

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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1. COUNTRY REVIEW

A. SOUTH ASIA

PAKISTAN

- **Lt Gen Ahmed Shuja Pasha is new ISI Chief; Joint session of parliament called on October 8; the United States and Pakistan to work together to counter insurgency, says President Zardari**

Lt Gen Ahmed Shuja Pasha has been appointed as the new Director General of the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) on September 29.¹ Pasha, just promoted from major general, had been Director General of Military Operations (DGMO). In this capacity, he headed the Pakistan Army's operations in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and so his appointment provides no indication of a change in the military establishment's war on terror policy. He has represented Pakistan at the tripartite commission meetings and served as UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon's adviser on peacekeeping operations. Meanwhile, a joint session of parliament is called on October 8 where the top intelligence and security officers would give a briefing to the members of parliament on the ongoing 'war on terror.'²

In other developments, talks were held between the United States Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte and Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi in Washington on September 30. The meeting focused mainly on security operations in FATA.³ Meanwhile, Pakistan has reportedly rejected the US demand to hold direct talks with Dr A Q Khan within the framework of the broader Pak-US strategic dialogue.⁴ Before this President Asif Zardari stated in New York on September 28 that Pakistan would work along with the US to develop trained counter-insurgency units within the army.⁵

Elsewhere, at least 21 people, 16 of them foreign nationals, were reported killed in missile attacks in North Waziristan on October 3. According to local sources, the missile was fired from a Predator drone which hit a house in the village some 15km west of Miramshah. Military sources, however, denied that any NATO drone had carried out the attack inside the Pakistan territory. According to Reuters, the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force had informed Pakistan it would be conducting an operation across the border from North Waziristan.⁶ Meanwhile, the Afghan diplomat Abdul

¹ Iftikhar A. Khan, "Kayani shakes up army command," *Dawn*, September 30, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/09/30/top1.htm>

² "Top brass to brief MPs on 'terror war': Joint parliamentary session on 8th," *Dawn*, October 5, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/10/05/top1.htm>

³ Anwar Iqbal, "US to boost Pakistan's anti-terror capability," *Dawn*, October 1, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/10/01/top1.htm>

⁴ Sami Abraham & Mohammad Saleh Zaafir, "Pakistan rejects US demand to question Dr A Q Khan," *The News*, October 1, 2008 at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp

⁵ "I will suck oxygen out of their system so there will be no Talibs," *Daily Times*, September 29, 2008 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008\09\29\story_29-9-2008_pg1_1

⁶ "16 foreigners among 21 killed in missile raid," *Dawn*, October 4, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/10/04/top2.htm>

Khaliq Farahi who was kidnapped by militants in Peshawar on September 22 was released on September 29.⁷

SRI LANKA

- **Troops capture LTTE airstrip in Panikkankulam area; JHU calls for commission to probe INGO activities; CPI national secretary D. Raja: We will not allow any assistance to Sri Lankan Army from Indian side**

Sri Lankan Troops has reportedly captured a LTTE airstrip in Panikkankulam area, seven kilometres northwest of Mankulam. According to military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara, the airstrip, 500 meters long and 50 meters wide, is located west of the A9 road. "There are signs that the LTTE had made use of this airstrip to land and park their small aircraft in an emergency as it comprised a taxiway and parking areas", Nanayakkara said.⁸ This is the first time that Sri Lankan forces engaged in the Wanni liberation came across such airstrip despite reports about several airstrips used by the LTTE in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan Government has decided to deport the ZOA Project Manager in Kilinochchi who had refused to accede to the request by the government to leave Kilinochchi. Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights Mahinda Samarasinghe said at a press conference that the Italian INGO official had refused to leave Kilinochchi for Vavuniya when all other foreign NGO personnel obliged.⁹ The Minister further stated that steps would be taken to cancel his visa and deport him immediately. Meanwhile, Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa confirmed that the ZOA Project Manager had been working for the LTTE.¹⁰ Further, the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) has called for the appointment of an independent commission to probe the activities of International NGOs involved in relief work in uncleared areas in the North. According to them, such a commission should comprise a team of patriotic retired servicemen who are pro-government.¹¹

