

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **Operations planned to get rid of militants; India wants details on ISI's role in Kabul attack; Afghanistan's Natural Resources under the sight of Islamic State; No one should think about the collapse of Afghanistan; Dried and fresh fruits export on rise; Mounting insecurity in coming months; No one should gamble Afghanistan will collapse; Pakistan's movements along Durand Line detrimental for Kabul-Islamabad ties; Stanikzai rejected as Afghanistan's Defence Minister; XI, Putin set to discuss IS threat in Afghanistan'; Afghan delegation in stronger stance towards Taliban in peace talks; Taliban, Afghan officials agree to hold next meeting after Ramadan.**

In a bid to assure the lawmakers of improved security in the near future, Chief of the National Directorate of Security (NDS) Rahmatullah Nabil told Wolesi Jirga that special operations would be conducted within next six months to clear restive parts of the country from insurgents. Disturbed by the constant news of insecurity and fall of different districts to the Taliban insurgents, the Wolesi Jirga or Lower House of the Parliament has decided to summon the NDS chief, the minister of interior Noorul Haq Ulomi, and the deputy of chief of army staff Gen. Afzal Aman. The high-ranking security officials appeared in the Wolesi Jirga to brief the MPs over security situation and the attack on Afghan parliament. The NDS in coordination with other security organizations have planned to target and destroy the militants' centres in every parts of the country, Nabil said, adding that key insurgent leaders would be killed in order to dismantle the rebel groups. Regarding the government's policy on Daesh, the NDS chief said that there is no difference between the Taliban and Islamic States, as both are anti-Afghanistan forces. He confirmed that Daesh has presence in Nangarhar province. However, he assured of neutralizing the multinational terror group, claiming that several Islamic State fighters were arrested. Speaking about the NDS-ISI deal, Nabil said the agreement was not implementable unless signed and finalized by him. "I have not signed the agreement with Islamabad [ISI]," he said. The spymaster added that the agreement would be shared with different groups in the country before inking in order to build consensus. Nabil further said that they are authorized to reject or approve the agreement¹

New Delhi is keen to use the findings of the NDS of Afghanistan to drive home the point that nexus between Pakistan's "state actors" and terror outfits poses a threat not only to India, but for the entire region. Seven terrorists, including a suicide bomber, carried out an attack on the Afghanistan parliament recently. The suicide bomber detonated himself near the gate of the

¹ "Special Operations Planned To Get Rid Of Militants: NDS", *Afghanistan Times*, June 27, 2015, at <http://afghanistantimes.af/special-operations-planned-to-get-rid-of-militants-nds/t>

parliament complex, while sergeant Eessa Khan single-handedly gunned down six other terrorists. Though no parliamentarian was hurt, a woman and a child were killed in the explosion. Security establishments in New Delhi suspected the role of state actors of Pakistan in the attack. The suspicion was proved true when investigations by NDS revealed that a serving ISI officer – known as Bilal – had coordinated the attack. The Afghanistan media quoted NDS spokesman Haseeb Siddiqui stating that attack was “jointly designed by Maulvi Sherin, the Haqqani Network’s operational commander, and the ISI officer Bilal” in Peshawar, the capital of Pakistan’s north-western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Pakistan, however, dismissed the findings. Officials in New Delhi said that the findings should now make the new government realize that Kabul’s reliance on Islamabad to buy peace from Taliban could be counter-productive. New Delhi is of the view that the revelations should prompt Afghanistan government not to go ahead with the proposed agreement for cooperation between NDS and ISI. Islamabad has been putting pressure on Kabul for early conclusion of the ISI-NDS deal as it would allow Pakistani intelligence agency to further spread its tentacles in Afghanistan.²

Pentagon in a new report says that Islamic State group is eyeing on the Natural Resources of Afghanistan. Citing the Pentagon report, *The Diplomat* an online international news magazine that also writes analysis says that even though it is unknown if Islamic State would be able to hold swaths of land in Afghanistan but it is obviously possible that the group will seek to beat the country’s poorly monitored mining industry to fund their operations in Iraq and Syria. *The Diplomat* further states that the majorities of the estimated \$3 trillion worth of mineral resources of Afghanistan are undeveloped, abandoned, awaiting new contracts or excavated by local community members (Especially warlords). According to *the Diplomat*, the Islamic State (IS) is attempting to gain a toehold in Afghanistan and the worsening security situation could pave way for the group to enhance operations. *The Diplomat* citing a report issued by Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) in April says that illegal extraction of mines cost Afghanistan at least \$300 million annually since the fall of Taliban in 2001. It further states most of Afghanistan’s illegally extracted mines are going to Pakistan, adding that the leadership of Daesh’s Khorasaan province is predominantly comprised of former Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) commanders which makes the smuggle of Afghanistan’s illegally extracted mines to Pakistan easy.³

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani on June 30 said that the future of Afghanistan is dependent on cooperation from the regional countries, adding that fundamental change is impossible without assistance of the neighbours. He said Afghanistan is facing challenges but security forces have the ability to overcome those. He has repeatedly said that Pakistan is an undeclared war with Afghanistan and anyone lighting fire in Afghanistan will burn in that fire. He reiterated that everyone must know that the instability in Afghanistan causes instability in the whole region.

² “India Wants Details on ISI’s Role in Kabul Attack”, *Afghanistan Times*, June 29, 2015, at, <http://afghanistantimes.af/india-wants-details-on-isis-role-in-kabul-attack/>

³ “Afghanistan’s Natural Resources Under The Sight of Islamic State”, *Khaama Press*, June 29, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/afghanistans-natural-resources-under-the-sight-of-islamic-state-3567>

⁴ “President Ghani: No One Should Think About The Collapse of Afghanistan”, *Khaama Press*, June 30, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/president-ghani-no-one-should-think-about-the-collapse-of-afghanistan-3575>

While accepting the vast presence of foreign insurgents in the country, the President said that foreign militants from 10 countries are operating only in northern Kunduz province. He said we will sacrifice for another five thousand years but will build Afghanistan.⁴

Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan (EPAA) predicts a 15,000 ton increase in export of dried and fresh fruits. Head of the dried and fresh fruits department of EPAA, Mohammad Mustafa Hashemi, said Afghanistan failed to export the set target of 50,000 tons of fruits last year due to political crisis mainly caused by the election impasse. Afghanistan exported only 40,000 tons of fruits at a total cost of USD 168mn during the last fiscal year. This year, Afghanistan is expected to export 25,000 tons of fresh fruits and 30,000 tons of dried fruits to the international market. Hashemi links the boost to export to better climate conditions, availability of cold storages and improvement in packaging and marketing of the products.⁵

The NDS chief has said plans have been chalked out to tackle the threat from Daesh, warning security situation will deteriorate in coming months. With the same breath, however, Rahmatullah Nabil said the country's security forces were capable to deal with any eventuality. He expressed these views at the Wolesi Jirga (WJ) to brief the house about the current security situation across the country. He said the National Security Council (NSC) would discuss Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Islamabad. NDS chief, Interior Minister Noor-ul-Haq Ulumi and Maj. Gen. Afzal Aman, operation commander at the Ministry of Defence (MoD) were summoned by the WJ to inform the house about over all security, attacks on the parliament, recent recruitment in the spy-service and distribution of Computerized Identity (ID) Cards.⁶

President Ashraf Ghani on June 30 said the war had been imposed on the Afghans and Afghanistan would not collapse as a country. "No one should gamble that God forbid Afghanistan will collapse," Ghani told a United Nations' function on women and peace in Kabul. The president said the Afghans had lived for 5,000 years, protecting their soil and they would give sacrifice for another 5,000 years to protect their country and soil. Ghani urged regional powers to come to some sort of regional consensus on how to stabilize Afghanistan. "We are giving sacrifice and there is a need that the region and all of our neighbours with one voice reach a consensus," he said. "The governments should learn one fundamental lesson; instability of a government in one region causes instability in the entire region and the world," he said. The president said Afghan women had suffered the most in the ongoing war in the country. He said the Afghans were of the opinion that the war had been imposed on them. "The war is imposed on us and we don't want peace from a weak position. "I assure you that whenever we reach a peace agreement, Afghan women's presence in the government will be made sure," the president pledged.⁷

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) on July 4 said that Kabul-Islamabad relations will be worsened if the Pakistan's continues its movements along the Durand Line. Quoted by Radio

⁵ "Dried and Fresh Fruits Export to Reach 55,000 Tons This Year", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, June 28, 2015, at http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=12444

⁶ "Spymaster Warns of Mounting Insecurity in Coming Months", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, June 29, 2015, at http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=12445

⁷ "President Ashraf Ghani :No One Should Gamble Afghanistan will Collapse", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, July 1, 2015, at http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=12479

Azadi, the MoFA spokesman, Shekib Mustaghni, pointed out to the Durand Line skirmishes between the Afghan security forces and Pakistani military in Angor Ada area in Barmal district in Paktika province, and said the situation will damage relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan if they will not prevented. "If such issues were not prevented, it will damage the struggles of the two countries in cementing their ties," he said. The Border Forces entered clashes with Pakistani military in Angor Ada area. According to Afghan forces, the Pakistani side wanted to build military establishments on Afghanistan's territory. A day after the Durand Line aggression, Sayid Abrar Hussain Pakistan's ambassador to Kabul was summoned by the Foreign Ministry's political deputy to explain the issue. Mustaghni said they told the Pakistani ambassador that such issues will only be resolved through talks. "To find a lasting solution for the problem, the Afghan and Pakistani governments should work on a mechanism that paves the way for talks, both at military and political levels," he added ⁸.

