

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

May 23-29, 5(4), 2011

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Bangladesh

- **India approves Rs 251 crore for the construction of a railway track to connect India and Bangladesh; India provides duty exemption on apparels imported from Bangladesh; Bangladesh expresses its willingness to help Japan in its massive reconstruction and rebuilding; US Assistant Secretary of State Robert Blake met BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in Washington**

Reports noted that India has approved Rs 251 crore for the construction of a 14 km railway track to connect India's Agartala with Akhaura of Bangladesh.¹ Meanwhile, according to another report, India will provide duty exemption on apparels imported into the country from Bangladesh under South Asian Free Trade Area agreement. In respect of articles of apparel and clothing accessories, the exemption shall apply to a quantity of imports, not exceeding 10 million pieces, computed from the 1st day of January in a calendar year.²

In another development, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said Bangladesh is ready to help Japan for its massive reconstruction and rebuilding of their devastated economy during a meeting with Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka, Tamotsu Shinotsuka. Japanese Ambassador made a courtesy call on her at the foreign ministry on May 24.³

In other developments, US Assistant Secretary of State Robert Blake met BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in Washington on May 26. Khaleda Zia also met Tony Blinken, adviser for National Security Policy for the US vice president, at White House and discussed entire range of Dhaka-Washington bilateral relations.⁴

Sri Lanka

- **Sri Lankan delegates attended the XVI Ministerial Conference and Commemorative meeting marking the 50th anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Bali, Indonesia; Sri Lanka's Foreign minister visited China; A two member parliamentary delegation from**

¹ "India okays fund for Akhaura rail link", *The Daily Star*, May 23, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=186867>

² India okays duty-free RMG quota", *The Daily Star*, May 28, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=187567>

³ "Bangladesh ready to help", *The Daily Star*, May 25, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=187147>

⁴ "Blake meets Khaleda", *The Daily Star*, May 28, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=187532>

Pakistan visited Sri Lanka; Agreement for the avoidance of double taxation between Sri Lanka and Luxemburg

A Sri Lankan delegation consisted of Rauff Hakeem, Minister of Justice, Dilan Perera, Minister of Foreign Employment Promotion & Welfare, Gitanjana Gunawardana, Deputy Minister of Finance and Sajin de Vass Gunawardana, Monitoring MP for External Affairs attended the XVI Ministerial Conference and Commemorative Meeting marking the 50th Anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Bali, Indonesia held from 25-27 May. On the sidelines of the summit, a series of bilateral meetings were also held by members of the Sri Lanka delegation.⁵

Reports noted that External Affairs Minister Professor G.L. Peiris met Mr. Yang Jiechi, Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, at the Foreign Ministry in Beijing on May 24.⁶ While, a two-member parliamentary delegation from Pakistan visited Sri Lanka from May 25-29 in a bid to find ways and means to further strengthen the link between the legislators of the two countries.⁷

In other developments, the Sri Lanka Government and the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg have concluded negotiations on an agreement for the avoidance of double taxation and for the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and on capital. This agreement will come into effect with the completion of necessary procedural and protocol formalities by both governments.⁸

Maldives

- **The IMF reaches at a staff-level agreement with the Government of Maldives; President of the ADB paid a courtesy call on President of the Maldives; Germany funds A2J project in Maldives; President meet the delegation of representatives accredited to the Maldives from European Union member countries; Chairman of the standing committee of the National People's Congress of the PRC paid a courtesy call on President; President sent a message of greetings to President of Sri Lanka on the occasion of the victory day celebration**

The International Monetary Fund reached a staff-level agreement with the government of Maldives on May 25, 2011 to extend its co-operation programme with the government for a further three years. The agreement remains subject to review by IMF management and approval of the IMF's

⁵ "Minister of External Affairs addresses the XVI Ministerial Conference and Commemorative Meeting marking the 50th Anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Indonesia", *Ministry of External Affairs, Sri Lanka*, May 27, 2011 at http://www.mea.gov.lk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2787&Itemid=75.

⁶ "Sri Lanka has fullest capability to resolve her own issues - China's Foreign Minister", *Ministry of External Affairs, Sri Lanka*, May 25, 2011 at http://www.mea.gov.lk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2776&Itemid=75

⁷ Bandara, Kelum, "Pakistani delegation arrives for diplomatic talks", *The Daily Mirror*, May 25, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/44965.html>.

⁸ "Lanka and Luxembourg conclude negotiations", *The Daily Mirror*, May 23, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/44719-lanka-and-luxembourg-conclude-negotiations.html>.

Executive Board, which could consider a program request from Maldives in July.⁹ Meanwhile, President of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Haruhiko Kuroda paid a courtesy call on President Mohamed Nasheed on May 26.¹⁰

Reports noted that the government of Germany will provide 6 million rufiyaa (• 330579) over the next two years to expand the Access to Justice (A2J) Project in Maldives. The agreement of German assistance to strengthen Maldivian justice sector was signed between the German government and UNDP. President Nasheed was present on the Occasion.¹¹

President Mohamed Nasheed met with the delegation of representatives accredited to the Maldives from European Union member countries currently visiting the Maldives on May 25, 2011.¹² While, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China Wu Bangguo paid a courtesy call on President Mohamed Nasheed on May 29, 2011.¹³

In other developments, President Mohamed Nasheed sent a message of greetings to President of Sri Lanka Mahinda Rajapaksa on the occasion of the victory day celebrated on May 27.¹⁴