While participating in a state-wide fast organised by his party to condemn military action against Tamils and attacks on Tamil fishermen, the CPI national secretary D. Raja demanded a change in India's foreign policy towards Sri Lanka. He said that the Indian Government should articulate its position on various issues, including military assistance to the Sri Lankan Army, attacks on Tamil fishermen and planting of sea mines by the Sri Lankan Navy. According to him, "The situation demands that the Indian government explain its position. There are reports that three Indian soldiers were injured in the war between the Sri Lankan Army and the LTTE. The Indian government has not reacted so

⁷ Zulfiqar Ali, "Kidnapped Afghan diplomat freed," *Dawn*, September 30, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/09/30/top3.htm>

⁸ Ranil Wijayapala, "Troops capture LTTE airstrip", *Daily News*, October 1, 2008 at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/10/01/sec01.asp>

⁹ Thushari Kalubowila, "ZOA project manager to be deported immediately", *The Island*, October 4, 2008 at <http://www.island.lk/2008/10/04/news1.html>

¹⁰ Norman Paliyawadana, "Gotabhaya Rajapaksa says ZOA PM had LTTE links", *The Island*, October 4, 2008 at <http://www.island.lk/2008/10/04/news2.html>

¹¹ "JHU calls for commission to probe INGO activities", *Daily News*, October 2, 2008 <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/10/02/pol05.asp>

far. It must make it clear whether it is clandestinely helping the Sri Lankan Army. We will not allow any assistance to the Sri Lankan Army from Indian side.”¹² Meanwhile, in a statement AIADMK general secretary Jayalalithaa alleged that the Indian government had remained not just a passive witness but was an active collaborator by supplying arms, providing radars and training to the Sri Lankan armed forces. She said “After the disastrous IPKF misadventure and the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian government had taken a decision that it would not get involved in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka. But now, we have the same government going all out to help the Sri Lankan armed forces.”¹³

Elsewhere, the Sri Lanka Tea Board said that the country’s tea exports rose by more than 40 per cent in the first eight months of the year and is on track to earn a record 1.4 billion dollars this year. Tea shipments climbed 41 per cent to 883 million dollars from January to August over the same period a year earlier, helped by strong demand from Russia and the oil exporting nations of the Middle East, the Sri Lanka Tea Board said in a statement. In fact, Tea is of crucial importance to the Sri Lankan economy since it is the country’s biggest agricultural export. The country earned a record US \$ 1.02 billion from tea in 2007 and is on track to better its performance and hit a record 1.4 billion dollars this calendar year, said Tea Board chairman Lalith Hettiarachchi.¹⁴

Meanwhile, the Science and Technology Minister Prof. Tissa Vitarana stated that Sri Lanka will be constructing construct atomic reactors to generate power, exploiting vast deposits of ‘Thorium’ found along the coastline from Beruwala to Negombo as a solution to the power crisis facing the country.¹⁵

B. EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

CHINA

- **Tibet Nationalities Institute celebrated its 50th anniversary; United Nations and China will co-organize a high-level meeting on climate change; President Hu Jintao has appointed four new ambassadors; China strongly objected to the US government’s decision to sell arms to Taiwan**

The Tibet Nationalities Institute (TNI) celebrated its 50th anniversary last week. TNI is the first institution of higher learning for ethnic Tibetans set up by the Central Government outside the Tibet Autonomous region. On this occasion, the Chinese President Hu Jintao had written a letter to TNI and hailed the institute for their “important contribution to the economic development and social progress”. The Chinese President

¹² “We will not allow any assistance to Sri Lankan Army from Indian side”, *The Hindu*, October 3, 2008 at <http://www.hindu.com/2008/10/03/stories/2008100361550800.htm>

