

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. SOUTH ASIA

BANGLADESH

- **Indian Commerce Minister Anand Sharma pays a two-day visit to Bangladesh; Sri Lankan President Rajapaksa pays first official visit to Bangladesh; India seeks access to the territory of Bangladesh and its sea ports for the North-Eastern regions of India; Bangladesh and Vietnam sign an MoU on food security; Director General of International Organisation for Migration pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina**

Indian Commerce Minister Anand Sharma arrived in Dhaka on April 23, leading a 33-member delegation and a host of high profile businessmen on a two-day visit to Bangladesh to hold talks to bolster the bilateral trade relations.¹ However, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa went to Bangladesh on April 18 on a three-day official visit. This was his first official visit to Bangladesh.² Both Bangladesh and Sri Lanka signed five deals in the fields of trade, agriculture, fisheries, vocational education, and science and culture in a bid to diversify bilateral cooperation, during the Presidential visit.³

Meanwhile, New Delhi has submitted a proposal to Dhaka to allow the use of the latter's road and rail facilities on 15 routes for the purpose of export and import of goods to and from India to third countries and one part of India to another through the Bangladesh territory and its sea ports -- Chittagong and Mongla. Seeking access to the territory of Bangladesh and its sea ports for the North-Eastern regions of India, New Delhi has invited Bangladesh government to sign a protocol for a period of seven years for the purpose of transit, corridor and use of two ports.⁴

Reports noted that Bangladesh and Vietnam have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on April 18 in Hanoi to ensure food security of the two countries

¹ "Indian minister to lead business team to Dhaka", *The Daily Star*, April 22, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=182599>

² "Rajapaksa arrives today", *The Daily Star*, April 18, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=182100>

³ "Rajapaksa calls for strong political ties", *The Daily Star*, April 19, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=182191>

⁴ Ahsan, Nazmul, "Delhi seeks transit facility thru' 15 road, rail routes", *The Financial Express*, April 18, 2011 at http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=132864&date=2011-04-18

and rice trade during Bangladesh's Food and Disaster Management Minister Dr Abdur Razzaque's visit to Vietnam.⁵

In other developments, Director General of International Organisation for Migration (IOM) William Lacy Swing paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhaban in Dhaka on April 19.⁶

SRI LANKA

- **Bangladesh and Sri Lanka sign five deals during President Rajapaksa's first official visit to Bangladesh; Kenya to use Sri Lankan housing model; Qatar will increase its quota for 'skilled workers' from Sri Lanka; Two Japanese ships are on goodwill visit to Sri Lanka; Two Brunei naval patrol vessels arrives at the Port of Colombo for a logistic halt**

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa went to Bangladesh on April 18 on a three-day official visit. This was his first official visit to Bangladesh.⁷ Both Bangladesh and Sri Lanka signed five deals in the fields of trade, agriculture, fisheries, vocational education, and science and culture in a bid to diversify bilateral cooperation, during the Presidential visit.⁸

However, Housing and Constriction Minister of Kenya Petrer Soita Shitanda met his Sri Lankan counterpart Minister Wimal Weerawansa in Nairobi on April 17 and informed him that Kenya had decided to use Sri Lankan model for the development of housing.⁹

Meanwhile, reports noted that the government of Qatar has agreed to increase its quota for 'skilled workers' from Sri Lanka.¹⁰ In other developments, two Japanese ship 'Kirisame' and 'Yuudachi' with Commander 7th Escort Division Captain Hiroshi Ito on board arrived at the port of Colombo on April 19 on a

⁵ "Hanoi offers rice line: Signs deal with Bangladesh to help ensure food security", *The Daily Star*, April 20, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=182320>

⁶ "IOM DG Meets PM", *The Daily Star*, April 20, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=182372>.

⁷ "Rajapaksa arrives today", *The Daily Star*, April 18, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=182100>

⁸ "Rajapaksa calls for strong political ties", *The Daily Star*, April 19, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=182191>

⁹ "Kenya to follow Sri Lankan housing policy", *The Daily Mirror*, April 18, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/41285.html>

¹⁰ Bandara, Kelum, "Qatar increases quota for 'skilled workers'", *The Daily Mirror*, April 22, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/41734.html>

two-day goodwill visit.¹¹ While, two Brunei Naval Patrol Vessels, 'KDB Darussalam' and 'KDB Darulehsan' arrived at the Port of Colombo for a logistic halt on April 21, 2011.¹²

MALDIVES

- **The Indian Government announces export of 32,094 tonnes of wheat flour to Maldives during 2011-2012; Advisor and Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of Cambodia pays a courtesy call on President Nasheed; President Nasheed sends a message of sympathy to US President Barack Obama following the violent storms that caused havoc in the Southern United States**

The Indian Government has announced the export of 32,094 tonnes of wheat flour to Maldives in 2011-2012, under the bilateral trade pact between the two countries.¹³ Meanwhile, Advisor and Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of Cambodia Ouch Borith paid a courtesy call on President Mohamed Nasheed on April 20, 2011 and presented a special letter from the Cambodian Prime Minister to the President. The Cambodian Prime Minister's Special Envoy spoke on promoting cooperation in areas of tourism and agriculture between the two countries during the meeting.¹⁴

In other developments, President Mohamed Nasheed has sent a message of sympathy to President Barack Obama following the loss of life and widespread devastation caused by violent storms that has been ravaging parts of Southern United States.¹⁵

B. EAST ASIA

JAPAN

- **Japanese PM expresses regrets for recent nuclear crisis and pledges to "bolster nuclear safety and international trust"; Australian PM pays visit to tsunami-hit area during her visit to Japan; Canberra insists on**

¹¹ "Two Japanese Maritime ships in Colombo", *The Daily Mirror*, April 21, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/41613.html>

¹² "Brunei naval ships here on logistic halt", *The Daily Mirror*, April 22, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/41750.html>

¹³ "Indian government permits 32,094 ton wheat export to Maldives", *Minivan News*, April 21, 2011 at <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief>

¹⁴ "Cambodian PM's Special Envoy Pays a Courtesy Call on President", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, April 20, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5187>

¹⁵ "President Sends Sympathy to the US President", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, April 18, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5171>

continuing anti-whale programme against Japan; “Operation Soul Train” between Japanese SDF and the US army launched; TEPCO to postpone start of other nuclear reactors within Japan

In a recent article written by Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan, which was published by several newspapers worldwide, Kan has offered deep regret about the recent nuclear crisis in Fukushima and pledged to “bolster nuclear safety and international trust.” While reiterating that he is to give top priority in bringing the situation in Fukushima No. 1 power plant under control, Kan also vowed to make efforts in addressing recent challenges, such as, the leaks of radioactive water into the ocean. Kan has also assured that while combating the challenges posed by the crippled nuclear plant, the Japanese government would maintain transparency.¹⁶

