting when the draft proposals were unanimously approved. The amendments propose deletion of clause 2 of article 31 which specifies term limits on Executive Presidency, changes to the Constitutional Council, changes to appointment of Commissions, delegation of powers to Secretaries of Ministries to institute public service transfers, and making mandatory for the holder of the office of the President to attend Parliament every three months.

The ruling alliance is confident of passing the Bill with a two-third majority in the 225-member parliament with at least 160 votes in favor.

The Sri Lanka government strives to maintain close relations with foreign embassies in the interest of the expatriate workers.

The Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau has decided to establish close relations with embassies of relevant countries to obtain information on migrant Sri Lankan workers. The objective is to look into the problems of expatriate Sri Lankans and to provide immediate solutions. Deputy General Manager of the Bureau, R.K.K.M. Randeniya told the SLBC that the programme to be commenced from Lebanon will be extended to other countries. He further said that a programme is underway to bring back Sri Lankans currently staying at welfare centers in the Middle East without delay. Matara regional Manager of the Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau Buddhi Hiththetiyaage said the health condition of Mrs. Ariyawathi, who underwent harassments in Saudi Arabia, has improved.

Left Front leader to clad in black on the day of the constitutional amendment

Sri Lanka's Left Liberation Front leader Dr. Wickramabahu Karunaratne urged the people to wear black clothes on September 08, the day when the 18th amendment to the constitution is expected to be passed in the parliament. He made this appeal at a press conference held in

Colombo today on the proposed constitutional amendments. Dr. Karunaratne lost his university lecturer post in 1978 as he hoisted black flags against the 1978 constitution that introduced the Executive President system. He says the 18th amendment to the constitution further strengthens the powers of the executive President. The Left Liberation Front calls for the abolition of the executive Presidency.

Sri Lanka Supreme Court to deliver decision on constitutional amendments today

Sri Lanka's Supreme Court is to deliver its decision on the proposed amendments to the country's Constitution today to the President and the Speaker. A five-judge bench of Supreme Court took up the Draft Bill Tuesday to decide whether the proposed amendments are consistent with the Constitution. Sri Lanka Cabinet on Monday during a special session approved the amendments to be presented in the parliament as a Draft Bill. The Supreme Court Bench comprising Justice Dr. Shirani A. Bandaranayake (President), Justice K. Sripavan, Justice P. A. Ratnayake PC, Justice S. I. Imam and Justice Suresh Chandra directed Attorney General President's Counsel Mohan Peiris and the other counsels who appeared for several other parties to submit their written submissions before 10 a.m. today. The main amendments to the Constitution are the deletion of clause 2 of article 31 which specifies term limits on Executive Presidency, appointment of a five-member Parliamentary Council in place of the Constitutional Council specified by the 17th Amendment and permission for President to attend parliament once in three months. Deletion of clause 2 of article 31 will remove restrictions on term limits and enable the President to contest for a third term. The proposed amendments would allow the President to attend the parliamentary sessions every three months. However he will not have voting powers but will be available for legislators to question, the government revealed. The proposed Parliamentary Council (PC) will comprise the Speaker, the Prime Minister, the Opposition Leader, a nominee MP of the Prime Minister and a nominee MP of the Opposition Leader. The PC will be responsible for the reorganization of independent commissions. It will continue to function even when the Parliament is dissolved and it would be in force until the new Parliament assumes duties. According to the government, all nominations the PC makes are to be forwarded to the President within one week for observations and in the case of a failure to do so, the President has powers to make appointments. The President and the parliament have powers to remove any members from the PC if necessary. At a media briefing at the Mahaweli Centre Tuesday Minister Susil Premajayantha has said that the proposed changes are not structural amendments and therefore a two-third majority vote in the parliament will be sufficient for the amendments to become law. Sri Lanka's main opposition United National Party (UNP) yesterday called on the government to hold a referendum on the proposed constitutional amendments and alleged that the government was in a haste to amend the Constitution. Minister Premajayantha has said that the amendments had not been prepared hastily but the provisions had been discussed with opposition parties and other stakeholders over a long period. Following the Supreme Court's decision today, the Speaker will place the Bill on the Order Paper of the Parliament. It will be

debated on September 8. The ruling alliance is confident of passing the Bill with a two-third majority in the 225-member parliament with at least 160 votes in favor.