B. East Asia

Japan

- **Japan to allow the United States to export jointly developed missile to third party; G-8 Summit held in Japan; PM Naoto Kan held talks with several leaders on the sidelines of the G-8 Summit**

In a significant development, Japan has decided to allow the United States to export their jointly developed missiles, particularly new Block 2A type of the sea-based Standard Missile-3 interceptor, to third countries despite Japan's long held taboo on arms exports. The final decision however

⁹ "IMF Agrees To 3-Year Support Package for Maldives, Praises Government's Economic Policies", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 25, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5376>

¹⁰ "ADB President Haruhiko Kuroda Calls on President Nasheed", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 26, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5379>

¹¹ "Germany Provides Rf6 Million To Strengthen The Justice System In Maldives", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 25, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5374>

¹² "President Meets with the Delegation of European Representatives to the Maldives", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 25, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5372>

¹³ "Chairman of the National People's Congress of China Calls on President Nasheed", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 29, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5387>

¹⁴ "President Sends Victory Day Greetings to Sri Lankan President", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 27, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5384>

will be conveyed by early June during the meeting of the defence chiefs of the two allies and expected to be confirmed only in late June during the two-plus-two security talks involving defence and foreign ministers of the two countries.¹⁵

In the recently concluded G-8 Summit held in Deauville, France, the leaders of the participant nations called for a larger role for the IAEA in ensuring nuclear safety following the Japan's recent nuclear crisis. In a final communiqué issued on May 27 after the end of the summit, the leaders pledged solidarity with Japan in its rebuilding efforts. However, while indicating that after the crisis, the weakening of Japanese economy was a risk factor, the leaders also urged Japan to show fiscal responsibility in funding its rebuilding process. On his part, Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan pledged that Japan would provide the international community with all information regarding the accident 'with the maximum possible transparency'. Kan also called for several measures to improve nuclear plant safety.¹⁶ During his address to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development held on May 25 in Paris, Kan made a significant commitment by pledging to increase the ratio of power generation by renewable sources to 20% by early 2020s.¹⁷

Further, Naoto Kan held talks with several leaders on the sidelines of the G-8 Summit. During his meeting with US President Barack Obama, Kan was assured that the US would help Japan in its rebuilding process. Obama's announcement was expected to soothe the bilateral relations between the two allies after the recent rift over the atomic disaster.¹⁸ During Kan's talk with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev over the long simmering dispute of Northern Territories, the former firmly reiterated that those territories belonged to Japan and also expressed displeasure with the recent visit of members of the Russian Cabinet to those territories on May 15. Although both the leaders refrained from making any concession on the issue, they agreed to carry on the negotiations on the subject in a calm environment.¹⁹

South Korea

● South Korea-US concludes military air drill 'Max Thunder'

Reports noted that a five-day long full-scale military air drill 'Max Thunder' was conducted between the South Korea and US forces from May 23 in the southwest Korea. The drill was aimed at

¹⁵ "Japan to allow US to export new missile", *The Japan Times*, May 25, 2011, at <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20110525a7.html>

¹⁶ "G-8 leaders call for stronger nuclear regulation, fiscal caution", *Asahi Shimbun*, May 29, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201105280186.html>

¹⁷ "Kan vows to boost 'green' power to 20 percent by 2020", *Asahi Shimbun*, May 27, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201105260176.html>

¹⁸ "Obama vows US support for quake-struck Japan", *Asahi Shimbun*, May 28, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201105270373.html>

¹⁹ "Kan, Medvedev far apart on Northern Territories", *Asahi Shimbun*, May 29, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201105280188.html>

improving the efficiency of joint operations by the two forces and about 59 aircrafts from both the countries participated in it. Max Thunder has been conducted by the countries since 2008. However it was for the first time that search and rescue scenarios of the pilots stranded behind enemy lines were incorporated in the drill.²⁰

North Korea

- **Kim Jong-Il tried to assure China North Korea's sincerity in resuming the Six Party Talks during his recent visit to China**

Reports noted that during North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il's recent visit to China from May 20 to May 26, 2011, he assured the Chinese leaders that the North was keen not only to improve its bilateral relations with South Korea but also to resume early the Six Party Talks on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.²¹ Kim apparently held summit talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao and discussed primarily issues like boosting of economic cooperation and resolving deadlock over Pyongyang's denuclearization. However, not much detail on the summit talks have been revealed so far by both sides.²² Earlier, during his visit to Japan, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao indicated to his South Korean counterpart Lee Myung-bak that Beijing invited Kim to visit China in order to offer him "the opportunity to understand China's development and use it for his country."²³

C. Central Asia & Russia

Russia

- **Russia delivers another batch of naval fighters to India; Russia joins NATO exercises for the first time; Russia-US seal Afghanistan helicopter deal; Russia bans German and Spanish vegetables; US President Obama: US-Russia to work together on missile defence; Russian President to visit Italy**

Reports noted that Russia's MiG aircraft maker delivered a new batch of five MiG-29K/KUB

²⁰ "Korea, US launch air defense exercise", *Korea Herald*, May 23, 2011, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20110523000754>

²¹ "Kim Jong Il promises Beijing he'll be on his best behavior", *Asahi Shimbun*, May 28, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201105270375.html>

²² "Kim, Hu discuss widening economic cooperation", *Korea Herald*, May 25, 2011, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20110525000707>

