

Bangladesh

Lull Before the Autumn Thunder



SRI LANKA

Northern Provincial Council Elections: What Next?

Country Round up

Bhutan	11
Bangladesh	11
India	15
Maldives	18
Nepal	20
Pakistan	23
Sri Lanka	27

The *South Asia Conflict Monitor (SACM)* aims to provide in-depth analyses, country briefs, summary sketches of important players and a timeline of major events on issues relating to armed conflicts, insurgencies and terrorism. It also aims to cover the government's strategies on conflict resolution and related policies to tackle these risks and crises.

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Bangladesh: Lull before the Autumn Thunder

The third week of October 2013 could turn out to be a challenging month for the ruling Awami League (AL). Despite several rounds of dialogue and media interactions between the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and AL both the parties continue to be rigid over the Parliamentary elections in January. While the BNP demands holding of the elections under a non-political caretaker government, the ruling AL has been adamant over holding the same under the present elected government. The BNP suspects that the elections under ‘a partisan administration’ may not be “free and fair.” It also opposed the AL’s constitutional amendment in June 2011 over the annulment of the Supreme Court’s verdict on the continuation of the interim elected government for two more parliamentary elections. When discussions ended in a stalemate on the issue, prime minister Sheikh Hasina at a cabinet meeting on September 02 hinted that the next general elections would be held by January 24, 2014, keeping the present cabinet and parliament functionally active, and till then, the parliament will be adjourned *sine die* session after October 27.

Unhappy with the unilateral decision taken by the ruling party, the BNP rejected the framework for the next general elections outlined by the prime minister, and declared that the 18-party opposition would wait till October 24 to see whether the government restores the caretaker government system. If the demand is not met by the deadline, the opposition would launch a “tougher movement” from October 25. In fact, many allies of the BNP have been suggesting mounting pressure on the government by carrying out violent protests till October. They find the AL anti-Islam.

Gathering Storm

Before launching the final protest, the BNP has been trying to secure support both from radical and other mainstream political parties. The BNP also wanted to take advantage of the divisions in society amongst believers and atheists particularly after the Shabagh movement. Despite differences with Hefazat Islam, the BNP and its allies had supported Hefazat Islam’s anti-government protest rallies, mobilising people from remote areas to protest against the Shabagh movement. The BNP is presently negotiating with the Hefazat leaders for their support to its October anti-government movement. The BNP is also trying to rope in other small radical Islamist groups into its fold by highlighting AL’s anti-Islamic activities.

The BNP has also been trying to swing public support in its favour by criticising International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) verdicts against top leaders of the JeI followed by the disqualification of

the Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) by the High Court as a political party. The JeI responded to the Court verdict by organising violent protests across the country. It also declared 48 hours' *hartal* from August 12. The protests continued till August 18. The JeI and its student wing, the Islami Chattra Shibir (ICS) have been organising *hartals* every alternate day over a series of judicial verdicts against its leaders and the party. The JeI and ICS members repeatedly demanded the immediate release of its central committee president Delwar Hossain and information on their 'missing' leaders and activists. The situation deteriorated after July 15, while the ICT convicted former JeI chief Ghulam Azam with a 90-year jail term for his role in the murder and genocide during the Bangladesh war in 1971 and also the trial of its secretary general Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed. Soon after, the JeI rejected the verdicts and declared a series of *hartals*.

Not only the opposition, but also the AL's major coalition partners are not happy with the government's decisions on the nature of the caretaker government. In a major blow to the AL, the Jatiya Party (JP) decided to separate from the AL alliance to fight the elections alone. Most importantly, the party blamed the AL for creating divisions in the society for vote bank politics and said it would participate in the BNP-led anti-government protests from October. In fact, the JP took a neutral stand in the last city corporation elections.

Other than political parties, some influential NGOs also are not happy with the Awami League. The Grameen Bank, one of the popular NGOs in Bangladesh, vowed to campaign against the AL in the next parliamentary election. The strained relationship between the AL and the Grameen Bank has generated a lot of anti-government opinion in rural areas. In fact, other civil society groups also expressed concern over the unilateral decision of the PM for holding elections in January 2014 and the decision, they find, may deepen the political crisis. Even the business community and ordinary people are fed up with frequent protests and *hartals* organised by the opposition parties.

Emboldened BNP

The anti-government movement was strengthened further with the victory of candidates supported by the BNP-led alliance in the five-city Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Barisal and Gazipur - Corporation polls with majority. The BNP-supported candidates won the election with a big margin. The results have emboldened the confidence of the opposition parties.

During campaigning for the city Corporation election, the opposition parties and religious groups came together. Members of the opposition parties reportedly carried the *Koran* during the

campaigning and asked people not to vote in favour of atheists, especially pro-Shabagh supporters. The opposition also took advantage of corruption, mis-governance and the government's failure to take action against some corrupt ministers. The opposition parties also presented the rigid posture of the ruling party over the formation of a neutral caretaker government for the elections. The party may adopt the same tactics during campaigning for the parliamentary elections.

The opposition's victory in the Corporation elections could be an indication of public reactions to the secular AL government. In 2008, the Awami League candidates won the Corporation elections by defeating the BNP candidates. Later, the AL emerged the winner in the Parliamentary election in the same year. Since the introduction of multi-party democracy in the 1990s, both these parties have ruled Bangladesh alternatively.

Meanwhile, anticipating the AL's last moment reconciliation on the nature of caretaker government, the party brought out its election manifesto. The manifesto lays emphasis on developing Bangladesh as a higher middle income country by 2030. It also talks about its fight against terrorism, judiciary and police reforms and declaration of assets of lawmakers, etc. However, the party finds that "fighting terrorism does in no way mean going against religion." The party believes that the AL's position on a non-partisan government may be tactical.

Despite a favourable situation, the BNP may not agree to join the parliamentary elections unless a middle ground is found on the caretaker government issue. The delaying tactics may benefit the BNP. First, it wants to become more popular by forcing the AL towards a middle path on the caretaker government issue. Given some recent successes, it wants to push the anti-AL movement further and bargain with the government from the position of strength. Second, there are serious intra-party rifts at the local level. On many occasions since the Corporation elections, the party cadres have killed each other for securing party tickets for the forthcoming elections. Top leaders of the party have been frequently visiting districts to look into issues before the parliamentary elections. The party believes that the problem at the field level will be resolved once the October protest begins. Third, the BNP is in dilemma how to work with religious fundamentalist groups in case it is voted to power. Last, but not least, no single country has openly supported the AL's position on the elections. The international community has rather suggested holding a dialogue between both the parties to resolve the crisis. Therefore, the BNP wants to mobilise the international community's support by highlighting unilateral decisions taken by the AL on the caretaker government in July 2011.

Anti-government Drive

Since the opposition alliance has been planning to further pressurise the government to accept formation of a non-party caretaker government, they may undertake a large-scale campaign against the AL by seeking support from Islamist groups. The opposition party will try to use street protest tactics to put more pressure on the government to hold the general elections under a neutral interim government. As part of the October movement, the party tried to gather support in remote areas by organizing frequent rallies in divisional cities and a district town in favour of the party's demand for restoration of the caretaker government system. As of September 29, Khaleda Zia has already addressed four divisional rallies out of eight planned by the party before October 25. They will also try to project the AL as anti-Islamic, to bring religious conservative groups into its fold and mobilise them against the government. Since the AL is branded as pro-India, the BNP may not mind seeking support from China since it has recently taken some interest in Bangladesh politics. Moreover, the AL's tactics of isolating the ultra-rightist groups may force them to follow more violent methods to come to power.



