

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

- **Karzai to unveil up to 17 more areas transferring from NATO to Afghan control as Afghanistan prepares to take full responsibility for security by 2014; Afghan fuel tanker blast kills 12**

Reports noted that President Hamid Karzai will shortly unveil up to 17 more areas transferring from NATO to Afghan control as Afghanistan prepares to take full responsibility for security by 2014, an official said on Wednesday. Badakhshan, Badghis, Balkh, Daykundi, Ghazni, Ghor, Helmand, Herat, Kabul, Laghman, Nangarhar, Nimroz, Parwan, Samangan, Sar-i-pul, Takhar and Wardak provinces are likely to be announced by Karzai at next month's regional conference in Istanbul, said the country's local government directorate. Most of Herat and Kabul were already handed over to Afghan control in a first wave of transition in July, but some districts remain under Nato's remit. Karzai "will announce the names of the provinces at Istanbul conference on November 2," Abdul Khaliq Farahi, director of the Independent Directorate for Local Government, told a press conference in Kabul. Although Afghan forces have been criticised for their capabilities, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen has said he is confident that transition will be completed by 2014 as planned.¹

In another development, at least 12 people have been killed and 33 injured in a fuel tanker explosion in northern Afghanistan, officials say. About 60-70 people arrived to steal fuel leaking from the tanker after a magnetised bomb blew a hole in it, a spokesman for Parwan province said. The tanker then burst into flames in a second explosion. Parwan province Governor, Basir Salangi, said it was a "terrorist attack" and the aim had been to blow up the tanker at Bagram air base.²

Pakistan

- **Pakistan-US chalk out work plan to combat terrorists; United States and Pakistan agree on a framework for holding direct talks with the militants; Intelligence reports warns of a reorganisation of Taliban and other militant organisations in Balochistan**

In a significant development, reports noted that the United States and Pakistan have 90-95 per cent agreement on a work plan to combat terrorists, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said on Sunday while reflecting on her two-day visit to Islamabad. During the visit, which ended on Friday, the chief US diplomat urged Pakistan to move against extremists who were attacking

¹ "Karzai to announce next areas for NATO handover", *Dawn*, October 26, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/10/26/karzai-to-announce-next-areas-for-nato-handover.html>

² "Afghan fuel tanker magnetised bomb kills 12", *BBC*, October 26, 2011 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-15455778>

American forces in Afghanistan or risk dwindling support from the US and further instability at home. She stated, "We're about 90, 95 per cent in agreement between the United States and Pakistan about the means of our moving towards what are commonly shared goals,". "And we have a work plan and a real commitment to making sure we are as effective as possible together", Clinton added.³

Meanwhile, according to reports, the United States and Pakistan agree on a framework for holding direct talks with the militants and are now working to operationalise the plan, says the US State Department. At a briefing for the press corps that accompanied Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Islamabad last week, two State Department officials explained what the secretary meant when she said in her recent interviews that the US and Pakistan had agreement on 90-95 per cent of issues they confronted. They said the US, Pakistan and Afghanistan had already an understanding on holding a "tri-logue" with the Taliban militants. They also agree that this has to be Afghan-led and has to be at the pace and scope that the Afghans decide on.⁴

In other developments, reports noted that At least two intelligence agencies are reported to have alerted the federal government about a reorganisation of Taliban and other militant organisations in Balochistan after the replacement of police with Levies force. The crux of the reports was that the rolling back of police force in most areas had encouraged the militant outfits, including the Taliban, to re-organise themselves, taking advantage of loose policing by the Levies which did not have the required training and the will to address such challenges.⁵

Bangladesh

- **Goods for transit to India will now be unloaded at Akhaura Land port; Bangladesh provides US\$ 1 million as relief support to the flood victims of Thailand; Germany pledged to provide 10.9 million euro as grant to help Bangladesh; PM Sheikh Hasina attends CHOGM meeting in Australia**

According to reports, as per a revised decision of the government of Bangladesh, goods for transit to India will now be unloaded at Akhaura Land Port instead of India's Agartala. Bangladeshi trucks will carry the goods from Ashuganj River Port to Akhaura Land Port from where the goods will be loaded on Indian trucks and taken to Agartala.⁶

Meanwhile, reports noted that Bangladesh will provide US\$ 1 million as relief support to the flood victims of Thailand as the country is experiencing a devastating flood, which is worse in more than 50 years.⁷

³ "US, Pakistan agree on work plan", *Dawn*, October 24, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/10/24/us-pakistan-agree-on-work-plan.html>

⁴ "Accord with US on Taliban tri-logue", *Dawn*, October 26, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/10/26/accord-with-us-on-taliban-tri-logue.html>

⁵ "Taliban regrouping in Balochistan, says intelligence reports", *Dawn*, October 22, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/10/22/taliban-regrouping-in-balochistan-say-intelligence-reports.html>

⁶ "Transit Goods: Unloading now at Akhaura", *The Daily Star*, October 24, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=207765>.

⁷ "Bangladesh to give \$1m for flood victims of Thailand", *The Daily Star*, October 24, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=207743>.

Reports noted that Germany pledged to provide 10.9 million euro as grant to help Bangladesh implement climate change adaptation and mitigation programmes. German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Dirk Niebel made the pledge while signing a joint declaration of intent on 'Cooperation in the Field of Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change' on October 25, 2011. The two countries also signed another joint declaration of intent on 'Cooperation in the Field of Health'.⁸ Both the countries have agreed to further explore bilateral trade and cooperation in the areas of sustainable development, climate change, health and social safety net programme.⁹

In other developments, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left for Australia on October 26, 2011 on a four-day official visit to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).¹⁰

Sri Lanka

- **Sri Lanka expressed its concerns about the transparency of the UN Human Rights Council; British PM: Make progress on human rights before 2013; Bangladesh pledges its support to Sri Lanka to host the next Commonwealth Leaders meeting in 2013; Japanese assistance for reintegration and reconciliation of the conflict-affected communities in northern Sri Lanka; Pakistani de-mining team visited Sri Lanka**

Reports note that the Special Envoy of the President for Human Rights Mahinda Samarasinghe addressing the Third Committee meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in New York today expressed Sri Lanka's concerns about the transparency of the UN Human Rights Council.¹¹

In another development, British Prime Minister David Cameron urged Sri Lanka on October 30, 2011 to make progress on human rights before it hosts the next Commonwealth leaders meeting in 2013 to prevent the likelihood of boycotts.¹²

Meanwhile, Bangladesh has pledged to support Sri Lanka to host the next Commonwealth leaders meeting in 2013 in Colombo. The assurance was given by the Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa when the two leaders met on October 28, 2011 at the ongoing 22nd Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting (CHOGM) 2011 in Perth Australia.¹³

⁸ "Germany to Give • 11m as climate aid", *The Daily Star*, October 26, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=207987>.