²³ "Wen: China invited Kim Jong Il to press for reform", *Asahi Shimbun*, May 23, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201105230128.html>

carrier-based fighters to the Indian navy in May. As part of the equipment a flight training simulator and other technical equipment has also been delivered. The two countries signed a contract stipulating the supply of 12 single-seat MiG-29Ks and four two-seat MiG-29KUBs to India in January 2004. The contract is part of a \$1.5-billion deal to deliver the Admiral Gorshkov aircraft carrier, currently being retrofitted in Russia for the Indian Navy. India's first four MiG-29Ks and MiG-29KUBs officially entered service in February 2010. In March 2010, Russia and India signed a \$1.5-billion contract on the supplies of 29 additional MiG-29K Fulcrum-D carrier-based fighter jets to New Delhi. The start of the supplies is scheduled for 2012. The contracts for the jets also stipulate pilot training and aircraft maintenance, including the delivery of flight simulators and interactive ground and sea-based training systems. The Indian Navy has named its MiG-29K squadron the "Black Panthers." The fighters will be based at an airfield in the state of Goa on India's west coast until the Admiral Gorshkov joins the Navy under the name of INS Vikramaditya in early 2013. The Vikramaditya is expected to carry up to 24 MiG-29K/KUB fighters. The future indigenous aircraft carrier Vikrant being built by India may also carry these aircraft.²⁴

According to reports, a Russian Black Sea Fleet task force, led by a submarine is taking part in NATO naval drills off the coast of Spain, the Russian Defense Ministry said, the first time a Russian submarine has participated in any NATO exercise. Bold Monarch is the world's largest submarine rescue exercise held every three years. This year's exercise, conducted on May 30-June 10 near the Spanish port of Cartagena, involves submarines, ships and aircraft from both NATO and non-NATO countries, including Russia. The Russian task force comprises the diesel submarine Alrosa, salvage tug Shakhtyor, auxiliary vessel KIL-158, and rescue vessel Epron. The Alrosa, a Kilo class diesel-electric submarine, will play the part of a "vessel in distress", stuck on the sea bed. Ships equipped with a range of sophisticated debris clearance, diver assisted gear and submarine rescue vehicles will attempt to salvage the sub and rescue its crew. The Russian auxiliary vessel KIL-158 carries an advanced Seaeye Panther Plus underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV).²⁵

In another development, the U.S. Army Forces Command and Russian state-controlled arms exporter Rosoboronexport have sealed a contract for the supply of 21 Mi-17V5 multipurpose helicopters to Afghanistan. The United States and Russia have been in talks for more than a year on the deal to provide the much needed vehicles for the NATO mission in Afghanistan. Apart from the helicopters, the contract stipulates the procurement of reserve units, ground support equipment, and maintenance support. The first helicopters will be sent to Afghanistan in October 2011. The Mi-17 is an export version of the Mi-8 Hip helicopter. Currently in production at two factories in the Russian Volga area city of Kazan and the East Siberian city of Ulan-Ude, it features powerful turboshaft engines and can transport up to 37 passengers. In May 2010, the United States lifted sanctions against Rosoboronexport that it had earlier blacklisted from tendering for

²⁴ "Russia delivers another batch of naval fighters to India", RIA Novosti, May 31, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110531/164329503.html

²⁵ "Russian sub joins NATO exercise for first time", RIA Novosti, May 31, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110531/164328150.html

U.S. arms deals. The sanctions were imposed in 2006 after the U.S. government accused Rosoboronexport of violating the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Despite the ban, dozens of Mi-17s have been bought by the United States for Afghanistan and Iraq over the past four years via intermediaries as commercial items, thus avoiding direct contacts with Rosoboronexport.²⁶

Meanwhile, President Barack Obama has said the United States and Russia are committed to finding an approach to a planned European-based U.S. missile shield that meets their security needs. Obama said after talks with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on May 26 that a common solution should be found to dealing with potential threats to both countries. President, Medvedev, meanwhile, said that the world's strategic balance has improved since Russia and the United States signed the new START missile treaty. The leaders met on the sidelines of a Group of Eight summit in the French resort of Deauville. Medvedev has become increasingly critical of U.S. plans to build a missile defence system in Central and Eastern Europe. He has warned that failure to cooperate with Moscow on the shield could spark a new arms race.²⁷

Reports noted that Russian President Medvedev will join 40 world leaders in Italy this week for a celebration marking the 150th anniversary of Italy's unification. Medvedev will arrive in Rome on 1st June 2011 for the two-day working visit, which will include meetings with Italian President and Prime Minister. The highlight will be the anniversary celebrations with a military parade attended by dignitaries including Austrian Chancellor Heinz Fischer, King Mohammed VI of Morocco, Turkish President Abdullah Gul, Chilean President Sebastian Pinera, Israeli President Shimon Peres and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.²⁸

In other developments, Russia has banned the import of all vegetables from Germany and Spain due to an outbreak of a highly virulent strain of the E. coli bacteria. As many as 10 people are reported to have died in Germany from the outbreak, suspected of being caused by contaminated cucumbers from Spain. Most of the infections have been reported in Germany, but cases have also been reported in Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Britain. Officials in the Czech Republic said there are indications that contaminated cucumbers may have been exported to the Czech Republic, as well as to Austria, Hungary, and Luxembourg.²⁹

²⁶ "Russia, US seal Afghan helicopter deal", RIA Novosti, May 27, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110527/164274183.html

