

US Afghan plan must have 'exit strategy': Obama

US envoy outlines strategy to Nato, EU

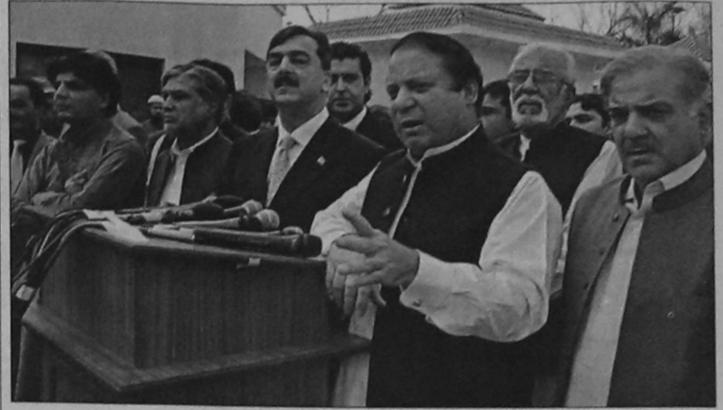
AFP, Washington/Brussels
US President Barack Obama said the United States must have an "exit strategy" in Afghanistan even as it expands its military, diplomatic and economic fight against a Taliban insurgency.

Afghanistan, against a backdrop of rising insurgent violence that has questioned the viability of a seven-year-old US-led effort to create a functioning democracy.
Obama said a decision last month to send 17,000 more US troops to Afghanistan -- largely to head off a spike in violence before elections in August -- was the most difficult he has had to make since taking office.

In the CBS interview Obama narrowly defined the US mission in Afghanistan as: "Making sure al-Qaeda cannot attack the US homeland and US interests and our allies. That's the number one priority."
Meanwhile US envoy Richard Holbrooke outlined to Nato yesterday new plans to beat insurgents in Afghanistan, as President Barack Obama looks for a way to end more than seven years of fighting.

Advani says his roots lie in the RSS

ANI, Nagpur
Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader L.K. Advani has said that his roots lie in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the BJP's ideologue.
"I have not forgotten this the whole of my life that all the responsibilities which I have held and all that I have done was on the basis of the education, traditions and blessings of the Sangh," Advani said, who attended the three-day conclave of the RSS here on Sunday.



Handout photo shows Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani (C) and opposition leader Nawaz Sharif (3rd R) addressing a press conference following a meeting in Lahore on Sunday. Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani and opposition leader Nawaz Sharif called for reconciliation to end Pakistan's political crisis but stopped short of announcing concrete agreements.



Sri Lankan demonstrators protest against the Ceylinc Group in Colombo yesterday. Owned by the Singapore counsel to Sri Lanka Lalith Kotelawala, the Ceylinc Group is going through a cash crunch, after one of its subsidiaries collapsed unable to settle 230 billion dollars to depositors.

Pakistan 'perilously close' to being failed state, says India

AFP, New Delhi
Pakistan is "perilously close" to becoming a failed state and is already "pretty dysfunctional," a senior Indian government official has said.
Home Minister P. Chidambaram also voiced fears that the rise of the Taliban in neighbouring Pakistan could have a spillover effect on India.

Asked if India has a stake in ensuring stable civilian rule in Pakistan, he replied: "Of course a stable civilian democratic government means that we know who we are dealing with and there are checks and balances."
He added that the rise of the Taliban in Pakistan "will encourage fundamentalists in India to imitate them, and number two the Taliban could become a sponsor of terror in India."

Lalu parts ways with Congress, to contest 28 Lok Sabha seats in Bihar

PTI, Patna
Dealing a major blow to the Congress in Bihar, RJD supremo Lalu Prasad today practically ended ties with it by putting up candidates in three constituencies where Congress has sitting MPs.
Earlier, the three seats -- Sasaram (SC), Madhubani and Aurangabad -- were allotted to the Congress by the RJD-LJP combine.

12, out of 40 Lok Sabha seats, for the LJP. However, the Congress resolved to contest 37 seats on its own, sparing Saran and Patliputra, which Lalu is to contest, and Hajipur from where Paswan will try his luck. Prasad today announced his party's candidates even in the seats won by the Congress in 2004 Lok Sabha polls.

Indian EC censures Varun Gandhi

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi
India's Election Commission has strongly censured BJP leader Varun Gandhi for his inflammatory speeches, with communal overtones, in Pilibhit constituency, Uttar Pradesh, and asked the saffron party not to field him as its candidate in coming parliamentary elections.