Parliament has rejected Mohammad Masoum Stanikzai as Afghanistan's Defence Minister. On the session of July 4 members of the parliament used their votes of confidence where Stanikzai received 84 green ticks and 104 red ticks. So he could not receive the 107 green ticks to become Afghanistan's Defence Minister. Mohammad Masoum Stanikzai is the acting Defence Minister of Afghanistan. Mohammad Masoum Stanikzai has previously served as the Minister of communications, Secretary of the High Peace Council and adviser to former President Hamid Karzai. He was the second nominee for Afghanistan's defence ministry who was unable to receive a vote of confidence from Wolesi Jirga or the Lower House of Parliament. Before him General Shir Mohammad Karimi, the Afghan Chief of Army Staff, was introduced to the parliament and he was also unable to receive the trust of the parliament. Abdul Rawouf Ibrahim, head of the Wolesi Jirga asked government to introduce a third nominee for this post after the rejection of two.⁹

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping along with other world leaders are set to discuss emerging Islamic State (IS) threat in Afghanistan during Eurasian security summit to be held in Russia this week, media reports on July 6 Xi travels to the Russian city of Ufa for a summit scheduled for Thursday and Friday of leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which groups China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Media reports it will be preceded by a meeting of leaders of the BRICS group of emerging economies — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Cheng Guoping told journalists. "...spill over effect of the Islamic State terrorist activities, Afghanistan now faces a grim security situation. SCO leaders will talk further about how to respond to the security situation there." China is seeking business interests in Afghanistan and is sensitive to any spill over of Islamic-inspired extremism from the country, which has a short border with its mostly Muslim western region of Xinjiang.¹⁰

⁸ "Pakistan's Movements Along Durand Line Detrimental For Kabul-Islamabad Ties: MoFA", *Afghanistan Times*, July 4, 2015, at <http://afghanistantimes.af/pakistans-movements-along-durand-line-detrimental-for-kabul-islamabad-ties-mofa/>

⁹ "Parliament Rejects Stanikzai as Afghanistan's Defence Minister", *Khaama Press*, July 4, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/breaking-news-parliament-rejects-stanikzai-as-afghanistans-defense-minister-3596>

¹⁰ "Xi, Putin Set to Discuss IS Threat in Afghanistan", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, July 7, 2015, at http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=12532

An Afghan peace delegation that has arrived in Pakistan's capital Islamabad to have face-to-face discussions with leaders of Taliban will talk from a stronger stance. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has said that the world, regional countries and opponents have acknowledged that Afghan security forces to not accept defeat. He says there for the Afghan delegation in Islamabad will talk from a stronger stance with Taliban. President Ghani has expressed these comments while in a meeting with political analysers and representatives of media outlets in Afghanistan. The meeting that was organized in Presidential Palace on July 7, President Ghani talked in detail about the reconciliation process with Taliban. He said that the primary peace talks will circulate on three factors which are changing these talks to durable process, building trust and preparing draft of important issues for the agenda of peace talks. President Ghani added that the purpose of this process is to reduce the amount of violence in the country and ultimately eliminate it. President Ghani further said that the involvement of women in peace process will uphold as previous. According to the President, the issue of the Durand Line has never been part of the agenda and will not be included in the future.¹¹

The Afghan officials and representatives of the Taliban group have agreed to hold the next round of talks on reconciliation process after the holy month of Ramadan. According to the officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, the first round of talks ended with agreement between the two sides to continue talks toward achieving peace and reconciliation. The officials further added that each side agreed to approach the process with sincerity and with full commitment in a bid to ensure lasting peace in the region. Negotiations on reconciliation process kicked off between the Afghan officials and Taliban representatives in Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan on July 7. The Afghan delegation was led by Deputy Afghan Foreign Minister on Political Affairs Hekmat Khalil Karzai. Taliban's former Deputy Foreign Minister Mullah Jalil and senior leader Qari Din Muhammad represented the Taliban group. The meeting was a follow-up of the recently held talks in Urumqi, China. The two-day meeting between the Afghan officials and Taliban representatives was held in the month of May this year. The meeting was reportedly facilitated by Pakistan's military intelligence – Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) in an apparent show of goodwill aimed at a negotiated solution to the insurgency.¹²

Pakistan

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **Khan of Kalat being persuaded; Lodhi in Islamabad for consultations; Decision to start final round of Zarb-e-Azb; \$220m loan approved; Clash on Pak-Afghan Border; Military operation in Khyber ends successfully; not serious about NAP enforcement; terrorism, electricity shortage as main challenges; Former RAW chief suggests interaction with ISI; Leaders enjoying luxurious lives abroad; Modi's remarks, Indian interference at UN; No evidence about JuD's links with LeT; UJC rejects claims of ex-RAW chief.**

The self-exiled Baloch leader, Khan of Kalat Mir Suleman Dawood Jan, has agreed to meet a

¹¹ "Afghan Delegation In Stronger Stance Towards Taliban In Peace Talks", *Khaama Press*, July 8, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/afghan-delegation-in-stronger-stance-towards-taliban-in-peace-talks-3613>

¹² "Taliban, Afghan Officials Agree To Hold Next Meeting after Ramadan", *Khaama Press*, July 8, 2015, at, <http://www.khaama.com/taliban-afghan-officials-agree-to-hold-next-meeting-after-ramadan-9498>

delegation of Balochistan government despite having reservations about its mandate and prevailing situation in the province. However, before meeting the delegation he would consult with the members of the Grand Baloch Jirga who had sent him aboard in connection with restoration of Kalat State. Prince Mohyuddin Baloch, the son of late Khan of Kalat Mir Ahmed Yar Khan, confirmed while talking to Dawn from London that Khan of Kalat had given his consent for meeting the proposed delegation. Meanwhile, there are reports about looting of historical items from the Khan of Kalat's palace in Kalat town. Reports suggest that a group of armed men entered the palace between the night of Thursday and Friday after breaking its main gate and took away armours, swords, a throne used by late Khan of Kalat Mir Ahmed Yar Khan Ahmedzai as head of Kalat State, gems and ornaments of great historical value, two carpets and other items with them after loading them on their vehicles.¹³

Ambassador to the United Nations Dr Maleeha Lodhi is in Islamabad for consultations on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's planned visit to the UN in September to attend a series of summits, besides addressing the General Assembly (UNGA). According to sources, the occasion will be more significant than the usual annual UNGA visits by the prime minister and consultations are reportedly being held about raising at the world forum the issue of Indian interference in Pakistan's affairs. The UNGA session will coincide with the 70th anniversary of the world body and the member states will take major decisions about sustainable development, climate change and peace. The prime minister will also attend a summit on the post-2015 development agenda, which focuses on sustainability goals. He will co-chair a summit on peacekeeping with US President Barack Obama. Pakistan is the largest troop contributor to the UN peacekeeping missions around the world.¹⁴

The Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), General Raheel Sharif, had an important meeting with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at the PM House on June 30, their second meeting in a week. The meeting took place a day before Prime Minister Nawaz's significant visit to Karachi. The two discussed matters related to Zarb-e-Azb and issues related to the security of the country. It was also decided to launch the final round of Zarb-e-Azb to cleanse the area from militants and take the operation to its logical end. Federal Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, Prime Minister's Adviser for National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz and Special Assistant to the PM (SAPM) on Foreign Affairs also joined the two after their one-on-one meeting. Highly-placed sources told *The News* that developments with regard to Afghanistan, Yemen and Fata, including the return, rehabilitation and resettlement of Temporarily Displaced Persons (TDPs), also came under discussion. The meeting lasted about three hours.¹⁵