²⁷ "Obama: US, Russia to work on missile defence", Radio Free Europe, May 26, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/obama_says_us_russia_to_work_on_missile_defense/24205945.html

²⁸ "Medvedev to visit to Italy", The Moscow Times, May 31, 2011, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/medvedev-to-visit-italy/437865.html>

²⁹ "Russia bans German, Spanish vegetables", Radio Free Europe, May 30, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/russia_bans_vegetable_imports_from_germany_spain/24209850.html

D. West Asia

Iran

- **Iran's Foreign Minister Salehi: Iran is ready to receive nuclear experts from China to visit country's nuclear sites; Egypt arrests Iranian diplomat for passing information**

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi has said that Iran is ready to receive nuclear experts from China to visit the country's nuclear sites so that they can become familiar with Iran's nuclear program. He also added that this invitation is extended while no other country in the world would allow experts from other countries to visit their nuclear installations sites. Reports noted that asked if Iran would continue producing uranium enriched to a purity level of 20 percent, the Iranian foreign minister said that Iran, like other signatories to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, has the right to enrich uranium to meet its needs.³⁰

In another development, Egypt has held an Iranian who worked at Iran's diplomatic mission in Cairo. Reports noted that this detention could be a potential setback to improving ties between the two countries. Al Arabiya television named the man as Kassem Al Hosseini and described him as a diplomat who had been detained for "passing information", without giving more details. Two security sources confirmed the detention to Reuters and one of them confirmed the charge. Neither gave details of his diplomatic status or name. Ties between the two states — severed after Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution and after Egypt made peace with Israel — had recently been warming. Although they do not have full diplomatic relations, each has a mission in the other's capital. Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Elaraby said after meeting an Iranian official in Cairo in April that Egypt was open to re-establishing diplomatic relations, marking a shift in policy since a popular uprising toppled President Hosni Mubarak on February 11.³¹

Iraq

- **Four people killed and 14 injured in bomb blast; US Defense Secretary express hope that Iraq's government would ask the US to keep its troops in the country longer than planned**

Reports noted that four people were killed in the explosion of a bomb in a parked car in southwestern Baghdad, officials said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Violence has decreased dramatically in Iraq since the height of the war, but bombings and shootings still happen daily across the country, many against a sectarian background. Many Iraqis are worried that violence may increase when US troops pull out. That is scheduled for the end of this year. US retiring Defense Secretary Robert Gates said he expected Iraq's government would ask the US to

³⁰ "Chinese experts welcome to visit Iran's nuclear sites: Salehi," *Tehran Times*, May 24, 2011, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=241271

³¹ "Egypt detains Iranian from mission in Cairo," *Khaleej Times*, May 29, 2011, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/May/middleeast_May812.xml§ion=middleeast

keep its troops in the country longer than planned. Gates said a longer US military presence could help sustain the security and other gains Iraq has made in recent years, and Iraq could become a model for a multi-sectarian society in an Arab country “that shows that democracy works.”³²

Syria

- **Syria calls for strengthening NAM’s role at the ministerial meeting; Russia reiterates its adherence towards Syria; Syria signs and ratifies multimodal transport agreement among Arab countries**

Syrian delegation, headed by Deputy Foreign and Expatriates Minister Fayssal Mikdad, participated in the 16th Ministerial Conference of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) convened in Bali, Indonesia and reviewed the situation in the region and the troubles facing Syria’s security and safety.³³ Mikdad was also quoted as saying that Syria agrees with Bali’s Commemorative Declaration on the 50th anniversary of founding the NAM which “stressed intention of the NAM member states to achieve a safer and more secure world, to create a multi-polar world and to reject unilateral sanctions imposed on any NAM country that would affect negatively on peoples and economic growth”.³⁴ On their part, the ministers and heads of delegations expressed their support to the measures undertaken by the Syrian leadership.

In another development, during a press conference in Moscow, Russian Foreign Ministry’s Official Spokesman, Alexander Lukashevich, said that Russia reiterated adherence to its stance towards Syria which rejected interference in its internal affairs. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev also talked about this issue during a press conference on May 18 wherein he said that his country will not agree on any resolution by the UN Security Council against Syria and called for giving enough time for the Syrian leadership to implement the reforms it declared, and not to exert pressure on it through adopting resolutions against it.³⁵

In other developments, Syria’s Permanent Ambassador to the Arab League (AL) signed the Agreement on Multimodal Transport of Goods among the Arab countries at the AL headquarters in Cairo, Egypt. The agreement also included Jordan, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Palestine and Yemen and was later ratified by Jordan and Syria. The agreement is hoped to contribute to activating trade exchange and boosting economic ties among the Arab countries. Ihab Mukaram,

³² “4 killed by parked car bomb in Baghdad,” *Khaleej Times*, May 25, 2011, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/May/middleeast_May690.xml§ion=middleeast

³³ “Syria Takes Part in Ministerial Meeting of Non-Aligned Movement”, *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 26, 2011, available at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/22/2011/05/26/348946.htm>

³⁴ “Mikdad Calls for Strengthening NAM Role in Face of Attempts to Impose Trusteeship”, *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 27, 2011, available at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/22/2011/05/27/349114.htm>

³⁵ “Russia Reiterates its Stance towards Syria”, *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 27, 2011, available at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/337/2011/05/27/349129.htm>

representative of the legal administration at the AL indicated that the agreement will be put into effect after thirty days of the date of submitting the ratification papers of three Arab countries according to article 46 of the agreement.³⁶