However, during her four-day visit to Japan that started on April 20, Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard paid visit to a coastal town in the Tohoku region that was hit by March 11 earthquake and tsunami. She was the first foreign leader to visit the disaster-hit area. During her visit, Gillard has assured Japan that Australia would provide a steady supply of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and mineral resources through “commercial market mechanisms”. She further promised that within the next few years, just like coal and iron ore, in LNG sector too, Australia would emerge as the most important supplier to Japan.¹⁷ Nevertheless, Gerald made it clear that Australia would continue its legal action against Japan’s whaling activities in Antarctic waters. She however, warned the whale conservation group-Sea Shepherd- against involving in dangerous protest activities.¹⁸

Meanwhile, with the aim of clearing debris from stations and railway tracks following the devastation brought on by the recent earthquake and tsunami in the Miyagi Prefecture, the Japanese SDF and the US army, on April 21, launched a project named “Operation Soul Train”. While commenting on the issue, Col. Alan Neyland, who leads the operation, stated that the project would bring together US and Japanese soul in restoring the railway tracks in Miyagi prefecture.¹⁹

¹⁶ “Kan pens ‘regret’ over nuke crisis”, *The Japan Times Weekly*, April 23, 2011, at <http://weekly.japantimes.co.jp/nn/kan-pens-regret-over-nuke-crisis>

¹⁷ “Aussie prime minister visits tsunami-hit area”, *The Japan Times*, April 24, 2011, at <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/print/nn20110424n1.html>

¹⁸ “Australia still antiwhaling but hits activists”, *The Japan Times*, April 24, 2011, at <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/print/nn20110424a6.html>

¹⁹ “ ‘Operation Soul Train’ now on track”, *The Yomiuri Shimbun*, April 22, 2011, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T110421005683.htm>

In other developments, following the outbreak of the nuclear fiasco at Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO)'s plant in Fukushima, the company has decided to postpone the planned start of other two nuclear reactors at its Higashidori nuclear power plant in Aomori Prefecture. It is worth noting that TEPCO initially planned to start its operation of the No. 1 and No. 2 reactors in Higashidori from 2017 and 2020 respectively. However, at present, the company has also revealed its intention to review the design of the reactors.²⁰

SOUTH KOREA

- **Australian Prime Minister visits Seoul, emphasizes the need for a bilateral FTA; Seoul hopes to strengthen its defence ties with Beijing through military exchange programme; South Korea's aid to Japan's quake victims reaches \$52 mln**

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard went on a visit to Seoul on April 23 following her visit to Japan. During her visit, she addressed a ceremony commemorating the 60th anniversary of a fierce battle at Gapyeong in Gyeonggi Province, in which, Australian force, along with the force of other allied powers, assisted South Korea in preventing Chinese breakthrough towards Seoul. That battle, according to Gillard, proved Australia as "a reliable and courageous ally." Later on, the Prime Minister also emphasized the necessity of concluding a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between South Korea and Australia as early as possible so that economic cooperation between the two countries could be strengthened further.²¹

Reports noted that as part of its efforts to forge a 'strategic cooperative partnership' between Seoul and Beijing, the Lee Myung-bak government in South Korea is hoping to reach a bilateral agreement with China next month on a military exchange programme. However, China has made it clear that in order to materialize such programme, the South would have to scrap its continued exchange programmes with Taipei. If Seoul gives in and decides to scrap its defence ties with Taipei, it will have a far reaching impact not only on South Korea-Taiwan relations, but also on China-North Korea relations.²²

Reports noted that South Korea's aid to the quake victims of Japan has reportedly surpassed 57 billion won (US \$ 52 million). However following the deterioration of South Korea-Japan relations following territorial dispute over

²⁰ "TEPCO to delay start of new Higashidori reactors", *The Yomiuri Shimbun*, April 22, 2011, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T110421005427.htm>

²¹ "PM Gillard mourns Korean War dead", *Korea Herald*, April 24, 2011, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20110424000317>

²² "Seoul, Beijing eye military exchange program", *Asahi Shimbun*, April 21, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201104210135.html>

Dokdo recently, the South's donation for that cause has witnessed a sharp decline. It is worth noting that on March 30, 2011, Japan renewed its sovereignty claim over Dokdo in new middle school textbooks.²³ Seoul-Tokyo relations might witness further downhill as Japan's main opposition party-the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)- has recently opposed the return of royal Korean books looted by imperial Japan during its colonial rule in the South.²⁴

C. CENTRAL ASIA & RUSSIA

CENTRAL ASIA

- **Military Chiefs of SCO nations meet in Beijing; Turkey, Kazakhstan to start joint venture in defense-related items; Kazakhstan hopes to settle Karachaganak dispute by June this year; Russia accidentally fires decoy rocket into Kazakhstan; Kyrgyz opposition to join Customs Union; IMF on a fact-finding mission in Kyrgyzstan; Tajik President Rahmon: Tajikistan to be energy independent in three years; Russia, Tajikistan military exercise held; Saudi Energy Minister visits Turkmenistan; Iranian Foreign Minister visits Ashgabat; Uzbek President Karimov visits China; Uzbek, China sign gas deal**

Chen Bingde, Chief of the General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army met here on 23 April with his counterparts from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbek's deputy defense minister. The military chiefs of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) have pledged to improve bilateral military relations and cooperation on SCO defense and security. The military chiefs will attend a meeting Monday in Shanghai to review SCO cooperation in the defense and security sectors. They will also discuss the progress made since last year, when SCO states signed an agreement on defense and security cooperation in the Tashkent SCO summit. The meeting is the first of its kind since the SCO was founded 10 years ago.²⁵

Reports noted that Turkish defense contractor and military electronics firm Aselsan will set up a \$30 million facility in Kazakhstan to make night vision systems for armored vehicles and electro-optical equipment. Kazakhstan Engineering and visiting executives from Turkey's leading defense firm penned the deal in the Kazakh capital Astana to create a 50-50 joint venture named

²³ "Korea's quake relief donations to Japan hit \$52 mln", *Dong-A Ilbo*, April 19, 2011, at <http://english.donga.com/srv/service.php3?biid=2011041995908>

²⁴ "Japan party opposes return of Korean royal books", *Dong-A Ilbo*, April 21, 2011, at <http://english.donga.com/srv/service.php3?biid=2011042137598>

