

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

- **Inmates escape from an Afghan prison in Kandahar; Top Al Qaeda leader killed; Ryan Crocker likely to be next ambassador to Afghanistan**

According to reports, more than 470 inmates at a prison at Kandahar in Southern Afghanistan have escaped through a hundreds of meters long tunnel dug from outside the jail. According to officials, many of those who escaped from the Kandahar jail were Taliban insurgents. A spokesman for Afghan President Hamid Karzai said that the escape was a "disaster" and threat to security in the country.¹

However, NATO forces in Afghanistan have announced killing of a senior Al Qaeda leader named Abu Ghani. He was a Saudi citizen and was killed in Kunar province near Pakistan, the forces said. Abdul Ghani has been blamed for directing a number of high-profile attacks - including the death of Malik Zarin, a tribal leader who was a close ally of President Hamid Karzai.²

Reports noted that President Barack Obama is likely to name seasoned diplomat Ryan Crocker as the next US ambassador to Afghanistan. This would reunite Crocker with Gen. David Petraeus in a rerun of the diplomatic and military "dream team" credited with rescuing the ailing American mission in Iraq. Crocker's name emerged this month as the leading candidate to replace Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, a former Army general. A final decision is yet to be announced by the white House.³

PAKISTAN

(APRIL 18-24, 2011)

- **Pakistan returns empty handed from IMF-World Bank meet; Pakistan tests new short range missile; Admiral Mullen visits amidst tension; US says no to drone attack abandonment**

¹ "Afghanistan: Hundreds escape from Kandahar prison", *BBC*, April 25, 2011 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13184920>

² "Al-Qaeda 'Afghan number two' Abdul Ghani killed – Nato", *BBC*, April 26, 2011 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13193634>

³ "Crocker top pick for Afghan post", *Dawn*, April 27, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/04/27/crocker-top-pick-for-afghan-post.html>

The Pakistani delegation to the International Monetary Fund –World Bank meet has returned without a decision on the release of \$11.3 billion loan package. The reason behind the decision is Pakistan's inability to meet performance benchmarks. Pakistan has already borrowed more than half of its \$50 billion external loans from the IMF, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. However, its dismal economic performance has stalled any further negotiations.⁴

In another development, Pakistan Military has confirmed the testing of a newly developed short-range missile. The missile is capable of carrying a nuclear warhead and is called Hatf 9. The test was conducted at an undisclosed location.⁵

According to reports, top US Military officer Admiral Mike Mullen is visiting Pakistan amongst tension over US's role in the region. He is slated to meet top leaders and Army chief General Parvez Kayani on the two day visit where he would raise concerns about ties between the insurgents and the intelligence agency ISI, reports added. ⁶

In other developments, the United States has reportedly said that it will not abandon its drone attacks. Though, it will consider how to go ahead with the military and the intelligence unit of Pakistan, The strife over drone attacks has become a sore point in the US-Pakistan relations since last few weeks.⁷

(APRIL 25-MAY 1, 2011)

- General Petraeus holds security talks in Pakistan; Wikileaks: US describes Pakistani intelligence unit as a terrorist organization; Pakistan tests new cruise missile; Proposal for importing petrol from India tabled

The Commander of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan General David Petraeus visited Pakistan to hold security talks with Pakistani army Chief General Pervez Kayani. Both the generals discussed issues of mutual interest and about how to bolster long term peace and stability in the region. This is Petraeus's sixth visit to the country which came in the wake of severe criticism by the US on Pakistani efforts to defeat the Taliban. ⁸

⁴ "Pak team returning without money", *Dawn*, April 19, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/04/19/pak-team-returning-without-money.html>

⁵ "Pakistan test-fires new nuclear-capable missile", *Dawn*, April 19, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/04/19/pakistan-test-fires-new-nuclear-capable-missile.html>

⁶ "Mullen visits Pakistan amid tensions over drones", *Dawn*, April 20, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/04/20/mullen-visits-pakistan-amid-tensions-over-drones.html>

⁷ "US says won't abandon drone program in Pakistan", *Dawn*, April 20, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/04/20/us-says-won%E2%80%99t-abandon-drone-program-in-pakistan.html>

⁸ "Petraeus visits Pakistan for security talks" *Dawn*, April 25, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/04/25/petraeus-visits-pakistan-for-security-talks.html>

According to a leaked US document, US authorities have described Pakistan's ISI intelligence agency as a "terrorist" organisation. It said that US saw the ISI as a threat at par with the Al Qaeda and Taliban.⁹

In another development, the Pakistani military has confirmed testing of a new nuclear cruise missile. The missile known as Hatf- VIII has a range of 220 miles and is capable of carrying nuclear warhead.¹⁰

In other developments, the petroleum ministry of Pakistan has proposed that the 'Most Favoured Nation' (MFN) status be granted to India to facilitate import of petroleum in lieu of cement and chemical export. This proposal will form the basis of a two day trade talks between the two countries. Both diesel and furnace oil are on the positive list of importable items from India but imports do not take place because of political reasons.¹¹

BANGLADESH

- **Two ships of Indian Coast Guard arrived in Chittagong Port on a goodwill visit; A high-powered delegation comprising both government and non-government officials from Bhutan visit SME Foundation office in Dhaka**

According to reports, two ships of Indian Coast Guard arrived in Chittagong port on April 24 on a five-day goodwill visit to Bangladesh. Twenty-five officials and 155 crewmen were aboard the two ships named Vajra and Raziya Sultana.¹²

In another development, a high-powered delegation comprising both government and non-government officials from Bhutan visited SME Foundation office in Dhaka and expressed its keen interest to work jointly with the SME sector of Bangladesh.¹³

⁹ "US cables likened ISI to Taliban, al-Qaeda: Wikileaks' *BBC*, April 26, 2011 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13191241>

¹⁰ "Pakistan test fires nuclear-capable cruise missile", *Dawn*, April 29, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/04/29/pakistan-successfully-test-fires-hatf-viii-cruise-missile.html>

¹¹ "Petrol import from India proposed", *Dawn*, April 27, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/04/27/petrol-import-from-india-proposed.html>

¹² "Two Indian ships arrive in Ctg", *The Daily Star*, April 25, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=183061>

