



PHOTO: AFP

Interpol secretary general Ronald Noble (L) and Pakistan Interior Ministry chief Rehman Malik address a press conference in Islamabad yesterday. Noble arrived in Pakistan to discuss the ongoing investigation of the Mumbai attacks, which India blamed on Pakistani extremists.

INDIAN ELECTION

BJD severs alliance with BJP in Orissa

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

In a major blow to India's main opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA) ahead of parliamentary elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Biju Janata Dal (BJD), a regional outfit, severed their 11-year-old alliance in the eastern state of Orissa after failing to reach an accord on seat sharing.

"The BJD and the BJP will fight the coming elections separately", Orissa Chief Minister and BJD chief Naveen Patnaik said after his talks with journalist Chandan Mitra, emissary of BJP's prime ministerial candidate L K Advani in Bhubaneswar, capital of the state, on Saturday night.

Orissa, where BJD and BJP are ruling coalition partners, goes to simultaneous polls to 42 parliamentary seats and 147 seats in the state legislature in the state in April-May.

"Unfortunately, seat-sharing discussions

for both Lok Sabha and assembly elections have failed. The formula offered by BJP for seat-sharing is unacceptable to us", Patnaik, a Western-educated politician, said.

Hitting back at BJD soon after the breakdown in the alliance, the BJP with 30 MLAs, withdrew support to the Naveen Patnaik-led government. But BJD, with 61 members in state legislature, appears to be safe as it has mustered the support of 13 other lawmakers, including those of CPI and CPI-M, to reach the majority mark of 74.

Orissa's main opposition Congress has 38 members in the state legislature.

The developments came as a jolt to BJP, which had hoped to win at least 18 parliamentary seats from Orissa.

Both BJP and Congress Party are eager to win as many parliamentary seats as possible either on their own or through allies as pre-polls surveys point to another fractured mandate with no party emerging with clear majority of its own in the 543-member Lok Sabha.

Congress 'sorry' for Babri mosque demolition

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Lucknow

Congress leader Digvijay Singh Saturday apologised for the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992 when the party was in power at the national level.

"We would once again like to say sorry to the nation for the demolition of the Babri Masjid as at that time the PV Narasimha Rao led-Congress was in power."

"We would also like to clarify that we will not have any kind of association with (former Bharatiya Janata Party leader) Kalyan Singh who was the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh when the (mosque) was demolished," Singh said.

Singh, Congress general secretary and in-charge of party affairs in Uttar Pradesh, was here to flag off and address a rally organised by the minority cell of the party.

Obama offers talks to 'moderate Taliban'

He admits US not winning the war

AFP, Washington/ Kabul

US President Barack Obama said, in an interview published yesterday, that the United States is not winning the war in Afghanistan and hinted at possible talks with moderate elements of the Taliban.

Highlighting the success of the US strategy of bringing some Sunni Iraqi insurgents to the negotiating table and away from al-Qaeda, Obama told The New York Times that "there may be some comparable opportunities in Afghanistan and the Pakistani region."

The strategy in Iraq had been developed by General David Petraeus, then commander of US forces in the country.

"If you talk to General Petraeus, I think he would argue that part of the success in Iraq involved reaching out to people that we would consider to be Islamic fundamentalists, but who were willing to work

with us because they had been completely alienated by the tactics of al-Qaeda in Iraq," Obama said in the interview published in the online edition of the Times.

But Obama warned that Afghanistan was not Iraq, and that reconciliation efforts could face difficulties.

"The situation in Afghanistan is, if anything, more complex. You have a less governed region, a history of fierce independence among tribes. Those tribes are multiple and sometimes operate at cross purposes, so figuring all that out is going to be a much more of a challenge," he said.

But Afghan President Hamid Karzai said his government had long supported dialogue with those members of the Taliban, who are not connected with the "terrorists" waging an increasingly bloody insurgency in Afghanistan.

"It is very good news that the American

president, his excellency Obama, has backed talks with those Taliban that he termed as moderate," Karzai said in Kabul.