²⁵ 'Military chiefs of SCO nations vow closer cooperation', *Xinhua*, April 24, 2011 at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-04/24/c_13843909.htm

Aselsan-Kazakhstan Engineering. Once the plant begins operation in a year, it will meet the needs of the Kazakh defense industry as well as to satisfy the defense requirements of Kazakhstan's regional neighbors.²⁶

Meanwhile, Kazakhstan hopes to settle by June its long-standing disputes with the foreign-led energy consortium that operates the giant Karachaganak energy field – the Karachaganak Petroleum Operating Group (KPO) led by Britain's BG Group and Italy's ENI. Kazakh authorities have levied several punitive measures against KPO for allegedly flouting ecological and tax regulations and overstating operating costs. Karachaganak project produces almost half the country's gas and 18 percent of its oil. As Kazakh state fuel producer KazMunaiGas holds no stake, it is believed that it wants a share of the lucrative project and has been pressing KPO to part with 10 percent.²⁷

In another development, a Russian military rocket the length of a truck veered off course during training exercises Thursday and landed 10 miles inside Kazakh territory. Kazakhstan's Emergencies department in the Western Atyrau region set up a special commission to look into the incident. Major General Vladimir Gradusov said trainee air defense units in southern Russia's Astrakhan region failed to shoot down the dummy target, which imitated a rocket after it went off course.²⁸

According to reports, Kyrgyz opposition party Ata Meken is not in favor of joining the customs union with Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus. This opposition comes after Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev announced that Kyrgyzstan will seek membership of the customs union of post-Soviet countries by the end of 2011. Ata Meken faction leader Omurbek Tekebayev questioned how Kyrgyzstan could afford to join the trilateral union of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus. "The Minister of Economic Regulation Uchkunbek Tashbaev stated that Kyrgyzstan stands ready to pay about \$2 billion compensation to WTO (World Trade Organization) members. Where he's going to take the money?" he asked.²⁹ Apart from this, party is apprehensive of deepening dependency on Moscow. Meanwhile, Kyrgyzstan's prime minister held talks with visiting experts from

²⁶ 'Turkish company to manufacture defense-related items in Kazakhstan', *Central Asia Newswire*, April 19, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Turkish-company-to-manufacture-defense-related-items-in-Kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=3856>

²⁷ 'Kazakhstan hopes to settle Karachaganak disputes by June, says minister', *Central Asia Newswire*, April 22, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Kazakhstan-hopes-to-settle-Karachaganak-disputes-by-June-says-minister/viewstory.aspx?id=3895>

²⁸ 'Russia accidentally fires decoy rocket into Kazakhstan', *Central Asia Newswire*, April 22, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Russia-accidentally-fires-decoy-rocket-into-Kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=3894>

²⁹ 'Kyrgyz opposition party opposes joining regional customs union', *Central Asia Newswire*, April 20, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/Kyrgyz-opposition-party-opposes-joining-regional-customs-union/viewstory.aspx?id=3874>

the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on improving Kyrgyzstan's troubled state finances. The IMF team will figure out if the government will be able to stick to its state budget for this year, will look at the fiscal sustainability over the medium term and discuss the progress made in setting up development institutions in the country. The IMF mission will wind up its fact-finding trip on May 4.³⁰

Tajikistan will produce enough energy in three years to satisfy all its domestic needs. Tajik President Emomali Rahmon said "Tajikistan's energy independence will be ensured in the next three years with the commissioning of the Sangtuda-2 hydroelectric power station". Dushanbe suffers regular power shortages during winter months forcing it to buy natural gas from neighboring Uzbekistan.³¹

Apart from this the leadership is trying to aim for energy independence in terms of gas self-sufficiency. Russia's 201 Motorized Rifle Division began week-long military exercises in Tajikistan on April 18. The aim was to better prepare the troops for mountainous and desert scenarios, to check the readiness of the military base to carry out tasks for the intended use, improve practical skills of the commanders of all levels in the organization of the fighting and management offices in close to combat situations. Russia first established a military base in 2004 and has several thousand military personnel stationed in Tajikistan.³²

Reports noted that Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov held talks with the visiting Saudi Oil and Mineral Resources Minister Ali Bin Ibrahim Al Naimi on April 21 on bilateral cooperation in the fuel and energy sector. Turkmenistan's opening up of new opportunities for foreign investment enables it to explore its energy resources through foreign modern technologies that it lacks. It aims to raise its energy output and refining capacities while seeking to diversify its energy export routes.³³ Meanwhile, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said on 24 April that Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan will take part in a joint project for construction of a railway connecting cities in three countries to each other which will play an important

³⁰ 'IMF, Kyrgyz Prime Minister assess viability of country's finances', *Central Asia Newswire*, April 21, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kyrgyzstan/IMF-Kyrgyz-Prime-Minister-assess-viability-of-country39s-finances/viewstory.aspx?id=3889>

³¹ 'Tajik president predicts energy independence in three years', *Central Asia Newswire*, April 21, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Tajikistan/Tajik-president-predicts-energy-independence-in-three-years/viewstory.aspx?id=3880>

³² 'Russian troops begin exercises in Tajikistan', *Central Asia Newswire*, April 18, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Tajikistan/Russian-troops-begin-exercises-in-Tajikistan/viewstory.aspx?id=3855>

³³ 'Turkmen president holds talks with visiting Saudi energy minister', *Central Asia Newswire*, April 22, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Turkmenistan/Turkmen-president-holds-talks-with-visiting-Saudi-energy-minister/viewstory.aspx?id=3896>

role in boosting trade transactions. Foreign ministers of Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Qatar and Oman will sign a transit cooperation pact in Ashgabat.³⁴

Uzbek President Islam Karimov visited Beijing on two-day state visit from 19-20 April. His visit coincided with an announcement by China's central bank that the two countries have agreed a currency swap.³⁵ The People's Bank of China (PBOC) forged deal with Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan for a \$106 million currency swap for the purpose of promoting bilateral trade, investment and financial cooperation. The deal has an extendable three-year period.³⁶ Uzbekistan and China agreed to cooperate in \$5 billion worth of joint projects. More than 25 projects will be undertaken in accordance with the new deals. One of them is the construction of a new pipeline from Uzbek gas fields to China having the capacity to transport 25 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas annually. China would lend Uzbek banks \$1.5 billion to help finance joint transportation, energy, and chemical production projects and both sides agreed to work together to crackdown down on separatism and terrorism in Central Asia.³⁷

