



Leader of the Pakistani Supreme Court Bar Association, Aitzaz Ahsan, addresses a protest rally in Lahore yesterday. The rally was held to demand the restoration of sacked judges.

Indian govt seeks allies to win confidence vote

Left vows to make life tough for Manmohan

AFP, Indo-Asian News Service, New Delhi

India's embattled coalition government was yesterday in talks with other parties in a bid to ensure it can win a confidence vote sparked by a withdrawal of support from left-wingers, officials said.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's Congress-led administration lost its majority after a bloc of leftists and communists stopped backing the government because of their opposition to a nuclear deal with the United

States.

Singh was to call on President Pratibha Patil later Thursday to fix a date for the confidence vote, a government spokesman said, as Congress party leaders lobbied smaller parties and independent lawmakers to cobble together the numbers.

At present, Congress and its allies have 225 assured seats in India's directly elected 545-member lower house of parliament, but it is way short of a simple majority after 59 left-wing lawmakers withdrew support.

Last week, the regional socialist

Samajwadi Party with 39 MPs promised to vote with the government but news reports say some within the group could rebel and side with the opposition.

"What we are trying to do is to get more than the 272 required to win the confidence vote," said a senior Congress minister, who wished to remain unnamed.

Singh argues the pact is crucial for India's energy security.

But left-wing parties and the Hindu nationalist opposition insist the deal would bind India too closely to the United States and runs counter to India's status as a

figurehead in the non-aligned movement.

A day after taking back their legislative support to Manmohan Singh's government, the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M)-led Left parties on Thursday vowed to make it "impossible for the government to go ahead with the deal".

They also believe that allowing UN inspections of the country's civil nuclear programme -- as demanded by the Americans -- would harm India's strategic weapons programme.

Malaysian PM to step down in 2010

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Thursday he would step down in mid-2010 and hand over to his deputy Najib Razak.

"I have decided to hand over my position to Najib to take over as party president in June, in the middle of 2010," Abdullah told a press conference.

The president of the ruling United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), which leads the Barisan Nasional coalition, is traditionally prime minister.

"I have achieved an agreement with Najib that I will not lead the BN and UMNO in the next election... and also this means that a transition of power must take place," he said.

India moves ahead on nuke safeguards deal

US welcomes decision

AFP, New Delhi/Vienna

India and the UN atomic agency have moved forward on implementing an agreement on subjecting the country's civilian nuclear sites to international controls for the first time, officials said yesterday.

The draft safeguards agreement is one of several conditions India must fulfil before it can enter a controversial pact on atomic technology sharing with the United States.

It involves India separating its civil and military programmes, and is subject to approval by the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) international board.

A top US envoy welcomed Thursday India's decision to seek

IAEA approval of its controversial nuclear cooperation deal with the United States, saying the US-Indian accord would ultimately strengthen global non-proliferation efforts.

"We welcome India's willingness to move forward with this historic initiative," said the US ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Gregory Schulte.

Schulte was speaking to journalists in a telephone conference call a day after India submitted a draft accord to the IAEA's board of governors that will allow UN inspectors access to India's declared civilian nuclear reactors on a regular basis.

The so-called safeguards agreement with IAEA is a precondition for the US-India deal to

go ahead.

Nuclear-armed India refuses to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) -- the cornerstone of international nuclear controls -- because it says it would endanger its strategic defence programme.

The draft agreement is essentially a way of placing India under some IAEA controls and enabling it to shop for nuclear technology on the international market.

"At the request of the government of India, the IAEA secretariat circulated to members of the IAEA board of governors for their consideration the draft of an agreement with the government of India for the application of safeguards to civilian nuclear facilities," IAEA spokeswoman Melissa Fleming said.

Thai govt in disarray as FM resigns

AFP, Bangkok

Thai Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej's five-month-old government was in disarray Thursday after the foreign minister resigned following a series of bruising court defeats for the cabinet.

Foreign Minister Noppadon Pattama became the third top official in the ruling People Power Party (PPP) forced out of office in less than 48 hours due to the government's legal troubles.

The party's deputy leader Yongyut Tiypairat, who was a former speaker of parliament, was banned from politics for five years Tuesday, after the Supreme Court upheld vote buying charges against him.

The following day, health minister Chaiya Sasomsab was removed from office by another top court, which found that he had illegally concealed his wife's assets.

