

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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1. COUNTRY REVIEW

A. SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

- **Karzai leads presidential vote count by significant margin; Dr. Abdullah states that he will not accept the results; Bashardost in third and Gilani in fourth position; 45 US soldiers killed in August, as against 44 in July; 40 killed in a truck bomb attack in Kandahar; 35 militants killed in NATO missile strike in southern Afghanistan; Brown visits British troops in Helmand**

Incumbent President Hamid Karzai according to most accounts has taken a significant lead over his closest rival Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, securing over 45 per cent of the votes polled, as against 30 percent for Dr. Abdullah. Mr. Karzai needs to get over 50 percent of votes to avoid a run-off. Chief Electoral Officer Daud Ali Najafi told a news conference in Kabul on August 29 that 35 percent of the votes (2,146,643 ballots) had been tallied.

Ramazan Bashardost was in the third position having secured 277,404 votes while Dr. Ashraf Ghani had bagged 48,375 votes. 73,499 votes were found invalid.¹ Dr. Abdullah on his part alleged fraud in the electoral process and stated that he would not accept the election results.²

Meanwhile, 45 American soldiers were killed in August, making it the deadliest month since 2001 for US forces operating in the country. 44 US troops were killed in July.³

Over 40 people were killed and up to 80 injured in a truck bomb explosion on August 25 in front of a construction company in Kandahar.⁴ NATO forces also claimed that a missiles strike in a mountainous area in southeastern Afghanistan killed 35 Taliban insurgents belonging to the Haqqani network on August 29.⁵

In other developments, UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown visited British troops stationed at Camp Bastion in the Helmand province during the week. Brown pledged to speed up the training of Afghan security forces so that they can "take more responsibility for their own affairs."⁶

¹ "Karzai extends lead in presidential vote," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, August 29, 2009, at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=80731>

² "Abdullah won't accept result if the incumbent wins," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, August 29, 2009, at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=80726>

³ "August deadliest month for US in Afghanistan," Associated Press, August 28, 2009, at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hvWEqWq3CrRvaQCmt21MfoYhjZJQD9ABV0BO0>

⁴ "Nearly 40 dead, up to 80 wounded in Afghanistan truck bombing," CNN, August 25, 2009, at <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/08/25/afghanistan.explosion/>

⁵ "35 Taliban killed in NATO missile attack," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, August 30, 2009, at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=80768>

⁶ "Brown visits Afghanistan," August 27, 2009, at http://www.news24.com/Content/World/News/1073/7437ef9b7b9f430d90ec032c89c89b67/29-08-2009-07-54/Brown_visits_Afghanistan

BHUTAN

- **Bangladesh urges India to provide a trade corridor through West Bengal in return for transit facilities; Nepal PM urged to speed up the process of repatriation of Bhutanese refugees; Bhutan releases its latest Foreign Direct Investment Policy guidelines, allows for 100 percent equity in key areas; PM Thinley assures New Delhi that his government will not allow militant groups to re-establish bases on its territory; PM Thinley on a visit to Japan to boost economic cooperation**

Bangladesh Commerce Minister Col. (retd.) Faruk Khan urged India to provide a corridor for his country through West Bengal to carry out trade with Bhutan and Nepal in return for his country providing transit facilities to India. Bangladesh had recently agreed to allow India to use its waterways to transport heavy machines for the upcoming 740 MW ONGC power project in southern Tripura.⁷

Reports noted that Bhutanese leaders in exile met with Nepalese PM Madhav Kumar Nepal and sought his help to speed up the process of repatriation of Bhutanese refugees. They also noted the important role that India will have to play in the process. According to the latest estimates, around 17,000 refugees have been resettled through the Third Country Resettlement Programme. The President of the Bhutan People's Party, Balaram Poudel stated that a majority of refugees wanted to return to Bhutan.⁸

In its latest Foreign Direct Investment Policy guidelines, Bhutan has allowed for 100 percent equity in key areas such as manufacturing, services, land ownership, foreign workers, and on external borrowing. Analysts noted that allowing foreign companies to own land is a key policy shift.⁹