Cong-led coalition ahead in Indian polls race

AFP, Indo-Asian News Service, New Delhi/Davangere
A coalition led by India's ruling Congress Party will secure the most seats in upcoming elections, but not enough to govern alone, according to a poll published yesterday.

channel predicted a Congress-led coalition could grab as many as 257 seats in the 543-member lower house of parliament.
An alliance led by the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would secure 184 seats, the poll said.

majority.
Congress currently holds 141 seats on its own, with the BJP close behind at 137.
The survey also said regional parties in southern India were expected to do well, after faring poorly in the 2004 elections.

Pak troops destroy 2 militant hideouts

AFP, Quetta
Pakistani troops yesterday destroyed two militant hideouts in the troubled southwestern province of Baluchistan, where a UN official was kidnapped last month, officials said.
A large quantity of weapons, rockets, explosives and communication equipment were found at two secret hide-

outs used by militants and outlaws, a paramilitary spokesman told AFP. The arms cache 'was destroyed,' he added.
Baluchistan, which borders Afghanistan and Iran, has rich energy resources but is rife with regional insurgency and sectarian violence. The province has also been hit by attacks blamed on Taliban militants.

PDB's rental

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tariff. When the government signed these agreements in January 2008, it aimed at increasing power generation by that summer. Now the purpose of it has been severely compromised," says a PDB source.
Experts now question whether two of these three gas-fired projects -- the Fenchuganj 50mw and Bogra20 mw -- have any relevance now, given the fact that the country is facing tremendous gas crisis.

The PDB cannot generate 450-500mw power due to gas supply shortfall and there is no chance that the government would be able to supply enough gas to all the power plants this year or next year.
The problem with the Fenchuganj plant is slightly different. Though there is enough gas in Sylhet to fire the plant, there is not enough power transmission line to evacuate new power to other parts of the country.

Data theft attempt from Indonesian mobile firm

AGENCIES, Jakarta
Chinese telecoms equipment maker Huawei Technologies has suspended an employee suspected of trying to steal data from Indonesian mobile firm Excelcomindo (EXCL)JK, according to officials at the firm on Friday.
"it did happen but it was only a reckless action [of] the employee," said a spokeswoman for Indonesia's third-largest mobile phone firm PT Excelcomindo Pratama Tbk. The visiting Huawei employee was caught by a member of staff at the firm but no company data was stolen, he said.
Thong Poh Wah, a spokesman for Huawei (HWT)UL, said the employee had returned to China.
"The employee has been suspended while the company investigates the matter," he said.
"While the personal action by this employee is in no way connected with our company, Huawei has issued an official apology to our partner and has taken appropriate disciplinary action against the employee and also taken steps to ensure that this does not happen again," the spokesman added.
Hasnul Suhaimi, Excelcom's president director, told Reuters that it had received an apology over the incident.

Employment Opportunity
Women are especially encouraged to apply. Smokers need not apply
RDRS Bangladesh is inviting applications from qualified persons for the following positions of different projects for immediate appointment.
1. Project Coordinator (Adaptation to Climate Change Project)
Salary: Consolidated Tk.47,000 per month
Requirements: Minimum Master's with 8-10 years professional experience in development field, including 5 years of proven leadership managing a large project team especially related with environment. Experienced in senior management position with project management, staff supervision, report writing and budgetary control including sound knowledge on climate change. Excellent communication skill is desirable. The incumbent will be responsible for overall leadership of the project, including project implementation, management, finance and administration. In collaboration with 7 national and 3 international partners of the project, s/he will make a strong liaison and coordination with NGOs, Government and donor agencies for necessary direction of the project. Age: maximum 45 years (may be relaxed for deserving candidates).

EC slips
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holding the long overdue elections to the local government bodies, officials added.
The EC last February completed a pilot project of updating the voter list with photographs in some areas in Manikganj, without help of the armed forces.
The armed forces' role in preparing a flawless voter list with photographs in 2007-08 had been widely lauded.
"The commission will review the implementation of the pilot project and find out the weaknesses," said a senior official at the EC Secretariat wishing anonymity.
The official said the EC would finalise the strategy to update the voter list on the basis of the lessons learnt from the pilot project.
The voter list with photographs was prepared in 2007-08, registering people who were 18 and above on January 1, 2008.
But on January 1, 2009, a year later, many young people became eligible for being registered as voters.

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Ms S. Norman, International Marketing Manager, will be visiting from the UK to conduct interviews and offer on-the-spot admissions as follows:
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Time: 11am - 5pm
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