¹³ “Convey displeasure to Sri Lanka, Jayalalithaa urges Manmohan”, *The Hindu*, October 5, 2008 at <http://www.hindu.com/2008/10/05/stories/2008100560150600.htm>

¹⁴ “Tea exports set for year record”, *Daily News*, September 29, 2008 at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/09/29/bus01.asp>

¹⁵ “Atomic reactors in Sri Lanka”, *Daily Mirror*, October 4, 2008 at http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=28274

also expressed the hope that the TNI should expand its activities with teaching, research and training.¹⁶

Xinhua reports that the United Nations (UN) and China will co-organize a high-level meeting on climate change focusing on technological development and transfer. It was decided by a mutual decision between the UN Undersecretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Sha Zukang and China's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Liu Zhenmin. It is reported that the conference will be opened by the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair.¹⁷

Last week saw the establishment of the first investment company in the Southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region. The name of the company is the Tibet Autonomous Region Investment Co. Ltd. which was funded by the regional finance department with a registered capital of 600 million yuan (87.6 million US dollars). It is reported that this company will be a platform for capital financing, attraction of expertise and industry investment. Among its business, it includes securities, funds, banking, real estate, transport, tourism and the high-tech sector.¹⁸

Meanwhile, President Hu Jintao has appointed four new ambassadors in line with decisions adopted by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC). Among these, Liu Jian was appointed as the Ambassador to Malaysia, Gao Deyi as the new Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho, Gong Jianwei as the new Ambassador to Georgia and Cheng Guoping as the new Ambassador to Kazakhstan.¹⁹

On the military side, the Chinese government has strongly objected to the US government's decision to sell arms worth of about 6.5 billion US dollars to Taiwan. In a reaction, the Chinese Defence Ministry spokesperson has said that the US decision to sell arms to Taiwan will hamper the Sino-US ties to a great extent. Last week, the Congress in US government had decided to sell arms to Taiwan, including Patriot-III anti-missile system, E-2T airborne early warning aircraft upgrade system, Apache helicopters, Javelin missiles, Harpoon Submarine-launched missiles, and some airplane accessory parts.²⁰

MYANMAR

- **China's grip on Myanmar 'cause for concern'**

According to a US-based human rights organization, *EarthRights International* (ERI), the Chinese grip on Myanmar's natural resources has grown considerably in a short time.

¹⁶ "President Hu hails institute for churning out Tibetan cadres, specialists", *People's Daily* (online), October 6, 2008, at <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90785/6509765.html>

¹⁷ "UN, China to co-organize high-level event on climate change", *People's Daily* (online), October 4, 2008, at <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6509364.html>

¹⁸ "Tibet sets up investment company to promote growth, development", *People's Daily* (online), October 2, 2008, at <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/6509062.html>

¹⁹ "Chinese President appoints new ambassadors", *People's Daily* (online), October 1, 2008, at <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/6508904.html>

²⁰ "China's defense ministry express strong indignation over U.S. proposed arms sale to Taiwan", *China Military* (online), October 5, 2008, at <http://english.chinamil.com.cn/>

ERI's survey identifies 69 Chinese companies engaged in oil, gas, hydropower development and mining - a 250 per cent increase on the number thought to be operating in Myanmar when a similar study was made one year ago. The ERI noted that Myanmar has become "geopolitically significant" to the Chinese as their mushrooming economy demands ever more natural resources, notably energy related. The survey identifies the most firms in hydropower developments—at least 45 companies actively engaged or planning 63 projects, ranging from small dams to the massive scheme on the River Salween at Tasang. In Myanmar's mushrooming oil and gas sectors, at least 16 Chinese companies are named, including all three of China's biggest transnational enterprises, Sinopec, China National Offshore Oil Corporation, and China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC). ERI pinpoints the Arakan coast as one of the most significant strategic locations for China's long-term plans for vacuuming up global oil and gas reserves. A terminal for oil shipped in from the Middle East and Africa, plus pipelines across Myanmar into southwest China, would "increase the efficiency of China's oil and gas imports by providing an alternative to the problematic Straits of Malacca." The ERI report comes just a few days after the junta confirmed that Chinese state-controlled China Non-Ferrous Metal Group will proceed to mine nickel in the Mandalay region. Few details of the agreement have been disclosed. The Myanmarese ministry of mines claimed that the project would provide more than 1,000 jobs for local people. The nickel will be exported to China. ERI says this will become one of the largest mining projects in Myanmar, with investment of US \$600 million, financed by Chinese state banks, to mine and export up 40 million tons of nickel ore.²¹