Guest Commentary: SRI LANKA**Northern Provincial Council Elections: What Next?****Author: SMRUTI S. PATTANAIAK**

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After 25 years, for the first time, election was held to the demerged Northern Provincial Council (NPC) on September 21. Though the victory of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) with a thumping two-third majority was predicted, some thought the development route to ethnic reconciliation as relentlessly articulated and pursued by the Rajapakse government, would give it some electoral benefits. It managed to win only 7 seats (18.38 per cent of the votes) in the 38-member council. The TNA won 30 seats (including two bonus seats, 78.48 per cent of the votes) and the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) that decided to fight a lone battle won one seat with 1.50 per cent of the votes. At a press conference soon after the election results were declared on September 22, the TNA made it clear that it will look forward “to be able to fulfill their legitimate political, economic, social and cultural aspirations” within the framework of a united and undivided Sri Lanka.

The TNA manifesto has been a major controversial issue for the majority Sinhalese who are trying to read beyond what is printed. The assertion of ‘internal self-determination’ within a unitary framework or ‘shared sovereignty’ created much debate in the media and drew the attentions of radical parties like the JVP and JHU. This led to the filing of a petition in the Supreme Court by the so-called ‘patriotic organisation’ which appealed that the TNA manifesto violates the Constitution of the country. Coupled with this, speeches of the Chief Ministerial candidate describing Prabhakaran as ‘mahaveera’ (hero) and another leader’s assertion that they will take up arms again if they are denied their rights, also did not allay the trust deficit between the government and the TNA. There has been a sustained campaign since the end of the war to portray the TNA as a torchbearer of the LTTE, a mouth piece of the Diaspora and other foreign patrons. Soon after the TNA nominated its Chief Ministerial candidate, media reports appeared that alleged that retired Justice C.V. Wigneswaran, is India’s chosen candidate, leading to a strong denial by the Indian High Commission in Colombo. However, such delegitimation of the TNA did not stop.

On the eve of the elections, posters written in Tamil appeared pasted on the walls in Jaffna: “think twice before you vote, are you ready to go for another war? Is your vote for TNA?” There

were posters against Wighneswaran advising him to rest, as he is old. Another poster appeared with a wrong ballot number of the Chief Ministerial candidate, and on election day, a fake copy of *Uthayan* newspaper appeared with news that Wighneswaran and Ananthi Sasitharan had crossed over to the government side. Moreover, there is a deliberate attempt to paint the TNA as a successor of the LTTE. Though elections remain largely free of violence, tactics of intimidation and 'psychological pressure' are apparently used to pressurize the voters.

All these put a question mark on the government's initiative at reconciliation and providing political space to the Tamil minority. Large-scale infrastructural development, and the road network has changed the face of the Northern Province but issues of land dispute, complaints about the Army occupying land and daily monitoring by the Army and intelligence, remain major stumbling blocks on the path of reconciliation. Especially, in the war-torn area degeneration of societal norms is apparent. There are instances of child abuse and rape as many families are headed by women and cannot pay attention to their children, as they go out to work to support their families. Incidents of prostitution have increased as a means of survival. The immediate need for the vast majority of the destitute in the war-torn area is employment, housing and a normal life. The Army is involved in developmental work but many who aspire for peaceful life do not want the Army's involvement in their day-to-day civil life. A Presidential Task Force for Resettlement, Development and Security in the Northern Province (PTF) constituted after the end of war, has seven representatives from the security forces amongst its nineteen members but it does not have a single Tamil. This leads many in the north to believe that there is increasing militarization of civilian life.

The TNA government will have three immediate issues at hand. The first is providing employment or means of livelihood to the destitute affected by war; second, resettlement of people on their ancestral lands and the question of demilitarisation and third, working for more meaningful devolution to meet the longstanding political aspirations. Resources to implement the first two issues would be important. Just before the election the Minister for Economic Development, Basil Rajapakse announced that he would no longer engage in the Uthuru Wasanthaya programme (Northern spring), which is part of development and reconstruction activities and handing over to the elected representatives of the newly constituted NPC. The success of this transfer would depend on the extent that the Rajapakse regime would go to provide resources for the NPC to accomplish this task. The United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) government would not like the TNA to gain more popularity. It is likely that resources for many of the developmental projects may not be available to the provincial government. The

involvement of the Diaspora in developmental activities will have to meet stringent conditions. The Diaspora perhaps may not be welcomed by the government if their political views run contradictory to those of the government. Making land available for such investment would also be a problem and engaging through NGOs is equally difficult. Securitisation of political, economic and social issues concerning the North would not allow any such engagement.

While devolution remains a major issue, it is unlikely to be granted given the extreme Sinhala nationalism that has dominated the devolution discourse. Already, the Supreme Court under the acting Chief Justice Mohan Peiris, has given a judgment saying that land is a Central subject providing further legal sanction to the Rajapakse regime's clear unwillingness to implement the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. This verdict, soon after the elections, signals the likely course of future developments. In such a scenario, it appears that the government will increasingly seek the legal route to undo the 13th Amendment, as the Parliament route through the Select Committee has remained defunct. Many believe that the government is waiting for the conclusion of CHOGM to strike harder.

It would be imperative in the greater interest of the people of the North for the UPFA and TNA to work and address the question of devolution through negotiation. TNA's electoral victory attests that the larger question of political aspirations of Tamil remains a core issue. The TNA has made it clear that it would like to address this issue within the unitary framework of the Sri Lankan State. This provides an opportunity for the UPFA government to take into cognizance the window of opportunity that the first NPC election provides to address the issue. It is President Rajapakse who has the ability and mandate to bridge the trust deficit between the North and the South and work towards a workable political solution that is acceptable to the North for durable peace. But, will he? The fundamental doubt remains even though he is the only person who can deliver.



Ravana Balaya (RB), Sri Lanka

The Ravana Balaya (force) (RB) is a Buddhist extremist organization comprising members of the Buddhist child Bikkhus and is named after the mythological ten-headed demon king of ancient Sri Lanka, Ravana. It considers Ravana as Sri Lanka's (SL's) national hero who saved the Island from foreign invasion. Ven. Ittekande Saddhatissa Thera is the Secretary of the Ravana Balaya National Organisation. . The RB was reportedly formed in the post-conflict period of Sri Lanka.

Objective and Organisational Structure

Its objectives, organisational structure and purposes of formation are still unclear. However, the RB engages mostly in protecting Sinhala nationalism, preservation of Sinhala Buddhist culture, fight against minority demands for separate state and religious conversion, etc. The RB is both anti-Islam and anti-Christian. It has been vehemently opposing the demands for a separate Tamil Eelam. It also opposes the implementation of the 13th Amendment. It threatened a mass-scale countrywide agitation, if the government fully implements the 13th Amendment and vests full powers with the Northern Provincial Council (NPC), which will be run by the Tamil National Alliance (TNA). It fears that if the NPC were to vest all the powers as stipulated in the 13th Amendment, it would lead to the Tamils towards formation of a separate state.

Modus Operandi

It is an ethno-religious fascist organization, unleashing hatred and violence against the religious and racial minorities in Sri Lanka in the name of "Sinhala Buddhism". The RB uses children as human shields against police action during protest marches. It demonstrates a very high degree of extreme intolerance towards other religions and communities. It has a kangaroo court style terror squad for instant action on a particular issue. Since its formation, the RB has been involved in various protest rallies like:

- September 2013: The Ravana Balaya threatened mass agitation across SL if the government fully implemented the 13th Amendment and gave full powers to the Northern Provincial Council.
- August 26, 2013: Buddhist monks of the RB marched to the UN office in Colombo demanding that UN Human Rights Chief, Navaneetham Pillay, leave the country.
- July 2013: Due to an intensive protest campaign by the RB, the Muslim community and religious leaders were forced to agree to relocate a Mosque on Swarna Chaitiya road in the Grandpass area of Colombo.
- June 2013: Ravana Balaya rounded up a group of evangelical Christians who were distributing a religious magazine in the outskirts of Colombo city and handed them over to the police.
- May 2013: The RB demanded boycott of Tamil movies from India in Sri Lanka as a protest against the Tamil Nadu government's claim on Kachchatheevu Island. Later, India clarified that no territory belonging to India was ceded to Sri Lanka.