⁹ "Hasina-Merkel Talks: Dhaka, Berlin agree to boost economic ties", *The Daily Star*, October 26, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=207986>

¹⁰ "PM arrives today, leaves tonight", *The Daily Star*, October 26, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=207988>

¹¹ "Samarasinghe questions UNHRC transparency", *The Daily Mirror*, October 27, 2011 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/14387-samarasinghe-questions-unhrc-transparency.html>

¹² "Britain urges Sri Lanka to make progress on rights by 2013", *The Daily Mirror*, October 30, 2011 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/14431-britain-urges-sri-lanka-to-make-progress-on-rights-by-2013.html>

¹³ "Bangladesh to support Sri Lanka hosting Commonwealth leaders meeting in 2013", *Colombo Page*, October 29, 2011 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_11B/Oct29_1319873071CH.php

According to reports, the Government of Japan has decided to grant 122 million Japanese Yen (approximately US\$ 1.5 million) through the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for reintegration and reconciliation of the conflict-affected communities in Northern Sri Lanka. The Ambassador of Japan to Sri Lanka Nobuhito Hobo and Chief of Mission, IOM Sri Lanka, Richard Danziger have signed the grant agreement on October 27, 2011 at the Embassy.¹⁴

In other developments, a 10 member de-mining team of officers from Pakistan Army Engineering Corps visited Sri Lanka from 13-28 October, 2011 on the invitation of the Sri Lankan Army.¹⁵

Maldives

- **President Nasheed attends CHOGM meeting; President supports Australian PM's carbon tax proposal; Nasheed congratulates President of Argentina**

Reports noted that President Mohamed Nasheed and First Lady Laila Ali departed to Australia on October 26, 2011 to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.¹⁶

In another development, President Mohamed Nasheed has declared his support of Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard's carbon tax proposal at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Perth on October 30, 2011, and recommended other countries follow her lead.¹⁷

In other developments, President Mohamed Nasheed has congratulated President Cristina Fernández of Argentina, on her success in Argentina's presidential elections.¹⁸

B. East Asia

China

- **China reaffirms commitment to ties with India; China's top political advisor visits Germany, ROK's nuclear envoy to visit China, Hu's visit to Austria to boost bilateral ties, China offers more aid to Thai, China issues white paper on law**

On the bilateral front, reports noted that Beijing has underscored its commitment towards

¹⁴ Japan grants US\$1.5 million for reintegration and reconciliation of conflict-affected in Northern Sri Lanka, *Colombo Page*, October 29, 2011 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_11B/Oct29_1319868241CH.php

¹⁵ "Pakistan sends experts to assist de-mining", *Official Website of Government of Sri Lanka*, October 25, 2011 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201110/20111025pakistan_sends_experts_to_assist_de_mining.htm

¹⁶ "President and First Lady Depart for CHOGM", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, October 26, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=6191>

¹⁷ "President backs Australia's carbon tax", *Minivan News*, October 30, 2011 at <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief>.

¹⁸ "President Congratulates Argentine President on her Re-election", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, October 25, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=6186>

consolidating its ties with New Delhi. This comes after the positive remarks from the Indian side towards Sino-Indian relations.¹⁹

In another development, China's political advisor Jia Qinglin visited Germany for a five day trip.²⁰ Meanwhile, Republic of Korea's nuclear negotiator is also scheduled to visit China to discuss resuming a multilateral forum aimed at dismantling the DPRK's nuclear programme.²¹

Meanwhile, Chinese President Hu Jintao visited Austria in order to promote China-Austria relations.²²

Reports noted that Wen Jiabao called his Thai counter part Yingluck Shinawatra in order to express his sympathy to the flood victims of the Southeast Asian nation and also to provide aid.²³

On the domestic front, in a significant development, the Chinese government issued the white paper on the Socialist System of Laws with Chinese Characteristics.²⁴

Japan

- **India, Japan agrees to develop rare earths jointly and step up negotiation towards achieving a bilateral nuclear pact; Japanese Prime Minister assures US Defence Secretary to make progress on base relocation; Japan, Vietnam sign agree to forge close bilateral defence cooperation**

During a recent meeting between Indian Foreign Minister Shri S K Krishna and his Japanese counterpart Koichiro Gomba in Tokyo, both agreed to promote at the private level, joint development of rare earths, essential for automobiles and information technology products. This is a significant development considering that it has come against the backdrop of an attempt to offset Chinese dominance in that field. During the meeting, both sides also agreed not only to step up negotiations towards reaching a bilateral nuclear cooperation agreement, but also to enhance security cooperation by carrying out joint exercises by navies of both the countries to ensure the safety of sea-lanes in the Indian Ocean.²⁵

¹⁹ "China reaffirms commitment to ties with India" China Daily, October 25, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-10/25/content_13975209.htm

²⁰ "Top political advisor starts visit to Germany" China Daily, October 30, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-10/30/content_14003933.htm

²¹ "ROK's nuclear envoy to visit China" China Daily, October 30, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2011-10/30/content_14003923.htm

²² "Hu's visit to Austria to boost bilateral ties" China Daily, October 29, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-10/29/content_14000855.htm

²³ "China offers more aid to Thai" China Daily, October 30, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-10/30/content_14002559.htm

²⁴ "China issues white paper on law" China Daily, October 27, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-10/27/content_13988033.htm

²⁵ "Japan, India to jointly develop rare earths", Yomiuri Shimbun, October 30, 2011, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T111029002574.htm>

In another development, during US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta's recent visit to Japan, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda appeared to indicate that his government would take measures to make progress on the stalled Futenma relocation process. Noda assured that his administration is to submit an environmental impact assessment report to Okinawa prefecture within this year, which is an essential step in deciding the relocation of US Marine Corps from Futenma in Ginowan to the Henoko district in Nago in the Okinawa prefecture.²⁶ Both the countries also agreed to enhance the bilateral defence cooperation across a wide range of areas, and to strengthen joint exercises and air surveillance.²⁷

In other developments, during Vietnamese Defence Minister Gen. Phung Quang Thanh's recent visit to Tokyo, both the countries signed a memorandum to enhance their bilateral defence cooperation, which calls for regular defense vice ministerial-level talks, mutual ministerial visits as well as exchanges between Japanese Self Defence Force and Vietnamese military. Both the countries also insisted on forging a close bilateral relationship to deal with China's growing assertiveness in the South China Sea and East China Sea.²⁸

South Korea

- **Chinese Vice Premier visits Seoul; South Korea and the US to step up efforts to strengthen bilateral defence cooperation to deal with North Korea**

Chinese Vice Premier Li Keqiang arrived in Seoul on October 26 for a two-day visit. During his meeting with South Korean Prime Minister Lee Myung-bak, Li was to discuss ways to promote bilateral cooperation and security situation in the Korean Peninsula. More importantly, he was also to discuss about the efforts to revive the stalled Six-Party Talks on North Korean nuclear programs. It is note worthy that during his recent three-day visit to North Korea, Li met with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il who reportedly expressed the North's willingness to return to the talks without any prior condition.²⁹

In another development, during US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta's recent visit to South Korea for the annual Security Consultative meeting, both the countries agreed to establish a joint operational plan to counter North Korean provocation. They decided to craft a "tailored bilateral deterrence strategy" to strengthen their capabilities in handling threats of North Korea's WMDs, especially nuclear weapons. Both the allies also agreed to strengthen their cooperation in dealing with cyberspace threats.³⁰

²⁶ "Noda promises key Futenma report by year-end/US defense chief 'very pleased' with prime minister's assurances of progress toward base relocation", *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 27, 2011, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T111026005695.htm>

²⁷ "Japan, US agree to bolster defense ties", *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 27, 2011, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T111026004865.htm>

²⁸ "Japan, Vietnam sign memo on defense cooperation enhancement", *Mainichi Shimbun*, October 25, 2011, at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/10/25/20111025p2g00m0dm013000c.html>

²⁹ "China's Vice premier arrives in S. Korea", *Korea Herald*, October 26, 2011, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20111026000695>

³⁰ "Allies to write defense plan on N. Korea", *Korea Herald*, October 28, 2011, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20111028000834>

C. Central Asia & Russia

Central Asia

(October 17-23, 2011)

- **Indian energy companies close to acquiring minority share in the Kashagan; Ashgabat determined to back European pipeline project; Three Central Asian republics sign free trade deal; Almaty hosts business council of Turkic-speaking states; Gallup poll shows few takers for Islamic republic in Kyrgyzstan; Putin: Tajikistan to join customs union only after Kyrgyzstan; U.S. Secretary of State visits Tajikistan, Uzbekistan**

Reports noted that the Indian consortium led by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation's overseas investment unit ONGC Videsh (OVL) is likely to purchase ExxonMobil's 16 percent stake in the offshore field for almost \$6 billion. India's Gail national gas company and Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) are also involved in talks to secure a piece of the shallow water project in the Kazakh sector of the Caspian Sea. The consortium developing the deposit includes ExxonMobil, Total, Agip, Shell and KazMunaiGas with 16.81 percent stakes apiece. The remainder is owned by ConocoPhillips and Inpex Holdings.³¹

In the meanwhile, Turkmenistan has last week voiced its determination to back a European pipeline project against Russian objections. The foreign ministry said it approves EU attempts to carry out bilateral negotiations with Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan on moving plans forward to lay a trans-Caspian Sea pipeline.³² Recently Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said that all the Caspian states should unanimously agree on Europe's proposed trans-Caspian gas pipeline before the project goes ahead.³³

In another development, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, along with Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia and Moldova signed a free-trade deal which will discard import and export levies on a range of goods. The agreement— forged in St. Petersburg by the eight countries at their summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)—will come into force in 2012 after ratification by the parliaments of all signatories. The Russian premier Putin added that the creation of the free trade zone would not interfere with Russia's plans to join the World Trade Organization (WTO).³⁴

Reports noted that leaders of four Turkic-speaking countries Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and Turkey launched a business council on October 20, at their first-ever summit held in Almaty.