- **Chinese dam incurs KIO wrath**

A Chinese-Myanmarese joint project to construct a series of hydroelectric dams in Kachin State has met with resistance from the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), said sources close to the armed ethnic group. The KIO, which signed a ceasefire with the junta in 1994, was reportedly unhappy that several projects to build dams in Kachin State. Tensions soared two weeks ago when Chinese authorities refused to pay tax to the KIO, which responded by deploying soldiers around the two dams in progress - Tarpein 1 and Tarpein 2 - which are being constructed on the Tarpein River in Momauk Township by Myanmar's Ministry of Electric Power No 1 and a conglomerate of Chinese companies. Soon after two battalions of armed KIO soldiers took up positions around the dams the Chinese construction workers on the project fled, causing construction to be suspended. Sources close to the KIO said that the workers returned and the project resumed about one week ago after Chinese authorities paid 1.5 million yuan (US \$220,916) to the KIO. The negotiation was reportedly mediated by newly appointed Commander of Northern Command Brig-Gen Soe Win. The Tarpein 1 hydroelectric dam is designed to generate a capacity of 240 megawatts and is located about 3.5 miles from Momauk Township, while Tarpein 2, which should generate 168 megawatts, is located about 6 miles downstream of Tarpein 1.²²

²¹ "China's Grip on Burma 'Cause for Concern', *Irrawaddy*, September 30, 2008, at http://irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=14333&page=1

²² "Chinese Dam Incurs KIO Wrath", *Irrawaddy*, October 2, 2008, at http://irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=14360

C. WEST ASIA

IRAN

- **IAEA insists Iran to assure the world for its secret nuclear programme; US think-tank to open in Tehran; French Foreign Minister warns of Israeli strike on Iran nuclear sites**

The chief UN nuclear inspector said a six-year probe has not ruled out the possibility that Iran may be running clandestine nuclear programs and urging Iran to reassure the world by ending its secretive ways. On the opening session of the IAEA's 145-nation conference on September 29, Europe also urged Tehran to fully cooperate with the UN probe that is trying to assess all of its past and present nuclear activities. The EU said 'the international community cannot accept the prospect of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons.' Israel also took Iran to task for co-sponsoring Islamic attempts to label the Jewish state a nuclear danger to the Middle East. Iran, in turn, accused the US, Britain and France of breaking their nonproliferation commitments by giving Israel 'full uninterrupted cooperation with, and assistance in, nuclear weapon technology.'²³

Meanwhile, the US has given approval for a research body to open an office in Iran. The American Iranian Council (AIC) was given a licence to establish a presence in Tehran by the US Treasury Department. The AIC is a policy think-tank devoted to improving relations between the US and Iran, which have been mutually hostile since Iran's 1979 revolution. A spokesman for the US state department, which guides the policy for issuing non-governmental organisation (NGO) licences to places under US sanctions, like Iran, Sudan and Cuba, said the move did not signal any change in policy. The US and Iran have had no diplomatic relations since the US hostages crisis in 1980 when Islamic revolutionary students took over the US embassy in Tehran. A US official quoted that the establishment of an AIC office in Tehran would encourage cultural exchange and mutual understanding between peoples while 'trying to isolate the Iranian regime'.²⁴