Support Base

Most of its members are ultra-radical young Buddhists. Its instant action on issues related Sri Lankan nationalism creates doubts about its collaboration with the Buddha Sasana ministry and also support of powerful elements in the Rajapaksa government. The RB opposes external interference especially India's role in resolving the ethnic conflict in SL.

COUNTRY ROUND UP

BHUTAN

The issue of the Bhutanese refugees surfaced for the first time after the second parliamentary elections in Bhutan. UNHCR records of September 17 show that 83,000 refugees have already left Nepal, 26,000 are in the resettlement list, while 12,000 are waiting for repatriation under the UNHCR's



third-country resettlement programme. There are also many who are not interested in the programme and are looking for return to their homeland. Media reports also indicated that many refugees are not happy with the third-country resettlement process. There are allegations by some refugees that the UN agencies and staff approach those refugees who are waiting to return to Bhutan. In this regard, the Senior Citizens' Home Return Committee (SCHRC) of the Bhutanese refugees living at Beldangi Camp of Jhapa district has sent a letter to the British Ambassador to Nepal, Andrew James Sparkes, and demanded initiatives for them to return home. Interestingly, it is not clear yet why did the SCHRC write only to the British Ambassador to Nepal, while the programme is conducted by the UN.

Major Events

September 16: The Senior Citizens' Home Return Committee of the Bhutanese refugees living at Beldangi Camp in Damak of Jhapa district has sent a letter to British Ambassador to Nepal, Andrew James Sparkes, demanding initiatives for them to return home. The letter states that the fundamental rights of the refugees hoping to return home for the past 21 years, have been scuttled (Himalayan Times, September 16, 2013).

BANGLADESH

Two kinds of unrest resurfaced in Bangladesh, as the main opposition political party Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its 18-party alliance refused to accept the framework for next general elections outlined by the present prime minister. Operatives of Jamaat-e-Islami's student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir continued to trigger intermittent clashes with police in Dhaka, Rajshahi, Moulvibazar areas demanding



immediate release of their jailed and convicted leaders and activists. To make things worse for the government, thousands of apparel workers descended to the streets and clashed with security force personnel demanding pay hike and resolution of safety issues in the last week of September. The violence mostly reported from Gazipur and Savar areas of the capital Dhaka that forced many factories (mostly European and American brands) to shut down.

There seems to be no respite for the Dhaka administration, as Bangladesh braces for opposition and Islamists led strikes and protest rallies in the coming months, especially ahead of general elections.

Major Events

September 03: During a secretary general-level meeting of the BNP-led 18-party alliance, the Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) suggested a hard-line stance to mount pressure on the government to stall it from holding elections under the Awami League (New Age, September 04, 2013).

September 04: The prime minister Sheikh Hasina criticised civil society, especially those who are advocating a non-party government to supervise the next general elections. She made the statement a day after a number of members of the civil society, jurists and political analysts, had said that the prime minister's latest announcement on the holding of the next national election might deepen the ongoing political crisis and hinder a level playing field (New Age, September 05, 2013).

September 03: BNP chairperson, Khaleda Zia urged professionals to actively participate in the final stages of the party's movement, she hoped to announce in the last week of October. In this regard, she planned to hold meetings with teachers of the Bangladesh Agricultural University and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology and working class leaders (New Age, September 05, 2013).

September 06: In a review meeting, BNP vice-chairman Abdullah Al-Noman said the opposition alliance would scuttle the ruling party's 'ill-attempt' to hold the next general elections under a partisan government through mass movement. The meeting reviewed the latest preparation of BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia's public meeting in Narsingdi district on September 08. Oust-the-government movement would begin with Khaleda Zia's public meetings in Narsingdi district (New Age, September 06, 2013).

September 08: At least 20 people, including a photo-journalist, were injured when the activists of pro-Jamaat-e-Islami, Chhatra Shibir clashed with police in Rajshahi and Moulvibazar district. The Chhatra Shibir was demonstrating as part of their countrywide movement demanding immediate release of their leaders and activists (Daily Star, September 09, 2013).

September 17: The Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) called a 48-hour countrywide hartal (shutdown) from September 18, following a Supreme Court awarding death penalty to its leader Abdul Quader Mollah for wartime offences (Daily Star, September 17, 2013).

September 17: At least 30 civilians and four police personnel were injured as the supporters of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir, went on rampage in Dhaka, Chittagong, Bogra, Natore and Moulvibazar shortly after the Supreme Court had converted the

life term for its leader Abdul Quader Mollah, to death penalty on (Daily Star, September 17, 2013).

September 19: One policeman and a Jamaat-e-Islami activist were killed in a clash during the Jamaat-enforced 48-hour hartal on the second day. Around 47 persons are injured in violence. Jamaat has enforced the shutdown from September 18 protesting the death penalty to its Assistant Secretary General Abdul Quader Mollah. (Daily Star, September 19, 2013).

September 19: A tribunal in Dhaka accepted the charges of war crimes against Jamaat leader Abdus Subhan. Subhan, who was vice-president of Pabna Peace Committee, an associate organisation of the Pakistani army at that time, had been involved in at least nine incidents of war crimes. The framing of charges will begin on October 02, 2013 (Daily Star, September 19, 2013).

September 21: Police arrested 12 Jamaat-Shibir activists and seized 10 crude bombs and hundreds of leaflets from a house at Malibagh of Dhaka (Daily Star, September 21, 2013).

September 21: Jamaat-e-Islami called a half-day hartal (shutdown) in Meherpur on September 22 in protest against the killing of its activist Delwar Hossain during the party's 48-hour hartal on September 18. Delwar was killed in a clash between Jamaat men and police at Gourinagar when Jamaat was observing the hartal protesting the death penalty awarded to its assistant secretary general Abdul Quader Mollah (Daily Star, September 21, 2013).

September 21: The Detective Branch of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police issued an alert that smuggling of small firearms into Bangladesh, especially pistols and revolvers, through three bordering districts- Chapainwababganj, Satkhira and Jessore- has become rampant as the gunrunners have found the routes safe for their illicit trade (New Age, September 21, 2013).

September 23: At least 135 people including six police personnel were injured during demonstrations by apparel workers demanding a hike in salary, for a third consecutive day. The workers engaged in sporadic clashes with law enforcers in Gazipur and Savar and attacked an Ansar camp in Joydevpur upazila of Gazipur and looted firearms. Four Ansar members including a commander were injured in the attack (Daily Star, September 23, 2013).

September 23: Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir activists clashed with police in Rajshahi and resorted to vandalism in Sylhet demanding immediate release of their leaders including Abdul Quader Molla. Police detained 16 Jamaat-Shibir men on the charge of planning subversive activities from different parts of Sylhet city (Daily Star, September 23, 2013).

September 25: Around 25 workers were injured when police charged batons on the apparel workers' during demonstrations for more than one hour blocking the Dhaka-Tangail highway and Dhaka-Narayanganj link road. The workers vandalised at least 10 vehicles and eight factories in Savar and Gazipur. Meanwhile, over 144 garment factories suspended production of their units in Gazipur when the apparel workers' unrest over salary hike stepped into fifth consecutive day (Daily Star, September 25, 2013).

September 26: The activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir led a brisk procession in Badda area of Dhaka and vandalised several vehicles. The Jamaat-Shibir men also exploded three cocktails (Daily Star, September 26, 2013).

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami: A Brief Sketch

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (hereafter JeI) was formed in 1971 alongside the formation of Bangladesh as a sovereign independent country. The idea of JeI emerged as a reaction to the ban imposed on the political parties to profess Islam immediately after independence in 1971. After the 5th amendment to the Constitution came into force in 1977, the JeI emerged as an Islamic political movement in 1979. Its objective is to bring about far-reaching changes in Bangladesh society by adhering to Islamic teachings. It emphasizes three diktats mentioned in the Quran ('O people, submit to Allah, There is no other Lord for you except Him'). JeI tries to popularize the message through religious sermons and influence government decision-making by associating itself with like-minded mainstream political parties. The long-term objective of the BJI is to create a theocratic Bangladesh and form a government with the 'blessings of Allah' and the support of the people. It shall turn the county into a "welfare state in the light of the Quran and the Sunnah." It tries to protect Islam from anti-social and anti-Islamic influences.