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a loan of over \$220 million to help Pakistan rebuild and upgrade roads, bridges and other high-priority infrastructure damaged by the

¹³ "Khan of Kalat Being Persuaded To Return Home", *Dawn*, June, 29, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1191121/khan-of-kalat-being-persuaded-to-return-home>

¹⁴ "Maleeha Lodhi in Islamabad for Consultations", *Dawn*, June 30, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1191309/maleeha-lodhi-in-islamabad-for-consultations>

¹⁵ "Decision to Start Final Round of Zarb-e-Azb", *The News*, July 1, 2015, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-38330-Decision-to-start-final-round-of-Zarb-e-Azb>

devastating 2014 floods. "Pakistan is highly dependent on agriculture and prone to floods and other extreme weather related-events like the current severe heat wave, and these will worsen as a result of climate change," said Donneth Walton, Principal Natural Resources and Agriculture Specialist in ADB's Central and West Asia Department. "This assistance will support a build-back-better approach, with multi-hazard-resistant features incorporated into the restored infrastructure." The floods in September 2014 displaced over 2.5 million people across 44 districts, and damaged more than 445,000 hectares of agricultural land, causing severe hardship to about a quarter of a million farmers.¹⁶

Two soldiers were wounded when Afghan National Army fired at Pakistan Army's position in Angoor Adda area of South Waziristan Agency on July 1 an Afghan border guard was killed in the exchange of fire. The Inter-Services Public Relations said that a rocket-propelled grenade-7 and a few rounds of small arms were fired on the Angoor Adda gate from the Afghan side causing injuries to the soldiers. Pakistani troops responded and targeted positions from where fire was coming. The border-crossing point was closed after the incident. Local people said that the exchange of fire continued for more than an hour. It is learnt that the wounded soldiers belonged to Frontier Works Organisation which builds roads and other infrastructures in border areas. Official sources said the government had planned to construct an entry gate, 'Bab-i-Waziristan', along the Afghan border. Afghan authorities have reservations over the plan and asked Pakistan to abandon it.¹⁷

The military has successfully brought to a close a massive offensive in Khyber tribal region, effectively flushing out militants and blocking their crossing points on borders with Afghanistan, according to government and security officials. But, the officials said, questions remained whether the military gains in the plains of Bara and upper reaches of Tirah valley could be sustained over a long period in the absence of administrative and auxiliary support systems. The military formally brought Operation Khyber-2 to a close on June 15, significantly enough, on the first anniversary of Operation Zarb-i-Azb in North Waziristan. Four days later, Army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif visited the troops in Tirah to take stock of the military offensive and the gains made in the nearly three and a half month long operation.¹⁸

The Supreme Court on July 3 observed that the federal and four provincial governments were not serious about the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) and sought a comprehensive report on the volume of NGOs and details of their funding. A three-member bench of the apex court, headed by Justice Jawwad S. Khawaja, heard the case of a fake cheque given to a citizen by a social organisation's deputy director. Attorney General Salman Aslam Butt submitted to the court a report on the NGOs. Justice Khawaja, however, observed that the governments were not serious about the implementation of NAP in letter and spirit. He further observed that there were thousands of registered NGOs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but nobody knew the volume of

¹⁶ "ADB Approves \$220m Loan For Flood-Hit Areas", *The News*, July 1, 2015, at [http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-38336-ADB-approves-\\$220m-loan-for-flood-hit-areas](http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-38336-ADB-approves-$220m-loan-for-flood-hit-areas)

¹⁷ "Two Pakistani Soldiers Hurt, Afghan Guard Killed In Clash", *Dawn*, July 2, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1191777/two-pakistani-soldiers-hurt-afghan-guard-killed-in-clash>

¹⁸ "Military Operation In Khyber Ends Successfully", *Dawn*, July 3, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1192007/military-operation-in-khyber-ends-successfully>

unregistered NGOs there. The attorney general informed the court that the government had allocated Rs15 million for the National Counter Terrorism Authority (Nacta) and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) during the federal budget 2015-16.¹⁹

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has maintained that the elimination of terrorism and resolving the energy issue are the top priorities of the government. Talking to outgoing ambassador of Germany in Pakistan Dr Cyril Nunn here at the PM House on July 3, he said the government is putting up the best efforts for attaining the two objectives besides according due attention to the development activities in various spheres across the country. The ambassador paid a farewell call on the premier and had an exchange of views pertaining to the subjects of mutual interest. Prime Minister Nawaz appreciated the active role played by the German ambassador in improving the bilateral ties between the two countries during his stay in Pakistan.²⁰

Former Indian spy chief A.S. Dulat, whose new book on Kashmir has stirred a hornet's nest in the disputed state, says he wants future talks with Pakistan to openly or quietly involve intelligence agencies from both sides to improve the chances of a durable solution. Mr Dulat served as a ranking officer at the secretive Intelligence Bureau (IB) before taking over as the head of Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) during the Vajpayee era. He said on July 4 that he had met everyone among Jammu and Kashmir's "separatist leadership" except Syed Ali Shah Geelani. "I would be happy if I could meet him." Some of the Kashmiris he named as accepting help or money from Indian spies denied the claims on Saturday. Yasin Malik, the chief of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, laughed away the claims of being given air tickets. "Is that what we are worth, some air tickets?" The Hizbul Mujahideen said Mr Dulat's claim that Hizb chief Syed Salahuddin had called up a senior IB officer to seek a seat for his son in a medical college was a "Himalayan lie" aimed at defaming their "freedom struggle".²¹

Commander Southern Command Lt Gen Nasir Khan Janjua has said that the people who had fled abroad and were now playing with dollars and pounds were misleading the innocent youth to fight in the name of freedom. "Peace is the basic right of the masses and we are following the path of peace," he said. He said those who had fled the country and had been misleading the people of Pakistan could not be the leaders of Pakistan. Those leaders had been leading luxurious lives abroad and playing in pounds and dollars and forcing the poor to fight with the forces. The people should recognise such wicked enemies suffering from the sense of mental inferiority. He expressed these views while addressing the closing ceremony of the All Pakistan T20 Balochistan Ramzan Cricket Cup 2015 at the Bugti Stadium here on July 5. He said the Baloch youth were coming to the right track and their awakening was a good sign for the country and the nation.²²

¹⁹ "SC Says Govts Not Serious about NAP Enforcement", *The News*, July 4, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-38394-SC-says-govts-not-serious-about-NAP-enforcement>

²⁰ "PM Identifies Terrorism, Electricity Shortage As Main Challenges", *The News*, July 4, 2015, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-38412-PM-identifies-terrorism-electricity-shortage-as-main-challenges>

²¹ "Former RAW Chief Suggests Interaction with ISI", *Dawn*, July 5, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1192395/former-raw-chief-suggests-interaction-with-isi>

²² "Leaders Enjoying Luxurious Lives Abroad: Gen Janjua", *The News*, July 6, 2015, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-38440-Leaders-enjoying-luxurious-lives-abroad-Gen-Janjua>

The Prime Minister Office is considering taking up the recent controversial statement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the creation of Bangladesh and the ongoing Indian interference in Pakistan at the United Nations. A close aide to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif told *Dawn* that the issue was discussed at the Foreign Office last week in the presence of the country's representative to the UN, Dr Maleeha Lodhi, and most of the participants of the meeting were of the view that Pakistan must take it to the UN. But considering Mr Sharif's desire to develop friendly ties with India, it will be interesting to see his reaction to the suggestions of the Foreign Office. The prime minister went to Delhi in May last year on Mr Modi's invitation to attend his oath-taking ceremony, but since then relations between the two countries had only soured. According to sources privy to the development, a consensus had emerged during the meetings at the Foreign Office that the Indian prime minister's speech made by him in Dhaka last month and 'evidence' about India's ongoing interference in Pakistan's affairs must be taken to the UN.²³

The government has ruled out the possibility of proscribing Jamaatud Dawa (JuD) in the near future and says there is no evidence of the charity organisation having been formed in place of the outlawed Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). Minister for States and Frontier Region retired Gen Abdul Qadir Baloch told the Senate on behalf of Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan during the question hour that the United Nations Security Council had in a resolution listed the JuD as LeT with a new name, but no supporting evidence had been shared with Pakistan to establish the connection. He said the organisation had been under observation in terms of Section 11-D of the Anti-Terrorism Act since November 15, 2003 and the provinces had been asked to keep a watch on its activities. The JuD will be proscribed if a report confirming its involvement in terrorism is received under Section 11-B of the ATA. Under Section 11-B, an organisation is proscribed if the federal government has reasons to believe that it is linked to terrorism. Under the law, the government can place an organisation under observation for six months if it is suspected of being involved in terrorist activities. The period can be extended only after providing the organisation an opportunity of being heard.²⁴