Prime Minister Jigmi Y Thinley, in response to Indian concerns over the presence of militant groups assured New Delhi that his government will not allow these groups to re-establish bases on its territory. Reports noted that groups like the NDFB and ULFA have managed to establish small bases in jungle areas, catering to small groups of 10-15 militants.¹⁰

Prime Minister Thinley left on a bilateral visit to Japan on August 27 on the invitation of the Japan Junior Chamber of Commerce. The visit would focus on measures at enhancing economic cooperation between the two countries.¹¹

⁷ "Give us passage to Nepal, Bhutan, B'desh: India," *Headlines India*, August 21, 2009, at <http://24dunia.com/search.aspx?o=0&cp=3&lid=EN&q=bhutan>

⁸ "Nepal's Bhutanese refugees seek India's help," *The Hindu*, August 19, 2009, at <http://www.thehindu.com/2009/08/19/stories/2009081956451300.htm>

⁹ "Sweeping changes," *The Kuensel*, August 26, 2009, at <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=13283>

¹⁰ "Bhutan to act tough against NE ultras," *The Assam Tribune*, August 26, 2009, at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/details.asp?id=aug2609/at02>

¹¹ "PM leaves for Japan today," *The Kuensel*, August 25, 2009, at <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=13274>

MALDIVES

- **Indo-Maldives defence agreement triggers controversy; Pakistan and Maldives agree to establish 'Friendship Caucus' of parliamentarians; Maldives Ambassador to Bangladesh discusses difficulties being faced by Bangladeshi emigrants working in Maldives with Bangladesh Police Chief; IMF approves \$60 million loan to help tide over economic crisis**

According to the Indo-Maldives defence and security framework, the Indian Navy and the Maldives National Defence Force would carry out joint surveillance and patrolling activities in the India Ocean. New Delhi will also provide a Dhruv helicopter and help establish a twenty-five bed military hospital in the island chain.¹² Reports also noted that India will establish a network of ground radars in the country and link them up with the Indian Coastal Command.¹³ The agreement has triggered domestic opposition with certain media reports stating that "Maldivian sovereignty was under threat and that the country was becoming an Indian protectorate."¹⁴

Pakistan and Maldives have agreed to establish a 'Friendship Caucus' comprising of members of Parliament from both countries. Among issues that are intended to be discussed include foreign and internal affairs, economy and industry, science and technology, socio-cultural and security related issues.

The Maldives Ambassador to Bangladesh, Ahmed Sareer met with the Bangladesh Police Chief Ahmed Faseeh and discussed measures to strengthen relations between the two police forces, including facilitating higher education and special training opportunities for Maldives police officers. The difficulties being faced by Bangladeshi emigrants working in Maldives were also discussed.¹⁵

In other developments, the IMF has agreed to provide \$60 million to Maldives under a 30-month stand-by agreement. The loan is intended to relieve the pressures on the Maldivian economy on account of reduced tourist inflows due to the global economic recession.¹⁶

SRI LANKA

- **Police foil assassination attempt on Defence Secretary; Colombo condemns Solheim's comments blaming the Sri Lankan armed forces for extra-judicial killings; Sri Lanka to get a grant from the International**

¹² "India to provide helicopter and hospital," *Miadhru Daily*, August 23, 2009, at <http://www.miadhru.com.mv/2009/08/local-news/india-to-provide-helicopter-and-hospital/>

¹³ "India to help defend Maldives," *Al Jazeera*, August 22, 2009, at <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia/2009/08/2009821142254284884.html>

¹⁴ "DRP advises caution on Indian media claims," *Minivan News*, August 17, 2009, at http://www.minivannews.com/news_detail.php?id=7090

¹⁵ "Maldives Ambassador to Bangladesh meets Police Chief," *Miadhru News*, August 30, 2009, at <http://www.miadhru.com.mv/2009/08/local-news/maldives-ambassador-to-bangladesh-meets-police-chief/>

¹⁶ "IMF pledges US\$60 million to Maldives," *Minivan News*, August 22, 2009, at http://www.minivannews.com/news_detail.php?id=7119

Organization for the Displaced towards the rehabilitation of surrendered LTTE cadres; Sri Lankan foreign exchange reserves stand at over Rs. 3 billion