Organizational Structure

JeI's organizational structure takes into consideration its quest to achieve its religious and political objectives. It has both an official and clandestine organizational structure. Since almost all top leaders of the JeI are either under judicial custody or sentenced to death for war crimes, the JeI is presently led by its acting Secretary General, Maulana Rafiqul Islam Khan. Islami Moqbul Ahmed is the acting Ameer of the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami.

As on September 29, 2013, the following top JeI leaders have been charged for their role in war crimes by the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT). They are: Moulana Matiur Rahman Nizami, Professor Ghulam Azam, Moulana Abul Kalam Muhammad Yousuf, Moulana Abdus Subhan, Moulana Delwar Hossain Sayeede, Ali Ahsan Md. Mujahid, Md. Kamaruzzaman, Abdul Kader Mullah, ATM Azharul Islam and Mir Quasem Ali. (Source: <http://www.jamaat-e-islami.org/en/>)

Support Base

The membership of the outfit is reserved only for committed Muslims. It does not encourage outside leaders to gain higher positions in the organizational structure. The leadership positions are reserved for JeI members. JeI gets support both from rural and urban areas.

The JeI operates through many front organizations like the Islamic Chatra Shibir (ICS), Farmers' Welfare Association, Dhaka Cultural Centre, Uccharon Artistes Association, Islamic Welfare Society and Simoom Artistes Association. There are some radical religious groups including the Harkatul Jihad, Jamatul Mujahideen, Jagroto Muslim Janata and so on, which are part of the JeI structure. Many ICS cadres are also members of these outfits. (Source: Shahriar Kabir, "Jammat-e-Islami and Islamic Militancy in Bangladesh", <http://www.secularvoiceofbangladesh.org/>).

Recent Events

On July 15, 2013, the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) sentenced JeI's top leader Ghulam Azam to 90 years in jail for his involvement in mass killings and rape during the war. Supporters of the JeI party clashed with police ahead of the verdict. It was the fifth sentence passed against current and former leaders of the party. Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayeedi and the party's assistant secretary-general, Muhammad Kamaruzzaman, were both sentenced to death by the Tribunal earlier this year. In another blow to the party, on September 17, Abdul Quader Mollah, was sentenced to death for war crimes during the war by the Bangladesh Supreme Court, eight months after a special tribunal sentenced him to life imprisonment. Jamaat-e-Islami's (detained) assistant secretary general, A.T.M. Azharul Islam, was also charged with war crimes.

Present Status

The Dhaka High Court cancelled the registration of Jamaat-e-Islami and banned it from contesting future polls on August 01, 2013. The bench comprising Justices M. Moazzam Husain, M. Enayetur Rahim, and Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque passed the judgment accepting a writ petition that challenged the legality of Jamaat-e-Islami's registration as a political party. The petition said Jamaat-e-Islami was a religion-based political party and it did not believe in the independence and sovereignty of Bangladesh. Until 2008, the JeI was contesting elections as a political party. Despite the High Court order, the JeI continues to remain part of the BNP-led 18-party alliance. If the ban continues till the Parliament elections, then many JeI candidates may contest as independents with support from the BNP-led alliance.

INDIA

The Jammu and Kashmir region witnessed increase in militant attacks on security forces (SF). Around 12 people including a senior army officer was killed in twin terror attacks by a single "fidayeen" (suicide) squad in Kathua and Samba districts of Jammu region. An unknown outfit Shuhada (martyrs) Brigade, suspected



to be Lashkar-e-Taiba's shadow or proxy, claimed responsibility for the attack. The security forces also neutralised several attempts of infiltration by the militants. The militants also tried to create tensions between local people and security forces by deliberately killing civilians in Shopian area of south Kashmir. Local people organised protests against the SF over civilian killings. Curfew was imposed in the region for more than five days. Interestingly, before the fidayeen attacks, there were several ceasefire violations on the India-Pakistan border from the Pakistan side.

The other issue which dominated the India's security landscape throughout September was the ongoing interrogations of Indian Mujahideen leader Yashin Bhatkal. The revelations, if the investigating agencies are to be believed, are worrisome and do not augur well for the country. IM's reported plan to attack Jewish establishments and to target Indian political leaders to create countrywide chaos among other things during elections would remain a major internal security priority.

Communal tensions loomed large in some part of Northern India after clashes between two communities in western Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district till September 24. Around 50 people were killed in that incident. Violence broke out in the Kawal area of Muzaffarnagar when members of a community returning from a panchayat meeting in Naglabadhod clashed with members of another community. The Army and paramilitary forces were deployed in Muzaffarnagar to bring the tension under control.

Jammu and Kashmir will continue to witness more militant attacks on SF in the coming days, as militant infiltrations have increased manifold. The Maoist rebels may step up attacks on the SF and government infrastructures ahead of forthcoming Parliament and Assembly elections.

Major Events

September 01: A seminar organized by the United Committee Manipur (UCM) in Imphal resolved to launch a sustained agitation to safeguard the territory of Manipur which will be lost once the border fence is erected along Manipur-Myanmar border. The resolution also demanded the suspension of erection works till an agreement is reached. Over 15 tribal villages of Manipur will be affected if the border fence is erected at the present location (The Hindu, September 02, 2013).

September 03: Two suspected NDFB(S) terrorists were killed in an encounter with CRPF's CoBRA commandos at Khagrabari near Aie river in Chirang district. One pistol and a grenade were recovered from the slain militants (IBN Live, September 03, 2013).

September 05: At least 12 cadres of different militant organizations surrendered to Manipur chief minister Okram Ibobi Singh. Of the 12 cadres, six belong to PREPAK (Pro), KYKL (2) and one each from PREPAK, PLA, UNLF and KCP (Lamyamba Khuman). They lay down an AK-47 rifle, two 9 mm pistols with magazines and bullets and five hand grenades (Times of India, September 05, 2013).

September 06: The Myanmar's army has asked the tribal village chief of Hollenphai village in Manipur to demolish houses and churches located at "areas of Myanmar." This was stated in a joint press statement by Thangkhosai Haokip and Khaimang Chongloi, the president and the general secretary of the Kuki Impi Manipur (KIM), the apex body of the Kuki tribals in Manipur (The Hindu, September 06, 2013).

September 06: The Maoists have recruited nearly 4,000 children, including girls, as part of a recruitment drive to strengthen their depleted cadre base. Official sources said the children were recruited for gathering intelligence about the movement of security forces, collect rations and work as couriers. While the age of boys is as low as 10 years, the average age of girls is 14-15 years (Times of India, September 06, 2013).

September 07: Four people were killed in a shootout in Shopian area of South Kashmir. The police claim the firing took place after a paramilitary post was attacked by militants, in which two militants and two civilians caught in the crossfire were killed. Police recovered two pistols from the site of the shootout (NDTV, September 07, 2013).

September 07: The shutdown, called by groups supporting the proposed division of Andhra Pradesh and formation of separate Telangana, was near total in the region while it evoked a mixed response in Hyderabad (DNA India, September 07, 2013).

September 09: Deputy Chief Minister of Manipur Gaikhangam Gangmei told reporters that he and Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh would meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to discuss the issue of the border row with Myanmar. The Myanmar's army has reportedly constructed one camp at Holenphai village near the border town of Moreh (The Hindu, September 10, 2013).

September 09: Over 155 rebels surrendered after the signing of MoU between the Manipur government and three terrorist outfits -Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP-Nongdrenkhomba), Kuki National Liberation Front (KNLF) and Kuki Revolutionary Front (KRF)- in Imphal. Around 300 rebels belonging to different outfits have surrendered so far this year in Manipur (IBN Live, September 10, 2013).