Libya

- **Islamic Conference on Investment calls for helping displaced Libyans; NATO airstrikes Tripoli while UK approved deployment of Apache Attack Copters; African leaders urged for a political solution to Libyan crisis; More nations express support for NTC**

According to reports, participants at the International Conference on Investment in Islamic States, organised by the Jordan Chamber of Commerce and the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Amman, have called for establishing a fund to help displaced Libyans and provide them with necessary humanitarian assistance. The conference also called for exerting more efforts to arrive at an integrated economy in Islamic countries as well as drawing up mechanisms to counter obstacles imposed by the global economic developments. The participants urged for setting up joint economic strategies and work on implementing all the agreements of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference related to boosting economic and trade ties among member states.³⁷

Within hours after the Libyan regime proposed a ceasefire through Prime Minister Al-Baghdadi Ali Al-Mahmoudi to end more than three months of fighting and the start of unconditional talks with the opposition on an existing African Union roadmap to resolve the conflict, NATO planes launched at least five air strikes on the Al Gaddafi compound at Bab Al-Azziziyah in Tripoli. At the same time, since the offer did not mention Gaddafi's future, the rebels insisted that any government initiative must include the departure of the Libyan leader as a first step towards resolution of the conflict.³⁸

Separately, the United States President Barack Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron, at a joint news conference in London, urged the Libyan leader al Gaddafi to step down, saying they would "turn up the heat on the Al Qathafi regime".³⁹ The two leaders also affirmed their joint resolve about the reduced U.S. role since NATO took the lead after the initial days of the campaign against the Libyan leader.

Meanwhile, the UK approved to send four Apache attack helicopters, currently on exercise in the Mediterranean, to the mission in Libya. It was also reported that the deployment of Apaches in

³⁶ "Syria Signs and Ratifies Multimodal Transport Agreement among Arab Countries", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 25, 2011, available at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/24/2011/05/25/348834.htm>

³⁷ "Islamic conference calls for helping displaced Libyans", *The Jordan Times*, May 27, 2011, available at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=37872>

³⁸ "NATO Air Strikes Rock Tripoli While UK Approves Deployment of Apache Attack Copters", *The Tripoli Post*, May 27, 2011, available at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=6061>

³⁹ "Barack Obama: 'Al Qathafi Must Step Down; Leave Libya to the Libyan People'", *The Tripoli Post*, May 25, 2011, available at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=6054>

Libya means there would be less chance of civilian casualties in operations as they can target individual soldiers, or groups of soldiers, on the ground as opposed to tanks or artillery or buildings.⁴⁰

The African leaders at the two-day extraordinary African Union summit to discuss the situation in Libya in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa urged for a political solution to the troubled North African state of Libya. It has also been mentioned as the continental body's first major step towards ending fighting in Libya that has been ongoing for over three months.⁴¹ Head of the AU Commission further said that beyond the humanitarian aspects, the current situation in Libya posed a serious threat to peace and security, as well as the long-term stability of Libya and of the continent.

In another development, reports noted that the United States administration invited the National Transitional Council (NTC) to set up a representative office in Washington. Jeffrey Feltman, the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs, described the invitation as "an important milestone in our relationship with the National Transitional Council".⁴² However, the rebel leaders, though welcomed the diplomatic contact, said only better weapons will help them defeat Gaddafi. Meanwhile, Jordan announced that it had recognised the National Transitional Council as the legitimate representative of the Libyan people. Jordan's Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh also said that his country would soon name a permanent envoy in Benghazi.⁴³

Egypt

- **Hamas, EU welcome Egypt plan to open Rafah border; Mubarak and others to be tried for killing of anti-government protesters; Egyptian Amer Group announces new investments in Syria**

According to reports, Gaza's Hamas rulers and the European Union welcomed the Egyptian announcement to permanently open the Rafah border crossing between Egypt and the Palestinian enclave to ease the blockade which has been in place since 2006. Hamas' spokesman Fawzi Barhum said that the Islamist movement hailed the move as "a courageous and responsible decision which falls in line with Palestinian and Egyptian public opinion".⁴⁴ He also hoped that this would be a step towards complete lifting of the siege on Gaza.

Separately, the European Union appreciated the move and said it was in consultations with Egypt, the Palestinians and Israel about returning its team of advisers to monitor activity along the frontier.

⁴⁰ *The Tripoli Post*, no. 2.

⁴¹ "AU Chairman: 'Only Political Solution Could Lead to a Lasting Peace in Libya'", *The Tripoli Post*, May 26, 2011, available at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=6056>

⁴² "More NATO Air Strikes, Same Target As More Nations Express Support for NTC", *The Tripoli Post*, May 25, 2011, available at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=6051>

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ "Hamas, EU hail Egypt plan to open Rafah border", *The Jordan Times*, May 27, 2011, available at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=37873>

However, Israel expressed concern over the initiative, with Home Front Defence Minister Matan Vilnai cautioning that it would create “a very problematic situation” given the fact that the measure will give Gazans a gateway to the world as Rafah is the only crossing which does not pass through Israel.⁴⁵

In another development, former Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, along with his sons Ala’a and Gamal, has been referred by Egypt’s prosecutor to stand trial in a criminal court for his alleged role in the killing of anti-government protesters during the country’s uprising. Further, Hussein Salam, a business and close confidant of Mubarak, who was blamed for a controversial deal to supply Israel with gas at lower than usual prices, has also been ordered to stand trial in a criminal court. The prosecutor said that the charges include, “intentional murder, attempted killing of some demonstrators ... misuse of influence and deliberately wasting public funds and unlawfully making private financial gains and profits”.⁴⁶