¹³ "Bhutanese delegates visit SME Foundation", *The Daily Star*, April 28, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=183462>

SRI LANKA

- **Hindustan Prefab Limited and RPP Infra Projects Limited are assigned to execute and implement the pilot project for 1,000 houses for the IDPs in the northern province of Sri Lanka; Fifteen Sri Lankan fishermen have been apprehended by Indian Coastguard for illegal fishing within the coastal limit of India; The Vietnam Embassy has been reopened in Sri Lanka after a lapse of almost 30 years**

Government of India has appointed M/s Hindustan Prefab Limited and M/s RPP Infra Projects Limited as project management consultants and contractors respectively to execute and implement the pilot project for 1,000 houses for the IDPs which will be spread over all five districts of Northern Province of Sri Lanka.¹⁴

Reports noted that fifteen Sri Lankan fishermen have been apprehended within the territorial waters of South India by a team of Indian coast guards while they were engaged in illegal fishing within the coastal limit of India. Though, on the advice of the Minister of Fisheries Dr. Rajitha Senaratna, Sri Lanka External Ministry and the Deputy High Commissioner's Office of India are taking steps to get the fishermen released.¹⁵

In other developments, the Vietnam Embassy has been reopened in Sri Lanka after a lapse of almost 30 years with the Ambassador designate from Vietnam Ton Sinh Thanh handed over his credentials to President Mahinda Rajapaksa on April 26, 2011.¹⁶

MALDIVES

- **Deputy Minister of Islamic Affairs of Saudi Arabia paid a courtesy call on President Nasheed; President Nasheed meets with the members of Board of Governors of International Islamic University of Malaysia**

President Mohamed Nasheed met with the members of Board of Governors of International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM), presently in the Maldives to attend the 91st Majlis meeting of the Board of Governors. The President and the IIUM Board of Governors exchanged views on ways to enhance collaboration

¹⁴ "India clarifies status of the Housing project", *Newsline*, April 27, 2011 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201104/20110427india_clarifies_status.htm.

¹⁵ De Silva, Thilini and Ramayaka, Indika, "Lankan fishermen arrested for illegal fishing", *The Daily Mirror*, April 28, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/42308.html>

¹⁶ "Vietnamese Embassy reopens after 30 years", *The Daily Mirror*, April 27, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/42203.html>

between the Maldives and IIUM to strengthen higher education sector, especially the Maldivian National University. The Maldives Higher Education Council has also met with the members of Board of Governors of the IIUM.¹⁷

In another development, Deputy Minister of Islamic Affairs of Saudi Arabia Dr Abdul Aziz Al-Ammar paid a courtesy call on President Mohamed Nasheed on April 25 at President's Office.¹⁸

B. EAST ASIA

CHINA

- **China to attempt first space rendezvous; China boosts surveillance to protect maritime rights; China pledges prosperous neighborhood policy; China should lead over Asian single currency; China, US to hold strategic and economic dialogue; China, Kyrgyzstan to deepen security cooperation; China offers \$9 million aid to Egypt; China urges early resumption of Six-Party talks**

According to reports, China has declared that it will attempt its first space docking between two unmanned vehicles in 2011. In order to achieve this first thing which needs to be done is to build a Chinese space station.¹⁹ On the other hand there are reports which suggest that Beijing is stepping up its maritime surveillance by hiring more staff and increasing the number of inspection ships.²⁰

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao again reiterated China's commitment to its policy of securing an amicable, tranquil and prosperous neighborhood in dealing with the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).²¹ Meanwhile

¹⁷ "President Meets IIUM Board of Governors", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, April 27, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5226>; "Maldives Higher Education Council Holds Talks with IIUM Board of Members", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, April 27, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5228>

¹⁸ "Deputy Minister of Islamic Affairs of Saudi Arabia Calls on the President", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, April 25, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5213>

¹⁹ "China to attempt first space rendezvous" *Associate Foreign press*, April 30, 2011 at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iHwJJg-hK9aCL0Qtp203VnbLEvA?docId=CNG.84a02addb4e76dc33903cc41530cbab5.1c1>

²⁰ "China boosts surveillance to protect maritime rights" *Associate Foreign Press*, May 2, 2011 at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hYEPBXlgwhvy9Ne08gg1advpUitA?docId=CNG.b90089cb488b64b8bb88c2cd05aa8f87.3b1>

²¹ "China pledges prosperous neighborhood policy" *China Daily*, April 30, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-04/30/content_12427176.htm

Malaysia has asserted that China should take the lead in formulating a single currency for Asia, given the large size of its economy.²²

In another development, reports noted that China and the United States will hold the third round of the Strategic and Economic Dialogue from May 9-10 in Washington.²³ There are also reports that China and Kyrgyzstan have agreed to promote regional peace and security via closer cooperation on law enforcement and security.²⁴ On the other hand China has declared an aid worth 60 million yuan (\$9.2 million) to Egypt.²⁵

In other developments, Beijing has stated that the involved parties should seize the current situation of easing tensions on the Korean Peninsula and create conditions to restart the long-stalled Six-Party talks.²⁶

JAPAN

- **Japan, China and South Korea to step up efforts towards forming a trilateral FTA; Japanese parliament passes a bilateral treaty with Korea on the return of historical Korean books; Kuwait is to donate 5 million barrels of crude oil to support Japan's rebuilding effort; Japan to launch independent panel to probe nuke accident in Fukushima; Japan reaffirms its plan to relocate Futenma Air Station; Tokyo fails to persuade Seoul and Beijing to ease food import restrictions imposed on Japan following Fukushima nuclear crisis**

In a recent meeting held in Tokyo, the trade ministers of China, Japan and South Korea, while agreeing that free flow of trade and investment among them was the key to sustaining growth, have decided to step up efforts to form a trilateral free trade agreement (FTA). In fact, in order to look into the feasibility of such an agreement, the three countries have already set up a Joint Study Committee, which involves government officials, participants from business as well as academic worlds.²⁷

²² "China should lead over Asian single currency" *China Daily*, April 28, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-04/28/content_12408836.htm

²³ "China, US to hold strategic, economic dialogue" *China Daily*, May 1, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-05/01/content_12428933.htm