³¹ "Indian oil consortium set to buy stake in Kashagan for \$6B", *Universal Newswires*, October 17, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=10443>

³² "Turkmenistan backs EU pipeline over Russian objections", *Universal Newswires*, October 19, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=10475>

³³ "Russia says Caspian gas plan needs unanimous agreement", *Universal Newswires*, October 17, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/turkmenistan/viewstory.aspx?id=10446>

³⁴ "Eight CIS states approve free trade deal in Russia", *Universal Newswires*, October 19, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=10470>

The development was made during talks by the four-member Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States (CCTS) on lifting barriers to trade. Major business organizations and companies will strive to boost trade and investment in these states. The summit was attended by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, his counterparts Roza Otunbayeva of Kyrgyzstan and Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan. The Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan was represented by his deputy.³⁵

In a related development, President Nursultan Nazarbayev and his Azeri counterpart Ilham Aliyev penned a joint declaration during their meeting, while delegates from both sides signed agreements on assigning land for the building of diplomatic establishments. Nazarbayev stressed that, "In the future Azerbaijan will become one of the most important transport arteries for Kazakhstan's oil and other products," while referring to his country's use of the Caspian Sea as an increasingly vital route for energy supplies pumped westward via Azerbaijan to energy-hungry markets in Europe. Similarly a railway route will link Eastern Europe with Azeri ports on the Caspian Sea to permit the shipment of goods from the Caucasus to Kazakhstan and onward to the Chinese market.³⁶

Reports noted that U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Tajikistan on October 21, on the penultimate stop of a multi-nation trip that discussed drugs, militancy and other threats to regional security. Tajikistan and neighbouring Uzbekistan are key regional partners for Washington as they participate in the U.S.-sponsored Northern Distribution Network (NDN), a non-military supply line used by NATO forces operating in Afghanistan.³⁷ Clinton concluded her four-nation trip of Central and South Asia on October 23, with talks with Tajik and Uzbek leaders on stabilizing Afghanistan and improving domestic human rights. She expressed concern over their human rights records and warned that restrictive measures against militant Islam may instead increase sympathy for militancy.³⁸

According to reports, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin clarified that the customs union will only consider Tajikistan's application for membership after Kyrgyzstan joins the trilateral group. The reason given was that, Tajikistan "does not have a common border with the customs union member nations but if Kyrgyzstan makes this step, Tajikistan will also be on the agenda [because it borders Kyrgyzstan]," Putin said.³⁹

In other developments, according to a poll released by Gallup on October 20, a full quarter of those polled said they preferred the former Soviet system, while another 24% polled for a system that has a lot of similarity to the Soviet one but is more democratic and market-based. 16%

³⁵ "Turkic states set up business council", *Universal Newswires*, October 20, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=10489>

³⁶ "Azerbaijan a key Caspian partner, Nazarbayev says", *Universal Newswires*, October 21, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=10497>

³⁷ "Clinton arrives in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan next", *Universal Newswires*, October 21, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/tajikistan/viewstory.aspx?id=10502>

³⁸ "Clinton concludes tour with Tajik, Uzbek visits", *Universal Newswires*, October 24, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/tajikistan/viewstory.aspx?id=10507>

³⁹ "Customs union to mull Tajik application after Kyrgyzstan joins, Putin says", *Universal Newswires*, October 21, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=10501>

considered authoritarian system as best and, while another 16% put their support behind a Western-style democracy. 3% said they would prefer an Islamic republic.⁴⁰

(October 24-30, 2011)

- **PM Atambayev is the new President of Kyrgyzstan; Kazakh coal imports banned over radioactivity; Zhetygen-Korgan railroad connecting Kazakh- Chinese railway systems to be completed by December this year; TAPI: Pakistan and Turkmenistan signed a tentative deal on supply and price of natural gas; Kazakhstan to enact Caspian Sea maritime transportation pact with Azerbaijan by 2011**

Reports noted that Kyrgyzstan's Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev has won the presidential election held on October 30. Since Atambayev won 63% of the vote, there won't be any second round. His two main rivals, each polling just under 15%, are both nationalist politicians from the country's south - Kamchibek Tashiyev and Adakhan Madumarov.⁴¹ Sixteen candidates contested wherein just over 60% of the Kyrgyzstan's three million eligible voters had cast ballots. International observers said they were unable to comment on the conduct of voting, but that there were scattered media reports of voting violations.⁴²

In another development, Kyrgyzstan banned imports from a Kazakh coal mine after detecting "dangerously" high levels of radioactivity. Acting Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov gave the order and instructed border officials to check the radiation levels of all shipments of coal fuel entering the country from Kazakhstan by road and rail.⁴³ Tests results indicated that around 8,000 tons of coal and 130 rail cars that carried it had radioactive levels that exceeded permitted levels by as much as 15 times.⁴⁴

In the meanwhile, Kazakh Transport and Communications Minister Berik Kamaliyev confirmed that the laying of the key railroad linking Kazakh and Chinese rail networks is scheduled for completion in early December: "The Zhetygen-Korgan railroad that will connect the Kazakh and Chinese railway systems will be completed on December 6."⁴⁵ The new east-west railroad will shorten the current transportation distance between the southern Kazakh city of Zhetygen, located nearby the business capital Almaty, and the Chinese border by around 300 miles by opening up a new frontier crossing at Korgan.⁴⁶ Meanwhile the construction of a vital north-south railway system is underway.

⁴⁰ "Kyrgyz citizens miss Soviet system of government, poll reveals", *Universal Newswires*, October 20, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=10493>

⁴¹ "PM Atambayev wins Kyrgyzstan presidential election", *BBC News*, October 31, 2011 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-15510217>

⁴² *ibid*

⁴³ "Kyrgyzstan bans Kazakh coal imports over radioactivity", *Universal Newswires*, October 28, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=10555>

⁴⁴ *ibid*

⁴⁵ "Southern Kazakhstan-China railway to be completed by December", *Universal Newswires*, October 31, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=10566>

⁴⁶ *ibid*

According to reports, the government of Pakistan confirmed on October 28 that it has signed a tentative deal with Turkmenistan on the supply and price of natural gas that it will receive from the TAPI gas pipeline. The partner countries of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) project have been locked in negotiations for months over finding an agreeable pricing formula.⁴⁷ According to the terms of the agreement, Turkmenistan will supply more than 31 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas per year through the multilateral pipeline to Pakistan and the latter will pay Ashgabat 69% of crude oil parity for the gas.⁴⁸