But Noppadon's court loss carries potentially damning implications for the entire cabinet.

Post-royal political deadlock drags on in Nepal

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Maoists said yesterday they were still unable to form a government and fill a post-monarchy political vacuum because ethnic parties from the south were holding up the process.

The impoverished Himalayan nation has effectively been without a proper government since May 28, when a newly-elected constitutional assembly voted to sack unpopular king Gyanendra, abolish the 240-year-old monarchy and proclaim a republic.

Two weeks ago interim prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala -- who steered the country through a two-year long peace process -- also resigned to make way for the Maoists to form a government.

The former rebels won most seats in the constitutional assembly elections, but not enough to form a government by themselves.

Senior Maoist official Krishna Bahadur Mahara said the process was now being blocked by ethnic Mahadhesis from the southern plains, a community that has long complained of being left out of the corridors of power by Nepal's shillite.

The Mahadhesis from the Terai lowlands on the border with India -- home to around half of the country's 27 million population -- want an autonomous federal state, and hold 81 seats in the 601-member assembly.

"The demands from Mahadhesi community has certainly delayed the formation of the government," Mahara told AFP, but said progress was being made in closed door talks with representatives of the ethnic group.

"We are looking forward to end the ongoing political vacuum as we have reached the deal with the Mahadhesi leaders to incorporate their demands in the amendment of the interim constitution," he said.

Landmine blasts kill 6 in Pakistan

AFP, Peshawar

At least six people were killed and nine others injured Thursday in a series of landmine blasts in a Pakistani tribal area bordering Afghanistan, an official said.

The blasts took place in Kurram district, where pro-Taliban militants are active and which has a history of sectarian and tribal violence.

No one claimed responsibility for the blasts, but similar bombings have been blamed on suspected pro-Taliban militants.

Three people were killed and six others injured when a pick-up carrying vegetables struck a landmine in Arawali village, local official Attaur Rehman told reporters.

In Marokhel, a tractor pulling a trolley hit a landmine, killing three people and injuring two others, he said.

In another incident, a man lost his leg when he passed over a landmine in the village of Magnek. Rehman said.



Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan (C) greets Iraqi children as his Iraqi counterpart Nuri al-Maliki (back-C) and Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan (L) look on during a welcoming ceremony for Erdogan at Baghdad International Airport yesterday.

Palestinians threaten to halt peace talks

AFP, Jerusalem

Palestinian leaders are threatening to halt peace talks with Israel to protest the continued expansion of settlements in occupied territory, a senior Palestinian figure said yesterday.

The leadership is "studying and considering the possibility of freezing all relations with the Israeli government, including the negotiations, because the Israeli government is insisting on the policy of building new settlements in Palestinian territory, especially in Jerusalem," Yasser Abed Rabbo told a news conference.

"We believe this is not only a violation of the understandings of the Annapolis Conference but an attempt by the Israeli government to undermine the process that was started at the conference," added Abed Rabbo, secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

He was referring to a US-hosted conference last November in which Israel and the Palestinians agreed to resume peace talks after an eight-year hiatus.

More foreign fighters move into Pak tribal areas

AFP, Washington

US intelligence officials say there has been an increase in foreign fighters travelling to Pakistan to join up with al-Qaeda-linked militants in the country's tribal areas, the New York Times reported yesterday.

US intelligence and military sources told the newspaper that dozens or more Uzbeks, North Africans and Arabs from Gulf states have moved into Pakistan in recent months, shoring up the al-Qaeda forces which are backing the Taliban insurgency in neighbouring Afghanistan.

A US military spokesman in Baghdad told the Times that there has been a corresponding drop in the number of foreign fighters entering Iraq, now less than 40 a month compared to up to 110 a month one year ago.

