

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Bangladesh

- **Bangladesh plans up gradation of land transport network to boost cross-border trade; Indian Army Chief handed over cannons to Bangladesh Army; United Kingdom assures Bangladesh of increasing its contribution to climate change resilience fund; Dalai Lama meets with Bangladesh's Permanent Representative to the UN**

According to reports, the Bangladesh Government has planned to construct and upgrade 2,000 kilometres of land transport network to boost cross-border trade and establish greater connectivity across South Asia.¹

In another development, visiting Indian Army Chief Gen Vijay Kumar Singh handed over two cannons, used during the liberation war against Pakistan occupation forces, to Bangladesh army on June 23.²

Meanwhile, the United Kingdom has assured Bangladesh of increasing its contribution to climate change resilience fund to 150 million pounds from the current 75 million pounds. The assurance was given by Alan Duncan, UK minister of state for international development, in a meeting with Bangladesh State Minister for Environment and Forests Hasan Mahmud at his secretariat office on June 22, 2011.³

In other developments, Tibet's spiritual leader Dalai Lama met Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the UN Dr AKA Momen in Australia. During the meeting the spiritual leader appreciated Bangladesh's role to achieve and sustain global peace.⁴

Sri Lanka

- **Concrete houses with water and toilet facilities for Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu; The High Commissioner for Canada meets with Central Province CM; Kingdom of Bahrain's**

¹ "Govt to take up \$6.45b connectivity projects", *The Daily Star*, June 24, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=191346>

² "Indian army chief hands over 2 cannons", *The Daily Star*, June 24, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=191268>

³ "UK assures Bangladesh of 150m pounds to climate fund", *The Daily Star*, June 23, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=191144>

⁴ "Dalai Lama praises Dhaka's role in peace", *The Daily Star*, June 25, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=191394>

Finance Minister meets with President Rajapaksa; Secretary General of the SAARC made a courtesy call on Minister of External Affairs; Goodwill gift from Bangladesh

Reportedly, Sri Lankan refugees in seven camps in Tamil Nadu would soon get concrete houses near their camps. 977 families from Sri Lanka would be benefited under this special scheme. Each beneficiary will get 300 square feet of concrete house with drinking water and toilet facilities.⁵

The High Commissioner for Canada Bruce Levy met Central Province Chief Minister Sarath Ekanayake at his office at Pallekelle Central Provincial Council Complex to discuss the exchange of tourist prospects and environmental issues and how best Canada and the Central Province could collaborate on these matters.⁶ While, Kingdom of Bahrain Finance Minister Shiek Ahmad Bin Mahamed met President Mahinda Rajapaksa at Temple Trees on June 24 and discussed trade related issues between the two countries.⁷

Reports noted that the new Secretary General of the South Asian Association for Regional Co operation (SAARC) Mrs Fathimath Dhiyana Saeed, made a courtesy call on Minister of External Affairs G.L. Peiris, at his Ministry.⁸

In other developments, Bangladesh High Commissioner in Sri Lanka H.E. Mahbub uz Zaman handed over a consignment containing six metric tonnes of medicine valued at about Rs. 8 million to Health Minister of Government of Sri Lanka Maithripala Sirisena as a goodwill gift from the Bangladesh Government.⁹

Maldives

- **President Nasheed meets with German Parliamentarians; Maldivian government aims to bring forth 2000 trained seamen; Maldives Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MCCI) invites Pakistani investors; Maldives to receive funding for renewable energy investments**

President Mohamed Nasheed met with the visiting German Parliamentarian delegation and discussed with them on the Maldives' political, social, economic and environmental issues as well as strengthening relations between the Maldives and Germany.¹⁰

⁵ "Concrete houses for Lankan refugees", *The Daily Mirror*, June 20, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/47463.html>.

⁶ "Canadian High Commissioner meets Chief Minister", *The Daily Mirror*, June 25, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/48122.html>.

⁷ "Bahrain Finance Minister meets President", *The Daily Mirror*, June 25, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/48095.html>.

⁸ "SAARC Sec-Gen meets External Affairs Minister", *The Daily Mirror*, June 25, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/48081.html>.

⁹ "Bangladesh gifts medicines to Sri Lanka", *The Daily Mirror*, June 23, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/47887.html>.

¹⁰ "President Meets the Delegation of German Lawmakers", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, June 20, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5488>

According to reports, speaking at a ceremony held at Dharubaaruge to mark the Seamen's Day, President Nasheed expressed his government's aim to train 150 officers and 500 crews and bring forth 2000 trained seamen in place of the 650 seamen already in service.¹¹

Meanwhile, Maldives Chamber of Commerce & Industry has invited Pakistani entrepreneurs to invest in the island nation's tourism, construction, and food sector.¹²

In other developments, the Maldives has been selected as one of the six pilot countries to receive funding for financing renewable energy investments in the country under the Scaling up Renewable Energy Programme (SREP) of the Climate Investment Funds (CIF).¹³

B. East Asia

South Korea

- **South Korea and the United States reiterate the necessity of inter Korea talks before the resumption of the six-party talks**