The United Jihad Council (UJC), a conglomerate of Kashmiri mujahideen groups, says there is no harm to hold talks with India, provided Kashmir is acknowledged as a dispute territory. "We are not just for fighting... We are open to all positive steps to achieve our goals. If India acknowledges Kashmir as a dispute with some international guarantee and invites Jihad Council for talks, we are ready to enter into a purposeful process," said UJC Secretary General Shaikh Jamilur Rehman. He was talking to media men during a visit to the office of Capital Journalists Forum (CJF) on July 7. Mr Rehman regretted that India had never been serious towards holding meaningful parleys with any stakeholder, whether the militant groups, pro-freedom politicians or the government of Pakistan. "We need to keep a wary eye on India's double dealings," he said. On allegations by former RAW chief A.S. Dulat, the UJC Secretary General maintained that it was a failed attempt to tarnish the image of pro-freedom Kashmiri leadership, something India had been persistently doing since long "out of sheer frustration". "Since the Kashmiri nation is fully aware of the motives behind this fresh bout of vilification campaign, it too will fail to mislead them," he believed.²⁵

²³ "PM May Raise Modi's Remarks, Indian Interference at UN", *Dawn*, July 8, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1192829/pm-may-raise-modis-remarks-indian-interference-at-un>

²⁴ "No Evidence about JuD's Links with LeT: Minister", *Dawn*, July 8, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1193106/no-evidence-about-juds-links-with-let-minister>

²⁵ "UJC Rejects Claims Of Ex-RAW Chief", *Dawn*, July 8, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1193107/ujc-rejects-claims-of-ex-raw-chief>

Bangladesh

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **Revision trial in the Felani murder case resumes; China to construct two-lane tunnel under the Karnaphuli River; The government reveals a three-year national action plan to combat human trafficking; Bangladesh graduated from the low income status to lower middle income nation; Increase in remittances; The OECD upgrades the overall country ratings of Bangladesh by one notch.**

Revision trial in the Felani murder case resumed at a special court of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in West Bengal's Cooch Bihar district on June 30, three months after an adjournment in the trial. On March 27, the court was adjourned for three months as the assistant public prosecutor of the BSF became sick.²⁶

Bangladesh signs a \$705 million deal with a Chinese firm in Beijing for the construction of a two-lane tunnel under the Karnaphuli River on June 30, 2015. Construction work of the 3.5-kilometre tunnel, the first of its kind in the country, will begin in December and is expected to be completed within four years. A memorandum of understanding on the construction of the tunnel was signed between Bangladesh and China during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Beijing in June 2014.²⁷

The government revealed a detailed three-year national action plan to combat human trafficking and protect the victims by taking effective awareness and preventive measures on June 30. Launching the "National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking 2015-17" in the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, secretaries of five ministries — home, foreign, expatriates' welfare and overseas employment, women and children, and law focused on the government's combined efforts to prevent the crime. They expressed their commitments to implement the plan by working together and sought assistances of UN agencies, regional and international communities to fight trafficking, which has recently become a threat for Bangladesh.²⁸

Bangladesh graduated from the low income status to lower middle income nation (LMIC), meeting the World Bank's requirements comfortably. The WB used last year's data to determine this year's ranking. Bangladesh's per capita income was \$1,080 in 2014 in line with the World Bank's gross national income (GNI) — higher than the Washington-based lender's set threshold of \$1,045.²⁹

²⁶ "Revision Trial in Felani Murder Case Resumes", *The Daily Star*, July 1, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/revision-trial-felani-murder-case-resumes-105595>.

²⁷ "Bangladesh Signs \$705m Deal With Chinese Firm", *The Daily Star*, July 1, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/705m-deal-signed-chinese-firm-105550>.

²⁸ "Ending Human Trafficking: Government Starts Three-Year Drive", *The Daily Star*, July 1, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/city/government-starts-three-year-drive-105457>.

²⁹ Byron, Rejaul Karim and Md Rahman, Fazlur, "Bangladesh Goes One Step Forward", *The Daily Star*, July 2, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/bangladesh-goes-one-step-forward-106231>.

In the just concluded fiscal year, migrant workers sent home \$15.31 billion in remittance, the highest in the country's history. The remittance in 2014-15 also rose 7.6 percent from \$14.23 billion in the previous fiscal year, according to Bangladesh Bank (BB) statistics released on July 2.³⁰

The OECD has upgraded the overall country ratings of Bangladesh by one notch for the resilience by its economy. The Bangladesh Bank in a statement on July 2 said the country moved to category 5 from category 6, which puts it just behind India but ahead of other South Asian countries. The major reasons for the promotion were the resilience of the Bangladesh economy and the high and stable growth for well over a decade despite political upheaval and weak external demand.³¹

Sri Lanka

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **President Sirisena allows former president Rajapaksa to contest the forthcoming general elections; JVP accuses Sirisena of betraying the people; JHU decides to quit the UPFA; BBS forms political party to contest elections; Sri Lanka signs the article of agreement of the AIIB; Sri Lanka and the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) sing cooperation agreement; Afghanistan's Minister of Information and Culture visits Sri Lanka; President inaugurates the construction work on the extension of the Southern Expressway from Matara to Hambantota.**

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena, who is also Chairman of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the United Peoples' Freedom Alliance (UPFA), gave the nod to former president Mahinda Rajapaksa to contest the forthcoming general elections under the UPFA. Issuing a special communiqué, UPFA General Secretary Susil Premajayantha said as discussed in the UPFA party leaders' meeting held under the patronage of President Sirisena on July 2, the party has decided to allow Rajapaksa to contest the August 17 parliamentary elections under the UPFA ticket. President Sirisena earlier decided not to give prime ministerial candidacy or group leadership from UPFA to former president. Former president will contest the elections as an ordinary candidate of the UPFA and not as its group leader or its Prime Ministerial candidate.³²

Sri Lanka's Marxist party, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) accused President Maithripala Sirisena of betraying the people by allowing the former President Mahinda Rajapaksa to contest the general election under the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA).³³

After the coalition party gave the nod for former president Mahinda Rajapaksa to contest upcoming elections, Minister Patali Champika Ranawaka said in a media conference in Colombo on July 5

³⁰ "Remittance Inflow To Bangladesh Hits Record \$15.31b", *The Daily Star*, July 3, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/remittance-hits-record-1531b-106567>.

³¹ "Bangladesh Higher in OECD Rankings", *The Daily Star*, July 3, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/business/bangladesh-higher-oecd-rankings-106600>.

³² "Sri Lankan President Gives Nod for Rajapaksa to Contest Upcoming Elections under UPFA Ticket", *ColomboPage*, July 3, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Jul03_1435935330CH.php.

³³ "Sri Lanka Marxist Party JVP Accuses President of Betraying People", *ColomboPage*, July 5, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Jul05_1436110240CH.php.

that the central committee of the Jathika Hela Urumaya had decided to leave the former ruling alliance to form a new political front.³⁴

The extremist Sinhala Buddhist organization in Sri Lanka, Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) has formed a political party to contest the upcoming parliamentary elections. The BBS will contest the August 17 elections under its political party Bodu Jana Peramuna (BJP).³⁵

Sri Lanka signed the article of agreement of the China-initiated multilateral bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) at the signing ceremony held in Beijing on June 29, 2015.³⁶

Sri Lanka and the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) have entered into an agreement to begin cooperation between CERN and the scientific community in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha and the Director General of CERN, Mr. Rolf-Dieter Heuer, signed an 'Expression of Interest' (EOI) Agreement on June 25, 2015 at the CERN Headquarters in Geneva to give effect to this process.³⁷

Afghanistan's Minister of Information and Culture Abdul Bari Jahani went to Colombo on June 30 to attend a four-day cultural ministerial conference.³⁸

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena inaugurated the construction work on the extension of the Southern Expressway from Matara to Hambantota. The President and Chinese Ambassador to Sri Lanka Yi Xianliang unveiled the plaque at the Nilwala entrance on the expressway at Godagama in Matara on July 4.³⁹

Maldives

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **Government meets MDP representative to resolve political crisis; Maldives to work together with the Commonwealth, says Foreign Minister; The Anti-terrorism bill has been presented to the Parliament; Vice President is asked to present his defence in relation to the motion of no-confidence; Pakistan donates US\$ 3.1 million to the Maldives.**

The government of the Maldives had meeting with the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP)

³⁴ "JHU Withdraws from UPFA, Forms a New Front", *ColomboPage*, July 5, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Jul05_1436104273CH.php.