In other developments, Kazakhstan's Water Transport Chief of the Ministry of Transport and Communications Kasim Pletov confirmed that Kazakhstan will be ready to enact a Caspian Sea maritime transportation pact with Azerbaijan by the end of this year. Under the deal, commercial shipping between their countries will be given unhindered entry at the other's ports to load and unload goods, port authorities of each country will recognize the passports and identity documents of civilians of both countries, and all the ships will be served in the ports by turn, regardless of state affiliation.⁴⁹ The document on sea trade cooperation was signed by transportation ministers Berik Kamaliyev of Kazakhstan and Ziya Mammadov of Azerbaijan.⁵⁰

Russia

- **Russia hopes that the US will make reciprocal efforts to break a deadlock over the European missile shield; Russia has contributed US\$ 22 million for UN peacekeeping operations; Russia has launched space freighter to the world orbit station; Russia aims to finish WTO talks by the end of this year; Russia ready to consider Japanese proposals regarding Sakhalin-3; Russian oil company expects payment of Chinese oil debts within a few weeks; Third Sukhoi T-50 stealth fighter to fly soon; Russia to provide Libya with aid to the tune of US\$ 7 million; Russia has lost a US\$ 600 million helicopter tender of India; Russia has no intention of joining the European Union; Russia plans to substantially contribute towards the Karabakh settlement; By 2020 Russia plans to produce 520 mln tonnes of oil, 850 bln cubic metres of gas; 850 bln cubic metres of gas; NATO-Russian commanders will meet to discuss Afghanistan security force training; Mongolia to open Russia, China link Railways**

Russia's envoy to NATO Dmitry Rogozin has said that Russia is hoping that the United States will make reciprocal efforts to break a deadlock over the European missile shield. The talks are deadlocked because the United States has refused to provide Russia with serious legally-binding guarantees that the European missile shield will not be aimed against Russia.⁵¹

⁴⁷ "Turkmenistan, Pakistan agree on TAPI supply price", *Universal Newswires*, October 28, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=10550>

⁴⁸ *ibid*

⁴⁹ "Kazakh-Azeri maritime pact ready by end 2011", *Universal Newswires*, October 25, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=10520>

⁵⁰ *ibid*

⁵¹ "Russia expects US compromise on missile defence", *RIA Novosti*, October 27, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20111027/168150654.html>

According to reports, Russia has contributed US\$ 22million to the budget of the UN peacekeeping operations. These include the budgets of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), UN operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the African Union – United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).⁵²

Reports noted that Russia has launched a Soyuz-U carrier rocket with a Progress M-13M cargo spacecraft from the Baikonur Space Center in Kazakhstan to deliver supplies to the International Space Station. The Progress space freighter will deliver food supplies to the world orbiter's crew and a small satellite, Chibis-M, to study lightning and thunderstorms in the Earth's atmosphere.⁵³

President Dmitry Medvedev has said that Russia aims to finish talks on gaining membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO) by the end of this year. Russia has been in membership talks with the 153-nation WTO for 17 years and remains the only major economy still outside the organization.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, reports noted that Russia is ready to consider Japan's partnership proposal for participation in Sakhalin -3 new project on the basis of the principles of strategic expediency and exchange of assets.⁵⁵

Russian space agency officials believe that the service life of the International Space Station (ISS) could be extended until 2028. The service life of the ISS ends in 2015 but participants of the project - Canada, the European Union, Japan, Russia and the United States – have recently agreed to extend its operation until at least 2020. The orbital station could be used as an assembly line and a launch pad for experimental spacecraft, including small satellites.⁵⁶

The Transneft Company has said that it expects China to repay its debts for the supplied oil within the next two or three weeks. At present, China's oil debt is estimated at 75 million U.S. dollars (debts to Transneft and Rosneft) and 700,000 U.S. dollars of penalties and fines to Transneft.⁵⁷

Reports noted that Russia will provide U.S. dollar 7 million as humanitarian aid to Libya. Russia has sent its IL 76 plane with 36.2 tonnes of humanitarian cargoes – canned milk, baby food, sugar and rice. Since the beginning of the crisis Russia has given Libya 144 tonnes of food products.⁵⁸

⁵² "RF pays \$22mln to budgets of UN peacekeeping operations", ITAR-TASS, October 29, 2011, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/259298.html>

⁵³ "Russia launches space freighter to world orbit station", RIA Novosti, October 30, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20111030/168265039.html>

⁵⁴ "Russia hopes to finish WTO talks by yearend", RIA Novosti, October 30, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20111030/168267234.html>

⁵⁵ "Russia ready to give attention to Japanese proposals re-Sakhalin 3", ITAR-TASS, October 25, 2011, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/256266.html>

⁵⁶ "ISS could be used for satellite assembly till 2028", RIA Novosti, October 18, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/science/20111018/167817258.html>

⁵⁷ "Transneft hopes for payment of China's oil debts within 2-3 weeks", ITAR-TASS, October 25, 2011, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/256218.html>

⁵⁸ "Rf to provide USD 7 mln aid to Libya", ITAR-TASS, October 27, 2011, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/258083.html>

According to reports, Russian Mi-28N Night Hunter has lost a tender on technical grounds on the delivery of 22 attack helicopters to the Indian military in strong competition with the American AH-64D Apache. The Russia helicopter failed to meet 20 requirements of the tender. Russia is still taking part in two other Indian helicopter tenders: on the delivery of 12 heavy transport helicopters and 197 light general-purpose helicopters.⁵⁹

According to reports, Russia's third prototype Sukhoi T-50 fifth generation fighter will be ready to take to the skies in the near future. The T-50 made its maiden flight in January and two prototypes have since been undergoing flight tests. It is the first fighter jet designed in Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union and the new war plane is expected to enter service in 2016.⁶⁰

Russian ambassador at large Anvar Azimov has said that Russia has no intention to seek a European Union membership. However, he has favoured a mutually beneficial dialogue which can help in fostering relationship between the two parties.⁶¹

President Medvedev has said that Russia as a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group and through direct contacts between the Armenian and Azerbaijani authorities plans to further contribute to the negotiations on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement.⁶²

In another development, the Russian Ministry of Energy has forecasted that by 2020 Russia will begin annually producing 500-520 million tonnes of oil and up to 850 billion cubic metres of gas. In 2010, Russia's oil production amounted to 504.9 million tonnes, which is 2.1 percent more than in 2009. Last year Russia's gas production amounted to 650.311 billion cubic metres, which is 11.5 percent more than in 2009.⁶³

Reports noted that Russia and NATO will discuss several issues of mutual interest which include the possibility of support to the Afghan security forces, joint efforts in the struggle against piracy off Somalia and the planning and holding of joint military exercises.⁶⁴

In other developments, Mongolia has said that it plans to synchronize the openings of two export railways to Russia and China to accelerate coal sales from the Tavan Tolgoi mine, one of the world's biggest unexploited coal deposits. It may complete the railways as soon as 2014. It initially planned to develop a Russian route first to reduce reliance on Chinese customers. The Soviet Union helped build Mongolia's rail network, and the Russian government still owns half of it.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ "Russia loses \$600mln Indian attack helicopter tender", RIA Novosti, October 25, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20111025/168096811.html>

⁶⁰ "Third Sukhoi T-50 stealth fighter 'to fly soon'", RIA Novosti, October 27, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20111027/168170067.html

⁶¹ "Moscow has no intentions to join European Union", ITAR-TASS, October 25, 2011, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/255938.html>

⁶² "Russia plans to further contribute to Karabakh settlement-Medvedev", ITAR-TASS, October 24, 2011, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/254928.html>

⁶³ "By 2020 RF to produce 520 mln t of oil, 850 bln c m of gas", ITAR-TASS, October 24, 2011, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/254691.html>

⁶⁴ "NATO, Russian commanders to discuss Afghan force training", ITAR-TASS, October 24, 2011, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/254498.html>

⁶⁵ "Mongolia to open China, Russia railways", The Moscow Times, October 28, 2011, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/mongolia-to-open-china-russia-railways/446536.html>