During a recent talk between US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and South Korean Foreign Minister Kim Sung-hwan, both the leaders reiterated the necessity of an improved relationship between the two Koreas before the resumption of the Six Party Talks to discuss North Korea's denuclearization issue. According to Kim, Pyongyang needs to demonstrate its sincerity towards denuclearization through concrete actions. The recent talks seem to have put to rest earlier suggestion that Beijing might be able to persuade Seoul and Washington in resuming the stalled Six-Party Talks even before the North agrees to hold bilateral talks with the South. Hillary Clinton further mentioned that although a US team recently visited North Korea to assess the latter's food crisis situation, Washington still remains indecisive on resuming food aid to the North. Many South Korean officials however accuse North Korea of amassing food before going for another nuclear test.¹⁴

¹¹ "Government aims to train 2,000 seamen in two years: President", *Haveeru*, June 26, 2011 at <http://www.haveeru.com.mv/english/details/37017>

¹² "Pak investors urged to tap opportunities in Maldives", *The News*, June 26, 2011 at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=54470&Cat=3&dt=6/26/2011>

¹³ "CIF to fund renewable energy investments in Maldives", *Haveeru*, June 25, 2011 at <http://www.haveeru.com.mv/english/details/36975>

¹⁴ "US, South Korea to keep pressure on Pyongyang", *Asahi Shimbun*, June 25, 2011 at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201106250166.html>

C. Central Asia & Russia

Central Asia

- **Partner countries of the TAPI pipeline wrangle in price dispute; Kazakhstan's national welfare fund Samruk-Kazyna is planning to invest in the Kyrgyz economy; Kazakhstan signs deal with Russia on new satellite system and with France on cooperation in space industries; Roundtable on cross-border trade held in Kyrgyzstan; Tajik and Iranian business entrepreneurs' meet in Dushanbe**

Reports noted that talks between the four partner countries of the 1,043-mile Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline project were being held up over gas price proposals in the Philippine capital Manila, where the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is based. The ADB is willing to sponsor development of different stages of the project, which is expected to cost \$7.6 billion.¹⁵ The dispute has arisen regarding the setting of the rates – Turkmenistan wants to negotiate separate prices for gas with each buyer country, while the buyers prefer a single rate. The Gas Sales Purchase Agreement (GSPA) which is to be signed by all four by July 31 may not materialise due to the ongoing dispute. The other issues that have added on to the dispute is that both the seller (Turkmenistan) and buyers side disagree on who is to pay for the unused gas that remains in the pipeline. Moreover, India wants Turkmenistan to reduce the sulphur content in the gas. Afghanistan came up with a new demand to link transit fees to changing gas prices, which breaks a previous agreement between the buyers that envisioned transit fees set at a fixed price.¹⁶

According to reports, Kazakhstan's national welfare fund Samruk-Kazyna is planning to invest in the economy of its southern neighbour Kyrgyzstan. The joint investment fund will have \$100 million worth of capital. Samruk-Kazyna Deputy Chairman Aidan Karibzhanov recently met Kyrgyz politicians including Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev and First Deputy Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov to discuss the projects. Babanov suggested several projects in which Samruk-Kazyna should invest – to participate in construction of power transmission lines 'Datka-Kemin' wherein Kyrgyzstan can export electricity to south of Kazakhstan, in projects like HEP hydroelectric power construction and invest in banking sector.¹⁷ In the meanwhile KazTranzGas Director General Daniyar Berliba led the negotiations on gas deliveries as part of a Kazakh delegation, which includes top-level managers from the Kazakh national welfare fund Samruk-Kazyna. The Kazakh state company that oversees the transportation of gas, KazTranzGas, will invest \$12 million into the Kyrgyz gas sector to ensure gas deliveries to southern Kazakhstan. KazTranzGas signed a document of cooperation with Kyrgyzgaz which is aimed at resolving the

¹⁵ "TAPI pipeline talks hit snag over gas prices", *Central Asia Newswire*, June 20, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Energy/TAPI-pipeline-talks-hit-snag-over-gas-prices/viewstory.aspx?id=4292>

¹⁶ -ibid-

¹⁷ "Samruk-Kazyna to invest in Kyrgyz projects", *Central Asia Newswire*, June 23, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Energy/Samruk-Kazyna-to-invest-in-Kyrgyz-projects/viewstory.aspx?id=4317>

situation in the gas supply in northern Kyrgyzstan and southern Kazakhstan. The \$12 million will go towards repairing equipment and hardware on the Kyrgyz gas transport pipelines.¹⁸

In another development, Kazakhstan's National Center of Space Communications (RTSKS) and Russian Information Satellite Systems-Reshetnev Company on 21st June signed a deal in France to build the KazSat3 satellite. This new satellite system will have a broad range of civil uses that will include surveillance of natural resources and agriculture as well as mapping and support for natural disaster response.¹⁹ Kazakhstan's National Space Agency delegation, headed by its chief Talgat Musabayev, was in the French capital to forge ahead on Kazakh-French cooperation in their space industries. The French space hardware and services supplier agreed in 2009 to build and launch two Earth observation satellites and construct a satellite control center in Kazakhstan in a \$336 million deal. These two satellites have a launch date set for 2014.²⁰

Reports noted that a roundtable was held in the last week to explore ways of improving cross-border trade between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The volatile southern regions of Kyrgyzstan bordering Uzbekistan depend on an unhindered flow of goods and services to provide sustainable economic and social development and the strengthening of inter-ethnic relations.²¹ The participants were drawn from the state and regional bodies, business associations and locally-based international groups. The event adopted a series of recommendations that included setting up of logistical trade centers and the legalization of informal payments.²² It was hosted by Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and International Business Council (IBC) wherein the latter represents more than 100 local and foreign businesses operating in Kyrgyzstan. The council represents over \$1 billion worth of investments in the republic.²³