In other developments, reports noted that Uzbek state-owned oil and gas company Uzbekneftegaz have signed a deal with Chinese real estate and gas conglomerate Xinjiang Guanghi Industry Investment Group to transport liquefied natural gas (LNG) to China and Kazakhstan. The signed deal stipulates that the two firms will jointly transport 600 million cubic meters (mcm) of gas from Uzbekistan.³⁸

RUSSIA

- **Russia negotiates ceasefire with Libyan PM; Libya seeks Moscow's role in peaceful settlement of the conflict; UN Secretary General and Russian leaders discuss Libya; Russia calls on Libya to comply with UN resolution; Putin initiates annual process of reporting the country's**

³⁴ 'Iran, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan to construct joint railway: Salehi', *Trend*, April 25, 2011 at <http://en.trend.az/capital/business/1866264.html>

³⁵ 'Karimov arrives in China for two-day state visit', *Central Asia Newswire*, April 19, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Uzbekistan/Karimov-arrives-in-China-for-two-day-state-visit/viewstory.aspx?id=3861>

³⁶ 'Karimov arrives in China for two-day state visit', *Central Asia Newswire*, April 19, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Uzbekistan/Karimov-arrives-in-China-for-two-day-state-visit/viewstory.aspx?id=3861>

³⁷ 'Uzbekistan, China agree to \$5B in joint projects', *Central Asia Newswire*, April 21, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Uzbekistan/Uzbekistan-China-agree-to-5B-in-joint-projects/viewstory.aspx?id=3882>

³⁸ 'Uzbekneftegaz, Chinese conglomerate sign gas delivery deal', *Central Asia Newswire*, April 20, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Uzbekistan/Uzbekneftegaz-Chinese-conglomerate-sign-gas-delivery-deal/viewstory.aspx?id=3869>

economic performance to the Parliament; Russia's Foreign Minister to sign agreements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia; Russia pushes ahead the proposal of constructing floating nuclear reactors; Medvedev to discuss implementation of the Skolkovo project; Indonesian navy successfully tests Russian anti-ship missile; Russia to deliver more S-300 air defence systems to Belarus

According to reports, Libyan Prime Minister Al-Baghdadi Al-Mahmoudi has held telephonic conversation with Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov about the possible ceasefire in his turbulent country. The telephone conversation between Al-Mahmoudi and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov came after Muammar Gaddafi's troops pulled out of the insurgents-held city of Misrata. Lavrov, on his part proposed sending observers to Libya and stepping up the peaceful solution of the conflict.³⁹

Russia believes that Libya is ready for a political settlement of the armed conflict in the country and wants Moscow to take part in the search for ways to end the conflict peacefully. A statement from Russia's foreign ministry read the head of the Libyan government expressed his assessments of the situation in Libya, He stressed the desire of the authorities in Tripoli to find a political solution to the conflict and said he wanted Russia to contribute to the search for a peaceful settlement". Russia's Foreign Minister Lavrov has said that the most important thing now was to stop the bloodshed and the sufferings of civilians. He was quoted as saying "for this purpose, it is necessary to unconditionally comply with the respective decisions by the UN Security Council and ensure an immediate seizure of fire, first of all, strikes against Misrata and other populated area"⁴⁰.

However, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, on a visit to Moscow, met Russian President Dmitry Medvedev amid mounting Russian concern that Western actions in the Libya conflict were exceeded a UN mandate. Russia abstained on a UN Security Council resolution which sanctioned air campaign in Libya, refraining from using its veto. But Medvedev last week warned against a "loose interpretation" of the UN resolution, and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has expressed regret that the West was being increasingly drawn into the conflict. Ban, speaking at the start of his talks with Medvedev said Russia could play an important role in settling regional conflicts and dealing with global challenges.⁴¹

³⁹ "Russia negotiates ceasefire with Libyan PM", *RIA Novosti*, April 23, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20110423/163668602.html>

⁴⁰ "Libya seeks Moscow's role in peaceful settlement to conflict – premier", *RIA Novosti*, April 24, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20110424/163678721.html>

⁴¹ "UN Chief, Russian leaders discuss Libya as Russian concerns mount", *Radio Free Europe*, April 22, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/un_chief_russian_leaders_discuss_libya/9502388.html

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has urged Libyan Prime Minister Al-Baghdadi Ali al-Mahmoudi to implement United Nations resolutions and end attacks on civilians. He said that Libya must abide by the UN Security Council resolution and ensure an immediate ceasefire, above all in Misrata and other population centers. Hundreds have been killed in the western city of Misrata, which a rebel spokesman said was again under heavy bombardment on Sunday by forces loyal to Muammar Gaddafi, a day after rebels celebrated a government pullback. The Libyan government has repeatedly made calls for ceasefires, which have been rejected by rebels who say they are not matched by its actions. Russia has also called on Libya to work with international organizations to ease the humanitarian crisis in the North African nation.⁴²

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has begun his appearance before the lower house of the Russian parliament, the State Duma, to present an annual report on Russia's economic performance. The address is the last such report that Putin will deliver to the current State Duma before parliamentary elections in December and the 2012 Russian presidential election. Putin suggested that Russia had successfully navigated a treacherous global financial period without "serious shocks and risks." Putin outlined government spending plans in light of billions of dollars of revenues from sales of oil, Russia's main export commodity⁴³.

Reports noted that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will visit South Ossetia and Abkhazia on April 25-26, where he will sign a number of intergovernmental agreements including on setting up information and cultural centres in the former Georgian republics. Lavrov will also discuss with the republics' leaders the problems and prospects of bilateral cooperation, in particular, protection of Russians' property rights in Abkhazia and transport problems in South Ossetia. Abkhazia and South Ossetia broke away from Georgia in the early 1990s. Georgian forces attempted to bring South Ossetia back under central control in August 2008, but were repelled by the Russian military. Russia subsequently recognized both republics, a move heavily criticized by the West.⁴⁴

Reports noted that amid global scare sparked by Japan's nuclear meltdown, Russia, in contrast, is aggressively moving ahead with its vast nuclear ambitions. Its state atomic agency, Rosatom, aims to double the country's nuclear capacity

⁴² Kueppers, A, "Russia calls on Libya to comply with UN", *Reuters*, April 24, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/04/24/us-russia-libya-un-idUSTRE73N14F20110424>

⁴³ "Putin kicks off annual economy report to Parliament", *Radio Free Europe*, April 20, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/putin_deliver_annual_economy_report_parliament/9499488.html

⁴⁴ "Russian FM Lavrov to sign agreements in Abkhazia, S. Ossetia", *RIA Novosti*, April 25, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20110425/163686561.html>

over the next two decades. It is also building nuclear power plants in India, China, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and elsewhere. The first floating plant, scheduled to be operational by the end of next year, will be anchored in a closed military bay off Russia's far eastern Kamchatka Peninsula. Rosatom has plans to build 12 seaborne plants and hopes to sell some of them for export. The plants' main purpose will be to provide energy to far-flung regions or isolated facilities such as military bases without the need for expensive energy grids. However, Greenpeace has warned that most countries on Rosatom's list of potential clients are currently seeking access to nuclear submarine technology and could misuse the reactors to pursue military goals.⁴⁵

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev will on April 25 preside over a meeting of the economic modernization commission and the board of trustees of the Skolkovo high-tech hub. The meeting will focus on the preliminary results of work to create the research hub in the Moscow Region and prospects of its development⁴⁶.