During his presidential campaign last year, Obama told Time magazine that opportunities to negotiate with some Taliban elements "should be explored."

Asked by the Times if the United States was winning the war in Afghanistan, which he has called the "central front in the war on terror," Obama simply replied: "No."

"You've seen conditions deteriorate over the last couple of years. The Taliban is bolder than it was. I think in the southern regions of the country, you're seeing them attack in ways that we have not seen previously," he said.

"The national government still has not gained the confidence of the Afghan people."

Pakistan orders judicial probe into attack on Lankan team

PTI, Lahore

Pakistani authorities today ordered a judicial inquiry into the terrorist attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team here though there was no official word on when a special police team investigating the incident would submit its preliminary report.

The government of Punjab province appointed Justice Shabbir Raza Rizvi of the Lahore High Court as a one-man tribunal to hold the judicial inquiry into the attack, an official statement said.

It did not give further details about the inquiry. Eight persons, including six policemen, were killed and over 20 others, including seven Sri Lankan players and a coach, were injured when a dozen heavily armed terrorists attacked the cricket team's convoy at the Liberty traffic roundabout in the heart of Lahore on Tuesday.

The special investigation team formed to probe the attack was expected to submit its preliminary report within two days of the incident. However, there is no official word when the report will be submitted to Governor Salman Taseer, who heads the administration of Punjab following the recent imposition of Governor's Rule in the province.

Pakistani investigators detained nearly 100 suspects for questioning but have drawn a blank so far in tracing the 12 attackers. Two suspects were arrested yesterday after a gun battle with security personnel at a market in Lahores cantonment area.



PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lankan defence ministry photo shows troops in action in the district of Mullaitivu where the guerrillas have been pushed in to a narrow strip of land. The defence ministry said over 100 Tiger rebels were killed in two days of fighting in the region as the battle against the Tamil separatists entered its final stages.

Coalition forces kill 2 Afghan policemen

AP, AFP, Kabul

A joint Afghan-coalition patrol killed two Afghan policemen who opened fire on their team in northeastern Afghanistan, the coalition said in a statement Sunday.

The joint patrol was conducting an operation against a senior insurgent leader in Kapisa province late Friday when the Afghan policemen began shooting, despite attempts to identify themselves as friendly forces, the statement said.

"In self-defence, the patrol returned fire killing two individuals," it said.

The coalition said it is reviewing the incident. "We sincerely regret the loss of life of our friendly forces and we are continually working with our Afghan partners to prevent situations like this from happening in the future," said Col. Greg Julian, the spokesman for the US forces in Afghanistan.

Earlier 12 people, including seven suspected militants, have been killed in a series of violent incidents in southern and eastern Afghanistan, officials said Saturday.

In one incident, a border guard was killed in a bomb blast in the eastern province of Paktika near the border with Pakistan, provincial governor Hamidullah Jiwak said.

And now India to have its Air Force One!

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, New Delhi

The Indian prime minister's brand new office in the air - akin to the US president's Air Force One - is all set to be inducted into the Indian Air Force (IAF) later this month, an official said.

Three Boeing Business Jets, fitted with the state-of-the-art security gadgets and latest communication systems, will be part of the Communications Squadron of the IAF. President Pratibha Patil, the supreme commander of the armed forces, is likely to formally induct the jets at a ceremony.

SP-Congress alliance almost over in UP

CNN-IBN, New Delhi

The BJP is not the only party facing rough weather ahead of the General Elections. The Congress, too, is finding it tough to work out an alliance with the Samajwadi Party (SP) in UP.

SP chief Mulayam Singh announced candidates for 74 seats in UP, leaving only six seats where it is not putting up a fight, among them are Congress strongholds Amethi and Rae Bareilly.

After weeks of negotiations, the two sides have still not managed to break the ice.

To counter the Congress's decision of announcing 24 candidates in the crucial political state, the SP has also decided to increase its tally of candidates from 65 to 74. This includes seats like Varanasi where the Congress has a sitting MP.