In other developments, Tajik Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade Saidrahmon Nazriyev hosted a business forum for Tajik and Iranian business entrepreneurs at the Ministry for Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) in Dushanbe. They discussed on economic cooperation and to forge deals on the same. This also included discussion on expansion for further cooperation in pharmaceuticals and health care. Several agreements were signed between the Tajik Ministry of Health and pharmaceutical corporations.²⁴

¹⁸ "KazTranzGas to invest \$12M in Kyrgyz gas sector", *Central Asia Newswire*, June 24, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Energy/KazTranzGas-to-invest-12M-in-Kyrgyz-gas-sector/viewstory.aspx?id=4326>

¹⁹ "Kazakhstan inks KazSat3 agreement with Russian company", *Central Asia Newswire*, June 21, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Kazakhstan-inks-KazSat3-agreement-with-Russian-company/viewstory.aspx?id=4299>

²⁰ -ibid-

²¹ "IBC, OSCE host roundtable on cross-border trade in south Kyrgyzstan", *Central Asia Newswire*, June 24, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kyrgyzstan/IBC-OSCE-host-roundtable-on-cross-border-trade-in-south-Kyrgyzstan/viewstory.aspx?id=4331>

²² -ibid-

²³ -ibid-

²⁴ "Dushanbe hosts Tajik-Iranian business forum", *Central Asia Newswire*, June 24, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Tajikistan/Dushanbe-hosts-Tajik-Iranian-business-forum/viewstory.aspx?id=4325>

Russia

- **Russia to lift EU vegetables ban; Russia may soon start talks on CERN membership; Russia ratifies extension of military base deal in Armenia; MIT to help set up Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology; Russia has criticized US Navy manoeuvres near Georgia; Latvia could seek NATO support over Mistral threat; Russia has joined EU's nuclear stress tests; Russia has blocked the release of Iran report at the UN; Bulava missile test launches to resume from June 28th; Medvedev has told Duma to cut threshold to 5%; Belarus to sell gas pipelines to Russia; Russian billionaire elected head of pro-business political party**

The European Commission has announced that Russia has agreed to lift a ban on EU vegetables imposed over a recent E. coli outbreak in Europe. Russian authorities signed the agreement on June 22 during a visit by EU Health Commissioner John Dalli, who was dispatched by the European Union's executive arm to convince Moscow to make good on a pledge to lift the ban. The commission said each EU state exporting fresh vegetables to Russia will have to certify — for a limited period — the origin of the produce and the absence of the E. coli strain responsible for the outbreak in northern Germany. The certification system for fresh vegetables will be in force until 10 days have elapsed following the last reported human case linked to the E. coli outbreak. The EU exported about \$862 million of vegetables to Russia last year.²⁵

According to reports, talks on Russia's associate membership in the European Center for Nuclear Research (CERN) could begin in the next few months. The 56-year-old CERN, which operates the \$5.6 billion international Large Hadron Collider (LHC) project, has recently opened membership to non-EU countries through the associate member status. Russia, which currently has an observer status along with India, Japan, Turkey and the United States, has made significant contributions to research at CERN and should have greater access to the equipment and the data produced. Israel was an observer until it was granted associate membership in April. Although CERN had yet to determine the conditions for associate membership, but it should not take more than a few months. It would be worth noting that founded in 1954 by 12 European countries with the aim of restoring the continent's role in physics research after the devastation of World War II, CERN currently has 20 members. But it also has nearly 8,000 scientists from around 80 countries working in or with its projects. Russia alone has provided 700 physicists and engineers to take part in the LHC project, which aims to recreate the conditions that existed immediately after Big Bang at the beginning of the universe 13.7 billion years ago.²⁶

Reports noted that the Russian Federation Council, the upper chamber of the parliament has ratified a protocol on extending Russia's use of a military base in Armenia. In 2010, Russia and Armenia signed amendments to a 1995 bilateral treaty extending Russia's use of the 102nd Military Base in Gyumri near Armenia's border with Turkey through 2044. The protocol stipulates that the

²⁵ "Russia to lift EU vegetables ban", Radio Free Europe, June 22, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/russia_lifts_eu_vegetable_ban/24243096.html

²⁶ "Russia may soon start talks on CERN membership", Ria Novosti, June 22, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/science/20110622/164775879.html>

term will be automatically extended every five years unless one of the parties notifies the other about the annulment of the treaty six months in advance. The base is under the command of Russia's North Caucasus Military District and is part of the CIS integrated air defense system. There are around 5,000 personnel at the base, as well as S-300 surface-to-air missile systems and MiG-29 fighters. Russia has repeatedly said that the presence of its base in the Central Asian republic does not violate any international agreements or upset the balance of forces in the region.²⁷