Reports noted that the Indonesian Navy has successfully tested a Russian-made anti-ship missile for the first time. The Yakhont anti-ship missile was launched from the Van Speijk class frigate, Oswald Siahaan, during naval exercises in the Indian Ocean. Russian observers oversaw the drills, which involved 12 ships and over 1,000 personnel. It took six minutes for the missile to cover 250 kilometres and destroy a designated target.⁴⁷

In other developments, according to reports, Russia will continue deliveries of S-300 air defence systems to Belarus. Belarus has several battalions equipped with Russian-made S-300 air defence systems on combat duty as part of the Russian-Belarusian integrated air defence network. Moscow and Minsk signed an agreement in February 2009 on the joint protection of the Russia-Belarus Union State's airspace and the creation of an integrated regional air defence network. Modernized versions of S-300 have a maximum engagement range of up to 150 kilometres (93 miles).⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Bigg, C, "Amid nuclear scare, Russia pushes ahead with controversial floating reactors", *Radio Free Europe*, April 22, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/russia_pushes_ahead_with_controversial_floating_nuclear_reactors/9502474.html

⁴⁶ "Medvedev to discuss Skolkovo high tech hub project implementation", *RIA Novosti*, April 25, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/science/20110425/163684561.html>

⁴⁷ "Indonesian navy successfully tests Russian anti-ship missile", *RIA Novosti*, April 21, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110421/163634028.html

⁴⁸ "Russia to deliver more S-300 air defence systems to Belarus", *RIA Novosti*, April 20, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110420/163620533.html

D. WEST ASIA

IRAN

• **Iran, Egypt sign first agreement since stepping down of President Mubarak; Iran-China to establish a “joint oil and gas committee” to accelerate the execution of energy projects between the two countries**

Iran and Egypt have signed the first agreement since former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak stepped down on February 11. Iran-Egypt Council of Merchants Chairman Muhyaddin Al-Gandur said agreement was signed between a number of Iranian and Egyptian tourism agencies to start bilateral cooperation on the exchange of tourists. According to the agreement, 10,000 Iranian nationals will be allowed to visit Egypt every month, while 60,000 Egyptians will be allowed to travel to Iran annually. The agreement will be implemented as soon as the two countries exchange ambassadors. ⁴⁹

However, Iranian minister of economic affairs and finance, Shamseddin Hosseini said Iran and China will establish a “joint oil and gas committee” to accelerate the execution of energy projects between the two countries. He said that the aim of forming this committee is to speed up projects execution and to develop the Sino-Iranian ties in the field of energy. The Iranian minister also added that the formation of the Iran-China joint oil and gas committee was stressed in a memorandum of understanding on trade and economic cooperation that was signed between Tehran and Beijing on April 21. Iran is currently China's third largest supplier of crude oil, providing it with roughly 12 percent of its total annual oil consumption -- nearly one million barrels per day. The volume of Iran's trade with China stood at about \$30 billion in 2010, up from \$400 million in 1942. ⁵⁰

IRAQ

• **Iraqi Prime Minister holds discussion with Admiral Mike Mullen on withdrawal of US troops**

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has informed the visiting US Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Admiral Mike Mullen that the remaining American troops were to leave Iraq by the end of 2011, according to the Security Agreement

⁴⁹ “Iran, Egypt ink first agreement since Mubarak’s ouster,” *Tehran Times*, April 23, 2011, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=239195

⁵⁰ “Iran, China to form joint oil, gas committee,” *Tehran Times*, April 23, 2011, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=239183

signed between the two countries in 2011. ⁵¹ .

JORDON

- **Jordan King and Qatar Emir discuss bilateral ties and regional issues; Jordan renews support for Libyans**

Reports noted that Jordanian King Abdullah and Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani discussed several issues of mutual concern and the latest developments in the region. At a meeting in Doha, the two leaders stressed on the need to enhance joint cooperation, and the importance of continued consultations and coordination to develop joint stances on challenges in the region in the best interest of Arab countries.⁵²

Simultaneously, according to reports, Jordan has been making intensive contacts with Gulf Cooperation Council countries. A top UAE minister said that the council is paying special attention to Jordan and its developmental and economic needs. According to reports, Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh stressed Jordan's clear and firm stance towards securing complete and comprehensive protection for the Libyans. During a phone call with member of the Libyan rebels' Transitional National Council (TNC) Ali Essawi, Judeh underscored that Jordan is committed to providing the Libyan people with all forms of support and humanitarian aid. The minister also stressed the importance of fully implementing the Security Council's 1973 Resolution which calls for a ceasefire in Libya.⁵³

SYRIA

- **Syrian Minister of Economy and Trade and Damascus Chamber of Commerce discuss new cooperation and partnership mechanisms; Minister of Economy and Trade and Damascus Chamber of Commerce discuss new cooperation and partnership mechanisms; Lebanese President and Syrian Ambassador discuss enhancing bilateral ties**

Minister of Economy and Trade Mohammad Nidal al-Shaar held discussion with Damascus Chamber of Commerce regarding the means for implementing new and effective mechanisms for cooperation and partnership in decision-making

⁵¹ "Iraq's PM informs US Chief of Staff necessity for withdrawal of U.S. troops by end of 2011," *Aswat al-Iraq*, April 24, 2011, at http://en.aswataliraq.info/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=142143&l=1

⁵² "King, Qatar emir discuss ties, region", *The Jordan Times*, April 24, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=36825>

⁵³ "Jordan contacts rebel leader, renews support for Libyans", *The Jordan Times*, April 24, 2011 at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=36830>

between the government and chambers of commerce. The Minister affirmed the need for establishing new partnerships between the two sides.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, Lebanese President Michel Sleiman discussed with Syria's Ambassador to Lebanon Ali Abdul-Karim about the state of relations between the two countries and means of enhancing them at all levels, in addition to all the aspects of cooperation. A statement issued by the Presidential Palace in Lebanon mentioned that the Lebanese President was briefed by Ambassador Abdul-Karim on the situation in Syria during the meeting.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, separately, Lebanese President reiterated Lebanon's support to stability in Syria, voicing Lebanon's backing to the process of comprehensive reforms initiated by the Syrian leadership lately.⁵⁶