September 10: After a month-long agitation and stalemate, the Gorkhaland Joint Action

Committee, the conglomerate of pro-Gorkhaland parties in Darjeeling decided to put the agitation for separate statehood on hold till October 2020. The GJAC has taken the decision after the Union Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde appealed for tripartite talks on the statehood issue (Economic Times, September 10, 2013).

September 11: One person was killed and four others injured after security forces allegedly opened fire on protesters in Shopian district in south Kashmir. People were protesting against the killing of four persons in a controversial shootout by the Central Reserve Police Force on September 07 (NDTV, September 11, 2013).

September 13: Security forces recovered high-tech arms, ammunition and gadgets from Maoist hideouts in Chhattisgarh. GPS, Chinese binoculars, claymore landmines and many other latest devices were recovered from Maoist hideouts in Rajnandgaon district (IBN Live, September 13, 2013).

September 13: At least nine migrant labourers from Assam were killed and 11 others injured in a grenade attack by militants at Nagamapal area in Imphal West district of Manipur (The Hindu, September 14, 2013).

September 14: Odisha police gunned down 13 Maoists, including a woman, inside a forest in the Podia block of Malkangiri district. An AK-47, a 9 mm pistol, 10 country-made guns, one country-made pistol, two claymore mines, 30 kitbags and ammunition were recovered from the Maoist camp (Indian Express, September 14, 2013).

September 16: Investigating agencies have reportedly recovered nearly 90 ready-to-use Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) from different Indian Mujahideen hideouts in Zephyr Heights, Mangalore and Abdullapur, Hyderabad (Times of India, September 16).

September 18: Suspected Maoist rebels stormed the National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) facility in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh and set the conveyor belt on fire. No casualty was reported in the incident (Business Standard, September 18, 2013).

September 18: A top militant leader of Manipur Naga Revolutionary Front (MNRF) was shot dead by suspected rival faction in Manipur's interior Ukhul district. MNRF which was formed by some militants about two years ago, was opposed to those persons who wanted to break up Manipur to form smaller states along ethnic lines (Business Standard, September 18, 2013).

September 24: Three suspected ULFA militants were arrested and three AK-81 rifles, nine magazines and three US-made bottle grenades were recovered from them (Zee News, September 24, 2013).

September 24: The Mumbai police asked at least 12 Jewish establishments in the city to be on alert. The advisory comes after the interrogation of Indian Mujahideen terrorist Yashin Bhatkal by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in New Delhi. Bhatkal has reportedly told the investigators that Jewish establishments in Mumbai have been recced by IM operatives (NDTV/PTI, September 24).

September 25: The Union Home Ministry warned that the CPI(Maoist) is all set to step up violence in the Maoist-infested state once again in the next 2-3 months, at a high-level review meeting chaired by Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde in New Delhi (Asian Age, September 25, 2013).

September 25: A powerful improvised explosive device (IED), weighing about two-and-a-half kgs, was seized along the Imphal-Jiribam-Silchar national highway (NH) in Manipur's Imphal west district. Meanwhile, four insurgents -- three from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and one from the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (Progressive), PREPAK-P, were arrested during various search operations at Uripok, Paona Bazar and other areas (The Hindu, September 25, 2013).

September 25: Assam Police killed a United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) militant and arrested three others. Two pistols, three cell phones, two pairs of shoes and a wallet containing money were seized from the arrested militants (Zee News, September 25, 2013).

September 26: Around 12 people, including a lieutenant-colonel of the Indian Army, were killed and four injured in twin terror attacks by a single "fidayeen" (suicide) squad in Kathua and Samba districts of Jammu region. An unknown outfit Shuhada (martyrs) Brigade, suspected to be Lashkar-e-Taiba's shadow or proxy, claimed responsibility for the attack.

September 28: Abdul Rehman, a former Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) operative was arrested in Kerala for publishing Jihadi literature titled Da'watum Jihadum (Dawat and Jihad). The original Urdu language book was authored by Hyderabad-based cleric Moulana Abdul Aleem Islahi. Usman Kadungott has translated the book into Malayalam.

September 30: At least seven prisoners including six operatives of proscribed Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) escaped from a prison in Madhya Pradesh attacking security personnel. Three of them were part of a plot to kill three judges who gave a decisive judgment in the Ram temple case.

MALDIVES

Despite successful conduct of the primary round of Presidential elections in the presence of international observers, uncertainty over the future of democracy continued. Since no party had secured more than 50 per cent of the votes, according to the Constitution, the election Commission of Maldives conducted the



second round of presidential elections on September 28 between the top two political parties-MDP (95,224 votes) and PPM (53,099 votes). The third largest party, the Jumhooree Party (JP) coalition, challenged the election results both in the High Court and Supreme Court about mistakes in the voters' list. The Supreme Court ordered prohibition on the second round of presidential elections until further orders. Immediately after the first round of elections, some senior leaders from MDP's rival party had declared that they would not allow Nasheed to assume power. The MDP suspects that the Court injunction was a conspiracy against both democratic and liberal political forces in Maldives. Interestingly, the Election Commission was completely isolated before the second round of presidential elections by other state agencies.

The MDP may carry out protests against the conduct of the second round of the election as soon as possible and also against judicial excesses. There are possibilities of clashes between MDP cadres and police in coming days. Other political parties may also support the police to harass the MDP supporters.

Major Events

September 07: Presidential elections in Maldives were held without any violence being reported. There were minor allegations of booth capturing from some political parties (Minivan News, September 08, 2013).

September 10: The Police Integrity Commission (PIC) recommended administrative action against the Police Commissioner Abdulla Riyaz over violating the Police Act by posting a letter on Twitter urging police officers not to vote for former President Mohammed Nasheed (Minivan News, September 10, 2013).

September 12: The Election Commission (EC) has sent a formal letter of warning to the religious conservative Adhaalath Party, stating that the Commission would take action should the party continue violating the Political Parties Act – the parent legislation upon which all political parties are founded. The warning was issued after Sheikh Imran during the speech claimed that the Jumhoree coalition would not accept the results of the scheduled run-off election, regardless of who won it (Minivan News, September 12, 2013).

September 13: The Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party's (DRP) declared that it would support the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) in the second round of the presidential election. DRP leader Ahmed Thasmeen Ali said that the party had made the decision based on the overwhelming support that the MDP had received in the September 7 election (Minivan News, September 14, 2013).

September 17: The Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) has called on the Parliament to reconvene to stop the Supreme Court from potentially annulling the election results, claiming the apex court consists of "some disgraced judges who face allegations of lewd conduct" (Minivan News, September 17, 2013).

September 18: The Maldives National Movement (MNM) has decided to protest against the vote manipulation in the first round of elections held on 7 September 2013. The protest will call for the Election Commission and all respective authorities related to the election to be accountable for the vote manipulation (Miadhu, September 18, 2013).

September 21: Two people on a motorcycle threw two petrol bombs toward the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP)'s 'Janbu Jagaha' meeting hall in Male'. No casualties were reported in the incident (Minivan News, September 23, 2013).

September 23: Umar Naseer has said that all political parties would unite against the opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) in the second round of the presidential election and would defeat MDP's presidential candidate, former President Mohammed Nasheed (Miadhu, September 23, 2013).

September 23: The Maldives Supreme Court issued an injunction delaying the second round of

the presidential election until it has finished looking into alleged discrepancies in the first round. The Court said “based on Article 144 (b), we order the Elections Commission and other relevant state institutions to delay the second round of the presidential election scheduled for 28 September 2013 until the Supreme Court issues a verdict in this case” (Minivan News, September 23, 2013).

September 24: The Election Commission (EC) said it would continue with preparations for the second round of presidential elections – scheduled for September 28 – and has stressed the supremacy of the Constitution following conflicting orders by the Majlis and the Supreme Court on a polling date. The Majlis passed a resolution on September 23 ordering the Election Commission to proceed with polls as planned (Minivan News, September 24, 2013).