³⁵ "Extreme Sri Lankan Buddhist Organization Forms A Political Party To Contest General Election", *The Daily Star*, June 29, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Jun29_1435591331CH.php.

³⁶ "Sri Lanka Signs Article of Agreement of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank", *ColomboPage*, June 29, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Jun29_1435559968CH.php.

³⁷ "Sri Lanka Initiates Collaboration with CERN", *ColomboPage*, June 29, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Jun29_1435599352CH.php.

³⁸ "Afghan Culture Minister Leaves for Sri Lanka", *ColomboPage*, July 2, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Jul02_1435777557CH.php.

³⁹ "Construction Work on Matara-Hambantota Segment of Sri Lanka's Southern Expressway Commenced", *ColomboPage*, July 4, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Jul04_1436028524CH.php.

representative on July 2 to resolve the political conflicts in the country. Home Minister Umar Naseer represented the government and the MDP was represented by the Leader of their Parliamentary Group and the MP for the Hinnavaru constituency, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih. MDP wanted the government to be more lenient towards four high ranking politicians, to resolve the issues facing the businesses and the investigation of the murder of Dr. Afrasheem and the missing journalist, Ahmed Rilwan by an independent body. The four people MDP wants leniency include: former President Mohamed Nasheed, Colonel-retired Mohamed Nazim, former MP of the Dhiggaru constituency, Ahmed Naazim and the former Defence Minister Tholhath Ibrahim Kaleyfaanu.⁴⁰

Foreign Minister Dhunya Maumoon has said that the effort being put by the powerful nations in the Commonwealth to include the Maldives on the Ministerial Action Group (CM) and harm the country is failing. A press release issued by Minister Dhunya on July 5 said that she informed on the political situation of the Maldives to the Ministers of the Commonwealth and she noted that the Maldives is within the regulations of the Commonwealth. Minister Dhunya also noted that the government has had success in defusing the political situation in the country and said that the country would work together with the Commonwealth.⁴¹

The Anti-terrorism bill has been presented to the Parliament by the Government on July 5. The President's Office said that the bill is set to meet international standards with special points to prevent terrorism. And the bill has the regulation on monitoring and apprehending those suspected of terrorism to secure the freedom and rights established by the constitution to guarantee the safety and protection of the people. The bill categorises locals taking part in foreign wars as an act of terrorism and there are harsh punishments for encouraging taking part in those wars, attempting to leave the country for such a cause, leaving the country, training and recruitment for such a war.⁴²

The parliament has given notice to Vice President Dr Mohamed Jameel Ahmed to present his defence in relation to the motion of no-confidence against him. The notice was sent on June 30, 2015.⁴³ Vice President Dr Mohamed Jameel Ahmed however in an interview with the New Indian Express has called the work by the parliament to remove him from office a "constitutional coup" and "friends of Maldives to step in".⁴⁴

Pakistan has donated US\$ 3.1 million to the Maldives to buy a water storage tank under the Malé Water Crisis fund and for repair works at the Parliament. Foreign Minister Dhunya Maumoon

⁴⁰ "Government has Said That They Would Be Flexible at the Opposition Meetings", *SunOnline*, July 2, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/30758>.

⁴¹ "Dhunya: The efforts Being Put To Include Maldives on the CM Agenda Is Failing", *SunOnline*, July 5, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/30837>.

⁴² "Anti-Terrorism Bill Goes to Parliament", *SunOnline*, July 5, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/30833>.

⁴³ "VP Given Notice to Present Defence for No-Confidence Motion", *SunOnline*, July 2, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/30762>.

⁴⁴ "Impeachment "a Constitutional Coup", Says VP", *SunOnline*, July 1, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/30735>.

accepted the cheque on behalf of the Maldivian Government from the Pakistani High Commissioner, Shaahid Mahmood at a special ceremony held at the Foreign Ministry.⁴⁵

B. East Asia

China

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **China upset with Japanese response with respect to Nansha Islands; Chinese Foreign Minister joins negotiations on Iranian Nuclear Issue; China wants normalization of ties between the United States and Cuba; Chinese National People's Congress (NPC) adopts the National Security Law; China successfully completes land reclamation on some Nansha islands; Chinese Vice Premier scheduled to visit Russia; Chinese President scheduled to attend the BRICS and SCO summit.**

In a response to the forthcoming Japanese White Paper, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said on July 3 that, "We again urge Japan to draw lessons from history and to be cautious with its words and actions on issues concerning military security". The white paper had made comments with respect to Nansha Islands. Hua further asserted that Japan was not a party to the disputes with respect to South China Sea.⁴⁶

The Chinese foreign Minister Wang Yi left China for Vienna to attend the negotiations on the Iranian nuclear issue. According to the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, "The Chinese side attaches great importance to advancing the negotiations on the Iranian nuclear issue".⁴⁷

The recent steps undertaken by the United States towards normalization of relations with Cuba have been welcomed by China. As per the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, "China welcomes and supports Cuba and the United States carrying forward normalization of their ties". China also expressed its hope that the United States would lift its blockade and sanctions against Cuba at the earliest possible date.⁴⁸

The Chinese National People's Congress (NPC) adopted a National Security Law on July 1, which included cyber security. As per the report, "The law included a cyberspace "sovereignty" clause, which covered assets and activities in space, the deep sea and polar regions".⁴⁹

⁴⁵ "Pakistan Donates 3 Million Dollars of Financial Aid to Maldives", *SunOnline*, June 30, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/30717>.

⁴⁶ "China Urges Japan to Stop Provoking Tensions in South China Sea", *China Daily*, July 3, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-07/03/content_21177564.htm, accessed on July 6, 2015

⁴⁷ "Chinese FM to Join Negotiations on Iranian Nuclear Issue", *China Daily*, July 2, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-07/02/content_21167252.htm, accessed on July 3, 2015

⁴⁸ "China Welcomes Normalized Cuba, US Ties", *China Daily*, July 1, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-07/01/content_21155667.htm, accessed on July 3, 2015

⁴⁹ "China Adopts National Security Law", *China Daily*, July 1, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-07/01/content_21150783.htm, accessed on July 3, 2015

As per the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, land reclamation for construction on the Nansha Islands has been completed. On June 30 China announced that, "Next, China will start the building of facilities to meet relevant functional requirements". These constructions will help China better perform its civilian obligations and international responsibilities.⁵⁰

The Chinese Foreign Ministry announced that Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will be visiting Russia from July 5 to July 9, 2015. During the visit he will attend the sixth Yekaterinburg International Exhibition and Forum of Industry and Innovation opening on July 8.⁵¹

The Chinese Foreign Ministry also announced that the Chinese President Xi Jinping is scheduled to attend the 7th BRICS summit on July 8-9 and the 15th SCO Summit on July 9-10 in Ufa Russia. He has been invited by the Russian President Vladimir Putin.⁵²

Japan

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **Japanese Ground Self-Defence Force participate in the Talisman Sabre exercise; the seventh Japan-Mekong Summit held in Tokyo; Chinese leader Yu Zhengsheng called on Japan to avoid involvement in South China Sea; TPP working-level talks to restart in Tokyo; Japanese SDF chief and US Joint Chiefs of Staff to meet in Washington for the second US-Japan strategic dialogue; Japan-ROK Summit possible in September.**

About 40 Japanese Ground Self-Defence Force personnel, for the first time, took part in the US-Australia Talisman Sabre exercise scheduled from July 4-19 in the Northern Territory and Queensland.⁵³ Japan's presence in the exercise is reflective of the deepening security relations between Australia and Japan. This growing cooperation among US's regional allies is often perceived in the context of Chinese activities in the South China Sea. However, the Chinese foreign ministry stated that while China is not anxious if the military drill is targeted at China but hopes "that relevant countries should play a positive and constructive role in enhancing mutual trust and cooperation between regional countries".⁵⁴

On July 4, the seventh Japan-Mekong Summit was held in the State Guest House in Akasaka Tokyo. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met with the leaders of the Mekong region states

⁵⁰ "China Completes Land Reclamation on Some Nansha Islands", *China Daily*, June 30, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-06/30/content_21145913.htm, accessed on July 3, 2015

⁵¹ "Chinese vice Premier to Visit Russia", *China Daily*, June 30, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-06/30/content_21145519.htm, accessed on July 3, 2015

⁵² "Xi To Attend BRICS, SCO Summit Next Week", *China Daily*, June 29, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-06/29/content_21136307.htm, accessed on July 3, 2015

⁵³ "Japan Joins U.S.-Australia War Games Amid Growing Tensions with China", *AFP-Jiji*, July 5, 2015 <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/07/05/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-joins-u-s-australia-war-games-amid-growing-tensions-china/#.VZIBHEZbhgB>

⁵⁴ Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Regular Press Conference on May 26, 2015, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China at http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1267054.shtml

including the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. During the meeting, "New Tokyo Strategy 2015 for Mekong-Japan Cooperation" was adopted. Japan committed a three-year Mekong aid plan amounting to ¥750 billion in ODA with objective to attain "regional stability" and "quality growth"⁵⁵. Besides, Myanmar suggested the proposal of establishing the Mekong University. During the meeting, the leaders reportedly discussed other regional issues including Korean Peninsula, developments in the South China Sea and UNSC reforms.⁵⁶

Reports on June 30 indicated that Chinese Communist leader, Yu Zhengsheng called on Japan to avoid involvement in South China Sea during his meeting with the LDP delegation led by Takeshi Noda in Beijing. Moreover, Yu stressed on several other sensitive issues including views on Japan's past militarism and the China Threat theory during the meeting held at the Great Hall of the People.⁵⁷ Earlier on 27 June, foreign minister Wang Yi, in a separate event, identified Japan's inability to "accept" the rise of China as one of the primary reasons for the strain in bilateral relations.