LIBYA

- **Rebels claim victory as Libyan troops retreat in Misrata; Gaddafi threatens reprisals to drone attacks; Kuwait recognises Transitional National Council (TNC) and donates money to Libyan rebels**

Reports noted that in a significant setback for Muammar Qadhafi's forces, Libyan troops in Misrata has been ordered to retreat from the city, hastened by NATO air strikes. According to reports, Misrata, the last large city held by rebels in western Libya, has been under a punishing government siege for nearly two months and hundreds of civilians have died in the fighting.⁵⁷

According to the sources close to Col. Gaddafi, introduction of NATO ground forces into Libya would be met by additional Libyan forces made up of African volunteers. Gaddafi regime has repeatedly denied using African mercenaries in the battle against the rebels. But several African nationals have been captured by the rebels in the fighting near Misurata. However, the Africans' identities, and their countries of origin, have not been made public by the rebel command.⁵⁸

Meanwhile, Kuwait has become the fourth country to recognize the Transitional National Council (TNC) of Libya as the sole legitimate representative of the

⁵⁴ "Minister of Economy and Trade, Damascus Chamber of Commerce Discuss New Cooperation and Partnership Mechanisms", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, April 18, 2011 at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/24/2011/04/18/342220.htm>

⁵⁵ "Lebanese President, Ambassador Abdul-Karim Discuss Beefing up Syrian-Lebanese Relations", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, April 21, 2011 at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/22/2011/04/21/342765.htm>

⁵⁶ "Lebanese President Voices Support to Syria's Stability", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, April 24, 2011 at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/22/2011/04/24/343139.htm>

⁵⁷ "Libyan troops retreat in Misrata; rebels claim victory", *The Jordan Times*, April 24, 2011 at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=36831>

⁵⁸ Strong, Morgan (2011), "Al Qathafi Remains Defiant; Threatens Reprisals to Drone Attacks", *The Tripoli Post*, April 25, 2011 at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articleDetail.asp?c=1&i=5903>

Libyan people, and donated a sum of €124 million to the Libyan people. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the emirate, Sheikh Mohammad al-Sabah announced Kuwait's recognition to follow on the lines of France, Italy and Qatar. Kuwait's decision follows closely on the Misurata residents' appeal for help and the demonstrations in this rebel-held city in the west of the country. They have been urging greater intervention by coalition forces.⁵⁹

EGYPT

- **Hosni Mubarak detained for further fifteen days; HSBC predicts Egypt economy to surpass Saudi Arabia by 2050; France pledges to help Egypt's transition; Official fact finding mission on Egypt's revolution released**

Reports noted that Former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was detained by the country's state prosecutor for a further fifteen days amid a probe into his involvement in a bloody crackdown on protesters and having a role in a controversial (corruption) deal to supply natural gas to Israel at lower than market prices. Mubarak's former oil minister Sameh Fahmi was also remanded into custody for his alleged role in selling the under-priced gas.⁶⁰

Meanwhile, HSBC in its January 2011 report predicted that Egypt's economy will be the largest in the Middle East by 2050, surpassing Saudi Arabia and will emerge as the 19th largest economy in the world. It noted, due to substantial improvements in developing markets, education, and demographic shifts, Egypt will be one of the top 30 economies in the world, also trumping the Netherlands and Switzerland. However, according to the report, in order to do so the country's economy will have to progress at a rate of 4 percent over the next 40 years.⁶¹

France's junior minister for trade Pierre Lellouche pledged French support for Egypt while extending an invitation for Egypt to attend a Group of Eight summit next month in France. Lellouche also met with Finance Minister Samir Radwan and the head of the Arab League, Amr Moussa, who has announced his intention to run for the presidency in November. Lellouche also spoke to another

⁵⁹ "TNC and Donates Millions of Euros to Libyan Rebels", *The Tripoli Post*, April 24, 2011, at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=5902>

⁶⁰ "Ousted Egyptian President Mubarak Detained for Further 15 Days", *The Tripoli Post*, April 23, 2011, available at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=5895>

⁶¹ "Egypt economy to surpass Saudi Arabia by 2050, HSBC predicts", *Daily News Egypt*, April 21, 2011 at <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/economy/egypt-economy-to-surpass-saudi-arabia-by-2050-hsbc-predicts.html>

presidential hopeful, Mohamed ElBaradei, the former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency.⁶²

In other developments, the official fact-finding mission investigating the death toll of Egypt's revolution released its final report, saying that at least 846 people were killed and 6,467 injured during the popular uprising that toppled the Egyptian regime and forced President Hosni Mubarak to step down in February. The revolution also left 26 officers and one prisoner dead. The report also confirmed that police fired live ammunition at peaceful protesters across Egypt starting January 25, adding that police only use live rounds if they are authorized to do so by a committee headed by the interior minister and high ranking officers.⁶³

GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC)

- **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) draws road map for departure of Ali Ahmed Saleh in Yemen**

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) presented Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh a revised version of its proposal to defuse the crisis in the country on April 21. The proposal calls for the resignation of the president within 30 days from the date of its acceptance and installation of a unity government within 90 days from the date of Saleh's departure. The unity government would include 50 percent of the members from the ruling party, 40 percent from the opposition groups and 10 percent from other factions. The proposal also asks all parties to ensure the holding of a presidential poll within two months from the date of Saleh's departure. The new proposal grants legal immunity to Saleh, members of his family, officials of his Presidency as well as his close aides once power is transferred and a new government installed.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, the Yemeni opposition is divided over the deal. A coalition of seven opposition parties generally accepted the deal. But thousands of protesters still suspect that Saleh is just manoeuvring to buy time and cling to power. The protesters say the established opposition political parties taking part in the talks with Arab mediators do not represent them and cannot turn off the rage on the streets.⁶⁵

⁶² "France pledges to help Egypt's 'fantastic transition'", *The Daily News Egypt*, April 21, 2011 at <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/economy/france-pledges-to-help-egypts-fantastic-transition.html>

⁶³ "Fact finding mission says 846 dead and 6,467 injured in Egypt's uprising", *Daily News Egypt*, April 19, 2011 at <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/human-a-civil-rights/fact-finding-mission-says-846-dead-and-6467-injured-in-egypts-uprising.html>