Sri Lanka cabinet backs change for president

COLOMBO — Sri Lanka's cabinet on Monday backed changing the constitution to allow President Mahinda Rajapakse to run for office for a third term, opening the way for a vote in parliament. Rajapakse, who oversaw the defeat of the Tamil Tiger rebels last year after decades of civil war, has a firm grip on power and has been criticised for crushing dissent and opposition media. The cabinet approved a proposal to remove the two-term limit for presidents, which would mean Rajapakse could stand again when elections are scheduled in November 2016. "The cabinet backed a move to amend the constitution," an official at the president's office said, declining to be named. Rajapakse came to power in 2005 and won a second presidential term in January. He has enough support in parliament to secure the two-thirds majority required to pass constitutional changes, but any amendment must also be approved by the Supreme Court. Several of Rajapakse's family hold key positions within the government, and the island's key aid donors, including the United States and Japan, have pushed him to enact political reform and to share power with minority ethnic Tamils.

Sri Lanka to set up military bases in strategic locations

Sri Lankan military plans to establish military bases in strategically significant places to strengthen the national security further, Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa said Thursday.

Addressing the ceremony to declare open a the new North-Western Naval Command Headquarters in Mullikulam yesterday, the Defence Secretary said it is the responsibility of relevant authorities to take necessary measures to thwart any attempts to reintroduce terrorism in the country. The Defence Secretary said the Tamil Tigers smuggled stockpile of arms and ammunition into the country using the sea route and therefore, it is important to maintain a proper marine surveillance around the country. The country's Navy has to bear the immense responsibility in protecting the shores, he said. The North-western Naval Headquarters has been strategically shifted from Puttalam to Mullikulam to enable the Navy to more effectively safeguard the waters and land by conducting prompt and sustainable naval operations at sea, lagoons and on land in accordance with national policies, the Navy said. The new command center is tasked with preventing the use of sea and land routes in the general area by unauthorized persons, protecting the coast line and fisheries, and controlling illegal fishing activities. It is also responsible for prevention of illicit migration, smuggling, drug trafficking, poaching, deforestation, and sand mining, the Navy highlighted. Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy Vice Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe, Army Commander Lieutenant General Jagath

Jayasuriya, and Air Force Commander Air Chief Marshal Roshan Goonethileke also participated in the occasion.

Saudi Embassy in Sri Lanka doubts housemaid torture allegation

The Saudi Arabian Embassy in Sri Lanka says that the allegations leveled against the employer by the Sri Lankan housemaid over inserting iron nails to her body have many doubts. The press officer of the Embassy issuing a press release said that the woman could not pass the security scanning machines at Riyadh and Colombo airports if she had nails in her body. However, Colombo airport sources say that the passengers arriving via Colombo airport are not scanned normally. The housemaid L.P. Ariyawathi claims she arrived in Sri Lanka on August 21. She admitted to Kamburupitiya hospital on August 22 and doctors have removed 13 nails and five needles from her body. However, the hospital sources said that most of the outward injuries of the places the nails were inserted to the body had completely healed when the surgery was carried out. A Ministry of Health psychiatrist has certified Ariyawathi is in good mental health. Meanwhile the Chairman of the Saudi National Recruitment Committee said yesterday that the relevant housemaid had withdrawn the last salary and given a letter stating that she had no problem with the employer.

Sri Lanka: One more new NGO takes to demining in North at Army request

The current demining projects in the north were to have more and more teeth as one more Non Governmental Organization (NGO) joined the bandwagon in order to expedite and further expand ongoing humanitarian demining roles, following an initiative taken by Security Forces Headquarters, Kilinochchi. The latest and the newest NGO, Delvon Assistance for Social Harmony (DASH) with a team of about 29 deminers a few days ago inaugurated its maiden project in areas surrounding the strategic Elephant Pass at the request of the Army deminers, pioneers in the sphere of demining since the government is prioritizing the reopening of the defunct Elephant Pass saltern. DASH team, spearheaded by its Programme Manager, Brigadier Ananda Chandrasiri (Retd), a reputed former Engineer Officer in the Army, has earlier cooperated with the Danish Demining Group (DDG) before the DASH began operational on its own as the requirement for speedy excavation of mines was fast swelling. The inaugural occasion at the old saltern complex in Elephant Pass adorned ceremonial garbs as Major General Chandana Rajaguru, Commander, Security Forces- Kilinochchi, Ms. Dulani Sirisena, Senior Programme Officer of AusAID, Mr. Chris Bath, Country Programme Manager - Danish Demining Group (DDG) Sri Lanka, Mr. Mark Livingstone, Operations Manager - DDG Sri Lanka, Lieutenant Colonel Deepal Subasinghe (Retd), Chairman - DASH and a number of state officials, military officers and officials of various mine action organizations, assembled at the venue to extend their greetings to the new partner in demining. Sri Lanka Army identified the