Meanwhile, Russia has criticized in the strongest possible terms the maneuvers of American USS Monterey cruiser carrying the AEGIS air defense system near the Georgian coast on the Black Sea. The U.S. warship arrived for joint exercises with Georgia as part of the Phased Adaptive Approach program designed to shape the European segment of the U.S.-led project to build a global missile defense system. Russia has been deeply concerned over U.S. plans to deploy a European air defense system near the Russian borders, saying it threatened its national security. Washington said it needed the system as a shield against possible threats from Iran or North Korea. Relations between Russia and Georgia have been complicated in the past decade. Russia has traditionally supported Georgia's breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, while Georgia has been looking to join NATO. In 2008, Russia and Georgia fought a five-day war over the two breakaway Georgian republics, after which Russia recognized them both as being independent states.²⁸

However, reports noted that Latvia will ask NATO for support if Russia deploys French-built Mistral warships in the Baltic Sea because it would change the balance of forces in the region. Russia and France signed last Friday a \$1.7 billion (1.2 bln euro) contract on two French-built Mistral class amphibious assault ships for the Russian Navy, which includes the transfer of sensitive technologies. Latvia, a former Soviet republic, joined the 28-member bloc together with other Baltic states in 2004. Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov said that it was too early to determine the future deployment of the warships, as the first ship will be delivered to Russia in 2014 and the second in 2015. A Mistral class ship is capable of carrying 16 helicopters, four landing vessels, 70 armored vehicles, and 450 personnel. The Russian military insists that the use of Mistral class ships will significantly increase the effectiveness of peacekeeping and humanitarian operations²⁹.

According to reports, Russia and Ukraine are among seven nations that will join an EU nuclear stress test program to examine whether nuclear power plants can withstand accidents and disasters. The 27 EU nations agreed on such a program last month and had called on other countries to join the plan. But the announcement late last week was a first big breakthrough to expand the program. Under the tests, "experts from other countries will evaluate the assessment

²⁷ "Russia ratifies extension of military base deal in Armenia", Ria Novosti, June 22, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110622/164761012.html

²⁸ "Russia blasts US Navy maneuvers near Georgia", RIA Novosti, June 21, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20110621/164752516.html>

²⁹ "Latvia says could seek NATO support over Mistral threat", RIA Novosti, June 22, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110622/164767283.html

carried out by their national experts,” the EU said in a statement. Armenia, Belarus, Croatia, Switzerland and Turkey are the other nations joining the program.³⁰

Reports noted that Russia has blocked the publication of a UN report detailing Iran’s alleged sanctions violations despite U.S., British and French calls for its release. The report, submitted to the Security Council’s Iran sanctions committee by an independent panel of experts, says Tehran has been breaking a UN arms embargo by shipping weapons to Syria, Western diplomats said. But Russian Deputy Ambassador Alexander Pankin gave no indication that Moscow would allow the document to be published.³¹

According to reports, a new test launch of Russia’s troubled Bulava missile will be staged on June 28. Despite several previous failures, officially blamed on manufacturing defects, the Russian military has insisted that there is no alternative to the Bulava and pledged to continue testing the missile until it is ready for service with the Navy. The launch will take place from a standard carrier, the Yuri Dolgoruky nuclear submarine, in the Barents Sea. Russia is planning to conduct at least four Bulava test launches this year and deploy the missile on its new Borey class strategic submarines. The Bulava missile carries up to 10 MIRV warheads and has a range of over 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles). The Russian military expects the Bulava, along with Topol-M land-based ballistic missiles, to become the core of Russia’s nuclear triad³².

On the domestic front, President Dmitry Medvedev has submitted a bill to the State Duma that would return the threshold to win Duma seats to 5 percent from the current 7 percent and indications are rife that it may be cut even further. “All political forces that have significant popular support should be represented in the parliament,” Medvedev told Moskovskiye Novosti. But opposition parties said the proposed change was only cosmetic because it would not apply to Duma elections this year but only to the next vote in 2016.³³

In other developments, the Belarusian government has said that it is prepared to sell its entire stake in its natural gas pipelines to Russia’s Gazprom for \$2.5 billion. Belarusian First Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Semashko is in Moscow to complete the deal to sell its remaining 50 percent in Beltransgaz. Gazprom already owns 50 percent of Beltransgaz, which conducts around 20 percent of Gazprom’s gas exports to Europe. Belarus is currently in its worst economic crisis in its post-Soviet history.³⁴ While another report noted that Russian tycoon Mikhail Prokhorov, 46,

³⁰ “Russia joins EU’s nuclear stress tests”, The Moscow Times, June 27, 2011, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-joins-eus-nuclear-stress-tests/439485.html>

³¹ “Russia blocks release of Iran report”, The Moscow Times, June 27, 2011, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-blocks-release-of-iran-report/439482.html>

³² “Bulava launches to resume June 28- source”, RIA Novosti, June 26, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110626/164850804.html

³³ Krainova, N, “Medvedev tells Duma to cut threshold to 5%”, The Moscow Times, June 27, 2011, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/medvedev-tells-duma-to-cut-threshold-to-5/439491.html>

³⁴ “Belarus to sell gas pipelines to Russia”, Radio Free Europe, June 23, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/belarus_to_sell_gas_pipelines_to_russia/24244727.html

has been elected to lead the pro-business Russian political party Right Cause. Prokhorov is one of Russia's richest men and owns a U.S. professional basketball team. He heads the Onexim Group, an investment firm that has interests in mining, banking and other industries.³⁵