September 25: The international community expressed alarm over the Maldives’ sudden suspension of the second round of presidential elections, initially scheduled for September 28. The Supreme Court issued an interim order on September 23, signed by four of the seven-member bench, halting the election until the Court rules on allegations of electoral impropriety filed by third-placed presidential candidate, Gasim Ibrahim (Minivan News, September 25, 2013).

September 26: Religious Islamist group Jamiyyathul Salaf has urged political parties including Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) and Jumhoory Party (JP) coalition not to use Sheikh Adam Shameem’s Al-Andhalus’ sermon, for anything other than its actual purpose, which was to remind the people to be careful of those trying to destroy the independence and Islam in the country, and to remind the people not to let those people achieve their goal. JS has distanced itself from political parties (Minivan News, September 26, 2013).

NEPAL

In Nepal, uncertainty over the holding of the 2nd Constituent Assembly (CA) elections on November 19 increased after the failure of dialogue between the High Level Political Committee (HLPC) and the CPN-Maoist-led 33 political parties. The CPN-Maoist blamed foreign forces for the abrupt end to the dialogue process from the HLPC side. Meanwhile, the 33 parties called for a *bandh* (shutdown) and demanded the scrapping of the agreement signed by the four major parties on March 14, forming an all-party government by dissolving the present government and postponement of Constituent Assembly (CA) polls. The party asked its cadres to be prepared to disrupt the November elections. In fact, the party has threatened that it may take up arms if the government tries to conduct Constituent Assembly elections in November without addressing their demands. In this regard, the party conducted training camps in the mid-western districts in which 36 district cadres were trained in warfare skills.



The CPN-Maoist has planned in detail how to disrupt the elections. First, the party may try to prevent other party candidates from filing their nomination papers. Second, they may attempt to kidnap some influential political leaders to bargain with the government to initiate the dialogue process and postpone the elections. Third, its cadre would not allow the election officials to reach the polling stations. Last but not least, it will appeal to people not to participate in the elections and if possible intimidate them.

Anticipating violence during elections, the government decided to deploy the Army. The decision was taken at a meeting of the National Security Council for election security as per the constitutional provision. The CPN-Maoist-led 33 agitating parties will intensify their activities to disrupt the CA elections. Simultaneously the alliance will also keep its door open for dialogue.

Major Events

September 01: CPN-Maoist General Secretary Ram Bahadur Thapa directed the party's rank and file to be mentally prepared to even take up weapons, should the need arise, to disrupt the November 19 CA election (Himalayan Times, September 01, 2013).

September 05: CPN-Maoist leader from Rukum district Sher Bahadur KC said his party conducted underground combat training for its cadres in Rukum with a view to preparing them for disrupting the Constituent Assembly (CA) polls scheduled for November 19. During the week-long residential training held at Garayala village in western Rukum, 36 district cadres were trained in warfare skills (Republica, September 06, 2013).

September 06: The High Level Political Committee (HLPC) and the Ashok Rai-led Federal Socialist Party (FSP) struck a five-point deal. As agreed, the FSP has withdrawn all its protest programmes and now has featured in the list of those parties that will take part in the forthcoming CA elections (Republica, September 06, 2013).

September 09: The Federal Republican Socialist Party (FRSP) called for a shutdown in the nine districts of the east, including Jhapa district, affecting normal life. The party called for the bandh demanding that federal states including Limbuwan be guaranteed before the election to the Constituent Assembly (CA) takes place (Himalayan Times, September 09, 2013).

September 12: Normal life was crippled in the Valley and eastern districts due to the bandh (shutdown) called by the 33-party alliance led by the CPN-Maoist. The alliance called for the bandh demanding holding of round-table talks, among others (Ekantipur, September 12, 2013).

September 13: Over a dozen people have been injured in a powerful bomb blast at Sarlahi Survey office in District headquarters Malangawa. The motive behind the blast is yet to be ascertained (Ekantipur, September 13, 2013).

September 13: Normal life in 20 districts in the mid and far west regions has come to a grinding halt following the bandh (shutdown) imposed by the CPN-Maoist-led 33-party alliance. The agitating parties demanded the scrapping of the agreement signed by the four major parties on March 14, forming an all-party government by dissolving the present government and postponement of the CA polls. The CPN-Maoist also dubbed the joint statement of the

European missions, apropos to the bandh culture, a breach of diplomacy and interference in Nepal's internal affairs (Himalayan Times, September 13, 2013).

September 15: Police found forty-four .303 rifles and a two-inch mortar of insurgency-era firearms in a forest near Khalanga in Jajarkot district. The butts and barrels of the rifles were separated so that it could be easier for smugglers to transport (Ekantipur, September 15, 2013).

September 17: CPN-Maoist Vice-Chairman C.P. Gajurel warned that his party would kidnap the candidates of other parties and prevent them from filing their nominations if the Constituent Assembly election is held without its participation (Himalayan Times, September 17, 2013).

September 17: Police arrested three people including an ex-Maoist combatant on the charge of terrifying the villagers by brandishing weapons. The arrests were made at Makrahar village in the district. They were held with one country-made pistol, one .303 rifle and one bullet (Ekantipur, September 17, 2013).

September 18: An internal assessment made by the government has categorised 16 districts as 'most sensitive' for the November 19 Constituent Assembly election. A majority of these districts, according to a report prepared by the Home Ministry, are in the Terai, where 71 of the 116 constituencies have fallen under the category (Ekantipur, September 18, 2013).

September 20: The Uday Kant Mishra a.k.a. Azad Singh-led Samyukta Janatantrik Tarai Mukti Morcha, an underground group, merged with the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum-Nepal. The outfit decided to pursue the path of peaceful struggle after realising that it is impossible to achieve desired results through violent means (Himalayan Times, September 20, 2013).

September 20: CPN-Maoist Secretary Netra Bikram Chand warned that his party will not hesitate to take up arms if the government tries to conduct Constituent Assembly elections in November (Himalayan Times, September 20, 2013).

September 22: The government proposed to form a four-tier security mechanism for the upcoming Constituent Assembly (CA) elections scheduled for November 19. According to the integrated security plan, around 62000 Nepal Army personnel, 54000 personnel from Nepal Police, 22000 from APF and over 44000 temporary personnel will be used for election security (Republica, September 22, 2013).

September 23: Strongly criticizing the High Level Political Committee (HLPC) and terming the four parties stooges of foreign forces and the Khila Raj Regmi-led current government a puppet, agitating CPN-Maoist party chairman Mohan Baidya appealed to the people to extensively and strongly boycott the Constituent Assembly (CA) polls scheduled for November 19 (Republica, September 23, 2013).

October 29: The CPN-Maoist-led 33-party alliance has urged the leaders of four major political parties to hold a dialogue once again. The CPN-Maoist Secretary Dev Gurung on behalf of the alliance, said that 'national consensus among the parties and promulgating new constitution' were a must to resolve the existing crisis in the country, and for that there was no alternative to the election.' (Himalayan Times, September 29, 2013).

PAKISTAN

The attacks on security forces by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) continued throughout in September. The major attack on the Pakistan Army on this month took place immediately after the peace talks were announced by the government. Two senior military officers and a soldier were killed in a bomb attack in



the Upper Dir district of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Responding to the criticism from mainstream political parties over the attacks on the Army despite the peace offer, the TTP said government should show some sincerity and urged that troops in the entire tribal area should go back to the barracks. The other demand was prisoners' release. However, despite the government's repeated appeals for dialogue, the TTP again insisted they are still at war with government troops because peace talks have yet to start and the military is still launching multiple offensives against them. The TTP also diversified its target groups by targeting Christian minorities to take revenge on Western countries, especially those that supported the US drone attacks.

The offer of peace talks led to disagreements between the Pakistan Army and the civilian authority, over how to handle an escalating insurgency. The Army criticised the civilian government and opposed peace talks with the Pakistani Taliban, saying previous attempts to bring the militants to the negotiating table had yielded no results. This indicates that the Nawaz Sharif government is finding it difficult to manage the TTP and the Army still remains a major player in Pakistan.