area and requested the new organization to prioritize the specified area. This first independent demining assignment is funded by AusAID, the Australian government's wing for international development assistance. Brigadier Chandrasiri (Retd) in his brief address to the occasion appreciated the DDG's support for grooming DASH and explained its availability of expertise and experience at every level of its organizational structure to carry out its responsibilities in conformity with expectations of the government. The Elephant Pass saltern which has a land mass of over 1,600 acres had significantly contributed to the country's salt production until it ceased to function in 1990 with the escalation of LTTE hostilities. At the time of its closure, the saltern had 300 permanent employees and 200 casual workers in addition to a seasonal workforce of about 1,500 men and women. The government, determined to boost the economy has planned to recommence the production process as early as possible providing a number of much-needed job opportunities for newly resettled people.

Sri Lanka set to import gas oil from UAE firm

Reuters reported that Sri Lanka's Ceylon Petroleum Corporation is expected to sign a deal to import 720,000 tonnes of gas oil for a year from a UAE based firm. The sources said that the UAE's Al Ain International Petroleum Derivatives Trader gets its products from Russia, Egypt and Iran as they are cheaper than in parts of the Middle East. A family owned company based in Al Ain said that a Russian producer would possibly supply Al Ain if the deal goes through. They declined to name the company involved and Al Ain. Traders said that the cargoes of 0.25% sulphur gas oil, for delivery beginning in September and continuing to August next year were offered at USD 4 per barrel below Singapore quotes.

http://www.steelguru.com/middle_east_news/Sri_Lanka_set_to_import_gas_oil_from_UAE_firm/163548.html

Sri Lanka trade union leaders discuss forming alliance to fight for pay hikes

Sri Lanka's Marxist party Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) affiliated National Trade Union Center (NTUC) has commenced discussions with other trade unions and union representatives to jointly fight for winning salary increments for the working masses. The NTUC has already launched a campaign to demand a Rs. 8,000 salary increment for the public sector employees and similar increments for the private and estate sector. Speaking to ColomboPage, NTUC Head and JVP politburo member K.D. Lalkantha said the NTUC held discussions with five trade unions Thursday. "Trade union leaders Mahinda Dewage, Sarath Kahagalle and Saranapala Palihena participated in the discussion," he said. The union leaders have agreed to form a joint coalition with the NTUC to demand salary increments for the working population in the country.

According to Lalkantha, the NTUC is to continue with its dialogue with other trade unions during this month in order to form a broad alliance to launch a massive trade union action to win the demands.

http://www.colombopage.com/archive_10B/Sep03_1283490824JR.php

Indian Army Chief to visit Sri Lanka

The Chief of Indian Army General V. K. Singh is to arrive in Sri Lanka on Sunday (05) on a five-day official visit, Indian media reported. During his visit, General Singh is scheduled to meet Sri Lanka's Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, his Sri Lankan counterpart Lieutenant General Jagath Jayasuriya and other senior defence officials. Reportedly the visiting military leader will be here to discuss defence cooperation aiming to strengthen bilateral military ties between the two neighbors. The General, who has led the war against LTTE in "Operation Pawan" to capture Jaffna from LTTE in late 1987 as part of the Indian Peace Keeping Force, is scheduled to visit Vavuniya in the war-torn North. His visit comes in the wake of India's Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao's three-day visit to the island on Monday (August 30). During her visit Ms. Rao visited the Tamil heartland in the North and observed the resettlement process of the displaced civilians. Foreign Minister S.M. Krishna is also scheduled to visit the country in October to inaugurate consulates in Hambantota and Jaffna and attend the India-Lanka joint commission meeting, Indian media reported.