²⁴ "China, Kyrgyzstan to deepen security cooperation" *China Daily*, April 27, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-04/27/content_12404492.htm

²⁵ "China offers \$9 million aid to Egypt" *China Daily*, April 21, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-04/21/content_12370217.htm

²⁶ "China urges early resumption of Six-Party talks" *China Daily*, April 19, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-04/19/content_12358271.htm

²⁷ "China, Japan, South Korea seek trade pact", *BBC news*, April 25, 2011, at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/13184570?print=true>

As an effort to strengthen Japan-Korea relations further, the House of Representatives in Japan has recently passed a bilateral treaty with Korea in relation to the return of 1,205 historical Korean books, which were stolen during Japan's colonial rule there. Although the treaty is yet to be ratified by both the Houses of Japanese Parliament, it is expected to be implemented as both the ruling and opposition parties, except the main opposition party-the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)-have extended their support towards it.²⁸

Partly as an acknowledgement Japan's financial aid to Kuwait about 20 years ago during the Gulf War, Kuwaiti government has decided to return the favour by offering 5 million barrels of crude oil, worth \$548.3 million, to support Japan's rebuilding effort following the Great East Japan Earthquake. It is worth noting that Kuwait imports four million barrels of crude oil a day.²⁹

Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan has recently announced that the government will launch an independent panel to look into the causes of the recent nuclear accident in Fukushima triggered by the March 11 earthquake and ensuing tsunami. He has also assured that Japan will share the lessons from the accident with the international community and contribute to safety improvements of nuclear plants through organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).³⁰

During the recent visit of US senator Carl Levin to Japan, both Japanese Defence Minister Toshimi Kitazawa and Foreign Minister Takeaki Matsumoto have assured that Tokyo intends to steadily implement the Japan-US bilateral accord on Futenma base relocation issue struck in May 2010. Levin was in Japan to follow up on the bilateral accord, which is linked to the transfer of 8,000 US Marines from Okinawa to Guam and the relocation of the Futenma Air Station within Okinawa island prefecture. However, so far, the implementation of the accord has not been possible due to the strong opposition of local residents of Okinawa.³¹

²⁸ "Japanese Parliament passes treaty on return of Korean books", *Dong-A-Ilbo*, April 27, 2011, at <http://english.donga.com/srv/service.php3?biid=2011042850338>

²⁹ "Kuwait returns favor, donates oil to Japan", *Asahi Shimbun*, April 29, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201104280182.html>

³⁰ "Japan to launch independent panel in mid-May to probe nuke accident", *Mainichi Shimbun*, April 29, 2011, at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/news/20110429p2g00m0dm009000c.html>

³¹ "Japan vows to stick by accord on US base relocation", *Mainichi Shimbun*, April 29, 2011, at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/news/20110429p2g00m0dm007000c.html>

In the meantime, at the eighth economic and trade ministers' meeting involving Japan, China and South Korea, held in Tokyo recently, Japanese trade minister Banri Kaieda's efforts to persuade his Chinese and South Korean counterparts to ease the restrictions on food imports from Japan, have failed. It is worth noting that following the recent nuclear crisis in Fukushima, Beijing banned imports of all food, agricultural and fishery products from Fukushima and its surrounding areas, including Tokyo. Seoul too insisted Tokyo to issue certificates of food safety for food products from those areas. In response to Kaieda's request, both of his counterparts responded that public safety remained to be their top priority and the current measures were based on scientific views.³²

SOUTH KOREA

- **US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presses South Korea to take initiative in resuming the six party talks with North Korea; Seoul pledges \$500,000 for anti-piracy fund**

According to reports, during her recent visit to Seoul in April, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has urged South Korean President Lee Myung-bak to take the initiative in resuming the stalled six-party talks by holding a bilateral meeting between the two Koreas. While Clinton suggested that South Korean government officials should meet with North Korean counterparts to ascertain Pyongyang's commitment over the denuclearization issue, Lee reportedly maintained a cautious stance on the issue. Instead, he insisted that the South would consider that option only when it became clear that the North too was prepared to negotiate seriously. Lee further stated that Seoul would deliver any aid to Pyongyang only if the latter offered an apology for its various provocative actions, including shelling a South Korean island last November, which killed four South Korean citizens.³³

In another development, while extending its current financial role in fighting anti piracy mission off the Somali coast, the South Korean government has recently pledged to offer \$500,000 to an international anti-piracy trust fund. The fund, which is to be used to expand court facilities and prisons to better deal with the pirates, is reportedly the fourth largest in such effort after Netherlands (\$1.4 million), the UAE (\$1.4 million) and Germany (\$750,000).³⁴

³² "Beijing, Seoul to maintain limits on food imports", *The Japan Times*, April 25, 2011, at <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/print/nn20110425a3.html>

³³ "Clinton presses South Korea for talks between two Koreas", *Asahi Shimbun*, April 26, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201104250121.html>

³⁴ "Seoul pledges \$500,000 for anti-piracy fund", *Korea Herald*, April 24, 2011, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20110424000218>

NORTH KOREA

- **North Korea insists on security guarantee from the US before giving up its nuclear weapon programme; North Korea is willing to hold a summit meeting with South Korea, says former US President Jimmy Carter**

During former US President Carter's recent visit to North Korea to diffuse the tension between the two Koreas and discuss the impoverished North's pleas for food aid, Pyongyang has reportedly insisted on having some kind of security guarantee from the US if it is to give up its pursuit of nuclear weapons. As part of the security guarantee, the North has, over the years, stated that it wants an assurance that the US will not attack it. At the same time, it also insists on signing a peace treaty with the US.³⁵

While briefing the South Korean officials in Seoul regarding the outcome of his recent visit to Pyongyang, former US President Jimmy Carter has mentioned that North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il is ready to hold a summit meeting with South Korean President Lee Myung-bak at any time. Considering that Carter and the group of 'the Elders' (which includes former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Brundtland and former Irish President Mary Robinson) did not meet with the North Korean leader personally during their Pyongyang trip, critics do not seem to be very optimistic about it. In fact, Seoul's Foreign Minister Kim Sung-hwan also downplayed its significance stating that he did not see why North Korean leadership would feel the necessity of delivering such a message "via a third party."³⁶