The frequency of militant attacks on public transport and other infrastructural facilities was comparatively less this month. Despite the deployment of Rangers in Karachi, the city continued to bleed due to sectarian violence.

In all likelihood, the TTP's attacks on security forces, Christians and foreign nationals will continue. The dialogue may not progress substantially due to the army's reservations while the Pakistan army will continue as an influential player in Pakistani political and security landscape.

Major Events

September 01: Nine soldiers were killed and 21 others injured when a roadside bomb hit an

army convoy passing through the troubled region of North Waziristan near the border with Afghanistan (Daily Times, September 02, 2013).

September 03: At least 12 persons including a police personnel were killed in separate incidents of firing and violence across Karachi (Daily Times, September 04, 2013).

September 03: Karachi's police chief said that 119 policemen had been killed during the last eight months in the city. He said the city has been facing problems of street crime, extortion and targeted killings and a huge quantity of weapons are available in the city (Dawn, September 03, 2013).

September 04: Sixteen persons were killed including a Pakistani naval officer in various ethnic and sectarian incidents in Karachi (Nation, September 05, 2013).

September 05: 11 persons were injured, mostly children, in a bomb explosion outside a girls' school. The bomb went off at the end of the school day as students walked into a street lined with fabric shops in Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. In a separate incident, a suspected militant was killed and another arrested by police during an overnight clash with residents in Bannu (Dawn, September 05, 2013).

September 05: Three suspected militants were killed during an exchange of fire with personnel from the Crime Investigation Department (CID) in Karachi's Mauripur area (Dawn, September 05, 2013).

September 04: The federal cabinet gave approval for an operation by Rangers against criminal elements in Karachi. This was decided at a special meeting of the federal cabinet at the Governor's House under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The operation will be led by the Rangers, while police will assist the paramilitary forces. (Daily Times, September 05, 2013).

September 06: Two persons, including a local leader of the Awami National Party (ANP), were killed in different incidents of violence in Karachi. Further, Rangers arrested 11 suspects in a separate search operation carried out in the city's Baldia town area (Dawn, September 06, 2013).

September 06: A drone strike in the North Waziristan tribal region killed six militants including a senior commander, Mullah Sangeen Zadran, of the Haqqani network. Zadran was blacklisted as a terrorist by the United Nations and United States and was wanted for kidnappings and sending hundreds of foreign fighters into Afghanistan (Dawn, September 06, 2013).

September 07: The government announced the release of seven more Taliban militants 'to facilitate' the troubled Afghan reconciliation process. This was the third batch of Taliban detainees to be released by Islamabad. Twenty-six prisoners were set free in two groups in 2012 (Dawn, September 08, 2013).

September 09: The mainstream political parties supported the government's anti-terror efforts and unanimously recommended the initiation of dialogue with all the stakeholders to curb terrorism. They also called for taking up the issue of drone attacks at the United Nations.

September 09: A joint counter-insurgency operation by police and army killed two suspected TTP suicide bombers after they attacked the office of the district police officer (DPO), judicial lock ups and lower courts in Kohat. One policeman was also killed while 13 others, including three security personnel, were injured in the attack inside the military cantonment area.

Separately, three volunteers of a peace lashkar were killed in a clash with terrorists in Shlobar area of Bara Tehsil. The terrorists also kidnapped five members of the lashkar. In another incident, five tribesmen were killed and two injured in firing by unidentified men in Bannu (Daily Times, September 10, 2013).

September 11: Muttahida Qaumi Movement chief Altaf Hussain condemned the arrest of a former provincial legislator belonging to the party, Nadeem Hashmi. In response, MQM supporters observed a shutdown in Karachi and in some areas of Hyderabad (Dawn, September 11, 2013).

September 11: As a confidence building measure ahead of possible peace talks, the Pakistani military has exchanged six militants for two paramilitary soldiers captured by the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) (Dawn, September 11, 2013).

September 10: Eleven people, including a Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) worker, were shot dead in separate incidents of violence in Karachi (Daily Times, September 11, 2013).

September 12: Senior Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) commanders opened discussions at an undisclosed location in the semi-autonomous northwest area along the Afghan border on how to respond to an invitation from the government for talks to end insurgency that has killed thousands of people (Daily Times, September 13, 2013).

September 13: At least nine NATO oil tankers were burnt during an attack in the Sohrab district of Balochistan. The oil tankers were incinerated when unknown motorcyclists targeted them with rockets in the Sohrab area near Kalat (Dawn, September 13, 2013).

September 15: Two senior military officers and a soldier were killed in a bomb attack in the Upper Dir district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) accepted responsibility for the attack (Dawn, September 15, 2013).

September 15: At least twenty oil tankers were burnt in a rocket attack in Balochistan. The oil tankers were carrying fuel for NATO forces to Afghanistan from Karachi when armed men intercepted them and set them on fire (Daily Times, September 16, 2013).

September 17: Six persons, including a political party worker, were killed in various incidents of violence whereas Rangers and Police personnel arrested 30 suspects and recovered weapons during targeted operations conducted in Karachi. Earlier on September 16, police had claimed to have detained four militants belonging to the Lashkar-i-Jhangvi during operations conducted in Karachi (Dawn, September 17, 2013).

September 17: A worker of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and another of the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ) were shot dead by police in controversial circumstances in Mochko while four other MQM men were gunned down in Orangi Town in a suspected targeted attack (Dawn, September 18, 2013).

September 17: Commenting on the recent arrest of a militant, Punjab University Vice-Chancellor Prof Mujahid Kamran said that the Islami Jamiat Talba (IJT) had sheltered the Al-Qaeda operative arrested from the university hostel. (The Nation, September 18, 2013).

September 20: The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry has remarked that arms are coming into Karachi from India, Israel, NATO, US and Russia. Justice Iftikhar was presiding over a five-member bench of the Supreme Court, hearing the Karachi violence case

(Daily Times, September 20, 2013).

September 20: Three people were killed and several injured in a grenade attack on a mosque in Achini Bala area of Peshawar. Initial reports suggest that hand grenades were thrown inside the mosque by unidentified militants (Daily Times, September 20, 2013).

September 21: Pakistan released its most senior Afghan Taliban detainee, Abdul Ghani Baradar, in a move Kabul hopes will encourage peace talks with the insurgents. Abdul Ghani Baradar, a one-time military chief often described as the insurgents' former second-in-command, was the most high profile Taliban commander detained in Pakistan (The Nation, September 21, 2013).

September 20: A tribal leader belonging to Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) was killed and five others injured when gunmen on a motorcycle attacked a PTI office at the Jalozi camp in Nowshera (Dawn, September 21, 2013).

September 22: A twin suicide bombing killed more than 80 people and injured 130 others at a church service in Peshawar in one of the deadliest attacks on Christians in the country. Two suicide bombers entered the All-Saints Church and detonated their explosive jackets at the conclusion of a service when hundreds of worshippers were coming out to get a free meal of rice on the front lawn. Taliban's special anti-foreigners wing, Junood ul-Hifsa, claimed responsibility, to avenge US drone strikes on them and Al-Qaeda operatives (The Nation, September 23, 2013).

September 23: Angry Christians carried out protest rally against the deadly attack at All-Saints Church in Peshawar (Dawn, September 23, 2013).

September 23: Around six people, including three police personnel, were killed while eight others were injured in a remote-controlled blast in Saranan area of Pishin District. The police personnel were busy in routine security checks at a check post in Saranan when the blast occurred (Daily Times, September 24, 2013).

September 24: In a major reshuffle, the Pakistani Army has changed the portfolios of several officers giving them important command and staff positions, including that of a corps commander, two General-Officers-Commanding (GOCs) and a deputy director general at the Inter-Services Intelligence (The Nation, September 24, 2013).