So now the SP wants to leave only six seats for the Congress. Both sides though, still insist that talks are on to work out an alliance. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that this will be an alliance more on paper rather than on ground.

Earlier, SP General Secretary Amar Singh had said his party cannot be pushed to a corner by the Congress.

"We have been meeting with the Congress by lowering our head, but we will not lower it to the extent that we get beheaded," Amar Singh said.



PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lankan government handout picture shows President Mahinda Rajapakse (C) is taken for a ride on a navy speed boat following the passing out of his son, Yoshitha Rajapakse, as a naval officer on Saturday in the north-eastern port town of Trincomalee.

PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of The Premier Bank Limited in its 66th Meeting held on Sunday, March 8, 2009 at 11.30 a.m. at the Board Room of Head Office, Dhaka, among others, has decided to hold 5th Extra-Ordinary General Meeting, 9th Annual General Meeting for the year 2007 and 10th Annual General Meeting for the year 2008 as per following schedule:

Sl. No.	Particulars	5th Extra-Ordinary General Meeting (EGM)	9th Annual General Meeting (AGM)	10th Annual General Meeting (AGM)
1.	Date and Time	Monday, April 20, 2009 at 11.00 a.m.	Monday, April 20, 2009 at 11.30 a.m.	Monday, April 20, 2009 at 12.30 p.m.
2.	Venue	Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207		
3.	Recommendation	Increase of Authorized Capital from Tk. 200.00 crore to Tk. 600.00 crore and accordingly, amendments of Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Bank as approved by Bangladesh Bank	7% Stock Dividend for the year ended 31st December, 2007, as announced earlier	24% Stock Dividend for the year ended 31st December, 2008 subject to the approval of Bangladesh Bank.
4.	Record Date	Wednesday, March 25, 2009	05.06.2008, as announced earlier	Wednesday, March 25, 2009

By order of the Board of Directors
Sd/-
Syed Ahsan Habib, FCMA
Company Secretary

Dated : March 08, 2009
Dhaka

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100 months left to save the planet: Charles

ANI, London

Prince Charles is to issue a warning that the world has only '100 months to act' before the damage caused by global warming becomes irreversible.

As part of a tour of South America, his speech to business leaders in Rio de Janeiro will echo predictions made by climate change experts who believe there are about eight years left to cut CO2 emissions.

He will warn that failure to act urgently could have catastrophic effects for the planet, reports The Telegraph.

The speech will stress the importance of big business joining the fight against global warming. He will say that although the world is in recession, protecting the environment should remain a priority.

It is believed the speech will echo one that he gave in Sao Paulo at the start of the last recession in 1991, when he warned that it was important to continue to care for the welfare of the planet and that it should not become "a luxury".

The prince's tour will help to put the environmental agenda before leaders of the G20 nations meet in London next month.



UNITED LEASING COMPANY LIMITED
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NOTICE OF THE TWENTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the twentieth Annual General Meeting of the shareholders of United Leasing Company Limited will be held at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre, Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka on **Thursday, April 2, 2009** at 3:30 p.m. to transact the following business:

1. To receive and adopt the Directors' Report and Audited Accounts for the year ended December 31, 2008.
2. To declare Dividend for 2008.
3. To elect Directors as per Articles of Association of the Company.
4. To consider the appointment of Auditors for 2009 and fix their remuneration.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

Dated : Dhaka
March 9, 2009

COMPANY SECRETARY

Notes :

1. A Shareholder entitled to attend and vote at the meeting may appoint a proxy to attend and vote in his/her stead. The proxy form must be affixed with a revenue stamp of Tk 8.00 and submitted to the Registered Office of the Company no later than 48 hours before the day of the Annual General Meeting.
2. **March 17, 2009** is the **Record Date**.
3. Shareholders are requested to submit their queries on the Directors' Report and Audited Accounts, if any, at the Registered Office of the Company by Sunday, **March 29, 2009**.