⁶⁴ "GCC draws road map for Saleh's departure", *Arab News*, April 21, 2011 at <http://arabnews.com/middleeast/article369470.ece>

⁶⁵ "Opponents of Yemen's president divided over deal", *Arab News*, April 24, 2011 at <http://arabnews.com/middleeast/article371840.ece>

E. USA

- **Classified documents shed light on treatment of prisoners in Guantánamo Bay prison**

Reports noted that more than 700 classified military documents now provide detailed accounts of the men who have been detained at the Guantánamo Bay prison in Cuba. The new found documents also provide details regarding the evidence against the 172 men still locked up there.⁶⁶ The reports clearly show how many detainees who turned out to be innocent were still held for a long period of time.⁶⁷ This has come as an embarrassment to the US administration, which has been quick to condemn the publication of these documents.⁶⁸

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

NATIONAL

- **South West Air Command soon to have a Su-30MKI squadron; Indian Navy begins INS Vikramaditya induction process**

According to Air Marshal AK Gogoi, AOC-in-C of SWAC, the Indian Air Force's South West Air Command (SWAC) will have a Su-30MKI squadron permanently based at Jodhpur sometime in the next two years. Air Marshal Gogoi said the air force was strengthening itself and would be able to deal with any sort of threat especially from Pakistan and China. He also said the IAF was expecting an increase in the number of fighter squadrons after 2012. The Air Force has been facing shortage of aircraft for a considerable period of time⁶⁹.

The Indian Navy has started preparing itself to take charge of the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya (Admiral Gorshkov) from Russia. The first batch of officers and sailors has commenced training in Russia ahead of its induction next year. The Indian Navy has sent a 152-member crew for training on the 45,000-tonne aircraft carrier in St. Petersburg, Russia. The warship is to be delivered by December 2012. The INS Vikramaditya project, sanctioned in January 2004 envisaged delivery of the warship in August 2008 but it got delayed over price with Russia demanding \$2.9 billion to carry out repair and re-equipping for

⁶⁶ "Classified Files Offer New Insights into Detainees", *The New York Times*, April 24, 2011 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/25/world/guantanamo-files-lives-in-an-american-limbo.html>

⁶⁷ "WikiLeaks releasing documents on Guantanamo", *Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 2011 at http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-gitmo-documents-20110425_0.4816478.story

⁶⁸ Note- 68

⁶⁹ "SWAC gets a boost with Su-30MKI squadrons, Akash SAM and radars", *Domainb.com*, 21 April 2011, at http://www.domain-b.com/defence/air_space/iaf/20110421_su_30mki_squadrons.html

converting the cruiser into an aircraft carrier. The aircraft carrier's superstructure profile has the potential to accommodate powerful planar or phased array radar systems with the 'billboard style' antennae, which was first observed on the United States Navy's USS Long Beach, along with extensive command and control facilities to conduct an aerial campaign. The ship will also be equipped with a robust combination of air defence weaponry, such as a SAM and/or a CIWS.

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INTERNATIONAL

- **Japan to have stronger military ties with the United States; Drone strikes in Libya**

Japan's Defense Minister said his country needs stronger military ties with the U.S. and South Korea to balance China's growing might, reports noted on April 23. He was particularly concerned about China's increasing naval capabilities. His comments seem to be a departure from the previous premier, Yukio Hatoyama of the ruling party who had vowed a less subservient relationship with Washington. Japan's relations with China plunged to their lowest point in years last September over a territorial dispute involving islands in the East China Sea, called Senkaku in Japanese and Diaoyu in Chinese.⁷¹

Meanwhile, the United States carried out its first drone strike in Libya on April 23, the Pentagon said, two days after approving the use of pilotless aircraft to aid rebels fighting Moammar Gadhafi's forces. U.S. President Barack Obama authorized the use of missile-carrying drones in Libya for what his administration called "humanitarian" reasons on April 21. The rebels fighting Moammar Gadhafi's forces welcomed the decision to send in the drones, which have been widely used in Pakistan and Afghanistan, despite controversy over the deaths of civilians caught in the cross-fire. The NATO military alliance has also welcomed the strikes.⁷²

⁷⁰ "Indian Navy Preparing To Take Control Of INS VIKRAMADITYA", *Defence News*, April 23, 2011, at, <http://www.defencenews.in/defence-news-internal.asp?get=new&id=441>

⁷¹ "Japan Seeks Stronger Military Ties with U.S.: Report", *Agence France-Presse*, 23 Apr 2011 at <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=6309217&c=ASI&s=TOP>

⁷² "U.S. Carries Out First Drone Strike in Libya: Pentagon", *Agence France-Presse*, 3 Apr 2011, at <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=6309199&c=AME&s=AIR>

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

JAMMU & KASHMIR

- **Three accused socio-religious organizations deny their involvement in the killing of involved in the killing of Jamiet Ahl-e-Hadith Moulana Showkat Ahmad Shah; Clashes broke out in old Srinagar in protest of killing of Ahmad Shah; IED blast near LoC in Poonch leaves two BSF personnel injured; Militants killed in Kishtwar encounter; Militants killed in Ramban; Clashes broke out in old Srinagar in protest of killing of Ahmad Shah**

Three socio-religious organizations namely, Sout-ul-Haq, Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Toiba dismiss the claims of police that they were involved in the killing of President of Jamiet Ahl-e-Hadith Moulana Showkat Ahmad Shah. The organizations demanded impartial probe into the killing from an independent international tribunal.⁷³ However, clashes broke out in old Srinagar after the sit-in protest against the killing of Moulana Showkat Ahmed Shah ended. Eyewitnesses' said that youth took to streets and pelted stones on the cops after the separatist leaders left the area.⁷⁴

Meanwhile, reports noted that two BSF personnel were hurt in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast near the Line of Control in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir. The IED blast was triggered by militants during BSF patrolling in Sonagali area in Poonch district.⁷⁵ However, in Jammu's Kishtwar district two militants were killed in a gunbattle with the forces. A search operation by the Rashtriya Rifles and police was launched in Sarawa forest belt in which the militants fired on the soldiers resulting in the gunfight.⁷⁶

In other incidents, two militants of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) were killed in a gunfight with forces in Ramban district, while army claimed that it foiled an infiltration bid in Poonch district. Forces recovered two AK-47 rifles, six magazines, 160 rounds, 10 Chinese grenades, a satellite phone, a mobile phone, a pair of binoculars and a compass from their hideout.⁷⁷

⁷³ 'Sout-ul-Haq, TeM, Lashkar rebut police claims', *Greater Kashmir*, April 17, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Apr/18/sout-ul-haq-tem-lashkar-rebut-police-claims-30.asp>