US-Japan TPP working-level talks is scheduled to restart in Tokyo from July 9-10. While the Japanese side will include the acting chief TPP negotiator Hiroshi Oe and ambassador in charge of economic diplomacy Takeo Mori, US side will be represented by Acting Deputy Trade Representative Wendy Cutler. The last TPP talks were held in May. In the upcoming meeting, discussion is expected on critical issues for instance automobile trade and Japanese import quota for US rice.⁵⁸

Japanese SDF chief, Gen. Katsutoshi Kawano and Gen Martin Dempsey, US Joint Chiefs of Staff is scheduled to meet in Washington for the second US-Japan strategic dialogue on July 16 at the National Defence University in Washington. The objective is to strengthen US-Japan alliance at a time of increasing Chinese activities in maritime realm. The first strategic dialogue was held in April 2014.⁵⁹

Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister Shinsuke Sugiyama suggested that Japan-ROK Summit is possible in September on the side-lines of the annual UN General Assembly session in New York.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ New Tokyo Strategy 2015 for Mekong-Japan Cooperation (MJC2015), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, July 4, 2015 at http://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sea1/page1e_000044.html

⁵⁶ Masaaki Kameda, Japan, Mekong ink new ¥750 billion aid deal, *The Japan Times*, July 4, 2015 at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/07/04/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-mekong-ink-new-%C2%A5750-billion-aid-deal/#.VZIBNEZbhgB>

⁵⁷ "China Urges Japan To Stay Away from South China Sea disputes", *Kyodo*, June 30 2015 at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/06/30/national/politics-diplomacy/china-urges-japan-to-stay-away-from-south-china-sea-disputes/#.VZohIFK6a1t>

⁵⁸ "Japan, U.S. To Resume TPP Talks on July 9", *The Japan News*, July 4, 2015at <http://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0002262622>

⁵⁹ "Top Japan, U.S. Military Brass Plan Powwow in Washington", *Kyodo*, July 4, 2015 at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/07/04/national/politics-diplomacy/top-japan-u-s-military-brass-plan-powwow-in-washington/#.VZIBW0ZbhgB>

⁶⁰ "Abe-Park Summit Mulled For Sept.", *The Japan News*, July 1, 2015at <http://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0002254438>

The Korea Peninsula

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **China extends invitation to North Korean leader to visit Beijing to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the war; the 16th South Korea-Australia defence policy meeting held; reports indicate that DPRK has executed approximately 1,382 between 2008 and 2014; South Korea and US started the Combined Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore Exercise at the Anmyeon Beach; Russia plans to build four wind farms in DPRK; MIKTA Speakers' Consultation held in South Korea.**

China has reportedly extended an invitation to North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong Un to visit Beijing to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the war.⁶¹ However, there is no confirmation yet on the subject from the North Korean administration. Besides, there were reports suggesting that both South and North Korean militaries are invited to participate in the military parade scheduled in China on September 3 at Tiananmen Square. China has reportedly requested South Korea to despatch an honour guard to the parade.⁶²

The 16th South Korea-Australia defence policy working-level meeting was held on July 3. The two sides discussed several issues including the security situation in the Asia-Pacific region and strengthening bilateral defence cooperation by way of joint military exercises and PKO operations. The Korean side was represented by Director-General of International Policy Yoon Soon-ku and the Australian side was led by Scott Dewar. They reportedly talked about the blueprint of South Korea-Australia security and defence cooperation which is scheduled to be revealed in the defence and foreign ministers meeting in September.⁶³

Korea Institute for National Unification published a report titled *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2015* claiming that DPRK has executed approximately 1382 people between 2008 and 2014. The findings of the report are based on the testimonials from 221 North Korean defectors who came to South Korea in 2014. The white paper reflects the present status of human rights violation in DPRK and indicates that people were executed for viewing and circulating South Korea movies, television dramas and other media content.⁶⁴

South Korea and the US are holding the second Combined Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore Exercise from June 29 to July 9 at the Anmyeon Beach to improve their logistical war readiness. Approximately 1,700 service members have joined in this exercise. The first exercise was held in

⁶¹ "China Invites North Korea's Kim Jong Un to Beijing in September", *The Wall Street Journal*, July 1 2015 at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/china-invites-north-koreans-kim-jong-un-to-beijing-in-september-1435747025>

⁶² "China Invites Koreas' Militaries To Parade Marking End of WWII", *Yonhap News Agency*, July 1, 2015 <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2015/07/01/89/0401000000AEN20150701005300315F.html?input=www.twitter.com>

⁶³ "S. Korea, Australia Hold Working-Level Defence Talks", *Yonhap News Agency*, July 3, 2015 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2015/07/03/0301000000AEN20150703004000315.html>

⁶⁴ "Yi Whan-woo, NK Executes Nearly 1400 from 2008 to 2014", *The Korea Times*, July 1, 2015 at http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/07/485_181968.html

2013. The ongoing exercise is aimed to boost the capability to transfer cargo from sea to shore in addition to their logistics interoperability, communication and cooperation.⁶⁵

Russian RAO Energy System of East plans to build four wind farms adding 40 megawatts on both sides of the Russian-North Korean border. Out of the four, two farms will be constructed in Primorye region and the remaining two will be built inside DPRK in the Rason trade and economic zone. These farms are likely to be formally commissioned in 2016 or 2017.⁶⁶

MIKTA Speakers' Consultation was held in Seoul from July 2-5. MIKTA is composed of Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia. The Speakers' Consultation meeting was attended by Korea's Assembly Speaker Rep. Chung Ui-hwa and his Indonesian counterpart Irman Gusman, Australian counterpart Stephen Parry and Mexican Senate Speaker Miguel Barbosa. The discussion included several issues such as the North Korean nuclear issue and sustainable development goals.⁶⁷

C. West Asia

Iran

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **Iran nuclear talks extended to July 7; Iran to unify forex rates 6 months after nuclear deal.**

"The P5+1 and Iran have decided to extend the measures under (2013 interim deal) until July 7 to allow more time for negotiations to reach a long-term solution," State Department spokesperson Marie Harf said, as a June 30 midnight deadline approached. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said he believes that an agreement to resolve the 13-year issue is "within reach". The nuclear negotiations are "progressing in a positive direction. There remain questions, mostly regarding procedural issues rather than technical," said Lavrov.⁶⁸

Iran's Central Bank Governor Valiollah Seif says foreign currency exchange rates in the country will be unified 5-6 months after finalizing a deal with world powers on the country's nuclear programme. The central bank's main responsibility is to prevent emotional shocks in the market, which is currently stabilized. However, currency rates may be lowered after the unification process takes effect. Iran and the group P5+1 (the U.S., UK, France, Russia, China, and Germany) are in talks to strike a deal over the Islamic Republic's nuclear programme. They are in a seven-day extension to a July 10 deadline.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ "S. Korea, U.S. Launch Joint Military Logistics Drill On West Coast", *Yonhap News Agency*, 29 June 2015 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2015/06/29/0401000000AEN20150629005700315.html>

⁶⁶ "Russia To Build N. Korea Wind Farms: Report", *The Korea Herald*, June 30 2015 at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150630000994>

⁶⁷ "Speakers from 5 Countries Discuss Cooperation in Seoul", *Korea.net*, July 2, 2015 at <http://m.korea.net/english/NewsFocus/Policies/view?articleId=128489>