Reports noted that the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) of Sri Lanka has cracked a plot to assassinate Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa. A large haul of ammunition including a suicide kit weighing over 5 kg, machine guns, 121 rounds of ammunition, two ammunition cases, 13 cyanide capsules, five batteries, remote controllers, detonators were among items recovered by the police.¹⁷

The Sri Lankan government strongly condemned the comments of the Norwegian Minister of Environment and International Development, Erik Solheim, which were published in the website of the 'Aftenposten' newspaper on August 28, 2009, laying the blame for extra-judicial killings on the Sri Lankan Army. In the light of his comments, the Foreign Ministry noted the "possible partisanship in the facilitatory role" carried out by Mr. Solheim earlier.¹⁸

The Sri Lankan government meanwhile expects to get grants worth between Rs. 1,500-2,000 million from the International Organization for the Displaced towards the rehabilitation of surrendered LTTE cadres. Among other countries, the US, UK, France, Japan and India have welcomed this grant. Surrendered Tiger cadres will be given training in information technology, carpentry, masonry, tailoring and other technical courses.¹⁹

In other developments, the Media and Information Minister Anura Priyadarshana Yapa stated that the Sri Lankan economy had now recovered and was stable, with foreign reserves amounting to over Rs. 3 billion.

B. EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

CHINA

- **Defence Minister urges high level of military preparedness for the Chengdu Military Area Command; Legislation giving armed police statutory authorization to respond to riots, terrorist attacks and other social security emergencies passed; Troop transport exercises conducted successfully**

Chinese Defence Minister Liang Guanglie, at a meeting of the Defense Mobilization Committee of the Chengdu Military Area Command of the PLA, stated that the southwest region of China was strategically important and

¹⁷ "Plot to assassinate Defence Secretary," *Daily News*, August 25, 2009, at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/08/25/sec01.asp>

¹⁸ "Sri Lanka 'Deeply Regrets' Comments by Eric Solheim and Doubts about His Impartiality during the Peace Process," *Lanka Web*, August 30, 2009, at <http://www.lankaweb.com/news/items/2009/08/29/sri-lanka-%E2%80%98deeply-regrets%E2%80%99-comments-by-eric-solheim-and-doubts-about-his-impartiality-during-the-peace-process/>

¹⁹ "Over Rs 1,500 m to rehab detainees," *Daily News*, August 25, 2009, at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/08/31/news13.asp>

therefore urged the highest order of military preparedness at every governmental level²⁰

China on August 27 passed legislation giving armed police statutory authorization to respond to riots, terrorist attacks and other social security emergencies.²¹

Reports noted that a reserve station of the PLA Air Force successfully transported troops using different aircrafts under actual-war conditions. The unit was established in November 2005 to offer training support for transporting soldiers.²² In a similar exercise, the Guangzhou Military Area Command (MAC) organized a training exercise transporting hundreds of troops, weapons, and ammunition in high-speed electric trains traveling at over 200 kms per hour.²³

In other developments, the Chinese government officially designated the Anti-Chemical Command and Engineering College (ACCEC) as the "state designated agency for anti-terrorism chemical test and appraisal."²⁴

JAPAN

- **DPJ secures a landslide victory; Yukio Hatoyama to be PM; Taro Aso accepts responsibility for LDP defeat; Obama looks forward to work closely with Hatoyama, "on a broad range of global, regional and bilateral issues"**

Opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) scored a landslide victory in the August 30 general elections, winning 308 seats in the 480-member House of Representatives. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) having secured just over 100 seats was voted out of power for only the second time in its 54-year history. DPJ President Yukio Hatoyama is expected to be sworn in as the new Prime Minister, replacing LDP leader Taro Aso. The 62-year old Hatoyama thanked the electorate "for their courage in choosing a change of government." Aso stated that he will step down from his position, accepting moral responsibility for the defeat.²⁵

Analysts noted that result may not radically alter Japan's foreign policy positions, including the country's relationship with China, or the Korean nuclear issue. Reports noted that the massive stimulus package announced by Beijing

²⁰ "Chinese Defense Minister Stresses Importance of Defense Mobilization," *PLA Daily*, August 30, 2009, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2009-08/30/content_4030369.htm

²¹ "China Passes Armed Police Law," *PLA Daily*, August, 27, 2009, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2009-08/27/content_4029321.htm