In other developments, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Egyptian Amer Group (an Egyptian tourist group), Mansour Amer has expressed the Group’s desire to open a restaurant chain in Damascus and other Syrian cities, as a step following the opening of Porto Tartous Complex. Amer told that the group is establishing the first shopping mall in Tartous, in addition to constructing 3500 hotel apartments. It means providing about 7000 hotel rooms and 5000 sustainable job opportunities, he acclaimed.⁴⁷

Palestine

● Arab Peace Initiative Committee to seek Palestine’s full United Nations membership

At the end of its emergency ministerial meeting held in Doha, the Arab Peace Initiative Committee decided to seek full U.N. membership for a Palestinian state in the framework of 1967 lines and Jerusalem as its capital. The committee further decided to work to mobilize the required international support of the Security Council members and political and geographic gathering at the United Nations to allow the issuance of this resolution.⁴⁸

Jordan

● Jordan and Iraq to develop Aqaba-Baghdad railway

Jordan Transport Minister Mohannad Qudah and his Iraqi counterpart Hadi Al Amiri signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to pave the way for implementing a railway connectivity

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ “Egypt’s Prosecutor Says Mubarak to be Tried for Killing of Anti-Government Protesters”, *The Tripoli Post*, May 24, 2011, available at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=6049>

⁴⁷ “Egyptian Tourist Group Ready to Invest More in Syria”, *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 25, 2011, available at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/24/2011/05/25/348904.htm>

⁴⁸ “Arab Peace Initiative Committee Requests Palestine’s Full Membership at UN within 1967 Lines & Jerusalem as Capital”, *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 30, 2011 at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/22/2011/05/30/349431.htm>

project between the two countries. The MoU was signed in the presence of Egypt's Transport Minister Atef Abdel Hamid during a visit to the Jordan Academy for Maritime Studies. Qudah said the two countries also agreed to develop the Aqaba-Baghdad route, stressing its importance in serving international and regional trade. Jordan Prime Minister Marouf Bakhit said that transport was one of the main pillars of economic cooperation and development in the Arab world, and stressed Jordan's commitment to boost cooperation and coordination with Egypt and Iraq in the transport sector.⁴⁹

D. USA

● President Obama nominates Gen. Martin E. Dempsey as the next Joint Chiefs of Staff

Gen. Martin E. Dempsey has been nominated by President Obama to be the next Joint Chiefs of Staff. In addition to this announcement, President Obama also announced that broad reshuffles will be done within his national security team, with the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan in view. Reports noted that President Obama is not giving any hints on whether he supports troop pullouts or not. He only mentioned that "he expected General Dempsey, now the Army chief, to present him with a full range of options on how to begin bringing American troops home."⁵⁰ How effective the reshaping of the national security team will be in changing government's strategy is yet to be seen. But it seems like the process of changing gears and changing strategies has begun in Washington.

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

● Indian Navy to induct stealth frigates INS Satpura and INS Teg; Indian Navy will not join any multilateral groupings outside U.N mandate

According to reports, the Indian Navy continues to improve its war-fighting capabilities despite being stretched in coastal security and anti-piracy operations of late. The force is all set to induct two more deadly stealth frigates to bolster its growing "blue-water" warfare capabilities. The

⁴⁹ "Jordan, Iraq to build Aqaba-Baghdad railway", *The Jordan Times*, May 30, 2011 at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=37979>

⁵⁰ "Obama Wraps Up Reshaping of National Security Team", *The New York Times*, May 30, 2011 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/31/us/politics/31military.html>

6,200-tonne indigenous stealth frigate INS Satpura is likely to be commissioned in June-July, while the Russian-built 4,900-tonne INS Teg should finally be ready for induction by September-October. These long-awaited warships will come at a time when Navy chief Admiral Nirmal Verma has stressed that “maintenance of war-fighting abilities” remains the “top-most priority” for his force despite the “large number of peacetime commitments (anti-piracy, coastal security and the like) at hand”. The defence ministry has also approved Project-17A to construct seven more frigates at Mazagon Docks and GRSE in Kolkata, with even more stealth features, for around Rs 45,000 crore. In all, the Navy has around 30 new warships and six submarines on order as of now to maintain its force-levels at about 140 combatants.⁵¹

Meanwhile, the Indian Navy will not join any multilateral groupings, putting to rest the possibility of Indian participation in the U.S.-mooted concept of a 1,000-ship navy. Addressing to the naval commanders in New Delhi, Defence Minister A.K. Antony ruled out India joining such a group unless it is under a U.N. mandate, a Defence Ministry statement noted. While India will join maritime cooperation in the region against terrorism and piracy, there is no plan to join any broader multilateral grouping, a Defence Ministry official said. It would be worth noting that the 1,000-ship navy concept, espoused by Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, had envisioned an operational partnership of naval and coastal forces from friendly countries around the world.⁵²

International

- **Chinese conventional submarine (SSK) has bigger missions; Russian submarine to take part in the world's biggest submarine rescue exercise under the aegis of NATO**