Elsewhere, the French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said that Israel would strike arch foe Iran before it succeeding in developing nuclear weapons. He told this in an interview with Israeli newspaper, *Haaretz*, during a two-day visit to the region. Kouchner also said he hoped tough diplomacy and sanctions would persuade Iran to halt its uranium enrichment programme, which Israel and many Western countries believe is aimed at developing nuclear weapons. He further noted that "Iran with an atomic bomb is unacceptable at al ... Talking, talking, talking, and offering dialogue, sanctions, sanctions, sanctions. Is the alternative to bomb first -- I think not". Iran has always insisted its nuclear drive is entirely peaceful. Israel is widely regarded as the only nuclear armed state in the Middle East but it has never confirmed or denied having an arsenal.²⁵

²³ 1 "IAEA chief urges Iran to end its nuclear secrecy," *Khaleej Times*, September 30, 2008, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2008/September/middleeast_September583.xml§ion=middleeast

²⁴ 2 "US think tank to open in Tehran," *BBC News*, October 3, 2008, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7650169.stm

²⁵ 3 "French FM warns of Israeli strike on Iran nuclear sites," *Khaleej Times*, October 5, 2008, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2008/October/middleeast_October53.xml§ion=middleeast

IRAQ

- **Iraq purchases 12 new US-built reconnaissance planes to bolster surveillance; Iraq's presidency approves provincial elections law; Two US helicopters crashed in Baghdad; Sunni Arab groups obtain pay in Iraq**

Iraq's Defense Ministry said Iraq has bought 12 new US-built reconnaissance planes to bolster surveillance of its borders and better track movement of extremist groups. Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Mohammed al-Askari said six King Air planes have been delivered, with six more expected to arrive soon. He also added that they would be used in Iraq's 'war against terrorism'. The planes will be used to track terrorists' movements inside or outside cities, plus detect any infiltration across Iraq's borders. The King Airs are small aircraft equipped with advanced aerial video technology enabling them to cover wide areas and send live feed to ground control centers.²⁶

Meanwhile, the Presidency Council – which consists of President Jalal Talabani and his two vice presidents - has agreed to ratify the country's provincial elections law paving the way for long-awaited elections to be held before January 31 next year. The polls had been scheduled for October 1, but the law governing how the vote should be conducted stalled in parliament over how to treat the northern oil-rich city of Kirkuk, where control is disputed by Kurds, Arabs and ethnic Turkmen. Parliament adopted a revised version last month which puts off a decision on Kirkuk while authorizing the election in other provinces.²⁷

Elsewhere, the US military says a man believed to be the planner of a series of deadly al-Qaeda attacks in Iraq has been killed in Adhamiya district of Baghdad. Mahir al-Zubaydi, also known as Abu Assad or Abu Rami, was said to head the group behind bombings which killed at least 16 people in Baghdad this week. US officials described him as the al-Qaeda military commander for the whole of Baghdad east of the Tigris river. He was suspected to have played a key role in planning some of the worst atrocities in Iraq over the past few years.²⁸

The US military in Iraq says it will soon hand over responsibility for paying members of Sunni Arab groups fighting al-Qaeda to the Iraqi government. About 100,000 former anti-US insurgents have joined the so-called 'Awakening Councils' since September 2006 and received salaries from the US. Members of the 'Baghdad Awakening' will move to the government payroll on October 1, 2008, with others to follow. The cost of the former insurgents' salaries amounts to about \$360m a year. The 'Sunni Awakening' has made a huge difference to the security situation in Iraq. A US military spokesman in Baghdad says 54,000 Baghdad Awakening members would be paid by the national

²⁶ 1 "Iraq buys 12 US-made reconnaissance planes," *Khaleej Times*, September 30, 2008, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2008/September/middleeast_September582.xml§ion=middleeast

²⁷ 2 "Iraq's presidency approves provincial elections law," *Khaleej Times*, October 3, 2008, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2008/October/middleeast_October37.xml§ion=middleeast