²² "Reserve Airfield Station Possesses Emergent Combat Support Capability," *PLA Daily*, August 27, 2009, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2009-08/27/content_4029325.htm

²³ "Guangzhou MAC Organizes Transportation Training," *PLA Daily*, August 24, 2009, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2009-08/24/content_4027746.htm

²⁴ "State Anti-terrorism Chemical Test and Appraisal Agency Established," *PLA Daily*, August 24, 2009, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2009-08/24/content_4027721.htm

²⁵ "Opposition DPJ crushes LDP in landslide victory," *Associated Press*, August 30, 2009, at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9ADDEP01&show_article=1

(worth 4,000 billion yuan) has not only boosted China's domestic demand but has widened its imports, benefiting countries like Japan.²⁶

US President Obama on his part stated that he looked forward to working closely with Mr. Hatoyama, "on a broad range of global, regional and bilateral issues." He added that as "a close friend and ally, the United States awaits the formation of a new Japanese government."²⁷

KOREAN PENINSULA

- **Former President and Nobel Laureate Kim Dea-jung passes away; South Korean satellite launch a failure; Australia: Rocket-propelled grenades among other weapons found on an Australian-owned ship seized by the UAE traveling from North Korea to Iran; Russia deploys a missile defence system near its border with North Korea**

Former South Korean President and Nobel Laureate Kim Dae-jung passed away on August 18 in Seoul after a month-long battle with pneumonia and other related complications. The 85-year old Kim had served as president from 1998-2003, and was the principal author of the 'Sunshine Policy' followed pursued with the North.²⁸

The South Korean Ministry of Education, Science and Technology stated that a satellite launched on August 25 was lost shortly after blastoff due to problems in the payload fairing system. While the first and second stage rockets separated as planned after launch from the Naro Space Center, one of the two fairings covering the satellite did not fall off properly.²⁹ President Lee Myung-bak visited the country's space centre on August 28 and encouraged researchers, to "learn from their mistakes to achieve a greater goal."³⁰

US Ambassador on the Korean nuclear issue Stephen Bosworth is expected to travel to Asian capitals "to consult with the key countries of the region" who are part of the Six Party Talks. The State Department however stated that he will not be going to Pyongyang nor meeting North Korean officials.³¹

Australia's transport minister Anthony Albanese stated on August 30 that rocket-propelled grenades among other weapons were found on an Australian-owned ship traveling from North Korea to Iran. The ANL Australia was stopped

²⁶ "Sino-Japanese ties not to be affected after DPJ elected," *China Daily*, August 31, 2009, at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2009japanelection/2009-08/31/content_8636373.htm

²⁷ "Obama looks forward to working with new Japan PM: White House," *Associated Press*, August 30, 2009, at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9ADFLHO0&show_article=1

²⁸ "Former Korean President Kim Dae-jung dies at 85," *Korea Herald*, August 18, 2009, at http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/NEWKHSITE/data/html_dir/2009/08/18/200908180085.asp

²⁹ "Satellite lost shortly after launch," *Korea Herald*, August 26, 2009, at http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/NEWKHSITE/data/html_dir/2009/08/26/200908260079.asp

³⁰ "Lee made a surprise visit to space center," *Korea Herald*, August 28, 2009, at http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/NEWKHSITE/data/html_dir/2009/08/28/200908280090.asp

³¹ "Bosworth to begin Asian tour to discuss resumption of 6-way talks," *Korea Herald*, August 28, 2009, at http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/NEWKHSITE/data/html_dir/2009/08/28/200908280080.asp

by authorities of the United Arab Emirates earlier in the month on charges of carrying a shipment of North Korean arms.³²

In other developments, Russia deployed a missile defence system near its border with North Korea and was studying other measures to protect its population from stray missiles. Russia shares a small border with North Korea in the Far East and its main Pacific port of Vladivostok, with a population of 600,000, lies only 150 km from North Korea.³³

SOUTHEAST ASIA

- **Pak frigate makes a port call in Malaysia; NLD calls for release of political prisoners and amendment of 2008 constitution ahead of 2010 elections; Myanmar authorities and Kachin representatives meet; China urges US to halt its military surveillance activities close to its exclusive economic zone**