D. West Asia

Iran

- **Iran invites IAEA chief to visit country's nuclear sites; Iranian MPs withdraw impeachment motion against Foreign Minister Salehi after he accepts the resignation of the newly appointed deputy foreign minister Malekzadeh; EU included three names of Iranian Guards chief in Syria sanctions; Iran's supreme leader stressed that there will be no "real security" in Afghanistan as long as US forces remain there**

Iran's nuclear energy chief Fereydoun Abbasi-Davani stated that he had held "very good" and "transparent" talks with the head of the UN atomic agency and had invited him to visit the state's nuclear facilities. The rare meeting in Vienna between Fereydoun Abbasi-Davani and Director General Yukiya Amano of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) follows increasingly strained ties between Tehran and the UN body over the last year. Iran has rebuffed IAEA appeals for information and access to help clarify allegations of military-linked nuclear work. Abbasi-Davani, head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, said the two sides pledged to resolve their problems through more dialogue in future. Iran's refusal to halt enrichment has led to four rounds of UN sanctions on the major oil producer, as well tighter US and European Union restrictions.³⁶

Reports noted that Iranian MPs decided to withdraw the motion to impeach Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi after Salehi accepted the resignation of the newly appointed deputy foreign minister for administrative and financial affairs, Mohammad Sharif Malekzadeh. Parliamentarians started a campaign to impeach Salehi if he did not dismiss Malekzadeh. Some of the Majlis representatives said Malekzadeh is allied with the deviant current, which is associated with Esfandiar Rahim Mashaii. An impeachment motion, had also signed by 33 MPs, was submitted to the Majlis Presiding Board. However, the situation changed when Malekzadeh resigned.³⁷

According to reports, the European Union published extended sanctions on Syria recently that includes the names of three commanders of Iran's Revolutionary Guard accused of supporting

³⁵ "Russian billionaire elected head of pro-business political party", VOA News, June 25, 2011, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/europe/Russian-Billionaire-Elected-Head-of-Pro-Business-Political-Party-124538139.html>

³⁶ "Iran invites UN atom chief to see nuclear sites," *Khaleej Times*, June 21, 2011, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle09.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/June/middleeast_June597.xml§ion=middleeast

³⁷ "Salehi avoids impeachment through Malekzadeh resignation," *Mehr News*, June 21, 2011, at <http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1341143>

Syrian President Bashar Al Assad's suppression of dissent. The list, published in the European Union's Official Journal, also included a Syrian property firm, an investment fund and two other enterprises accused of funding Assad's government. According to the names given in the Official Journal, the Iranians were Major-General Qasem Soleimani and Brigadier Commander Mohammad Ali Jafari of the Revolutionary Guard, and the Guard's deputy commander for intelligence, Hossein Taeb.³⁸

In another development, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has said as long as US forces remain in Afghanistan there will be no "real security" in the country. He also added that "Americans want to have permanent bases in Afghanistan and this is dangerous because the real security will not be established as long as the American military forces are present in Afghanistan." His statements came during the meeting with Afghan president Hamid Karzai in Tehran. He also stated that in comparison to years ago the US has been growing weaker both at home and abroad and Washington is trying to compensate this through maintaining its presence in the region. Elsewhere in his remarks, he said Tehran is ready to cooperate with Kabul to reconstruct Afghanistan and it will share its experience with the country in different areas.³⁹

Iraq

● Iranian First Vice President Mohammad-Reza Rahimi to visit Iraq and plan to sign six MoUs; 40 people killed in bomb blasts in Baghdad

Reports noted that Iranian First Vice President Mohammad-Reza Rahimi will visit Iraq on July 6 to participate in the Iran-Iraq Joint Supreme Economic Committee, Foreign Minister Ali-Akbar Salehi said. Salehi added that, "the two countries have reached agreement for signing 4 memorandums of understanding and 2 other items are also being discussed which is hoped to be finalized by the mentioned date." Talking in a joint press conference with his Iraqi counterpart Hoshyar Zebari, Salehi put the two countries' current annual trade value at \$4-5 billion. The aim of forming the Iran-Iraq Joint Supreme Economic Committee is to expand economic relations between the two countries.⁴⁰

In a tragic development, four bombs ripped through Baghdad killing at least 40 people in the worst violence the capital has seen in months, Iraqi officials said. An American civilian aid specialist working to improve education in Iraq was killed in a separate attack. The first three bombs went off in quick succession in a southwestern Baghdad neighborhood shortly after 7 p.m. One targeted a Shiite mosque, another exploded just outside a popular market, while the third went off inside the market where people were doing their evening shopping ahead of the Muslim weekend, Iraqi

³⁸ "EU names Iranian Guard chiefs in Syria sanctions," *Khaleej Times*, June 24, 2011, http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle09.aspx?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/June/middleeast_June661.xml§ion=middleeast

³⁹ "No security as long as U.S. forces stay in Afghanistan, Leader tells Karzai," *Tehran Times*, June 26, 2011, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=243061

⁴⁰ "Iran, Iraq plan to sign 6 economic MOUs," *Mehr News*, June 21, 2011, at <http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1341002>

police officials said. About an hour later, a parked car bomb targeting a police patrol killed six people, including one policeman and five bystanders in a different neighborhood in southwestern Baghdad, said hospital officials. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but Sunni extremists such as al-Qaida in Iraq generally tend to target Shiite mosques and neighborhoods and Iraqi security forces.⁴¹

