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1. Afghan asylum-seekers 'rescued' off Indonesia after AFP tip-off, Stephen Fitzpatrick, Australian, 2009-07-09

Up to 74 Afghan asylum-seekers have been found safe after fears their fishing boat had sunk in dangerous Indonesian waters, Foreign Minister Stephen Smith. The boat, which was reported to be foundering off Komodo island in the country's east, had been under surveillance by Australian police based in Jakarta. However, there was confusion over the fate of the boat late last night, with Indonesian military officials on Flores saying:"We've found nothing. We are the navy here and we've found nothing."

- Migrants disappear in Komodo shipwreck, Eras Poke, Jakarta Globe, 2009-07-08
- Migrants' boat feared sunk near Indonesia, Tony Jones, Lateline, ABC, 2009-07-08
- Mystery surrounds missing Afghan asylum boat, Geoff Thompson, ABC, 2009-07-09

2. Australian was spying, says China, Mathew Murphy and Chalpat Sonti, Age, 2009-07-09

An Australian executive of mining giant Rio Tinto, detained in China, is being held on suspicion of being a spy and stealing state secrets. Mr Hu was detained by Chinese Ministry of State Security officials on Sunday but has not been charged. Australian consular officials have so far been denied access to Mr Hu, but have struck a deal with China to see him by Saturday. Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Smith said there was no evidence of a link between the detention of Mr Hu and any commercial matters concerning Rio.

3. A runaway winner, Muninggar Sri Saraswati, Markus Junianto Sihaloho and April Aswadi, Jakarta Globe, 2009-07-09

Incumbent Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was handed a clear mandate to lead Indonesia for five more years, according to partial official results showing he scored a landslide victory in the country's second-ever direct presidential election. Results from 40,000 of 451,000 polling stations nationwide showed that Yudhoyono and his running mate Boediono, the former central bank governor, were leading with 60.72 percent of the vote.

- Komisi Pemilihan Umum [Indonesian Language]

- Hasil quick count pilpres LSI, Lemabaga Survei Indonesia, 2009-07-08 [Indonesian language]

4. PNG bank closure cripples province, Liam Fox, ABC, 2009-07-08

An entire province in Papua New Guinea has all but ground to a halt because its only bank has closed. Bank South Pacific suspended operations at its Popondetta branch in Oro province two weeks ago after rioting oil palm farmers damaged several buildings, including the bank. Since then schools have shut down and the local hospital is only taking emergency cases because there is no money to pay staff.

- Calm returns in PNG's Popondetta after riot by disgruntled bank customers, RNZI, 2009-06-29

5. Govt urged to front up on climate funds, Ilya Gridneff, Age, 2009-07-07

Opposition climate change spokesman Greg Hunt said Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Climate Change Minister Penny Wong needed to explain the success of programs such as the $3 million Papua New Guinea Australia Forest Carbon Partnership, signed more than a year ago.

- PNG carbon racket dupes landowners, RNZI, 2009-06-12
- PNG to investigate CO2 con men, UPI, 2009-06-24
- Papua New Guinea Australia Forest Carbon Partnership: 10 questions for Penny Wong, Chris Lang, 2009-07-03

6. Fugitive former Thai PM Thaksin Shinawatra's secret Fiji talks, Rowan Callick, Australian, 2009-07-09

Fugitive billionaire former Thai leader Thaksin Shinawatra flew in his Learjet to Fiji for a secret meeting with the controversial prime minister and military commander Frank Bainimarama. The

subject of their discussions, held in Mr Bainimarama's office in Suva, is unknown, but informed sources in Fiji say Mr Thaksin is considering investing $300million in the country. In return, he would probably be assured safety there from extradition.

7. No cap on troops for Afghanistan, Anne Davies, Age, 2009-07-09

America's military chief has flagged the possibility of sending more US troops to Afghanistan on top of 68,000 approved by the Obama Administration, warning that Americans should brace for more US casualties. Admiral Mike Mullen has denied there is a cap on the US commitment in Afghanistan, which was identified by President Obama as a priority.

- Security and stability in the broader Middle East: a cooperative approach, Adm. Mike Mullen, CSIS: Statesmen's Forum, 2009-07-07
- Allied officers concerned by lack of Afghan Forces, Richard A. Oppel Jr., NYT, 2009-07-07
- Two diggers wounded in Afghanistan, Age, 2009-07-09

8. Crossing the Helmand, Brian M Downing, Asia Times, 2009-07-08

The offensive launched last week by United States forces in the southern Afghan province of Helmand signals the start of a new chapter in the conflict. Two potential problems come to mind. First, the scale of the operation may be sufficient to cause dismay among the indigenous populace, many of whom are ambivalent about the Taliban but blame US troops for bringing war to their districts. Second, counter-insurgency doctrine calls for beginning in "easy" districts, where insurgent support is relatively weak and government control relatively strong. The present operation has ignored that tenet and chosen to begin in a Taliban stronghold.

- Helmand Province, Afghanistan, World Briefing Maps
- Map: Operation Panther's Claw, UK forces in major Afghan assault, BBC, 2009-06-23
- Operation Panther's Claw [aka Operation Panchai Palang], Wikipedia
- Operation Strike of the Sword [aka Operation Khanjar], Wikipedia

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