Reports noted that the recent images of a Chinese conventional submarine (SSK) that was first seen in September 2010 may shed further light on its possible missions. The new People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) SSK appears to be one third larger than the 2,500-3,000-ton Yuan-class SSK currently in production, indicating it may be intended for longer-range open ocean interdiction missions past the 'First Island Chain': China's preferred term for the East China Sea and waters surrounding Taiwan. The SSK also has an unusually large sail estimated to be 17-20 ft (5-6 m) tall and 12-13 ft wide. Part of the sail's length is taken up by a new crew escape capsule - a first for a PLAN submarine - while periscopes and a mast-mounted radar are placed behind the capsule in a horizontal row to save space. Behind the sensors there is space for weapons, which, considering the sail's height, could include missiles.⁵³

Meanwhile, in a major development, reports noted that a Russian submarine will take part in the

⁵¹ “India to boost ‘blue-water’ warfare punch with two new stealth frigates”, *The Times of India*, May 25, 2011, at <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/NEWS/newsrf.php?newsid=14792>

⁵² “India Will Not Join 1,000-Ship Navy Concept”, *Defence News*, 25 May 2011, at <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/NEWS/newsrf.php?newsid=14798>

⁵³ “Images of mystery Chinese sub prompt more questions than answers”, *IHS Jane's*, 27 May, 2011, at <http://www.janes.com/products/janes/defence-security-report.aspx?ID=1065929693&channel=de>

world's biggest submarine rescue exercise with its former cold war adversary NATO next week, the military alliance said on May 27. The Russian submarine will be the first to participate in any NATO exercise, off the coast of Cartagena, Spain. Around 2,000 military and nonmilitary personnel as well as ships and aircraft from more than 20 nations will take part in the exercise, dubbed Bold Monarch 11 that will run from May 30 to June 10. Held every three years, it "is the world's largest submarine rescue exercise," said a statement from NATO's SHAPE allied military headquarters based in Mons, Belgium. "The exercise is designed to maximize international cooperation in submarine rescue operations - something that has always been very important to NATO and all the submarine-operating nations," the statement said further. The inclusion of a Russian submarine in the exercise comes amid a warming of ties between Moscow and the 28-nation alliance, nearly three years after Russia's war with Georgia had sparked tensions between the two sides.⁵⁴

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Home Minister Chidambaram: Security forces were keeping a very careful vigil along the border in Jammu and Kashmir to foil any infiltration attempt by militants; Two militants killed during a gunfight in Keller; Militants killed in Sopore; Separatist leaders under house arrest; Militants killed in Kupwara gunfight; A LeT commander killed during an encounter with forces in Poonch district**

The Centre said the security forces were keeping a very careful vigil along the border in Jammu and Kashmir to foil any infiltration attempt by militants.

Home Minister P Chidambaram said there were some intelligence inputs suggesting infiltration to Jammu and Kashmir from across the border but the number was "debatable".

Chidambaram said the security forces would be able to stop infiltration and if a few were able to get through; the forces would be able to apprehend them in course of time.⁵⁵

Two militants of Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) outfit were killed in a gunfight with soldiers at Keller in the south Kashmir district. Policemen, soldiers of 44 Rashtriya Rifles and paramilitary CRPF men of 14 battalion cordoned off Khanday Mohalla, Keller and launched searches. Militants holed up inside a residential house opened fire on the search party which retaliated triggering an

⁵⁴ "Russian Sub to Join NATO Exercise for 1st Time", Agence France-Presse, 28 May 2011 12:00, at <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=6654700&c=EUR&s=SEA>

⁵⁵ "Forces vigilant in JK: PC", Greater Kashmir, May 23, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/May/24/forces-vigilant-in-jk-pc-57.asp>

encounter a police official said. The gunfight continued for long in which two militants were killed.⁵⁶ In another incident in north Kashmir's Sopore area, two militants were killed in an encounter with security forces. .⁵⁷

Reports noted that authorities have put top separatist leaders, including Hurriyat Conference (G) chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Hurriyat (M) chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and JKLF chairman Muhammad Yasin Malik, under house arrest. Geelani was scheduled to address a rally at Hazratbal, while Mirwaiz was scheduled to address Friday congregation at Jamia Masjid in old city and Malik was to address a gathering at Kangan.⁵⁸

In other violent incidents, two militants were killed and six houses gutted in a fierce encounter in Zachildara area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district. A top police official said following a tip off about the presence of militants, SOG along with the 21 RR laid siege of Ganai Mohalla in Laribal area of Zachildara and started house to house searches. According to a official the search party received fire from the militants who were hiding in a house.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, a LeT commander was killed and two of his associates injured during an encounter with forces in Poonch district. Acting on a tip-off, a joint team of 18 Rashtriya Rifles and police raided Soni-top forests in Bafilaiz-Deraki-Gali belt.⁶⁰

North East India

- **Arunachal Pradesh's Tirap district hit by turf war between NSCN factions; 53 years of AFSPA completed in Northeast; DHD (J) flays governments' partisan role; Blast in Manipur; Explosives recovered**

According to reports, Arunachal Pradesh's Tirap district has been hit by a turf war between Khaplang (K) and Issac-Muviah (IM) factions of the NSCN that has left one insurgent dead. According to police sources, a cadre of NSCN-K was killed in a shootout between the rival factions on at Chasa village. Both the rival factions of the NSCN have been waging a war against each other to gain control over the district and its resources due to the porous borders with Myanmar.⁶¹

⁵⁶ "2 militants killed in Keller gunfight: Police", *Greater Kashmir*, May 26, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/May/27/2-militants-killed-in-keller-gunfight-police-78.asp>