⁶⁸ "Iran Nuclear Talks Extended to July 7: US State Department", *Presstv*, June 30, 2015 at <http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2015/06/30/418193/Iran-nuclear-talks-July-7-US>

⁶⁹ "Iran To Unify Forex Rates 6 Months After Nuclear Deal", *Tehran Times*, July 6, 2015 http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=247892

Iraq and Syria

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **ISIS linked militants launch major assault in Egypt's Sinai; ISIS teens execute 25 soldiers in Syria's Palmyra; Coalition airstrikes target Raqqa, Syria**

Militants linked with the Islamic State unleashed a wave of attacks on the military in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, briefly seizing key checkpoints and signalling a bold new campaign by insurgents in one of the region's most stable countries. As many as 70 soldiers and civilians were killed in the fighting, officials and local media said. The army acknowledged that 17 soldiers and 100 militants had died in the clashes. The assault was one of the most sophisticated attacks on the powerful army in decades, and it challenged Egypt's efforts to portray itself as a bulwark of stability in a region awash in violence.⁷⁰

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) released a grisly video showing 25 Syrian government soldiers being executed by teenagers in the ancient amphitheatre in the city of Palmyra. The video documented an execution that reportedly happened shortly after the group captured the city on May 21. The 10-minute clip, which begins with a recitation of the Quran, then cuts to shots of the conflict, and then chained-together soldiers being led out of a cell onto a courtyard. The captives are then transported by a convoy of pickup trucks to the site of the Palmyra ruins, where they are made to kneel in a line in the amphitheatre. As the death sentence is read out, a crowd of a couple of hundred – including small children – can be seen on the wings of the amphitheatre. The camera then zooms in on the soldiers, some of whom appear to have been beaten. They are then executed by pistol fire, and their bloodied corpses are shown lying on the ground.⁷¹

A wave of coalition airstrikes took aim at ISIS targets in the group's Syrian stronghold of Raqqa over the weekend. The latest series of attacks were part of "the most sustained set of airstrikes to date" against ISIS in Syria, Brett McGurk, the U.S. envoy for the coalition against ISIS, said on *Twitter*. Near Raqqa, 18 airstrikes destroyed ISIS vehicles and bridges, the coalition said. At least 23 ISIS militants were killed in the airstrikes in the Raqqa area, according to the London-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. One strike targeting an ISIS member in a school area also killed six civilians, the observatory said. A spokesman said the coalition "is unaware of any confirmation of civilian casualties."⁷²

⁷⁰ "Militants Launch Major Assault in Egypt's Sinai", *The Washington Post*, July 1, 2015 at http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/militants-launch-major-assault-in-egypts-sinai-peninsula/2015/07/01/ceeff24d-67fc-4b14-88f7-f594c8dc3c53_story.html

⁷¹ "ISIS Teens Execute 25 Soldiers in Syria's Palmyra", *Alarabia*, July 4, 2015 <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/07/04/ISIS-teens-execute-25-soldiers-in-Syria-s-Palmyra-.html>

⁷² "Coalition Airstrikes Target Raqqa, Syria", *CNN News*, July 5, 2015 <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/07/05/middleeast/syria-raqqa-airstrikes/>

The Gulf

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **Yemen's Houthis attack Saudi border towns**

Yemen's Houthi militias shelled various areas in Saudi Arabia's Jizan and Najran, according to *Reuter's news agency* citing Houthi sources. Thirteen shells had been launched, targeting several areas including Jizan's airport, the report stated, adding that military equipment had also been destroyed. It is yet unknown whether there are casualties. A Saudi-led alliance has been bombing Yemen's Houthi militia and allied army units loyal to deposed leader Ali Abdullah Saleh since March 26 in an attempt to restore exiled President Abdrabbu Mansour Hadi to power.⁷³

D. The United State of America

National

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff releases the National Military Strategy; New National Military Strategy takes into account increasing disorder in the world; The landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage would likely impact other countries; Cyberspace and critical infrastructure operators and experts participated in the fourth annual Cyber Guard exercise; Democratic presidential contender Clinton has raised more than \$45 million; State Department releases hundreds of more pages of Clinton emails.**

On July 1, 2015, Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, released the National Military Strategy which provides the blueprint for how the military will use its forces to protect and advance U.S. national and security interests. Dempsey said, "Globalization, diffusion of technology, and demographic shifts are driving rapid change as state actors and trans-regional networks challenge order and stability". He added, "This strategy addresses these dynamics and our strategy to ensure that our force remains the best-led, trained and equipped military on the planet." The National Military Strategy follows the release of the 2015 National Security Strategy in February this year, as well as the 2014 Quadrennial Defence Review. The strategy recognizes that the application of military power versus traditional state threats is far different than military power against non-state actors. It also posits that the most likely scenario is prolonged campaigns rather than short, intense battles. The strategy also states that as a "hedge against unpredictability with reduced resources we may have to adjust our global posture." While the document notes Russia's contributions in some security areas such as counter-narcotics and counterterrorism, it also points to that nation's willingness to use force to achieve its goals. Iran's nuclear programme worries American allies in the region and beyond, according to the strategy. Iran sponsors terrorist groups in the region and is active in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon. North Korea remains an

⁷³ "Yemen's Houthis Attack Saudi Border Towns", *Alarabia*, July 4, 2015 at <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/07/04/Yemen-s-Houthis-attack-Saudi-border-towns.html>

outlaw state that has developed atomic weapons and is building missiles capable of reaching the United States. China is in a different class, but could be a threat to the United States, according to the strategy. It is a rising great power and the strategy encourages China "to become a partner for greater international security."⁷⁴

During a joint news conference at the Pentagon with Defence Secretary Ash Carter, Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey said the new National Military Strategy takes into account increasing disorder in the world and the erosion of America's comparative advantage. He said, "Since the last ... National Military Strategy was published four years ago, global disorder has trended upward while some of our comparative advantages have begun to erode". America still maintains the most powerful military in the world, but other countries are investing heavily in military capabilities, Dempsey said. The gap between those countries and the United States is closing, he added. Dempsey addressed recent claims by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) that it is responsible for attacks outside of Syria and Iraq. "What we've said from the beginning is that ISIL is trans-regional," he said. "There are also groups in Afghanistan that have re-branded themselves under the ISIL ideology and that stretches over to Boko Haram in Nigeria, which has also expressed its affiliation with ISIL. So it is trans-regional."⁷⁵

The landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling in favour of same-sex marriages has no legal force outside the United States, but gay rights activists in many parts of the world believe the court ruling will help their cause. In the Philippines, in India, in Australia and elsewhere, gay rights advocates think the U.S. ruling may help change attitudes, just as American activists - and judges, educators and legislators - had earlier been influenced by the easy acceptance of same-sex marriage in some European countries, where the laws were changed smoothly without much fuss. In today's wired world, political movements cross national boundaries in the blink of an eye, and the trend toward legal acceptance of same-sex marriage is gaining pace, though still rejected outright in some parts of the globe.⁷⁶

Cyberspace and critical infrastructure operators and experts from more than 100 organizations spanning government, academia, industry and the international coalition participated in the fourth annual Cyber Guard exercise, June 8-26. U.S. Cyber Command, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation co-led the exercise. Participants rehearsed a whole-of-nation response to destructive cyberattacks against U.S. critical infrastructure. U.S. Cyber Command Commander Navy Adm. Michael S. Rogers spent a day with Cyber Guard participants, touring exercise areas and speaking with players. In Suffolk, Cyber Guard players practiced actual operations on a closed network against simulated expert adversaries. Private-industry participation included several information and sharing analysis centres, as well as public and private research institutions. Rogers said Cyber Guard leveraged and used the capabilities from the private sector

⁷⁴ Garamone, Jim, "Dempsey Releases National Military Strategy", *DoD News*, July 1, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129191>

⁷⁵ Garamone, Jim, "Dempsey Discusses New Military Strategy, ISIL", *DoD News*, July 1, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129197>

⁷⁶ "US Same-Sex Marriage Ruling Likely to Impact Other Countries", *Associated Press*, June 28, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/ap-us-same-sex-marriage-ruling-likely-to-impact-other-countries/2840511.html>

with capabilities of the federal government within DoD and, more broadly, the FBI and DHS. The exercise also sought to develop shared situational awareness among government agencies, the private sector and allied partners.⁷⁷

Democratic presidential contender Hillary Clinton has raised more than \$45 million since she entered the race in April, aides said on July 1, setting a fast pace in what is sure to be the most expensive U.S. political campaign in history. The fundraising figure, announced by the campaign on Twitter, did not include a breakdown of the total number of donors to Clinton, the amount of their average donation or how many donors have already given the legal maximum of \$2,700. But campaign aides said 91 percent of the donations were in amounts of \$100 or less and touted the figure as a sign of broad-based, grass-roots support as she fights off a challenge from the party's liberal wing led by U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont.⁷⁸