⁷⁴ 'Clashes in city', *Greater Kashmir*, April 22, 2011 at <http://greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Apr/23/clashes-in-city-36.asp>

⁷⁵ '2 BSF men hurt in IED blast near LOC in Poonch', *Greater Kashmir*, April 17, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Apr/18/2-bsf-men-hurt-in-ied-blast-near-loc-in-poonch-19.asp>

⁷⁶ '2 militants killed in Kishtwar encounter', *Greater Kashmir*, April 21, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/ShowStoryLatest.asp?NewsID=2153>

⁷⁷ '2 militants killed in Ramban', *Greater Kashmir*, April 24, 2011 at <http://greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Apr/25/2-militants-killed-in-ramban-30.asp>

NORTH EAST INDIA

- **AGP leader targeted; Trucks stranded at Manipur-Nagaland border; 17 dead in a Pawan Hans Helicopter crash at Tawang; Government grants compensation to ULFA for daily expenses; North East insurgents still use Garo Hills as transit route; Six UG Cadres arrested in Manipur**

According to reports, Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) leader Ajjur Rahman Talukdar was shot at and injured by two unidentified assailants at his residence at Nilambazar in Karimganj district.⁷⁸ Meanwhile, due to economic blockade by a Naga students' organization, more than 240 loaded trucks have been stranded at Manipur-Nagaland border. The blockade was initiated as opposing the government's plan to hold elections to autonomous district councils in hill districts of the state next month.⁷⁹

In a tragic development, seventeen people were killed and six others injured when a Pawan Hans chopper burst into flames and then plunged into a gorge while trying to land at Tawang civil helipad. The chopper caught fire just as it was about to land at the helipad.⁸⁰

Reports noted that pro-talks ULFA leaders have now been given Rs 40 lakh by the Centre for daily expenses and to run their families. The Home Ministry released the first instalment of financial assistance to the ULFA leaders, including 'chairman' Arabinda Rajkhowa, 'vice-president' Pradip Gogoi and others besides its cadres – totaling approximately 400.⁸¹

Meanwhile, according to reports, northeast militants use Garo Hills as a transit area for cross-border movement, poor border management, coupled with the porosity of the international boundary which enabled a group of ULFA men (anti-talks faction) to sneak into Bangladesh last week. ULFA cadre numbering

⁷⁸ 'AGP leader shot at', *The Sentinel*, April 18, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/mainnews/story.php?sec=1&subsec=0&id=33789&dtP=2010-04-19&ppr=1#33789>

⁷⁹ 'Over 200 trucks stranded at Manipur-Nagaland border', *The Sentinel*, April 18, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/northeast/story.php?sec=2&subsec=9&id=337308&dtP=2010-04-19&ppr=1#33730>

⁸⁰ 'Pawan Hans crash at Tawang; 17 killed', *The Sentinel*, April 19, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/mainnews/story.php?sec=1&subsec=0&id=71964&dtP=2011-04-20&ppr=1#71964>

⁸¹ 'ULFA gets Rs 40 lakh from government for daily expenses', *The Sentinel*, April 24, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/mainnews/story.php?sec=1&subsec=0&id=72567&dtP=2011-04-25&ppr=1#72567>

between 16 and 20 crossed over to Bangladesh from a village located in between Tikrikkila and Phulbari in West Garo Hills district.⁸²

In other developments, a combined force comprising of the Imphal west district police commandos and 28 Assam Rifles have arrested at least four cadres of the proscribed PREPAK GS faction from different counter insurgency operations on April 23. Meanwhile in a follow up action another two cadres of the outfit were arrested by the combined force on the same day. In another incident, troops of 10 Assam Rifles at Kangchup under Logtak Brigade of Red Shield Division apprehended s/s area commander of KNF(P) Haoseh Kipgen.⁸³

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **UN Security Council extends mandate of the committee monitoring UNSC Resolution 1540; Security Council calls for dialogue to resolve differences between Northern and Southern Sudan; Counter-Terrorism Committee meets to discuss fight against terrorism; UNSC calls for political dialogue in Yemen**

The Security Council extended the mandate of a committee tasked with monitoring UN resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction for 10 years and requested it to carry out a comprehensive review of the implementation of the text. The mandate was extended by an unanimous decision until April 25, 2021. The Council requested the committee to conduct a comprehensive review on the status of the implementation of the resolution, thereafter the Council if found necessary would recommend adjustments to the mandate and report on the conclusions of those reviews.⁸⁴

In another development, UNSC has urged the northern and southern Sudan to iron out outstanding issues before southern Sudan becomes a separate country in July and also encouraged them to enter into dialogue with the UN on the future of its presence there. The Council expressed its concern over increased tensions, violence and displacement in the Abyei areas and urged government of Sudan and the government of Southern Sudan to implement and stick to recent security agreements by withdrawing from the territory all forces other than the Joint

⁸² 'Garo Hills still transit route for NE rebels', *The Sentinel*, April 21, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/meghalaya/story.php?sec=2&subsec=8&id=72339&dtP=2011-04-22&ppr=1#72339>

⁸³ Security forces arrest six UG cadres from separate operations', *Imphal Free Press*, April 24, 2011 at <http://www.ifp.co.in/imphal-free-press-full-story.php?newsid=16531>

⁸⁴ 'Security Council extends mandate of UN committee on weapons of mass destruction', *UN News Centre*, 20 April 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38159&Cr=non-proliferation&Cr1=>

Integrated Units and Joint Integrated Police Units. The Council demanded the Government of Sudan and the armed movements to cease their hostilities and ensure full and unhindered access for humanitarian workers and UNAMID to provide assistance.⁸⁵ Meanwhile, the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee held a three-day meeting with regional organizations to accelerate and unify international strategies to defeat the scourge of terrorism.⁸⁶

In other developments, discussing the violence in Yemen for the first time, the UN Security Council members called for restraint and political dialogue. However, the 15-member body failed to agree on a public statement on Yemen. The meeting came as Yemeni police opened fire on protestors in two cities as the campaign to end President Ali Abdullah Saleh's rule escalated.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ 'Sudan: Security Council urges parties to peace pact to resolve outstanding issues', *UN News Centre*, 21 April 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38172&Cr=sudan&Cr1=>

⁸⁶ 'Security Council committee meets to discuss how to accelerate fight against terrorism', *UN News Centre*, 19 April 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38150&Cr=terror&Cr1=>

⁸⁷ 'Yemen: UN security council calls for dialogue, but fails to agree publicly', *Guardian*, 20 April 2011 at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/apr/20/yemen-un-security-council-protest>