SOUTHEAST ASIA

- **Malaysia-China sign pacts on communication, energy and infrastructure; Chinese Premier reassures ASEAN neighbours of peaceful region, and a friendly China; Myanmar to launch Satellite; Pirates hijack Singaporean chemical tanker; Cambodia accuses Thailand of attacks; Thai cabinet to contend Cambodia's appeals**

Malaysia and China inked several pacts including those on energy cooperation, infrastructure development and communication on 28 April, 2011. Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak and Chinese Premier presided over the signing ceremony. Among other friendly gestures, China approved Malaysian central

³⁵ "North Korea demands US security guarantee for nuclear talks-Carter", *Asahi Shimbun*, April 29, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201104280191.html>

³⁶ "N.K.'s Kim ready to meet Lee at any time: Carter", *Korea Herald*, April 28, 2011, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/pop/NewsPrint.jsp?newsMLId=20110428001071>

bank's application to establish a representative office in Beijing to facilitate trade and investment.³⁷

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao reiterated on China's commitment to secure a peaceful region on 30 April, 2011, the last day of his two day visit to Indonesia. He said that China is committed to the idea of having an amicable, tranquil and prosperous neighbourhood. He also called upon the ASEAN nations to take up stronger role in the East Asia Summit, and promised of full Chinese support in that regard.³⁸

According to reports, Myanmar is striving to develop satellite communication. A five member central committee, headed by union minister of communications, posts and telegraphs, and a working group has been set up in that regard. According to the reports, the central committee for launching satellite will formulate policy regarding the launch of state-operated satellites and carry out tasks related to obtaining space-related technology.³⁹

Reports noted that a Singapore registered chemical tanker has been hijacked by pirates on 1 May, 2011. The ship was hijacked off the Kenyan coastal borders and is now believed to be heading towards Somalia. The tanker was carrying 28,000 tonnes of crude palm oil.⁴⁰

On 1 May, 2011, the Cambodian Ministry of defence issued a statement accusing the Thai army of launching incessant attacks into Cambodian territory at the Ta Moan and Ta Krabey temples. The fighting has killed more than two dozen soldiers so far, and has displaced thousands of civilians from bordering areas.⁴¹

In other developments in the region, Thailand's Prime Minister, Abhisit Vejjajiva announced on 1 May that he would ask the Thai cabinet members to appoint a committee to counter Cambodia's appeals to the International Court of Justice. Thailand and Cambodia have a long history of border dispute, the source of

³⁷ Malaysia, China sign pacts to boost investment, *Associate Press*, 28 April, 2011, http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/A/AS_MALAYSIA_CHINA?SITE=MSJAD&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT

³⁸ China reiterates commitment to amicable, tranquil, prosperous neighbourhood policy, *China Military Online*, 1 May, 2011, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/today-headlines/2011-05/01/content_4429063.htm

³⁹ Myanmar strives for satellite communication development, *TMC News*, 30 April, 2011, <http://www.tmcnet.com/submit/-roundup-myanmar-strives-satellite-communication-development-/2011/04/30/5478340.htm>

⁴⁰ Pirates hijack Singaporean tanker off Kenya, *Straits Times*, 1 May, 2011, http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory_663482.html

⁴¹ Cambodia's army condemns Thailand for 10 straight days of arms attacks, *Xinhua*, 1 May, 2011, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-05/01/c_13854296.htm

which have been the temples in the bordering areas; Preah Vihear being the most prominent among them.⁴²

C. CENTRAL ASIA & RUSSIA

CENTRAL ASIA

- **Central Asian and Persian Gulf countries sign transit corridor deal; Legal status on sea discussed by Caspian coastal states; Kazakhstan discusses on Caspian spills; Manas base will be transit center after 2014; Turkey agrees to eradicate Kyrgyz debt; China lends \$4.1B to Turkmenistan**

Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Persian Gulf countries – Iran, Qatar, and Oman, have signed an agreement on 25th April to create a transit and transport corridor providing the isolated Central Asian region with an export route to sea outlets to the south. This project will also revamp existing railroad links and bypass violence-torn Afghanistan.⁴³ The initial agreement on the construction of the railway was signed between presidents of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan in April 2007 and Iran joined the deal in September 2007. The proposed route starts in Uzbekistan before crossing Turkmen and Iranian territory to arrive at Iran's ports on the Persian Gulf. The 1,000-kilometer railroad will shorten more than 600 kilometres of route for transporting goods from the Central Asia to the Persian Gulf, and will become one of the important international transportation links between China and Europe.⁴⁴

Representatives of Caspian coastal states met in Azerbaijan's capital Baku for a meeting of their working group ahead of the summit in Russia to be held later this year. Coastal states Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Iran met in Baku with the hope to agree on the basic principles for a draft convention on the legal status of the Caspian and to work on the decisions of the third Summit of Caspian States on agreement of national zones. The coastal states have so far managed to sign agreements on Caspian Sea security, the

⁴² PM: cabinet to appoint committee to contend with Cambodia's appeals to World Court, *MCOT*, 1 May, 2011, http://www.mcot.net/cfcustom/cache_page/203156.html

⁴³ 'Central Asian, Gulf countries sign transit corridor deal', *Central Asia Newswire*, April 26, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/Central-Asian-Gulf-countries-sign-transit-corridor-deal/viewstory.aspx?id=3918>

⁴⁴ 'Central Asia-Persian Gulf transit corridor deal signed', *Tehran Times*, April 26, 2011 at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=239428

delimitation of national zones and a ban on fishing for sturgeons.⁴⁵ Talks on determination of the legal status of the Caspian Sea have been continuing almost since the collapse of the Soviet Union with heads of state having held three summits – April 2002 (Ashgabat), October 2007 (Tehran) and November 2010 (Baku).⁴⁶

Kazakhstan hosted a meeting on developing international response strategies for oil spills in the Caspian Sea wherein 60 participants of oil companies, state institutions, international groups and non-governmental organizations attended to discuss ways to apply existing UN response initiatives. Kazakh Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications Azat Bekturov told the meeting that it was time to ratify and implement conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), “particularly in light of an increasing number of oil spills and last year's Mexican Gulf catastrophe, which demonstrated such incidents' tremendous environmental and financial costs.”⁴⁷