The Pakistani F-22 frigate, PNS Zulfikar, made a port call at Port Klang in Malaysia on August 27 before continuing its journey home. The Chinese-built frigate is reportedly equipped with the state-of-art weaponry and sensors, including anti-surface missile, surface-to-air-missile, guns and torpedoes. It was formally handed over to the Pakisytani Navy on July 30.³⁴

The National League of Democracy (NLD) stated that the upcoming general elections in 2010 will not lead to any change in Myanmar unless the ruling junta releases political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi and amends the 2008 constitution. The 2008 constitution codifies the role of the military in the country.³⁵

During a meeting on August 22 between members of the Myanmar government and representatives of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), the junta reiterated its earlier demand of transforming the KIO's armed wing - the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), into a battalion of the government-run Border Guard Force (BGF) ahead of the October deadline set by the regime. The KIO has however rejected the proposal and stated that it would discuss the issue with the new government that would assume office after the 2010 elections.³⁶

³² "Arms found on ship bound from NKorea to Iran," *Associate Foreign Press*, August 30, 2009, at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5idgfbE56iwbzRHHYGg95JBjmsrrA>

³³ "Russia deploys missile defence system near N. Korea," *Reuters*, August 26, 2009, at <http://in.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idINIndia-41996920090826>

³⁴ "Pakistan to enhance naval relations with Malaysia," *Bernama.com*, August 25, 2009, at http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/news_lite.php?id=435554

³⁵ "Without constitution amendment, elections cannot herald change: NLD," *Burma News International*, August 25, 2009, at <http://www.bnionline.net/news/mizzima/6909-without-constitution-amendment-elections-cannot-herald-change-nld.html>

³⁶ "Junta reiterates October deadline on KIA," *Burma News International*, August 25, 2009, at <http://www.bnionline.net/news/kng/6907-junta-reiterates-october-deadline-on-kia.html>

In Thailand, a law suit was filed against PM Abhisit Vejjajiva and his cabinet, alleging that they misused their authority by imposing the Internal Security Act (ISA) to control the 'red shirts' rally on August 23.³⁷

In other developments, at the recently concluded special session on maritime safety between China and the US, Chinese delegates urged the US to reduce and eventually halt the latter's military surveillance close to China's exclusive economic zone. The Chinese stated that such surveillance activities by the US ships have led to incidents of confrontation between the two sides in recent past.³⁸

C. WEST ASIA

IRAN

- **NTPC Chairman: India considering building a 6,000 MW gas based power plant in Iran; Rafsanjani rebuts remarks of Presidential chief of staff on election unrest; Khamenei: No proof that opposition leaders blamed for the post-election unrest were acting on behalf of foreign powers; IAEA: Slight decrease in Iran's nuclear enrichment activities**

NTPC chairman R.S. Sharma stated that the Indian government was considering building a gas-based 6,000 MW power plant in Iran, along with a 1,500 kms high voltage transmission link to carry power to India. The project is expected to cost about \$10 billion. It is proposed that 5,000 MW will be transmitted to India and the remaining 1,000 MW will be transmitted to Pakistan.³⁹

Iran's Expediency Council (EC) Chairman Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani dismissed the recent remarks of the chief of staff of the Presidential Office, Esfandiar Rahim-Mashaii that he [Rafsanjani] tried to use the demonstrations in the aftermath of the June 12 presidential elections to bring pressure Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. Rafsanjani warned of a complex plot to create conflict among the different pillars of the government and termed Mr. Rahim-Mashaii's comments as "hallucinations."⁴⁰

Ayatollah Khamenei meanwhile stated that he saw no proof that opposition leaders blamed for the post-election unrest were acting on behalf of foreign powers. Khamenei's comments are in contradiction with accusations frequently made by hardliners. He added that he had "no doubt" that the mass

³⁷ "UDD sues PM, Cabinet over ISA," *Bangkok Post*, August 28, 2009, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/152917/udd-sues-pm-cabinet-over-security-law>

³⁸ "China urges the US to halt surveillance near its shores," *The Reuters*, August 27, 2009, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSTRE57Q1ZU20090827>

³⁹ "India eyes 6,000 MW power project in Iran," *Tehran Times*, August 25, 2009, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/Index_view.asp?code=201757