Syria

- **Syrian President discuss domestic developments with the visiting delegation of Syrian community in USA; Number of rallies held in Syria to show support for reforms led by President; Syria and Russia Friendship Associations discuss enhancing bilateral relations**

According to reports, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad discussed with a delegation of the Syrian community in the USA about the latest events being witnessed in Syria in last couple of months, and the misleading media campaign facing the country which tries to falsify facts and to distort reality. They also discussed the role of the Syrian community in the countries of expatriation in explaining what is happening and conveying the true image abroad. In response, members of the community expressed full support to the reform process and stressed their firm belonging to their homeland.⁴²

In another development, a large number of Syrians marched towards al-Hijaz Square in Damascus to show their support for the reforms led by President Bashar al-Assad and to emphasis national unity. The participants also rejected the conspiracy against Syria, and voiced their support for the army and security forces in their efforts to preserve security and protect property. Further, the participants said that the march was a spontaneous action to show solidarity in reaction to external conspiracy targeting Syria's national stance.⁴³ Other places where rallies were organized include National Museum Square in Tartous governorate and al-Ziba village in Hasaka governorate.

In other developments, the Chairmen of the associations of Syrian and Russian friendship discussed means of enhancing the bilateral relations between Syria and Russia and the role of the two associations in pushing them forward on all levels, in addition to strengthening the friendship ties between the two countries' people and governments. The meeting also appreciated Russia's stance towards the issues of the region and its rejection of all forms of foreign interference in Syria's internal affairs, stressing that Syria is moving forward in the process of reforms to meet the aspirations of the citizens.⁴⁴

⁴¹ "Blasts rip through western Baghdad, killing 40," *Khaleej Times*, June 24, 2011, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/June/middleeast_June656.xml§ion=middleeast

⁴² "President al-Assad, Delegation of Syrian Community in USA Discuss Events in Syria, Misleading Media Campaign", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, June 27, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/337/2011/06/27/354915.htm>

⁴³ "Hundreds March to Al-Hijaz Square to Show Support for Reform Project Led by President al-Assad", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, June 27, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/337/2011/06/27/354968.htm>

⁴⁴ "Syria, Russia Discuss Enhancing Bilateral Relations and Means of Enhancing them", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, June 26, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2011/06/26/354872.htm>

Libya

- **The African Union panel welcomes Gadhafi's decision to stay out of peace talks; NATO strikes kill fifteen more civilians in al-Brega; France defends European Mission in Libya**

Reports noted that after talks in Pretoria, the African Union panel on Libya announced that the African leaders welcomed Muammar Gadhafi's decision to stay out of negotiations to end Libya's four-month conflict. Separately, fighting was continuing between the rebel and government forces on the plains below the rebel enclave in the Nafusa Mountains, southwest of Tripoli. Rebel commanders have informed that the fighting centred on Bir Al Ghanam, a strategic point on road to the Libyan capital.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, according to Libyan government officials, NATO missile strikes in al-Brega have resulted in killing of 15 civilians and wounded 20 more. The report referred to a NATO "war of extermination" and "crimes against humanity" in Libya. In response, NATO said that it was unaware of the deaths reported by Libyan state media and clarified that its missiles hit clearly identified military targets.⁴⁶

In another development, France has rejected U.S. Defense Secretary's criticism of Europe's performance in the NATO operation against Libyan leader Muammar Al Qathafi. French President Nicolas Sarkozy has opposed the outgoing U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates for his remarks criticising EU nations for lacking military muscle. Earlier, Robert Gates remarked that the Libyan campaign had exposed limitations.⁴⁷

Egypt

- **Amnesty International demand justice for victims in Egypt revolution; Clashes between pro and anti-Mubarak demonstrators in Cairo turned violent**

According to reports, the Secretary General of Amnesty International Salil Shetty has opined that Egypt cannot move forward until victims of human rights violations, before and after the January 25 revolution, receive justice. He told reporters in Cairo that it will be "very difficult to move forward" if Egyptian victims of human rights violations do not feel that "accountability and compensation" have been adequately applied.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ "Qadhafi to stay out of Libya peace talks - AU panel", *The Jordan Times*, June 27, 2011 at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=38872>

⁴⁶ "NATO Strikes Kill 15 More Civilians, Libya says", *The Tripoli Post*, June 25, 2011 at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=6258>

⁴⁷ "French President Defends Europeans' Mission in Libya", *The Tripoli Post*, June 25, 2011 at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=6255>

⁴⁸ Borkan, Brett (2011), "Egypt can't move forward without justice, says Amnesty sec-gen", *The Daily News Egypt*, June 26, 2011 at <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/human-a-civil-rights/egypt-cant-move-forward-without-justice-says-amnesty-sec-gen.html>

In another development, reports noted that hundreds of supporters of former president Hosni Mubarak clashed with his opponents in central Cairo in which dozens were injured and some cars were damaged. The pro-Mubarak demonstrators were demanding the immediate release of the former president who is in custody on charges of killing anti-regime protesters.⁴⁹

Israel

- **Egypt remands Israeli spy suspect in custody; Israel begins rerouting of fencing near Bilin**

Egypt remanded Ilan Grapel, an alleged Israeli spy suspect and a US-Israeli joint citizen who was arrested in a Cairo hotel on June 12, in custody for 15 days for the “needs of the investigation”. Grapel has been accused of sedition and inciting Egyptians to clash with the country’s interim military leadership. However, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman denied he was a spy.⁵⁰