September 25: Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan militants attacked the Ghallanai Dam site in Mohmand Agency, Peshawar, by killing three workers and kidnapping at least two others. The attackers planted an improvised bomb on the road leading to the dam (Daily Times, September 26, 2013).

September 27: 19 people were killed and 43 others injured when a powerful bomb exploded in a bus carrying government employees near Gulbela area in Peshawar (The Nation, September 28, 2013).

September 29: Swat chapter of TTP claimed responsibility for the September 15 attacks in Upper Dir that killed two senior army officers Major General, Sanaullah Khan, Lieutenant colonel, Tauseef. (Dawn, September 29, 2013)

September 29: Nearly 40 people died and hundred others injured in a car bomb blast near Kissa Khawani Bazaar of Peshawar. A splinter group of TTP claimed responsibility for the bombing, saying the attack was in response to US drone strikes in tribal areas. (Daily Times, September 30, 2013).

SRI LANKA

The Mahinda Rajapaksa government's 'carrot and stick' policy towards the Tamil and Muslim dominated Northern Province continued. While on the one hand, the government declared holding of the elections in the Northern Province, on the other hand, it tried to influence the provincial election results in favour of the



ruling party by intimidating TNA candidates and making anti-Muslim speeches. The members of the ruling party criticised both the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) and the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) for helping the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay to prepare a negative report on the country. Before the elections, the Campaign for Free and Fair Elections (CaFFE), Sri Lanka's election monitoring group, observed that the Department of Elections and the Police needed to take immediate action to enforce election laws to prevent escalation of violence ahead of the elections for Provincial Councils.

The Provincial Council elections held for the Northern, Central and North Western provinces were by and large free and fair except for some minor incidents with 67.52 per cent turnout. Tamil National Alliance (TNA) merged as largest party in the Northern Province Council elections. The party won all five districts in the Province with a clear majority and secured 30 of the 38 seats. The Buddhist extremist groups and the National Heritage Party (JHU), a Sinhalese hardline party, appealed to Sri Lanka's president to limit the powers of a regional council won by Tamils. Sinhala nationalist groups suspect that TNA's victory and implementation of the 13th Amendment may revive the separatist movement in the region.

The Supreme Court's decision on the 13th Amendment may lead to fresh round of ethnic tensions in the Northern Province. The TNA may not form the government in Northern Provincial Council until the land-related issues are settled. Pro-government Sinhala nationalist groups may try to suppress the TNA's demand over the land issue.

Major Events

September 01: Two suspected members of the banned Sri Lankan terrorist group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) arrested by the Indian police were reportedly making improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu (India). (Colombo Page, September 02, 2013).

September 05: The National Freedom Front (NFF), an ally of Sri Lanka's ruling party, accused the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), another party in the governing coalition, of helping the

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay to prepare a negative report on the country. The NFF noted that the separatist statements made by the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), the major Tamil party in the country, have noticeably increased following Pillay's visit (Colombo Page, September 05, 2013).

September 05: One suspected LTTE supporter set himself on fire morning in front of the UN's Human Rights Commission building in Geneva (Daily Mirror, September 06, 2013).

September 06: Muslim leaders and parties in Sri Lanka were disturbed over a comment made by the Sri Lankan Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapakse attributing the rising religious tensions in the country to Muslim extremism. The statement has also disturbed the Muslim allies of the government. Rauf Hakeem, Sri Lanka's Justice Minister criticized the Defence Secretary's comments saying that he was disturbed by the warning that extremist elements may try to promote Muslim extremism in Sri Lanka (Colombo Page, September 06, 2013).

September 07: Speaking at an election rally held at the Edward Sports Grounds in Matale, Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapaksa warned that foreign forces are plotting to destabilize the country and urged the ethnic Tamil and Muslim communities not to be misled by false propaganda that attempts to create rifts among the communities (Colombo Page, September 07, 2013).

September 09: The Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU), an ally of Sri Lanka's ruling party, said it would no longer participate in the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) appointed to address the national issue of power devolution. The party is not satisfied with the slow pace of the PSC in amending the 13th Amendment before the Northern Provincial Council elections (Colombo Page, September 09, 2013).

September 10: Two suspicious containers believed to contain drugs were seized by the Customs Revenue Task Force (RTF) of Sri Lanka upon their arrival from Karachi in Pakistan. According to Customs sources, there is a growing tendency to use Sri Lanka as a transshipment hub for smuggling and distributing drugs by Pakistan nationals (Daily Mirror, September 10, 2013).

September 13: Jaffna Security Forces arrested eight people on charges of possessing posters containing the picture of former LTTE leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran at Kodikarmam in Jaffna. They were campaigning for the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) during the elections to the Northern Provincial Council (Daily Mirror, September 13, 2013).

September 15: Customs officers of Sri Lanka seized four suspicious containers from Pakistan. Last month, the Customs officers of Sri Lanka had seized four such containers from Pakistan (Colombo Page, September 15, 2013).

September 15: Sri Lankan police arrested 125 people for election law violations. The police also received 142 election related complaints across the country (Colombo Page, September 15, 2013).

September 17: Campaign for Free and Fair Elections (CaFFE), Sri Lanka's election monitoring group, observed that the Department of Elections and the Police needed to take immediate action to enforce election laws to prevent escalation of violence ahead of the elections for the Northern, Northwestern and Central Provincial Councils (Colombo Page, September 17, 2013).

September 19: Sri Lanka expressed dismay at the concerns expressed by the United States, Germany and Ireland at the General Debate of the 24th session of the United Nations Human

Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva and asked the detractors at HRC not to discredit the Northern Provincial Council's election process or prejudice its outcome (Colombo Page, September 19, 2013).

September 19: Eight persons, including an election monitor, were attacked by the occupying Sri Lankan military in Jaffna, which besieged the residence of Tamil National Alliance (TNA) woman candidate Ms Ananthi Sasistharan at Araali in Jaffna (TamilNet, September 19, 2013).

September 21: The Election Commissioner Mahinda Deshapriya said the Provincial Council elections held for the Northern, Central and Northwestern provinces are by and large free and fair except for some minor incidents with 67.52 per cent turn out (Colombo Page, September 21, 2013).

September 22: Tamil National Alliance (TNA) secured a landslide victory in the first-ever Provincial Council elections held in the Tamil-dominated Northern Province. The party won all five districts in the Province with a clear majority and secured 30 of the 38 seats for the newly-formed Council. The ruling United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) managed to secure seven seats and the Muslim Party Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) got one seat in the Council (Colombo Page, September 22, 2013).

September 23: The National Heritage Party (JHU), a Sinhalese hardline party, urged Sri Lanka's president to reduce powers of a regional council won by Tamils. JHU argue that the first semi-autonomous body won by the minority Tamil National Alliance (TNA) could eventually lead to the division of the island on ethnic lines (Global Post, September 23, 2013).

September 23: The Ravana Balaya (RB), a Buddhist extremist outfit, threatened mass-scale countrywide agitation, if the government fully implemented the 13th Amendment and vested full powers with the Northern Provincial Council (NPC), which would be run by the Tamil National Alliance (TNA). The RB had earlier demanded before the election commissioner to cancel the NPC elections and declare TNA manifesto illegal (Ceylon Today, September 24, 2013).

September 28: The Campaign for a Free and Fair Election (CaFFE), an election monitor in Sri Lanka said incidents of violence following the end of the Provincial Council elections have risen. According to CaFFE five incidents were reported from the Kurunegala District (Colombo Page, September 28, 2013).

September 28: Tamil National Alliance (TNA) leader R. Sampanthan said the party would 'carefully study the Supreme Court judgement' on the issue of land and the powers of Provincial Councils pertaining to land, before deciding on the next course of action. He said over the past few years the Sri Lankan government has been acting in contravention of the constitutional provisions pertaining to land. In these circumstances, the recent judgement of the Supreme Court delivered by the current Chief Justice Mohan Peiris and two other judges, raises very serious issues relating to land" (Daily Mirror, September 28, 2013).