The Kyrgyz government has decided to set up a national public transit center at the Manas airfield after the United States leaves the military airbase. Manas Transit Center near the capital Bishkek is used by the U.S. to support military operations in Afghanistan. The US plans to exit from Afghanistan in 2014. Kyrgyzstan's Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev stated in a press conference, “Over a thousand (Kyrgyz) people work at the airbase... We must establish a modern transit center at the place of the airbase.”⁴⁸

Kyrgyz government has agreed with the Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan when Atambayev visited Ankara last week, to establish a cargo route between Istanbul, Bishkek and Shanghai.⁴⁹ Kyrgyzstan's Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev on a state visit to Turkey was successful in negotiating deals on debt and visa regime. Turkey agreed to cancel Kyrgyzstan's foreign debt and provide it with a \$61 million donation. This comes as good news to a cash-strapped Kyrgyzstan who will not have to pay back the \$51 million it owes Turkey. Both Kyrgyz premier Almazbek Atambayev and Turkish premier Recep Tayyip Erdogan agreed eliminate travel visa requirements between their

⁴⁵ ‘Caspian coastal states negotiate legal status on sea’, *Central Asia Newswire*, April 27, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/Caspian-coastal-states-negotiate-legal-status-on-sea/viewstory.aspx?id=3924>

⁴⁶ ‘Caspian coastal states still thrashing out legal status’, *News.Az*, April 26, 2011 at <http://www.news.az/articles/politics/35123>

⁴⁷ ‘Kazakhstan hosts meeting on coordinating emergency response to Caspian spills’, *Central Asia Newswire*, April 29, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/Kazakhstan-hosts-meeting-on-coordinating-emergency-response-to-Caspian-spills/viewstory.aspx?id=3942>

⁴⁸ ‘Kyrgyzstan to transform Manas base into transit center after U.S. exit’, *Central Asia Newswire*, April 28, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kyrgyzstan/Kyrgyzstan-to-transform-Manas-base-into-transit-center-after-US-exit/viewstory.aspx?id=3935>

⁴⁹ -ibid-

countries, signed tax exemption agreements and plan to remove obstacles in the way of establishing a work permit system.⁵⁰

In other developments in the region, China Development Bank has given Turkmenistan a credit of \$4.1 billion in return for future supplies of gas. The Central Asian republic plans to use the loan for the second phase of its largest natural gas project South Iolotan and for boosting the energy-rich republic's exports. China is expected to purchase up to 40 billion cubic meters (bcm) of Turkmen gas a year by 2015 through a new pipeline that began transporting supplies in 2009. Turkmenistan expects to sign a new deal with China this year to provide a further 20 bcm of gas annually.⁵¹

D. WEST ASIA

IRAN

- **Iran successfully test-fired Sokho-24 missile: Mohammad Alavi; Iran hopes, Germany takes independent steps regarding Iran-India oil payments; Iranian president misses two cabinet meetings, opposition calls for debate**

According to reports, Brigadier General Mohammad Alavi has said that the Iranian Air Force has successfully test-fired laser Sokho-24 missiles. He also noted that the Iranian Air Force will test-fire a long range version of this missile in the near future. He added that Sokho-24 is a strategic fighter jet and Iran has been able to improve its electronic warfare systems.⁵²

The Iranian ambassador Alireza Sheikh-Attar to Berlin has expressed hope that German officials would make independent decisions and resist the pressure exerted by the United States regarding Iran-India oil payment issue. The problems in disbursing money to Iran for oil shipments first surfaced in December, when India's Central Bank stopped payments through a regional financial clearing house that the US says is used by Tehran to avoid international sanctions. Indian companies, which obtain significant oil supplies from Iran, then began routing money to Tehran through the European Iranian

⁵⁰ 'Kyrgyzstan, Turkey agree to eradicate Kyrgyz debt and work on visa regime', *Central Asia Newswire*, April 27, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kyrgyzstan/Kyrgyzstan-Turkey-agree-to-eradicate-Kyrgyz-debt-and-work-on-visa-regime/viewstory.aspx?id=3925>

⁵¹ 'China lends Turkmenistan \$4.1B in return for future gas', *Central Asia Newswire*, April 27, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Turkmenistan/China-lends-Turkmenistan-41B-in-return-for-future-gas/viewstory.aspx?id=3923>

⁵² "Iran test-fires Sokho-24 missiles," *Tehran Times*, April 26, 2011, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=239433

Trade Bank, based in Germany. But this arrangement was also fragmented because the US claims the bank supports Iranian firms involved in the country's nuclear program. 53

In other developments, powerful MPs in Iran have called for a closed debate on President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's clear boycott of his official duties. The president has not been seen at his office for days, missing two cabinet meetings and canceling a visit to the holy city of Qom. Analysts believe an internal power struggle may be under way. Some MPs have accused Ahmadinejad's supporters of putting pressure on ministers to sign a letter backing president against the supreme leader. Many conservatives believe that President's top advisor Esfandiar Rahim Mashaie is the root cause of the problem. Simmering tensions between supporters of the two men came to a head on 17 April, when Intelligence Minister Heidar Moslehi was forced to resign. Moslehi was promptly re-instated by the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei.⁵⁴

IRAQ

- **Iran Majlis speaker supports unity and democracy in Iraq; Six people killed in a suicide attack in Diyala province**

According to reports, Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani has said it is Iran's policy to help Iraq maintain its national unity, create a durable democracy and reconstruct the country. He also added that the enemy has made serious efforts to sow discord between the political parties in Iraq. Larijani went on to say that Iraq is lagging behind other countries despite the fact that it is gifted with rich natural resources and workforce, blaming the US occupation of the country for such an underdevelopment. Iraq's vice president Tariq al-Hashimi, for his part, said Iran and Iraq share deep cultural and religious affinities and that their interactions will benefit the entire region. 55

In another development, a security official has informed that a suicide bomber has blown up himself in the eastern Iraqi town of Baladruz, killing at least six people and injuring 15. The bomber targeted a mosque in the town, 90km (55 miles) north-east of Baghdad in Diyala province. It would be worth noting that Diyala remains restive, with a divided Shia-Sunni population. In March, at least

⁵³ "Tehran hopes Germany resists U.S. pressure in Iran-India oil payment issue," *Tehran Times*, April 27, 2011, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=239512