²⁸ 3 "US kills senior Baghdad bomber," *BBC News*, October 4, 2008, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7652362.stm

government from next month. The first councils were formed in the province of Anbar when local Sunni tribes, who had initially backed al-Qaeda against US forces, turned against it because of its extremist ideology. Their successful campaign ousted al-Qaeda from Anbar within a year, transforming the huge western province into one of the most peaceful parts of Iraq. Awakening councils are also found among Sunni Arab tribes in Salaheddin, Diyala, Nineveh and Tamim provinces. Members have often been the target of attacks by al-Qaeda-inspired militants. However, there are major concerns about whether the Awakening movement can be integrated into the national government or whether it will continue as an alternative source of political and military power.²⁹

II. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

JAMMU & KASHMIR

- **Farooq Abdullah: Delhi to be blamed for present turmoil in J&K**

Former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah had blamed ‘elements’ in Delhi for the present turmoil in the Kashmir Valley. "One day India may lose Kashmir. The separatists’ active in the Valley cannot be blamed alone but elements in Delhi are equally responsible for this. They are pushing people to the wall," Abdullah said at a function in New Delhi on September 30. Abdullah alleged that there was politics against the people of Kashmir during the rule of erstwhile Maharaja Hari Singh, and the same tendency persists even today.³⁰

- **Yasin Malik: Include Kashmiris in Indo-Pak dialogue process**

Stating that Kashmiris are not against the Indo-Pak talks, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chairman Mohammad Yasin Malik said the dialogue process can prove to be effective only if the people of J&K are also included in it. "We are not against the talks between India and Pakistan. But we demand that Kashmiris be also included in the dialogue process. Then only such a process can move forward and prove to be effective and result oriented," Malik said this while addressing an Eid congregation in Srinagar on October 1. He further stated that both countries have been holding talks on Kashmir for decades. But this exercise has proved futile in absence of the people of the state.³¹

- **Curfew imposed in the entire Kashmir Valley to thwart separatists’ march**

The entire Kashmir valley was brought under indefinite curfew on October 5 to thwart a march by separatists to Lal Chowk in Srinagar on October 6. A virtual siege was laid around Lal Chowk as a large posse of gun-carrying security personnel took up positions in and around the area. A number of separatist leaders, including JKLF leader Yasin Malik, were put under preventive custody.³²

²⁹ 5 “Sunni fighters to get Iraqi pay,” *BBC News*, October 4, 2008, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7598167.stm

³⁰ ‘Delhi to be blamed for present turmoil: Farooq’, *Daily Excelsior*, October 1, 2008, at <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/web1/08oct01/news.htm#4>

³¹ “Include Kashmiris in Indo-Pak dialogue process: Yasin”, *Kashmir Times*, October 3, 2008, at <http://kashmirtimes.com/news2.htm>

³² “Curfew imposed on Valley to thwart separatists’ march”, *Daily Excelsior*, October 5, 2008, at <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/web1/08oct05/news.htm#6>

NORTH EAST

- **Serial blasts rocked Agartala, three killed and 120 wounded**

Three persons were reported killed and nearly 120 others wounded in a series of five bomb blasts that ripped through Tripura's capital town of Agartala on October 1. The low-intensity blasts took place at Agartala's main shopping area of Maharaja Ganju Bazar, Gobind Ballah Pant market, Radhanagar bus stand, Agartala Motor stand and Abhay Nagar. It is the first time that Tripura has faced urban terror as the state's decades-old militancy has so far been dominated by tribal insurgent groups operating in tribal areas close to the Chittagong Hill Tracts. According to police sources, the needle of suspicion is on HuJI.³³ According to Tripura Police highly explosive devices with a mobile phone as trigger were used in low-intensity blasts.