D. West Asia

Syria

- **Syria and the US recall envoys following security threats; Syria and South Africa discuss agriculture cooperation; Syria discusses educational cooperation with Algeria and Iran; Arab League team held talks with the Syrian President**

According to reports, Syria recalled its ambassador to Washington Imad Mustapha for consultations, after the US envoy Robert Ford, an open critic of President Bashar Assad's crackdown on political dissent, was called back from Damascus due to safety concerns. Ford has come under heavy criticism by the regime supporters in Damascus who have accused him of helping incite violence in the country. The ambassador has also angered the regime by visiting protest hubs outside the capital in a show of solidarity with pro-democracy demonstrators.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, in a bid to mediate with the opposition, an Arab League team held talks with the Syrian President Bashar Assad. Headed by Qatar, the League's current chair, the delegation comprised the foreign ministers of Algeria, Egypt, Oman and Sudan, in addition to Arab League chief Nabil Al Arabi. Meanwhile, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said 19 people, including nine government soldiers, had been killed in the latest unrest between Assad loyalists and opponents.⁶⁷

In another development, during a meeting with the South African Ambassador in Damascus, Syrian Minister of Agriculture Riad Hijab underlined the importance of developing cooperation between Syria and South Africa, particularly in the fields of agricultural research, policies, technologies and exchanging expertise. Both sides have also agreed to prepare a memorandum of understanding to exchange agriculture expertise, training, particularly in agrarian research and policies. On his part, the South African Ambassador stressed the importance of cooperation with Syria, particularly in the fields of importing olive oil, citrus and other agrarian products.⁶⁸

In other developments, on the sidelines of the meeting of the 36th session of the UNESCO General Conference, Syrian Education Minister, Saleh al-Rashid discussed the means of developing bilateral educational cooperation with his Algerian counterpart, Abu Bakr Balmazid, and Iranian counterpart, Mohammad al-Hussaini. Al-Rashid also reviewed the Ministry's efforts to advance the educational situation, pointing out to the important steps made by the ministry to achieve the highest percentage of school teaching and dealing with school drop-out and illiteracy. Further, he stressed the importance of inspecting the pioneering educational experiences in various countries and the means of making use of them to develop the educational process.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ "Syria recalls envoy from Washington; US ambassador leaves Syria for security reasons", *The Jordan Times*, October 25, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=42700>

⁶⁷ "Arab League holds 'frank' talks with Assad as 19 killed", *The Jordan Times*, October 27, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=42797>

⁶⁸ "Syria and South Africa discuss agriculture cooperation", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, October 26, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2011/10/26/378078.htm>

⁶⁹ "Education Minister Discusses Educational Cooperation at UNESCO Conference", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, October 27, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/22/2011/10/27/378341.htm>

Jordan

- **New Jordan government led by Awn Khasawneh sworn in ; Economic hardships concerns Jordan's King; Jordan turns to Iraq for gas supplies**

Prime Minister Awn Khasawneh and his Cabinet were sworn in before King Abdullah, becoming the 94th government since 1921 and the ninth since the King ascended the Throne in 1999. Later, the Cabinet held its first meeting in which the prime minister stressed the need to work as a team to implement the King's vision and deal with the challenges facing the Kingdom. Of Khasawneh's 29-strong team, 16 new members were appointed ministers for the first time.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, during his two recent press interviews, Jordan King Abdullah voiced concern over Jordan's economic conditions, noting that political reform cannot be achieved without a positive change in the economy.⁷¹

In other developments, reports noted that Jordan is reaching out to Iraq to explore the feasibility of importing natural gas as the country continues to struggle to meet its rising energy needs. According to the Ministry of Energy Secretary General Farouq Hariri, energy officials have contacted Baghdad regarding supplying Jordan with natural gas for electricity generation and domestic use. The Iraqi energy officials are currently studying the feasibility of supplying the Kingdom with natural gas, with energy officials hoping for an agreement to be struck by early 2012.⁷²

Libya

- **Gaddafi's son Seif Al Islam Gaddafi wants to surrender; UN votes to lift Libya no-fly zone**

According to Abdel Majid Mlegta, a senior military official of the National Transitional Council (NTC), Libyan leader al-Gaddafi's son Seif Al Islam Gaddafi wants to surrender in front of The Hague war crimes court along with former intelligence chief Abdullah Al Senussi, the third man indicted along with the two Gaddafis by the International Criminal Court (ICC) after their crackdown on the popular revolt.⁷³

In another development, following the death of Muammar Gaddafi and the interim government's declaration of the country's liberation, the UN Security Council voted unanimously to lift the no-fly zone over Libya on October 31, 2011 and end military action to protect civilians. However, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said the alliance was ready to assist the new Libyan government in the transformation to democracy, particularly in the areas of defence and security sector reforms.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ "New gov't sworn in", *The Jordan Times*, October 25, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=42695>

⁷¹ "Economic hardship tops King's concerns", *The Jordan Times*, October 26, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=42742>

⁷² "As Egyptian gas supplies stall, Jordan turns to Iraq", *The Jordan Times*, October 26, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=42746>

⁷³ "Qadhafi son offers to surrender to Hague", *The Jordan Times*, October 27, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=42796>

⁷⁴ "UN votes to lift Libya no-fly zone on Oct. 31", *The Jordan Times*, October 28, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=42823>

Egypt

- **Egypt and Israel exchange prisoners; Ahmed Shafiq to contest for president; Giza Criminal Court upholds IGA decision to freeze Mubaraks' assets**

Reports noted that as part of prisoners' exchange, Egypt released an American Israeli it held as an alleged spy and Israel freed 25 Egyptians. The freed Egyptians crossed overland into Egypt's Sinai desert. Egypt arrested Grapel in June 2011 on suspicion that he was out to recruit agents and monitor events in the revolt that toppled Hosni Mubarak, an ally of Israel and the United States. The US-brokered exchange deal was reached shortly after a high-profile, Egyptian-mediated swap between Israel and Gaza's Hamas Islamist rulers who freed captive Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in exchange for more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners. Many of the prisoners were jailed for drug trafficking, infiltration into Israel and gun-running.⁷⁵

In another development, Ahmed Shafiq, a former Egyptian air force commander and close associate of former leader Hosni Mubarak, announced that he was planning to contest in the country's presidential elections. It is to be mentioned here that Mubarak appointed Shafiq as prime minister as uprising against his rule gathered pace in late January 2011. Shafiq held that post till three weeks following Mubarak's overthrow before the army removed him in a cabinet reshuffle to meet popular demands for removing former president's associates.⁷⁶

In other developments, the Giza Criminal Court upheld a decision taken by the Illicit Gains Authority (IGA) to freeze all assets belonging to former president Hosni Mubarak and his family. The decision includes assets belonging to Mubarak's wife, sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren, in addition to Mubarak's secretary Gamal Abdel-Aziz and businessman Hussein Salem's families. The court announced that IGA investigations proved that the Mubaraks have amassed fortunes during the rule of their father.⁷⁷

Israel

- **Arab League calls upon Germany to stop arming Israel; Israel ordered demolition of Al Aqsa access ramp**

Reports noted that the Arab League (AL) called upon Germany to stop arming and propping up Israel with new advanced weapons to be used for killing, destruction and aggression against the Palestinians. The Arab League's Assistant Undersecretary for the affairs of the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories Mohammad Sabeih made this remark while commenting on the delivery of another advanced and sophisticated German-made Dolphin submarine to the Israeli occupation, indicating that Israel received 5 Dolphin submarines earlier. The Arab League also appealed to Berlin to take into account the Arab nation's interests and the peace process in the Middle East region.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ "Israel, Egypt carry out US-brokered prisoner swap", *The Jordan Times*, October 28, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=42825>

⁷⁶ "Former Mubarak associate to run for president", *The Daily News Egypt*, October 27, 2011, at <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/egypt/former-mubarak-associate-to-run-for-president.html>