According to Israel Army statement, Israel began rerouting the fence around the West Bank village of Bilin, the centre of protests against Israel’s controversial separation barrier. “The new security fence enlarges the territory belonging to Palestinians in the area as the barrier’s route will now be moved away from the village and closer to a nearby Israeli settlement, in line with a 2007 Supreme Court ruling that said it significantly impinged on the property rights of Palestinian landowners”, the statement added.⁵¹

Palestine

- **US peace envoy urges Israel and Palestinians to pursue a peace accord; President Abbas to pursue UN statehood bid**

Reports noted that while speaking at the third annual Israeli Presidential Conference in Jerusalem, US peace envoy Dennis Ross urged Israelis and Palestinians to pursue a peace accord, saying the greatest risk to the parties was to stall. He made this observation while explaining President Barack Obama’s vision of two states for two peoples, based on the lines before the 1967 Mideast war with mutually agreed land frontiers. Further, Ross warned that with the region in flux and Palestinians threatening to seek independence unilaterally, time was short.⁵²

While, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said at a meeting of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Fateh Party in the West Bank city of Ramallah that since peace talks with Israel have not been renewed, the Palestinians would pursue their unilateral bid for recognition by the

⁴⁹ “Dozens injured in Cairo pro-Mubarak protests”, *The Daily News Egypt*, June 26, 2011 at <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/egypt/dozens-injured-in-cairo-pro-mubarak-protests.html>

⁵⁰ “Egypt remands Israeli spy suspect in custody”, *The Daily News Egypt*, June 26, 2011 at <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/other-top-stories/egypt-remands-israeli-spy-suspect-in-custody.html>

⁵¹ “Israel begins rerouting barrier at protest site”, *The Jordan Times*, June 27, 2011 at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=38874>

⁵² “US envoy urges Israel, Palestinians to talk now”, *The Jordan Times*, June 24, 2011 at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=38806>

United Nations in September. Separately, while many states, including France and Britain, have indicated that they would support the bid, it has faced strong opposition from Israel, the US and Germany, who argued any progress towards a Palestinian state must be made through a negotiated agreement. In response, Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said that granting UN membership to a Palestinian state could actually help bring the sides back to the negotiating table.⁵³

Jordan

- **Jordan planning to produce Uranium Oxide by 2020**

According to the Jordanian Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Khaled Toukan, Jordan is planning to produce uranium oxide, better known as yellowcake, by the end of the decade. This yellowcake, a key component in nuclear fuel, would be mined at the site of planned excavations in the Kingdom's central region. Toukan added that to fuel its peaceful nuclear programme, the Kingdom would then send the yellow cake to a third party nation for enrichment.⁵⁴

E. USA

- **Egypt assures US Senators of good governance and stability**

According to reports, the United States expressed its concerns about the status of government in Egypt. This message was conveyed when the Egyptian leadership met with two US Senators Senator John McCain and Senator John Kerry. After talks with the leader of Egypt's ruling military council, Senator John McCain expressed confidence that the caretaker military rulers wanted to transfer powers to an elected government "as soon as possible."⁵⁵ While Senator Kerry said that he thought the military was "very anxious to get out of the business of governing, and they want to go back to doing what they were doing." Both the senators mentioned that it was in America's national interest to make sure that stability prevailed in Egypt.⁵⁶

II. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Gunfights left 2 militants dead; Home Minister arrived in Srinagar on a two day visit to**

⁵³ "Palestinians going ahead with UN statehood bid", *The Jordan Times*, June 27, 2011 at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=38881>

⁵⁴ Luck, Taylor (2011), "Jordan to produce yellowcake by 2020", *The Jordan Times*, June 24, 2011 at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=38804>

⁵⁵ "Egyptian Leader Assures McCain and Kerry on Transition" *The New York Times*, June 26, 2011 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/27/world/middleeast/27egypt.html?ref=politics>

⁵⁶ Ibid.

review security scenario in the valley; Grenade explosion leads to injuries; Profiling of released militants begin

According to reports, two militants were killed in separate encounters across the state. The militant was spotted by 36 Rashtriya Rifles near Razdan pass on Bandipora Gurez road in North Kashmir after which the militant retaliated triggering a gunfight and left the unidentified militant killed. Another incident occurred in Jammu's Poonch district in which a militant of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) was killed.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, Home Minister P. Chidambaram arrived in Srinagar on a two day visit to review security scenario in the valley. Chidambaram was accompanied by Director General of CRPF K. Vijay Kumar, BSF chief Raman Srivastava and other senior official of the ministry. The Home Minister met Governor N.N. Vohra at Raj Bhawan and discussed overall security situation arrangements for Amarnath Yatra, post Panchayat election issues and matters to public services.⁵⁸

Reports noted that six persons, including a policeman and a woman, were injured in a grenade explosion in the north Kashmir town of Sopore. The device exploded with a big bang near the gate of police station.⁵⁹

In other developments, police have started an intensive exercise of profiling released militants in some areas of north Kashmir. The police have issued detailed profiling forms carrying 25 queries regarding released militants in Baramulla, Sopore and Rafiabad areas.