⁴⁰ "Rafsanjani warns about plot to foment conflict between pillars of establishment," *Tehran Times*, August 27, 2009, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=201921

demonstrations, in which at least 30 people died, had been planned in advance, "whether its leaders know or not."⁴¹

The IAEA in its latest report published on August 28, 2009 confirmed a slight decrease in the country's enrichment activities. It however urged Tehran to prove that it had not done work related to nuclear weapons. Iran termed the report as positive and a proof of the peaceful nature of its programme. IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei stated that Iran had improved its cooperation with the agency by allowing better monitoring at its controversial enrichment facility in Natanz, and by granting a visit to a research reactor under construction.⁴²

IRAQ

▪ **New Shiite alliance against al-Maliki formed; At least 11 killed in bomb attacks in Kut; Abdul Aziz al-Hakim dies at a Tehran hospital**

The Iranian-backed Shiite parties that helped propel Nouri al-Maliki to power in 2006 stated that he will not be their candidate in the January elections. They instead formed a new alliance - the Iraqi National Alliance, which includes the largest Shiite party (the Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council or SIIC) and al-Sadr's bloc, both of which have close ties to Tehran.

Reports noted that Mr. al-Maliki was faced with making a deal with minority Sunni parties to strengthen his position as his Dawa party was relatively small political base. Analysts noted that if the new alliance did well in the January 16 vote, Tehran could gain deeper influence in Iraq as US forces pull back, with a full American withdrawal planned by the end of 2011.⁴³

At least 11 people were killed and more than 11 wounded in bomb attacks on two minibuses near the southern Iraqi town of Kut, a mainly Shia area 150 km south-east of Baghdad. The attack came days after a double truck bombing in Baghdad killed at least 95 people, the deadliest strike in Iraq in this year. There has been an escalation of attacks since US troops pulled out of urban areas at the end of June.⁴⁴

In other developments, Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq Chairman Abdul Aziz al-Hakim died of lung cancer at a Tehran hospital. al-Hakim had taken over the leadership of the Shiite organization in August 2003 after the assassination of his brother Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim in Najaf. Their father, Grand Ayatollah Mohsen al-Hakim, was a revered Shia spiritual leader between 1955 and 1970. ISCI is the largest Shia grouping in Iraq. It recently joined with the

⁴¹ "No 'foreign link' to Iran unrest," *BBC News*, August 27, 2009, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8223606.stm

⁴² "Iran terms latest IAEA report positive," *Khaleej Times*, August 29, 2009, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle09.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2009/August/middleeast_August733.xml§ion=middleeast

⁴³ "Shiite groups form new alliance excluding Iraqi PM," *Khaleej Times*, August 25, 2009, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2009/August/middleeast_August602.xml§ion=middleeast

⁴⁴ "Deadly bus bombs hit Iraqi town," *BBC News*, August 24, 2009, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8218961.stm

followers of Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr to form a new political alliance to contest the parliamentary elections scheduled for January 2010.⁴⁵

II. MISSILES, SPACE, DEFENCE AND NUCLEAR REVIEW

MISSILES AND SPACE

- **South Korea's first satellite launch effort fails; Pyongyang calls for imposition of same penalties that it faced in the aftermath of its April launch attempt**

South Korea failed in its attempts to become only the tenth country to successfully launch a satellite. The satellite overshot its designated orbit with officials admitting that a delayed separation would result in the spacecraft not reaching its orbit.⁴⁶ In a bid to develop an indigenous launch capability, Seoul invested over \$400 million over a period of two decades, during which it launched its satellites from other countries space vehicles. The Korea Space Launch Vehicle I or KSLV-I was a two-stage projectile which took off from the Naro Space Centre. While the first stage separated four minutes after lift off, the satellite separated five minutes later but overshot its designated orbit by about 35 kilometers. The objective of the mission was to place the satellite in an orbit 306 kilometers above the earth.

While the Russian Space Agency built the first stage of the rocket weighing 140 tons, the second stage and the 100 kg satellite were built by the Korean Space Agency. The satellite was expected to monitor weather patterns and climate change, among other tasks. South Korea does not plan to develop a manned space program, but seeks to achieve an indigenous launch capability by 2018 and develop craft that can orbit the moon.