⁷⁷ Al "Court upholds decision to freeze Mubaraks' assets", *The Daily News Egypt*, October 27, 2011, at <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/egypt/court-upholds-decision-to-freeze-mubaraks-assets.html>

⁷⁸ "AL Calls upon Germany to Stop Arming Israel", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, October 28, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/22/2011/10/28/378379.htm>

In another development, Israel Jerusalem's city council said that it had ordered the controversial demolition of an access ramp to Al Aqsa Mosque compound. The order from the Israeli city council was addressed to the Western Wall Heritage Foundation, which manages the plaza next to the ramp. It said the foundation must demolish the structure within 30 days and begin building a new one. The wooden structure has been at the centre of a complex row between the Israeli Jerusalem municipality and the groups that oversee the Muslim and Jewish parts of the plaza that houses the Western Wall and Al Aqsa Mosque.⁷⁹

Palestine

- **Jordan keen to help Palestinians forge a united front; Fateh to consider Palestinian Authority's future**

According to reports, Jordan Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh said that Jordanian talks with the Palestinian resistance movement, Hamas, did not stop over the past period and reflect the Kingdom's keenness to help Palestinians forge a united front in their bid to obtain statehood. During a joint press conference with his Turkish counterpart Ahmet Davutoglu, Judeh noted that head of the Hamas political bureau in Damascus, Khaled Mishaal, stopped in Amman on his way to Saudi Arabia to pay tribute to the Saudi Monarch over the death of Saudi Crown Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz. According to politicians and analysts, regional developments make it imperative for Hamas to seek enhanced relations with the so-called moderate camp, particularly with Jordan.⁸⁰

In another development, in a speech to party's revolutionary council, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas urged his Fateh party to think carefully about where the Palestinians are headed and the future of the Palestinian Authority. Abbas said it was important to address concerns that the Palestinian Authority had become defunct. He said the council would discuss the next steps in the Palestinian bid for state membership of the United Nations, as well as peace talks proposal from the international Quartet and the future of the Palestinian Authority.⁸¹

E. Africa

Somalia

- **Russia praises UNSC resolution on judicial prosecution of Somali pirates; Al Shabaab claims victory over Kenyan military in southern Somalia; Gedo regional governor accuses**

⁷⁹ "Israel to demolish Al Aqsa access ramp", *The Jordan Times*, October 26, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=42748>

⁸⁰ "Jordan-Hamas contacts did not stop", *The Jordan Times*, October 27, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=42793>

⁸¹ "Fateh considers Palestinian Authority's future", *The Jordan Times*, October 28, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=42826>

Al Shabaab for Mandera town Bomb Attack in Northeastern Kenya; The situation of famine victims at Mogadishu's Badbado IDPs camp getting better

Russian Foreign Ministry praised the UN Security Council-adopted Resolution no. 2015 on judicial prosecution of Somali pirates calling it an important step towards the establishment of an international judicial mechanism for the pirates to justice. The statement from the Russian ministry noted that 'the adoption of this resolution is an important step towards the establishment of an effective judicial mechanism to provide the pirates and their supervisors and other participants in this activity to the trial.'⁸²

According to reports, the Al shabaab fighters have claimed victory over Kenyan military in southern Somalia. Sheikh Abdi-aziz Abu Mus'ab, a spokesperson for Al shabaab, told that they have battled with Kenyan forces just outside of Dhobley in Lower Jubba region. The fighting started after Al shabaab fighters ambushed Kenyan military in Lower Jubba region. The Al shabaab vowed that they would continue their struggle against what they called Kenyan incursion in Somalia.⁸³

In another development, Somalia's regional administration of Gedo region in southern part of the country accused Al Shabaab fighters of being behind the bomb blast in Mandera town, northeastern Kenya in which at least eight people were killed. Mohamed Abdi Kalil, the governor of Gedo region told that the Al Shabaab insurgent group planted roadside bomb and then targeted a car carrying Kenyan soldiers and teachers.⁸⁴

In other developments, Somalia's national disaster management agency noted that the situation of famine victims who came to Mogadishu's Badbado IDPs camp are getting better and better. Abdullahi Mohamed Shirwa, the chairman of Somalia's national disaster management agency, told that malnutrition cases and other famine related complications were declining in Badbado IDPs camp. He also said they have established health care centers in the camp to give health care for famine victims.⁸⁵

South Africa

● Leaked report exposes deceptions in submarine deal

According to reports, a leaked report on the contract to supply South Africa with submarines has exposed major deceit at the heart of the arms deal, the inflated promises of offsets. It claimed that the defence package, worth R30-billion in 1998, would deliver nearly R110-billion in offset benefits. These promises were also decisive in the evaluation of the winning bidders, the German

⁸² "Russia commends UNSC decision on the prosecution of Somali pirates", *AllAfrica.com*, October 27, 2011, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201110271043.html>

⁸³ "Al Shabaab Claims Victory over Southern Region Battle with Kenya", *AllAfrica.com*, October 28, 2011, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201110281118.html>

⁸⁴ "Official Accuses Al Shabaab of Kenya's Mandera Bomb Attack", *AllAfrica.com*, October 28, 2011, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201110281116.html>

⁸⁵ "The Situation of Famine Victims Getting Better - Somali Disaster Agency", *AllAfrica.com*, October 28, 2011, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201110281115.html>

Submarine Consortium, led by Ferrostaal, which promised offsets of nearly •3-billion on a contract price of •660-million. But since then the German company has been dogged by allegations that it paid bribes to secure business and its new management has been trying to rebuild the company's reputation.⁸⁶

Sudan

- **UN and African Union developing road map for peace in Darfur**

According to reports, Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and Head of the UN's peacekeeping department (DPKO), announced that the United Nations and the African Union, in collaboration with Sudanese stakeholders, were developing a new road map for comprehensive peace in Darfur. He also dealt with humanitarian and security conditions in the region.⁸⁷

South Sudan

- **South Sudan accuses Uganda of moving international border**

According to reports, officials in South Sudan's Eastern Equatoria state called for investigations into allegations that Ugandan authorities have unilaterally moved their shared border, fueling land disputes and insecurity. South Sudan accused that Global Positioning System satellite which coordinates defining the border, was 'abruptly' changed giving Uganda more land. After a joint meeting held between Magwi county of Eastern Equatoria state and Lamwo district in the northern part of Uganda, Peter Bongomin, the Magwi county commissioner noted that the changes should be investigated.⁸⁸

Nigeria

- **Senate concerns over rising Nigeria's debt; ICC restates its readiness to probe human rights violations in Nigeria**

Reports noted that the Senate of Nigeria has disclosed that the nation's debt profile had risen to \$39.72 billion (N6.02 trillion). It put the external debt element at \$5.398 billion and domestic debt at N5.21 trillion. This represents a significant leap on the \$3.62 billion the Debt Management Office (DMO) presented as the country's external debt stock at the end of March 2009. However, for states and local councils, which have been crying over paucity of funds to execute their core projects, reprieve appears on the way as the Senate has mandated its relevant committees to work out remedial measures to avoid their possible collapse. The Upper House has also asked

⁸⁶ "The arms deal's big deceit: The great submarine rip-off", *Mail and Guardian*, October 28, 2011, at <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-10-28-the-great-submarine-ripoff>

⁸⁷ "African Union and UN work on new road map for peace in Darfur", *The Sudan Tribune*, October 26, 2011, at <http://www.sudantribune.com/African-Union-and-UN-work-on-new>,40548

⁸⁸ "S. Sudan accuses Uganda of moving international border", *The Sudan Tribune*, October 25, 2011, at <http://www.sudantribune.com/S-Sudan-accuses-Uganda-of-moving>,40532

the Executive arm of government, to forward a new revenue sharing formula that could give the states and councils an edge over the Federal Government.⁸⁹