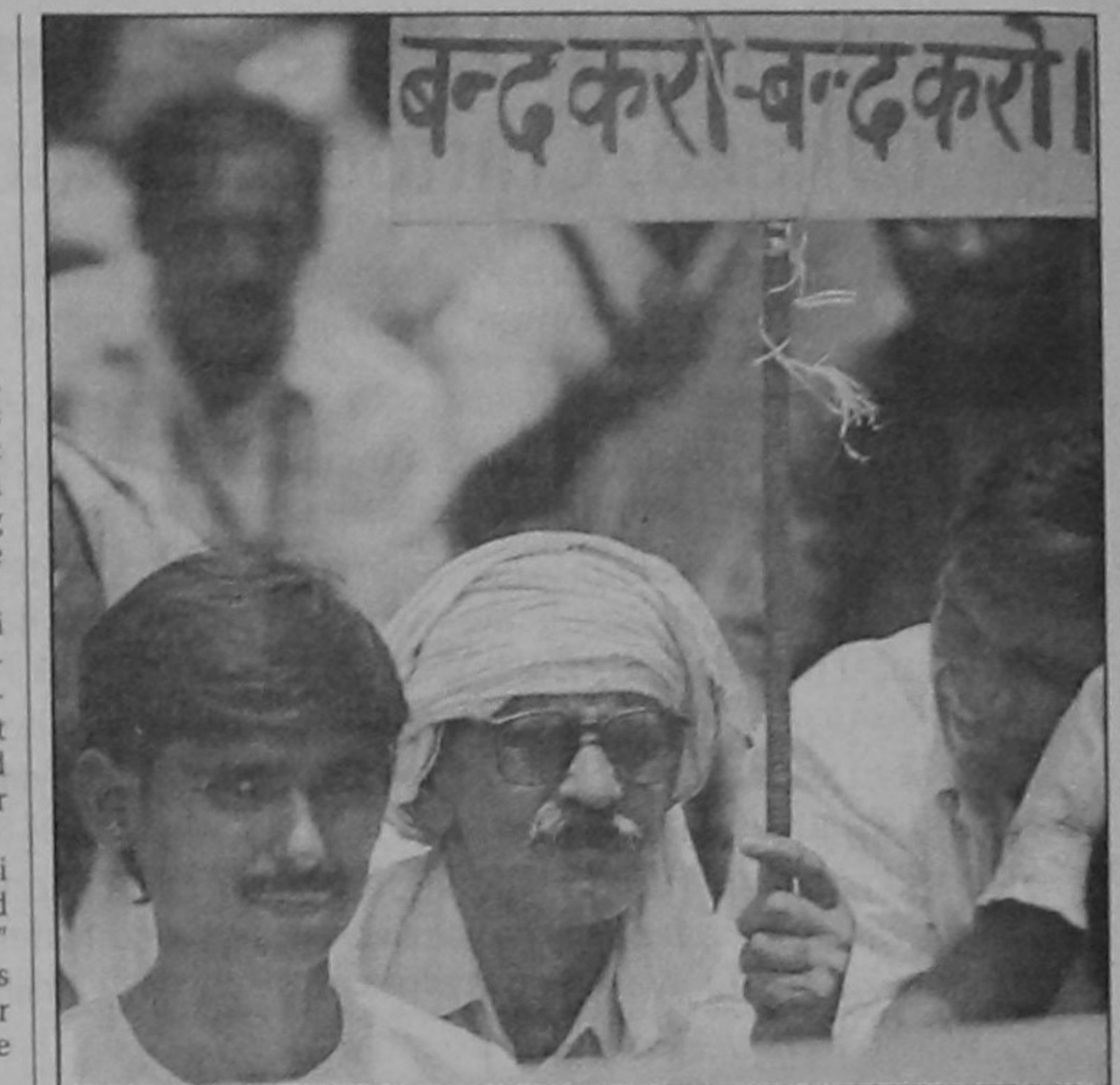
"The flow may reflect a change that is making Pakistan, not Iraq, the preferred destination for some

Sunni extremists from the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia who are seeking to take up arms against the West," the Times wrote, citing the officials.

General David McKiernan, the new Nato commander in Afghanistan, said the situation in Pakistan's northwestern border areas, where al-Qaeda and other Islamic insurgents are based, has worsened.

"The porous border has allowed insurgent militant groups a greater freedom of movement across that border, as well as a greater freedom to resupply, to allow leadership to sustain stronger sanctuaries, and to provide fighters across that border," McKiernan told the Times.

A US defence official told the Times that the flow of foreign fighters into Pakistan has increased "from a trickle to a steady stream," especially after Pakistan's government cut back tribal area operations in March and launched talks with local leaders in hopes of halting militant activities.