Pyongyang meanwhile demanded that South Korea face the same penalties for the launch of the KSLV-I as it did for the launch of its satellite in April 2009. Reports however noted that the argument was untenable as Pyongyang was in breach of UN resolutions following its withdrawal from the NPT in 2002.

- **ISRO: Contact lost with Chandrayaan-I**

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) officials stated that radio communication links were lost with the Chandrayaan-I moon orbiter in the early hours of August 29, 2009.⁴⁷ ISRO Chief G. Madhavan Nair however stated that

⁴⁵ "Abdul Aziz al-Hakim passes away," *Tehran Times*, August 27, 2009, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=201912

⁴⁶ Evan Ramstad, "South Korea Satellite Overshoots its Orbit," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 26, 2009, at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125118754687256301.html>

⁴⁷ "Communication Link with Chandrayaan Lost," *The Times of India*, August 29, 2009, at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/NEWS/India/Communication-link-with-Chandrayaan-lost-ISRO/articleshow/4948234.cms>

nearly 95 per cent of mission objectives have been met, including over 70,000 images of the moon.⁴⁸

NUCLEAR ISSUES

- **Gen: Aslam Beg: Bhutto asked PAF to be ready to bomb Indian N-sites**

In an interview with a private TV channel, former Chief of Army Staff Mirza Aslam Beg revealed that former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto had asked the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) to be prepared for attacking India's nuclear facilities, in the light of reports in 1990 that the US, Israel and India were planning to strike Pakistan's nuclear establishments.⁴⁹

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

- **Tarigami favours regional councils in J and K**

The CPI (M) leader and MLA from Kulgam M.Y. Tarigami stated that decentralisation was as a key to address divisive tendencies in Jammu and Kashmir. Mr. Tarigami advocated the setting up of regional and sub-regional development councils to evolve a unique mode of federation in the state. Initiating a discussion in the state legislative assembly on August 27, Tarigami insisted that such development councils have become necessary in the wake of growing regional and sub-regional aspirations. He pointed out that the visionary concept of District Development Boards pioneered by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah played an important role in the decentralisation process and called for its further fine tuning and improvement to make it more relevant to present day needs.⁵⁰

The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Northern Command (GOC-in-C) Lt. Gen. P. C. Bhardwaj stated that infiltration attempts from Pakistan have increased considerably in last few months as compared to the previous year with nearly 600 to 800 terrorists operating in the state. Talking to reporters in Udhampur on August 26, he noted that during the last three to four months, an increase in the number of infiltration attempts had been observed from across the border. Gen. Bhardwaj also noted that the number of foreign terrorists had gone down due to the lack of local support to the mercenaries, the wiping out of their top leadership, and due to the fencing and strict vigil along the borders. He

⁴⁸ "ISRO Formally Calls off Chandrayaan-I Mission," *The Times of India*, August 30, 2009, at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/news/india/ISRO-formally-calls-off-Chandrayaan-1-mission/articleshow/4951540.cms>

⁴⁹ "Bhutto planned to bomb Indian N-sites in 1990," September 1, 2009, at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/Bhutto-planned-to-bomb-Indian-N-sites-in-1990/articleshow/4957276.cms>

⁵⁰ "Tarigami favours Regional Councils," *Daily Excelsior*, August 28, 2009, at <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/web1/09aug28/news.htm#3>

however stated that local recruitment was unabated and that various terrorist organisations were still engaged in militant activity.⁵¹

NORTHEAST DEVELOPMENTS

- **Tarun Gogoi: No further division of Assam**

Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi, during a visit to Haflong town in NC Hills district, has reiterated that Assam would not be divided again under any circumstance. Interacting with the apex bodies of the tribal communities, the CM called upon all sections of the people to build up mutual trust for the restoration of peace in the violence-hit NC Hills district.⁵²

⁵¹ "600-800 ultras operating in J&K: Lt.Gen. Bhardwaj," *Daily Excelsior*, August 27, 2009, at <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/web1/09aug27/news.htm#1>

⁵² "No further division of State: Gogoi," *Assam Tribune*, August 30, 2009, at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/details.asp?id=aug3009/at04>