- **305 ULFBV cadres surrender, NDFB gives up sovereignty demand**

Altogether 305 insurgents belonging to the little-known the United Liberation Front of Barak Valley (ULFBV), a Reang outfit, formally surrendered before the authorities in Guwahati on September 30. Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi and other top officials also attended the surrender ceremony. The militants deposited arms and ammunitions including three AK-47 rifles and an M-16 rifle. The group also submitted a six-point charter of demands that includes creation of a separate Zila Parishad for the Reangs and other tribals living in the Barak Valley.³⁴

Meanwhile, in a significant development, the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) on September 30 formally gave up its original demand of a 'sovereign Bodoland' and assured the Central Government that the outfit would try to find solution to the problems within the framework of the Constitution of India. Further, the term of the cease-fire agreement with the NDFB has been extended by a period of three months with effect from October 1.³⁵ Meanwhile, Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) chief Hagrama Mohilary on September 30 said that the council could be scrapped if the NDFB agreed to a separate state. The Mohilary-led Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) had waged an armed struggle for statehood before settling for an autonomous council as per the accord in 2003. The BLT has since been disbanded. "If the NDFB drops the demand of sovereignty and asks for a separate state, we will stand by them. Nobody will oppose it," Mohilary said during a press conference at Kokrajhar.³⁶

MAOIST INSURGENCY

- **Four CRPF personnel killed in Bastar landmine blast**

Four Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel, including a Deputy Commandant, were killed and three others injured in a landmine blast suspected to have been triggered

³³ "Assault on Agartala", *Telegraph*, October 2, 2008, at http://telegraphindia.com/1081002/jsp/frontpage/story_9918102.jsp

³⁴ "305 ULFBV cadres surrender", *Sentinel*, October 1, 2008, at http://sentinelassam.com/sentinel_en/main%20news.htm

³⁵ "NDFB gives up sovereignty demand", *Assam Tribune*, October 1, 2008, at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/details.asp?id=oct0108/at04>

³⁶ "Hagrama open to statehood", *Telegraph*, October 1, 2008, at http://telegraphindia.com/1081001/jsp/northeast/story_9910741.jsp

by Maoists in the interior of Bastar district on September 29. The ultras blew up a CRPF road opening party vehicle as it reached Mardoom killing four of them.³⁷

OTHER INTERNAL SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS

- **Bomb blasts kill 6, 80 injured in Gujarat, Maharashtra towns**

At least six persons were killed and 80 others wounded as terrorists set off bomb blasts in Malegaon in Maharashtra and Modasa in Gujarat on September 29. In both the incidents, explosives were suspected to have been placed on motorcycles. Five persons were killed and 70 others wounded when a bomb went off at a hotel in Malegaon. The blast in Malegaon came two years after a powerful explosion in a mosque left 38 dead in September 2006. Further, one boy was killed and ten others injured in a low intensity blast at Modasa in Gujarat. Both the blasts took place in Muslim-dominated areas.³⁸

- **Private security agencies to ask government for intelligence duties**

With the spurt in home-grown terror resulting in a spate of bomb blasts across the country, private security agencies have decided to offer their services in gathering anti-terror intelligence. Personnel of the 50-lakh-strong private security agencies in the country will submit a proposal on the matter before the Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil during their third annual conference on October 13 and 14 in Bangalore. During the Bangalore conference - Home Land Security, A Determined Approach - the agencies will stress on foreign models of safety which rely heavily on public involvement in security and safety "bandobast" taking into consideration the "low-intensity home-grown war" witnessed in the recent terror attacks. The private security industry is buoyed by its recent success in striking a deal with the Rajasthan Government on training private security personnel to gather anti-terror intelligence. The conference will also attract about 15,000 private security players which provide employment to over 50-lakh men and women in the country.³⁹

³⁷ "4 CRPF personnel killed in Bastar landmine blast", *Hindu*, September 30, 2008, at <http://www.hindu.com/2008/09/30/stories/2008093050410100.htm>

³⁸ "5 killed, 80 injured in blasts in Gujarat, Maharashtra towns", *Hindu*, September 30, 2008, at <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/000200809300338.htm>

³⁹ "Pvt security agencies to ask Govt for intelligence duties", *Daily Excelsior*, October 5, 2008, at <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/web1/08oct05/news.htm#7>