In another development, the United Nations (UN)-backed International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, Netherlands, has restated its readiness to investigate reported cases of human rights violations in Nigeria. According to reports, a statement by the ICC prosecutor stated, "The office made its examination of the situation in Nigeria public on November 18, 2010. Nigeria is a State Party to the Rome Statute since September 27, 2001. The office has been analysing the alleged crimes committed in Central Nigeria since mid-2004 and is looking forward to engaging constructively with the Nigerian authorities on the issue." However, in his own speech which was in response to the presentation by the World Court to the UN General Assembly, Nigeria's Attorney-General did not touch on the ICC report which listed Nigeria among countries where its investigations were in progress. Meanwhile, Attorney-General Adoke expressed his unequivocal support for peaceful dispute settlement and underlined Nigeria's adherence to the ICJ's judgments as the principal judicial organ of the UN.⁹⁰

Côte D'Ivoire

- **Aid agencies urge government over forced IDP returns**

According to reports, UN agencies and NGOs have urged the Côte d'Ivoire government to reconsider its planned shutdown of sites for displaced people in the west in a bid to force them to return home. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) estimates that nearly 18,455 internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain in 36 sites in the west, while a further 169,486 were living in Côte d'Ivoire with host families. According to Mamadou Traoré, Director at the Ministry of Solidarity, the government has threatened to close IDP sites in Duékoué by mid-November 2011.⁹¹

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

- **Eastern Naval Command gets new Flag Officer Commanding in Chief; Advanced launch facilities being developed at ISRO to meet future needs**

Reports noted that Vice Admiral Anil Chopra has been appointed as the next Flag Officer Commanding in Chief, Eastern Naval Command. VAdm Chopra will take over on 31 Oct 2011

⁸⁹ "Concerns as Nigeria's debt hits \$39.72 billion", *The Nigerian Guardian*, October 28, 2011, at http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=65759:-concerns-as-nigerias-debt-hits-3972-billion&catid=1:national&Itemid=559

⁹⁰ "ICC probes rights violations in Nigeria, others", *The Nigerian Guardian*, October 28, 2011, at http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=65752:-icc-probes-rights-violations-in-nigeria-others-&catid=1:national&Itemid=559

⁹¹ "Aid Agencies Take Stand Against Forced IDP Returns", *AllAfrica.com*, October 27, 2011, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201110271289.html>

on the retirement of VAdm Anup Singh, a defense ministry release said on Friday. The Eastern Naval Command, one of the two operational commands of Indian Navy has jurisdiction over the entire Bay of Bengal as well as a large part of the Indian Ocean. The Command stands at the gateway to transformation as new ships, submarines and aircraft are added to the commands asset base. The Command is also witnessing enhancement of capability and infrastructure as required to meet growing demands of maritime security on the Eastern seaboard. Vice Admiral Anil Chopra, took over helm of the Indian Coast Guard on December 1, 2008, and has overseen the rapid expansion of the Coast Guard. Earlier, VAdm Chopra had commanded the Western Fleet as the Flag Officer Commanding (FOCWF).⁹²

In another development, the Director of Sathish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, M.C. Dathan, has said that advanced planning of launch complex facilities for future launch vehicle of ISRO has been taken up to meet the ISRO's future programme. He made these remarks while delivering the 12th Dr. S. Srinivasan Memorial Lecture on 'Launch Complex Facilities for Advanced Launch Vehicles', organised by the Aeronautical Society of India, Thiruvananthapuram Branch, in Association with the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday. He further said that the future launch vehicles such as reusable launch vehicle, man-rated vehicle for human space programme, etc., demanded state-of-the-art launch facilities which were being planned in ISRO.⁹³

International

● NATO campaign in Libya to end on October 31; Report: U.S. Satellites vulnerable to cyber attacks

According to reports, NATO has decided on October 28 to end its seven-month mission in Libya on October 31, 2011, despite calls from the country's new rulers for air patrols to continue until the end of the year. The "operation in Libya will end on 31 October 2011. Our military job is now done," NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen wrote on Twitter after alliance ambassadors formally agreed to end the mission. The formal decision about the withdrawal came one day after the U.N. Security Council unanimously voted to end the mandate that authorized military action in Libya from 11:59 p.m. Libyan time on October 31. A coalition led by the United States, France and Britain launched the first salvos in the air war on March 19, before handing over command of the mission to NATO on March 31. Western allies are now looking at how they can assist the new regime in Libya.⁹⁴

Meanwhile, according to a draft report by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, cyber hackers "achieved all steps required to command" a NASA satellite, which put the satellite at risk of being destroyed or damaged, The Terra EOS AM-1 satellite, used to

⁹² "Vice Admiral Anil Chopra Appointed As Flag Officer Commanding In Chief, Eastern Naval Command", 28 October, 2011, Ministry of Defence, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=76888>

⁹³ "Advanced launch facilities at ISRO", The Hindu, 30 October, 2011, at <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-kerala/article2582164.ece>

⁹⁴ "NATO Declares Oct. 31 End to Libya Mission," Agence France-Presse, 28 October 2011, at <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=8083842&&s=TOP>

study climate and environmental changes, experienced nine or more minutes of interference in October 2008, according to the draft report. The report also notes an earlier incident in June 2008 when the NASA satellite experienced two or more minutes of interference. The report did not say explicitly that the hackers were Chinese, but it said the techniques of the hackers “appear consistent with authoritative Chinese military writings.” A final version of the report will be sent to Congress on November 16, 2011. Later, NASA spokesman Trent Perrotto confirmed that there was a “suspicious event” with the spacecraft in the summer and fall of 2008, but no data was manipulated.⁹⁵

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Cabinet Secretary meets J&K CM; NIA launches manhunt in Kishtwar, Jammu; Grenade attacks in valley injured CRPF personnel; The Chief Justice of Pakistan occupied Kashmir’s High Court shot at; Five injured in Grenade blast in Bijbehara town in South Kashmir; Shutdown in Valley; Police held three LeT operatives**

Reports noted that a high-level Central team, led by Union Cabinet Secretary Ajit Kumar Seth met Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, his top bureaucrats and senior Army Commanders to discuss all issues including the proposed withdrawal of the contentious Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from certain areas of Jammu and Kashmir. Before meeting the Chief Minister, the Cabinet Secretary, the Home Secretary and the Defence Secretary had another round of discussion on the security scenario with Northern Army commander and his three Corps Commanders posted in the state. After holding parleys with high profile central team, Army stated that the deliberations on the revocation of AFSPA have not been discussed by it yet.⁹⁶

Meanwhile, a massive search operation was launched in higher reaches of Kishtwar to search for Junaid Akram Malik, wanted in the Delhi High Court blast case. The NIA has found similarities between the Delhi attack and the explosion near Northern Army Headquarters at Udhampur on May 2 this year. Sources privy to the investigation said teams had fanned out in Dachhan area in Kishtwar after some leads emerged about the presence of Junaid in that area. Plastic explosive and remote-controlled detonator used in the Udhampur attack were similar to those fitted in the suitcase bomb that had exploded outside the High Court.⁹⁷

In another incident, unidentified persons lobbed three grenades within a span of four hours across the valley that injured three paramilitary personnel. Gunmen also shot a policeman in

⁹⁵ “Report: Cyber Attacks Targeted U.S. Satellites,” 28 October, 2011, at <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=8086442&s=TOP>

⁹⁶ “Hectic deliberations in civil, army administration”, *Greater Kashmir*, October 24, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Oct/25/hectic-deliberations-in-civil-army-administration-57.asp>

⁹⁷ “NIA launches manhunt in Kishtwar”, *Greater Kashmir*, October 24, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Oct/25/nia-launches-manhunt-in-kishtwar-65.asp>