⁵⁴ "Missing Iran leader Ahmadinejad under pressure from MPs," *BBC News*, May 1, 2011, at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-13250309?print=true>

⁵⁵ "Tehran supports national unity, democracy in Iraq: Larijani," *Tehran Times*, April 26, 2011, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/Index_view.asp?code=239434

nine soldiers were killed in a suicide bomb attack on an Iraqi army base in Kanaan in Diyala.⁵⁶

SYRIA

- **Army and security forces launch an operation against extremist groups in Syria; Jordanians and Syrians protest military siege of Daraa**

A military source announced that army units and security forces launched a hunt operation against the armed terrorist groups in Syria. The operation has led to “the killing of 10 members of the terrorist groups and the arrest of 499 others”, the source added. The source also noted that two soldiers were martyred and eight others wounded in the operation.⁵⁷ In another development, nearly 500 protesters from Jordan and Syria held a demonstration in front of the Syrian embassy in Amman and expressed their solidarity with the Syrian people. Reports noted that it was “the largest show of solidarity since the protests in Syria started in mid-March 2011” The demonstrators demanded an end to the military siege of Daraa, and urged the international community to intervene.⁵⁸

LIBYA

- **Four of Gaddafi family members killed in NATO airstrikes**

Reports noted that Muammar Gaddafi’s youngest son Saif Al Arab and three grandchildren were killed in a NATO air strike in Libya. However, the deaths have not been independently confirmed, Jordan Times reported.⁵⁹ In another development, the United Nations decided to withdraw all international staff from Tripoli and also the UK “expelled” the Libyan ambassador after a mob attacked the UN’s offices and the UK embassy building in Tripoli. Reports noted that these offices were targeted in retaliation to the killing by NATO of few of Gaddafi family members.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ “Iraq: Deadly bomb attack in Baladruz,” *BBC News*, April 28, 2011, at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-13232209>

⁵⁷ “Army units and security forces hunt extremist groups, kill 10 terrorists, arrest 499”, *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 02, 2011, available at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/337/2011/05/02/344296.htm>

⁵⁸ “Protesters express solidarity with Syrian people”, *The Jordan Times*, May 2, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=37055>

⁵⁹ “Qadhafi survives air strikes, son killed - Libyan authorities”, *The Jordan Times*, May 2, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=37056>

⁶⁰ “UN Withdraws Staff from Libya; UK Expels Libyan Ambassador”, *The Tripoli Post*, May 2, 2011, at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=5940>

EGYPT

- **Egypt decided to open Rafah border crossing with Gaza; Egypt Foreign Minister requests US to recognise Palestinian state**

In an interview with Al-Jazeera, Egypt Foreign Minister Nabil Al-Araby announced that his country would permanently open the Rafah border crossing, Gaza's only crossing that bypasses Israel, to ease the blockade on Gaza.⁶¹ This announcement sparked Israeli concerns over the implications of this strategic move by Egypt for regional security.

On the other hand, Israeli vice Prime Minister Silvan Shalom declared that Israel is "worried" by Egypt's plan. Further, Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was considering the option of sending his special adviser Yitzhak Molho to Cairo for necessary talks with Egypt's interim leadership in this regard.⁶²

Meanwhile, Egypt has requested the United States to recognise a Palestinian state, as rival factions of Palestine prepared to sign a reconciliation accord in Cairo. MENA news agency quoted Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Al Arabi as mentioning, the recognition "would correspond with previous statements by the American administration supporting peace based on two states".⁶³

ISRAEL

- **Israel suspended tax transfers to Palestinians**

According to Israel's finance minister Yuval Steinitz, Israel has suspended tax transfers to the Palestinians, as it fears the money would be used to fund Hamas. It has been done in response to the unity deal which the Palestine President Mahmoud Abbas struck with the Islamists. Reports noted that Israeli transfers make up 70 per cent of Palestine's revenues.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Jouini, Hassen (2011), "Egypt to throw open Rafah border crossing with Gaza: FM", *Agence France-Presse* (quoted in The Daily News Egypt), April 29, 2011, at <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/egypt/egypt-to-throw-open-rafah-border-crossing-with-gaza-fm.html>

⁶² "Israel worried by Egypt Rafah decision: minister", *The Daily News Egypt*, May 1, 2011, at <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/egypt/israel-worried-by-egypt-rafah-decision-minister.html>

⁶³ "Egypt calls on US to recognise Palestinian state", *The Jordan Times*, May 2, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=37039>

⁶⁴ "Israel halts cash to Palestinians after Hamas deal", *The Jordan Times*, May 2, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=37057>

PALESTINE

- **Rival factions in Palestine agreed to form government; Syria lauds Palestinian reconciliation efforts, appreciates Egypt**

Reports noted that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fateh movement has struck an agreement with rival Hamas on forming an interim government and fixing a date for a general election.⁶⁵ The deal was brokered by Egypt between the two warring sides. Forging Palestinian unity was regarded as crucial to reviving any prospect for an independent Palestinian state, reports added.

In another development, according to the Foreign and Expatriates Ministry sources, Syria welcomes the positive outcomes of the efforts exerted to realize the Palestinian reconciliation. Syria considers it a victory to the Palestinian people's cause of liberating the occupied lands and restoring rights. Syria has also appreciated the role played by Egypt in this venture, sources added. It is to be mentioned that Syria had earlier tried to achieve the proposed reconciliation.⁶⁶

E. USA

- **America's most wanted terrorist Osama Bin Laden Killed by special forces in Pakistan**

After years of pursuit, America's most wanted man was killed in a military operation in Abbottabad, Pakistan which was ordered by President Obama. Reports noted that in a dramatic late-night appearance in the East Room of the White House, President Obama declared that "justice has been done" as he disclosed that American military and C.I.A. operatives had finally cornered bin Laden, the Al Qaeda leader who had eluded them for nearly a decade. American officials said bin Laden resisted and was shot in the head. He was later buried at sea.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ "Fateh, Hamas agree to end feud, form government", *The Jordan Times*, April 28, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=36929>

⁶⁶ "Syria Welcomes the Palestinian Reconciliation", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 01, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2011/05/01/344073.htm>