⁵⁷ "2 militants killed in Sopore gunfight", *Greater Kashmir*, May 27, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/ShowStoryLatest.asp?NewsID=2302>

⁵⁸ "Geelani, Umar, Malik under house arrest", *Greater Kashmir*, May 27, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/May/28/geelani-umar-malik-under-house-arrest-46.asp>

⁵⁹ "2 militants killed in Kupwara gunfight", *Greater Kashmir*, May 26, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/May/26/2-militants-killed-in-kupwara-gunfight-73.asp>

⁶⁰ "Militant killed, 2 hurt in encounter", *Greater Kashmir*, May 24, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/May/25/militant-killed-2-hurt-in-encounter-49.asp>

⁶¹ "Turf war between NSCN factions in Tirap", *Assam Tribune*, May 27, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may2711/at023>

AFSPA completed 53 years in the North East. It was promulgated in the North East as an Ordinance on May 22, 1958.⁶²

Hitting out against the government, the Dima Haram Daogah (J) said that the outfit felt deprived for the partisan role played by the Central and State Governments. The DHD(J) also alleged that the government played a partisan role and the outfit was feeling betrayed. The main issue was that preferential treatment was given to the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA). The DHD(J) said that it was feeling deceived because of the fact that the commander in chief of the outfit was arrested even after surrender of arms, while, leaders of other outfits were freed even before arms surrender.⁶³

In another incident, bomb explosions were reported at two places in Manipur. However, there was no report of any casualty in the blasts. Barely 30 minutes after a blast was triggered close to Nongada residence of Manipur Agriculture Minister Ph Parijat in Imphal East district, a second powerful bomb exploded at M G avenue, just few metres from the City Police station complex in the heart of Imphal town.⁶⁴

In other developments, Customs sleuths recovered 374 gelatin sticks, 800 detonators and 500 metres of fuse wire, meant to be taken to Myanmar, from the Polo parking lot in Shillong. The explosives were found in two bags left abandoned there.⁶⁵

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **India-Africa Summit: Renewed engagement for UN reforms; UN Security Council stresses elections for Somalia; UNSC welcomes arrest of fugitives responsible for crimes in Balkans and Rwanda**

The Africa – India Summit declaration signed during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s visit to Africa dealt with UN reforms among other issues. This renewed engagement could be an accelerated process of reforms at the UN. The Summit resolutions included Africa taking note of

⁶² “AFSPA completes 53 years in North East”, *Assam Tribune*, May 24, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may2511/oth05>

⁶³ “DHD (J) flays Govt’s Partisan Role”, *Assam Tribune*, May 28, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may2911/city05s>

⁶⁴ “Bomb blasts in Manipur, no casualty”, *Assam Tribune*, May 23, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may2411/oth06>

⁶⁵ “Explosives Recovered”, *The Sentinel*, May 27, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/meghalaya/story.php?sec=2&subsec=8&id=76149&dtP=2011-05-28&ppr=1#76149>

India's position and aspirations to become "a permanent member with full rights" in an expanded UN Security Council.⁶⁶ The Summit also emphasized the need for countries to 'exert utmost effort on UN Security Council reform during the current session of the UN General Assembly'.⁶⁷ Addressing a joint session of the Ethiopian Parliament Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said that the international community should continue with efforts to restore stability in Somalia. He also made a strong pitch to the UN to take the lead in evolving a comprehensive response to the threat of international piracy to ensure unhindered maritime trade.⁶⁸

In other developments, the Security Council stressed that a planned consultative meeting of Somalia's leadership should result in agreement on a schedule for elections in the country. It warned the Somali leaders that they would risk losing financial assistance if they fail to agree on how to conduct these elections.⁶⁹ The UNSC members also expressed their full support for the work of the African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and paid tribute to Ugandan and Burundian troops for their efforts to improve security for Somalis in Mogadishu. The Council also stressed the need to strengthen the Somali security forces and called for a comprehensive and collaborative campaign against maritime piracy off the Somali coast.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, the Security Council welcomed the arrest of two fugitives wanted by the UN tribunals set up to try those responsible for the worst crimes committed during the Balkans conflict of the 1990s and the Rwanda genocide of 1994. The Security Council congratulated the Serbian and the DRC authorities for these arrests.⁷¹

⁶⁶ "Africa to back Indian push for U.N. reform in September", *The Hindu*, May 24, 2011 at <http://www.hindu.com/2011/05/24/stories/2011052465071200.htm>

⁶⁷ "India, Africa call for end to Libya bombing", *The Hindu*, May 26, 2011 at www.hindu.com/2011/05/26/stories/2011052661970800.htm

⁶⁸ "India asks U.N. to take the lead in combating international piracy", *The Hindu*, May 26, 2011 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2050733.ece>

⁶⁹ "Security Council says bickering Somali leaders risk losing international support", *The Washington Post*, May 26, 2011 at http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/security-council-says-bickering-somali-leaders-risk-losing-international-support/2011/05/26/AG7tvpBH_story.html

⁷⁰ "Somali's leaders must agree on way forward for peace process – Security Council", *UN News Centre*, May 26, 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38519&Cr=somali&Cr1=>

⁷¹ "Security Council welcomes arrest of fugitives sought for crimes in the Balkans, Rwanda", *UN News Centre*, May 27, 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38538&Cr=war+crimes&Cr1=>