The forms issued by the police asks released militants to give their details like code name (when he was active), residence, present occupation, Tanzeem (outfit), date of exfiltration, date of infiltration, recovery, FIR numbers, date of arrests and release, economic status and phone numbers. A police official said profiling is being carried out to ascertain the exact number of released militants in the areas.⁶⁰

North East India

- **National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) leader's death confirmed; ULFA chairman optimistic about peace talks; NSCN (IM)-Centre resume talks; Government orders probe into Dispur clash; Section 144 imposed in Guwahati**

Meghalaya Home Minister HDR Lyngdoh confirmed reports that outlawed National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) leader Derhasar has been killed in a shootout with the security forces.

⁵⁷ "2 militants killed in gunfights", *Greater Kashmir*, June 23, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Jun/24/2-militants-killed-in-gunfights-33.asp>

⁵⁸ "PC arrives in Srinagar", *Greater Kashmir*, June 20, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Jun/21/pc-arrives-in-srinagar-35.asp>

⁵⁹ "6 injured in Sopore grenade explosion", *Greater Kashmir*, June 24, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Jun/25/6-injured-in-sopore-grenade-explosion-38.asp>

⁶⁰ "Police profiling released militants", *Greater Kashmir*, June 26, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Jun/27/police-profiling-released-militants-56.asp>

Meanwhile, an alert has been sounded in the State. Derhasar was killed on Saturday along with his bodyguard Bwidha Gawri after security forces raided a hideout of NDFB and Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) rebels at Guresimram village in Meghalaya's East Garo Hills district. Police said the slain rebel was involved in terror activities in Assam.⁶¹

Reports noted that ULFA chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa sounded optimistic about the proposed peace talks with the Centre, and said that the talks would usher in peace and progress in the State.⁶² While, another report noted that the formal talks between the Government of India and NSCN-IM will resume in New Delhi this week. The former 'chief of the army staff' of the NSCN-IM's armed wing, Atem is not optimistic about the Government's frame. Meanwhile, it has been reported that leaders of NSCN-IM from Nagaland have been camping in New Delhi in the last few days to participate in the talks.⁶³

In other developments, reports noted that the government will order a probe into the clashes in Dispur area when a demonstration of the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) turned violent forcing the police to resort to force to deal with the situation.⁶⁴ While, Section 144 CrPC was imposed across the capital town soon after the arrest of Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) leader Akhil Gogoi from the Press Club when he was addressing a press meet. The move was aimed at preventing any untoward incident following the arrest with his supporters converging in the Pan Bazar police station where he was taken after arrest. Akhil had been arrested on account of being the main agitators of the Dispur clash.⁶⁵

III. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **UN General Assembly re-elects Ban Ki-moon for second term as the Secretary General; Security Council calls for a comprehensive strategy for Somalia; India ready to join international efforts to tackle piracy; UNSC calls upon parties to Darfur conflict to resolve differences**

The UN General Assembly unanimously agreed to appoint Ban Ki-moon to a second consecutive term as the Secretary General of the organization. Ban's second term will run from January 1, 2012

⁶¹ "Meghalaya confirms rebel leader's death", *The Assam Tribune*, June 21, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun2111/at044>

⁶² "Arabinda optimistic about peace talks", *The Assam Tribune*, June 20, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun2111/city07>

⁶³ "NSCN(IM)-Centre talks resume today", *The Assam Tribune*, June 20, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun2111/oth06>

⁶⁴ "Govt. orders probe into Dispur clash", *The Assam Tribune*, June 22, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun2311/state03>

⁶⁵ 'Sec 144 imposed in Guwahati after Akhil arrest', *The Assam Tribune*, June 24, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun2411/at013>

to December 31, 2016. The decision followed the Security Council's recommendation to re-elect him.⁶⁶

The Security Council reiterated the need for a comprehensive and inclusive strategy to encourage the restoration of peace and stability in Somalia. The Council also stressed that the peace agreement signed in Djibouti in 2008 remains the basis for resolving the conflict in the country. It also urged the country's Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) to build broad-based representative institutions through an inclusive political process while ensuring the participation of women in public life.⁶⁷

According to reports, India has expressed its readiness to join any international efforts to tackle the threat of piracy and armed robbery at sea. India's Permanent Representative Hardeep Singh Puri said "India has a strong and abiding interest in ensuring the security of maritime traffic off the Somali coast and the Gulf of Aden". He also emphasized that with the increased presence of international naval forces off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, pirates have moved to other areas and increased pirate activity has been witnessed in the larger Indian Ocean area.⁶⁸

In other developments, the Security Council called upon all parties to the Darfur conflict to reach an agreement based on the Doha Document for Peace. The Council members urged the parties to resolve their differences and make every effort to reach a permanent ceasefire and comprehensive peace agreement as soon as possible.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ "General Assembly appoints Ban Ki-moon to second term as UN Secretary-General", *UN News Centre*, June 21, 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38797&Cr=secretary-general&Cr1=>

⁶⁷ "Somalia: Security Council calls for inclusive and comprehensive peace strategy", *UN News Centre*, June 24, 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38839&Cr=somali&Cr1=>

⁶⁸ "India ready to join hands to tackle piracy", *IBN Live*, June 22, 2011 at <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/india-ready-to-join-hands-to-tackle-piracy/161581-2.html>

⁶⁹ "Security Council calls on Darfur combatants to make peace based on Doha declaration", *UN News Centre*, June 23, 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38825&Cr=darfur&Cr1=>