⁶⁷ "Bin Laden is Dead, Obama Says" *The New York Times*, May 1, 2011 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/02/world/asia/osama-bin-laden-is-killed.html>

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

NATIONAL

- **Russia out of MMRCA deal; China expresses optimism about visit of high-level Indian Defence delegation to China**

According to reports, Russia has confirmed that India had rejected its bid to supply its traditional ally with 126 multi-role combat aircraft in a deal worth about USD 12 billion. Although, India has made no official announcement but the US and Russian exclusions indicate that only the Dassault Rafale fighter of France and the joint Eurofighter Typhoon project are still in the running.⁶⁸

In another development, China said that a "new breakthrough" has been achieved in its military relations with India, noting that a high-level Indian defence delegation would soon be visiting this country after a long gap. "New breakthroughs" and developmental momentum have emerged in Sino-India military ties, Geng Yansheng, a spokesman for the Chinese Defence Ministry, was quoted by the state-run Xinhua news agency as saying. The visiting delegation of Indian border patrol forces will include officers from several branches of India's military, Geng said, without providing details. The multi-command Indian military delegation headed by officer of the rank of Lt General is expected to visit China in June this year.⁶⁹

INTERNATIONAL

- **US President Obama: With the death of Osama bin Laden Justice has been done; Pakistan tested the nuclear-capable Hatf-VIII or Raad cruise missile**

"Justice has been done," was how President Barack Obama reacted in announcing the death of Osama bin Laden in a U.S. military operation in Pakistan. An American counterintelligence and counterterrorism team killed bin Laden yesterday during a firefight near Islamabad, the president said during a short statement from the White House late last night. "Tonight I can report to the American people and to the world that the United States has conducted an

⁶⁸ "India rejects Russia's fighter jet bid: official", *Brahmand*, April 30, 2011, at: <http://www.brahmand.com/news/India-rejects-Russias-fighter-jet-bid-official/6921/1/13.html>

⁶⁹ " 'New breakthrough' in military ties with India: China", *The Economic Times*, 27 April, 2011, at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/8101564.cms>

operation that killed Osama bin Laden, the leader of al-Qaida, and a terrorist who is responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent men, women and children," the president said. The attack ends a manhunt of almost 10 years. Bin Laden and his henchmen planned and executed the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, that killed 3,000 innocent Americans in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, Pakistan on Friday successfully tested the nuclear-capable Hatf-VIII or Raad cruise missile that has a range of 350 km, with the military saying the weapon system would give the country "greater strategic stand-off capability" on land and at sea. The air-launched cruise missile, which can carry a nuclear or a conventional warhead, was tested at an undisclosed location. The Raad, meaning thunder in Arabic, has stealth capabilities and is a "low-altitude, terrain hugging missile with high manoeuvrability" that can "deliver nuclear and conventional warheads with great pin-point accuracy".⁷¹

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

JAMMU & KASHMIR

- **Unrest in Maisuma due to protest demonstration demanding the release of the party's chairman Muhammad Yasin Malik; Soldiers hurt in Pulwama gunfight; Imam's death leads to protests; 2 policemen shot dead; Leader of APHC shot**

A complete shutdown was observed in Maisuma and adjoining areas of the city and a peaceful protest demonstration was staged by JKLF activists demanding the release of the party's chairman Muhammad Yasin Malik.⁷²

In another incident, two soldiers were injured in a gunfight with militants in South Kashmir's Pulwama district. Both militants and soldiers came face to face near Newa in which the soldiers got wounded and the militants managed to escape after the gunfight.⁷³

⁷⁰ "Obama Declares 'Justice Has Been Done'", *American Forces Press Service*, May 2, 2011, at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=63765>

⁷¹ "Pakistan tests Hatf-8 missile", Pakistan missile test, *Brahmand*, April 29, 2011, at <http://www.brahmand.com/news/Pakistan-tests-Hatf-8-missile/6917/1/13.html>

⁷² 'Protests, clashes in Maisuma', *Greater Kashmir*, April 29, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Apr/30/protests-clashes-in-maisuma-66.asp>

⁷³ '2 soldiers were injured in Pulwama gunfight', *Greater Kashmir*, April 30, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/ShowStoryLatest.asp?NewsID=2203>

In North Kashmir, killing of an Imam by unidentified persons triggered protests and clashes at Rafiabad. Four persons were hurt when police and paramilitary CRPF men resorted to baton charge and fired tear gas shells to quell protestors.⁷⁴ Two policemen were shot dead by unidentified gunmen on city outskirts. Meanwhile, two policemen were fired at by the gunmen near Nowgam Chowk. Police and paramilitary CRPF men cordoned off the area after the incident and efforts were on to trace the assailants.⁷⁵

In other developments, the Information Secretary of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (G) Pakistan Administered (Pak) chapter Showkat Ahmed Wani was fired at by some unknown gunmen.⁷⁶

NORTH EAST INDIA

- **Arunachal CM missing; Pawan Hans service suspended in Meghalaya; Indo-Myanmar trade reviewed in Moreh; Pro-talk ULFA to go business way in big way; UDLA ultra caught; Security tightened along Assam-Nagaland-Arunachal border; Three Assam Maoists in police remand**

Mystery still shrouds the whereabouts of Chief Minister Dorjee Khandu after the Pawan Hans chopper he was flying in went missing after take-off from Tawang. Contradicting the report that the chopper made an emergency landing in the eastern part of Bhutan, bordering West Kameng district, authorities in Bhutan said that it was not aware of any such incident. Meanwhile, the State Government has suspended all contracts with the Pawan Hans Helicopter Limited (PHHL).⁷⁷

Concerned over frequent technical snags, the Meghalaya Government decided to suspend the Pawan Hans helicopter services operating in the State with immediate effect. The lone Pawan Hans helicopter in the State operates between Shillong and Tura via Guwahati daily.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ 'Imam's killing triggers protest', *Greater Kashmir*, April 25, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Apr/26/imam-s-killing-triggers-protest-54.asp>

⁷⁵ "2 cops shot dead", *Greater Kashmir*, April 25, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Apr/26/2-cops-shot-dead-50.asp>

⁷⁶ "APHC leader shot at", *Greater Kashmir*, April 25, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Apr/26/aphc-leader-shot-at-49.asp>