Members of India's Government Employees National Confederation (GENC) hold placards as they take part in a protest rally in New Delhi yesterday. They were protesting against the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission and demanded that minimum wage be fixed at ten thousand rupees per month.

Who will benefit from attack on Indian Embassy in Kabul?

Nato commanders in Afghanistan believe that India and Pakistan are indirectly playing in the hands of Taliban or any other "third force" by blaming one another for terrorist activities against each other.

Highly placed diplomatic sources in Islamabad and Kabul have said that Nato commanders and some important western diplomats are trying their level best to remove misunderstandings between the two neighbours.

Misunderstandings were created after a suicide attack on Indian embassy on Monday in which Indian military Attaché Brigadier Mehta and political counselor Venket Rao were killed along with 41 others.

Nato commanders are of the view that both Kabul and Islamabad are target of terrorists. Islamabad police was targeted just one day before the attack on Indian embassy in Kabul. Nato officials appreciated that Pakistan never blamed India for Islamabad bombing but the Indian media was quick to blame Pakistan by quoting "Afghan sources".

Diplomatic sources in Islamabad are concerned that Pakistan may also blame India for any terrorist incident in future on its soil and ultimate beneficiary would be Taliban and al-Qaeda. It is learnt that few months ago Pakistan provided some evidence of possible Indian hand in terrorist activities against Chinese engineers in Baluchistan to Afghan and Nato officials. Pakistanis always believe that India is trying to destabilise Baluchistan and FATA by indirectly helping the militants but Afghan government always ignored these concerns.

Afghan officials are suspecting Pakistan for the killing of Brigadier Mehta because he was very active in establishing defense ties between India and Afghanistan. Brig Mehta even had a personal relationship with Afghan defense minister Abdul Rahim Wardak. Brig Mehta, in fact, had accompanied Wardak when he visited New Delhi in April 2008 to hold discussions with his Indian counterpart AK Antony and visit Jammu and Kashmir for a first-hand look at the way Indian army conducted counter-insurgency operations. Mehta sent many Afghan Army officers and pilots for training to India.

He recently proposed to bring more Indian paramilitary troops to Afghanistan for providing security to Indian Army engineers engaged in a road project in Nimroz province. Indian Border Roads

Organisation came under 30 rocket attacks in 2007 only in Nimroz.

Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) have already provided 400 soldiers for guarding this project. Four ITBP jawans were killed on June 4th this year in a bomb attack in Nimroz.

Taliban have killed and kidnapped Indian officials many times in last three years, they have always accepted the responsibility of their attacks against Indians but it was the first time that they never accepted the responsibility of attack on Indian embassy in Kabul.

Many believe that misunderstandings between Pakistan and India will be in the interest of Taliban because they want their enemies to fight with each other. Taliban have killed more Pakistani troops in FATA than the total number of Nato troops killed in Afghanistan in last seven years.

Taliban knew that Indians have named a road in the diplomatic enclave of Delhi as "Ahmad Shah Massoud Marg" who was their biggest enemy. They also know that India never accepted their government in Kabul from 1996 to 2001. India always provided money and weapons to Ahmad Shah Massoud and Taliban still consider India as their enemy.

Different groups of Taliban are targeting both India and Pakistan from last few years. There were 57 suicide attacks in Pakistan 2007 in which 658 people were killed.

There was a sudden increase in the attacks in June 2008 with 17 suicide bombings compared to just 7 suicide bombings in June 2007.

They even targeted President Karzai on April 27, 2008 in Kabul during a military parade. Some political analysts fear that if Taliban are not involve in Monday bombing then it is more dangerous because deteriorating law and order situation and growing tension between India and Pakistan may provide an opportunity to some non political players in Pakistan to once again break the fragile democracy in the country.

Many Pakistanis think that the attack on Indian embassy in Kabul was actually an attack on peace and democracy lovers in Pakistan because the real loser is Pakistan which is being blamed for the incident despite the fact that whole Pakistan is still on the high alert for possible suicide bombings. India could get some benefit by deploying more paramilitary troops or even the regular Army troops in Afghanistan in the name of "enhancing more security".

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- Capable of leading a merchandising team professionally.
- Able to anticipate problems and provide constructive solutions.
- Graduation from recognized institute would be preferred.
- Proficient in both written and spoken English.
- Familiar with PC applications

Suitable candidates are requested to submit their complete Resume along with a recent passport size photograph to

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