Islamabad (Anantnag) district of south Kashmir. Three CRPF men were injured in the blast. The attacks have come at a time when Chief Minister Omar Abdullah announced revocation of Armed Forces Special Forces Act (AFSPA) from some parts of the state within days. Incidentally, two grenades were hurled in Srinagar city where AFSPA was supposed to be lifted among three districts. A day ago, high profile team from Center had reviewed overall security scenario of the valley in a meeting with top brass of Police, Army, CRPF, BSF and intelligence agencies.⁹⁸

According to reports, the Chief Justice of Pakistan occupied Kashmir's High Court was Tuesday shot at and seriously injured. Ghulam Mustafa Mughal, the Chief Justice, was taking a walk with his bodyguards near his home in PoK capital Muzaffarabad when the gunman opened fire at him. The judge was hit by a bullet in the stomach. The attacker managed to escape. No further details were immediately available about the incident.⁹⁹

Reports noted that five civilians were injured in a grenade explosion in Bijbehara town of the South Kashmir district. This is the fourth grenade attack in the Valley during the week, while a cop was shot at and injured in another attack in Islamabad (Anantnag) town. Police said that suspected militants lobbed a grenade at Arwani Chowk. Police said that no security personnel or policemen were present at the Chowk when the grenade was lobbed. However, eyewitnesses said that a passing police vehicle was apparently the target of the attack but the grenade missed the vehicle.¹⁰⁰

In another development, according to reports, normal life remained paralyzed across the Valley in response to the call given by separatists including both factions of Hurriyat Conference against the landing of Army in the state on this day in 1947. The day passed off peacefully in Srinagar and other major towns of Kashmir, however the authorities had deployed contingents of police and CRPF to prevent any demonstration. In North Kashmir, life was paralyzed due to the strike. Baramulla, Kupwara and Bandipora areas remained shut. But thin private traffic plied on the roads. Situation remained calm in volatile area of Sopore.¹⁰¹

In other developments, police claimed to have arrested three Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) operatives accused of carrying grenade blasts in the Valley. A special investigation team constituted by the Srinagar police arrested two LeT operatives, who had carried out the twin blasts in Batamaloo and Baramulla. The arrested operatives were motivated by LeT to throw grenades.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ "3 grenade attacks in Valley", *Greater Kashmir*, October 25, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Oct/26/3-grenade-attacks-in-valley-49.asp>

⁹⁹ "PaK Chief Justice shot", *Greater Kashmir*, October 25, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Oct/26/pak-chief-justice-shot-43.asp>

¹⁰⁰ "5 injured in Bijbehara Grenade Blast", *Greater Kashmir*, October 26, 2011 at www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Oct/27/5-injured-in-bijbehara-grenade-blast-29.asp

¹⁰¹ "Shutdown in Valley", *Greater Kashmir*, October 27, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Oct/28/shutdown-in-valley-44.asp>

¹⁰² "3 LeT operatives held: Police", *Greater Kashmir*, October 27, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Oct/28/3-let-operatives-held-police-77.asp>

North East India

- **ULFA and Home Ministry discuss charter of demands; Sadar Hills District Demand Committee (SHDDC) to intensify blockades in National Highways in Manipur; Manipur records highest crime rate; 43 ultras surrender in Manipur; Save Sharmila Campaign completes nationwide tour; Agreement for Tipaimukh project signed; Bridge collapse in Arunachal Pradesh leads to deaths and disappearances**

According to reports, the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) began a crucial round of peace talks with a Central government team led by Home Secretary RK Singh on October 25 in New Delhi. The six-member ULFA team is led by Chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa. PC Haldar, who is interlocutor between the two sides, was also present for the talks at the North Block office of the home ministry. The talks, described as introductory by officials, would discuss the charter of demands submitted by ULFA. The charter of demands includes constitutional amendments to give Assam greater control over its natural resources, revenue generation, participation in the planning process, ensuring a secure demographic situation, besides accelerated and balanced development.¹⁰³

However, the Sadar Hills District Demand Committee (SHDDC), spearheading economic blockade on Manipur portion of two National Highways since August 1, have announced plans of intensifying the blockades after failure of talks with the Manipur Government. The SHDDC would intensify the ongoing economic blockades on National Highway 39 (Imphal-Dimapur-Guwahati) and NH 53 (Imphal-Jiribam-Silchar), a committee spokesman said. Talks between Manipur Government and the SHDDC over conversion of Sadar Hills area in Senapati district into a full-fledged revenue district failed.¹⁰⁴

Meanwhile, reports noted that Manipur has earned the dubious distinction of recording the highest rate of crimes in the country followed closely by Jammu and Kashmir. Assam has become the country's fourth most dangerous place to live in and is followed closely by Delhi and way above the all India national average. The findings are part of the 'Crimes in India' report released by Union Home Minister, P Chidambaram on October 27. 'Crime in India 2010' produced by National Crimes Record Bureau sheds light on the crime scenario in the country for the year 2010.¹⁰⁵

In another development, 43 cadres of United Tribal Liberation Army (UTLA) on October 27, joined the Suspension of Operation (SoO) in the presence of Manipur Chief Minister O Ibobi Singh in a programme christened 'Home Coming ceremony' at 1st Manipur Rifles Banquet hall. This marks the the largest single insurgent group to 'come home' in the State. UTLA has decided

¹⁰³ "ULFA, Home Ministry discuss charter of demands", *The Assam Tribune*, October 25, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=oct2511/at04>

¹⁰⁴ "SHDCC to intensify blockade as talks fail", *The Assam Tribune*, October 25, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=oct2611/oth06>

¹⁰⁵ "Manipur records highest crime rate, Assam 4th", *The Assam Tribune*, October 27, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=oct2811/at09>

to 'come home' by abjuring the path of violence under the guidance and direction of GoC Red Shield Division, Major Geneneral Binoy Poonen, VSM. The 'home coming' of the outfit was facilitated by Commander of 27 Sector Assam Rifles Brigadier VS Ranade and Commandant 46 Assam Rifles Colonel Vikas Chawla. The ceremony took place in the presence of Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh, State Director General of Police Y Joykumar and Major General Binoy Poonem, VSM, GOC 57 Mountain Division.¹⁰⁶

Reports noted that a nationwide march on 'Save Sharmila Campaign' to extend public support to Irom Sharmila's decade-long struggle against the controversial Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act came to an end. A 25-member activist team including seven women who took part in the 4500-km nationwide tour 'Jan Karvan' march covering more than 10 States was planned for mobilizing public opinion on revoking the AFSPA from Jammu and Kashmir and the North-East India. Social activist Medha Patkar flagged off the march from Srinagar on October 16. Social activists like Binayak Sen, writer Arundhati Roy and a host of intellectuals, litterateurs, artistes and activists have supported the campaign.¹⁰⁷

According to reports, despite opposition, the National Hydro Power Company has inked a Promoter's Agreement with SJVNL and Government of Manipur for execution of the 1,500 MW Tipaimukh Hydroelectric Project in Manipur. The Promoter's Agreement was signed in the presence of Union Power Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde, Manipur Chief Minister O Ibobi Singh by chairman and managing director, NHPC ABL Srivastava on October 22 in New Delhi. NHPC signed the Promoter's Agreement with SJVN Limited and Government of Manipur for setting up a Joint Venture Company (JVC) for implementation of the project in Manipur.¹⁰⁸

In other developments, reports noted that a foot bridge over Kameng river in Arunachal Pradesh collapsed. Three dead bodies were recovered while 14 people are still missing as rescue workers managed to pull out at least 58 people, of whom 30 were injured.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ "43 ultras surrender in Manipur", *The Assam Tribune*, October 27, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=oct2811/oth05>

¹⁰⁷ "Sharmila Campaign completes nationwide tour", *The Assam Tribune*, October 27, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=oct2811/oth06>

¹⁰⁸ "Agreement for Tipaimukh project signed", *The Assam Tribune*, October 28, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=oct2911/oth07>

¹⁰⁹ "Arunachal bridge collapse; 3 more bodies found", *The Assam Tribune*, October 30, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=oct3011/at0151>