⁷⁷ "Mystery shrouds Khandu's whereabouts", *The Sentinel*, April 30, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/mainnews/story.php?sec=1&subsec=0&id=73418&dtP=2011-05-01&ppr=1#73418>

⁷⁸ "Meghalaya suspends Pawan Hans service", *The Sentinel*, April 30, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/meghalaya/story.php?sec=2&subsec=8&id=73427&dtP=2011-05-01&ppr=1#73427>

In an endeavour to ensure the success of its Look-East policy and make the Northeast a big trading hub in the future, a panel discussion on improving exports between India and Myanmar through Moreh, the land custom station on the Indo-Myanmar border, was organized at the Moreh Trade Centre. The main agenda for the discussion was the hardships faced by traders and the people while moving goods along the National Highway 39 due to the presence of many check points.⁷⁹

ULFA (pro-talk) leader Mrinal Hazarika today said in no uncertain terms that the 400-odd ULFA members who were under ceasefire would enter various businesses in the State in a big way. He, however, made it clear that the ULFA (pro-talk) was not involved in running syndicates and extortion in any way.⁸⁰

A United Democratic Liberation Army (UDLA) militant was arrested after a night-long search operation. The 20 year old militant had been identified as Devendra Tripura. Lala police led by its officer-in-charge Nayanmoni Sinha arrested the ultra from Channighat, an area on Assam Mizoram border. Devendra admitted that he was actively associated with the UDLA, a Reang militant outfit which had unleashed terror in the sensitive South Hailakandi that shares border with Mizoram and Tripura.⁸¹

Security has been beefed up along the Assam-Nagaland border as intelligence agencies have received news that a group of ULFA cadres were awaiting to strike into the State. The supposed attack is a move of revenge by the ULFA for the 32 militants who were killed recently. Altogether 32 ULFA militants were killed in a fierce fighting with the Army at Kanubari, Balijan Grant, Borhat, Longpotia along the Assam-Nagaland border in Sivasagar district in recent times.⁸²

In other developments, the Chief Judicial Magistrate Court have sent three 'Maoists' of Assam – Aditya Bora, Ajoy Sorbor and Engraj Orang – for three days' police remand. All three Maoists had been arrested by the special task force in Orissa along with huge arms and ammunition on February 22 last. The Tingkhong police had registered a case (147/10) against them who hail from the Rajgarh area in Dibrugarh district, for snatching the service rifles from an Armed

⁷⁹ "Central team reviews Indo-Myanmar trade at Moreh", *The Sentinel*, April 30, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/northeast/story.php?sec=2&subsec=9&id=73347&dtP=2011-05-01&ppr=1#73347>

⁸⁰ "Pro-talk ULFA to go business way in big way", *The Sentinel*, April 29, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/mainnews/story.php?sec=1&subsec=0&id=73205&dtP=2011-04-30&ppr=1#73205>

⁸¹ "UDLA ultra held", *The Sentinel*, April 29, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/cachar/story.php?sec=2&subsec=12&id=73268&dtP=2011-04-30&ppr=1#73268>

⁸² "Tight security along Assam Nagaland-Arunachal border", *The Sentinel*, April 29, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/state1/story.php?sec=2&subsec=2&id=73246&dtP=2011-04-30&ppr=1#73246>

Police battalion jawan on duty in January this year. The Tingkhong police brought them from Orissa and produced them before the CJM court today and sought ten days' police remand. However, the CJM, after hearing the plea of both the counsels, sent them for three-day police remand.⁸³

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **UN Security Council divided on statement condemning Syria; UNSC and Secretary-General condemn terrorist attack in Morocco; Security Council extends UN mandate in Western Sahara**

The UN Security Council failed to agree on a European and US-backed statement condemning Syrian violence on 27 April, with the Russians stating that the situation did not threaten international peace. China and India called for a political dialogue and peaceful resolution of the crisis and did not condemn Syria. The Indian representative to the UNSC stated, "The Council needs to make clear that it is the responsibility of sovereign states to respond to the aspirations of its people through administrative, political, economic and other measures. At the same time, it is for states to decide on the best course of action to maintain internal law and order and to prevent violence."⁸⁴

The UN political chief too differed from the American and European viewpoint. B Lynn Pascoe told the UNSC that "a review of the reports of media, international human rights groups, UN agencies and diplomatic missions confirm that the overwhelming majority of protests have been peaceful and unarmed". "However, there have been credible reports of a very few instances where protesters have used force, resulting in the deaths of members of the security forces."⁸⁵

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council and the Secretary-General strongly condemned the terrorist attack at a café in Morocco. The Council members voiced their deep sympathy to the families of the victims and to the people and the government of Morocco. The 15-member body also stressed that all countries

⁸³ "Three Assam Maoists in police remand", *The Sentinel*, April 28, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/state1/story.php?sec=2&subsec=2&id=73137&dtP=2011-04-29&ppr=1#73137>

⁸⁴ "Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, at the United National Security Council open briefing on the situation in Syria on April 27, 2011", at <http://www.un.int/india/2011/ind1851.pdf>

⁸⁵ "UN fails to agree on condemning Syria", *Guardian*, April 28, 2011 at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/apr/28/un-security-council-fails-condemn-syria-violence>

must ensure that any measures they take to combat terrorism meet their obligations under international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law.⁸⁶

In other developments, Security Council extended the mandate of the UN mission in Western Sahara tasked with monitoring the ceasefire and organizing a referendum on self-determination for the people of the territory till 30 April 2012. The Council called on the parties “to continue to show political will and work in an atmosphere propitious for dialogue in order to enter into a more intensive and substantive phase of negotiations.” The UNSC also welcomed the parties’ commitment to continue the process of holding small, informal talks in preparation for a fifth round of UN-backed negotiations, and called on them to continue negotiations “without preconditions and in good faith.”⁸⁷

⁸⁶ “Security Council and Secretary-General deplore deadly bombing in Morocco”, *UN News Centre*, April 29, 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38228&Cr=terrorism&Cr1=>

⁸⁷ “Security Council extends UN mission in Western Sahara for another year”, *UN News Centre*, April 27, 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38206&Cr=western+sahara&Cr1=>