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department released hundreds of more pages of emails from the account of former secretary of state Hillary Clinton, in order to fulfil the order of a federal judge. The 3,000 pages of e-mails were sent between March and December of 2009 during Clinton's first year as America's top diplomat. They discussed everything from day-to-day scheduling concerns to foreign policy issues with a wide variety of aides, Obama administration and other contacts Clinton, the front-runner for the 2016 Democratic presidential nomination, has been criticized for her use of a private email address for her official correspondence while in office between 2009 and 2013. Her Republican rivals contend that Clinton used the private account in order to keep it out of the public record. A federal judge ordered the department to adhere to a timetable for the rolling release of 55,000 pages of emails sent and received by Clinton while she was the top U.S. diplomat.⁷⁹

International: Asia

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **McCain says a calendar-based troop's withdrawal would be a tragedy; Presidential candidate Clinton accused China of stealing commercial secrets; Aspen leaders ponder over China's aggressive polices and on US-China Relations; China-backed AIIB launched, despite the reluctance of Washington.**

The Arizona Republican and Senate Armed Services Committee chairman John McCain visited Kabul to meet the forces as well as top Afghan leadership. McCain said he is suggesting that U.S. President Barack Obama re-evaluate conditions in Afghanistan and decide to keep open some of its military bases in the country beyond 2016. McCain has always been against what he calls a "calendar-based withdrawal" from Afghanistan. He was also one of the lawmakers who joined

⁷⁷ "Military, Federal, Private-Sector Partners Key to Cyber Guard 15", *DoD News*, July 1, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129200>

⁷⁸ "Democrat Clinton Raises \$45M Since April US Campaign Launch", *Reuters*, July 01, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/democrat-hillary-clinton-raises-45-million-dollars-campaign/2845885.html>

⁷⁹ Benson, Don and Green, Richard "State Department Releases New Batch of Clinton Emails", *VOA News*, June 30, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/state-department-releases-new-batch-of-clinton-emails/2844047.html>

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's calls to slow down the pull-out from Afghanistan. There are around 9,800 U.S. troops left in Afghanistan, down from a peak of around 100,000 in 2011. The majority are training Afghan forces, but a contingent of several thousand are still engaged in combat. "A calendar-based withdrawal — that would be a tragedy, and in my view, an opening for the Taliban to gain and create success here in Afghanistan," McCain said. Under the current plan, the United States would draw down to an embassy presence in Kabul by the end of 2016.⁸⁰

On July 4, 2015, the Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton accused China of stealing commercial secrets and "trying to hack into everything that doesn't move in America." Speaking at a campaign event in the north-eastern state of New Hampshire, the former U.S. secretary of state and U.S. senator from New York said China is "stealing huge amounts of government information" as it looks for advantages. She said the United States needs to remain fully "vigilant" about China, which she said is establishing military installations that threaten countries the United States has treaties with, such as the Philippines. She was referring to Chinese construction projects in the contested South China Sea. In late June, the U.S. director of national intelligence said China was the "leading suspect" in the investigation into the massive cyber theft of U.S. federal employee data.⁸¹

China's perceived aggressive policies in its neighbouring waters and in cyberspace are two of the biggest roadblocks in its relations with the United States, according to a high-ranking Obama administration official and an influential congressional leader. U.S. Deputy National Security Adviser Ben Rhodes and Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, a 2016 presidential contender, both spoke this week on China at the Aspen Ideas Festival. That annual gathering in Aspen, Colorado, attracts leaders from around the globe and from many disciplines for discussions of ideas and issues. Since China has been involved in territorial disputes with its Asian neighbours for decades over islands in the South China Sea, Rhodes said the U.S. strategy is to work together with Asian countries to establish a rule-based order in the Asia-Pacific region.⁸² Australia was the first nation to sign the agreement, which is designed to finance Asia's massive \$800 billion need annually for highways, railways, ports, telecommunications, energy and electricity projects. China is providing nearly \$30 billion of the AIIB's \$100 billion capital base, and will hold over 25 percent of voting rights in the bank. India and Russia are the bank's second and third largest shareholders.⁸³

The multibillion-dollar China-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) was launched in Beijing on June 29, with founding members signing an agreement that gives the clearest signals

⁸⁰ Tanzeem, Ayesha, "US Senator McCain in Kabul, Asks US Bases Remain", *VOA News*, July 04, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-senator-john-mccain-in-kabul-asks-us-bases-remain/2848844.html>; "Defense Minister Rejected as Taliban Battle Near Kabul", *Reuters*, July 04, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/reu-defense-minister-rejected-as-taliban-battle-near-kabul/2848987.html>

⁸¹ "Clinton Accuses China of Stealing US Government Information", *VOA News*, July 04, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/clinton-accuses-china-stealing-government-information/2849422.html>

⁸² Chen, Yang, "Aspen Leaders Ponder US-China Relations", *VOA News*, July 04, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/aspen-leaders-ponder-us-china-relations/2847607.html>

⁸³ "China Welcomes Partner Nations for New Infrastructure Bank", *VOA News*, June 29, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/china-welcomes-partner-nations-for-new-infrastructure-bank/2841200.html>

to date about how the bank will operate. Among them was the confirmation that China will hold the largest block of voting rights of 26 percent. Members of BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – will hold a significant chunk of the voting shares as well, with nearly 50 percent. This has given rise to fears that AIIB could not only challenge long established institutions such as the World Bank, but also the recently created BRICS Bank. China has led the campaign to garner support for the AIIB after it first proposed it two years ago. Some analysts regard its ability to attract more than 50 countries, despite the reluctance of Washington to join, as a foreign policy success. Many U.S. allies, including Australia, Britain, Germany, Israel, and South Korea, have joined. Nearly half of the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization are founding bank members. One of the key reasons the United States and others have held off is because of questions they have about the bank's ability to uphold high standards of governance and accountability.⁸⁴

India-US Relations

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **India and the US officials reviewed implementation of Modi and Obama initiatives; US 'National Military Strategy' for 2015 seeks to "deepen" security relationship with India; PM Modi confident about the renewed energy in relations; US says only regular engagement can generate new trend in Indo-Pak ties; UN Climate Change Conference gears up, focus on India; Technical glitch fixed and visa, passport operations back to normal.**

Indian and the US officials have reviewed the implementation of initiatives taken during the two summits between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Barack Obama in the past one year. Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar had a series of meetings with the US officials on June 29 during which he discussed issues ranging from ease of doing business to cooperation on terrorism and climate change. During his day-long visit, Jaishankar met US National Security Advisor Susan Rice, Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Trade Representative Michael Froman among others.⁸⁵

The Pentagon said on July 1st that it would "deepen" its security relationship with India, noting that the US' global network of allies and partners is a unique strength that provides the foundation for international security and stability. In its 'National Military Strategy' for 2015, the Pentagon said countries like Russia, China and North Korea pose security threats to the US and its allies. Reiterating that the US "will press forward with the rebalance" to the Asia-Pacific region, the 24-page report said it will strengthen its alliances with Australia, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Ide, William and Dasgupta, Saibal "China's Influence Grows With New Infrastructure Bank", *VOA News*, June 29, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/china-influence-grows-with-new-infrastructure-bank/2841441.html>

⁸⁵ "India, US Review Implementation Of Initiatives by Modi, Obama", *DNS News*, June 30, 2015 at <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-india-us-review-implementation-of-initiatives-by-modi-obama-2100294>

⁸⁶ "United States to Deepen Security Relationship With India: Pentagon", *Press Trust of India (PTI)*, July 01, 2015 at <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/united-states-to-deepen-security-relationship-with-india-pentagon-777293>; "US to Deepen Security Relationship With India: Pentagon", *PTI*, July 1, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/us-to-deepen-security-relationship-with-india-pentagon/articleshow/47901900.cms>

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, greeting the people of US on the occasion of their 239th Independence Day on July 4, said that he was “excited and confident about the renewed energy” in India-US relations. “The ties between India and US are time tested and connected by shared values. We are both vibrant democracies and remain very proud of our democratic framework,” PM Modi said in a tweet. “Our economic ties are strong and our cultural ties are vibrant. Last year I visited US and in January this year, President (Barack) Obama came to India and became the first ever president of US to join our Republic Day celebrations as the chief guest,” the PM said. PM Modi added: “Substantial ground was covered during both these visits as far as strengthening India-US ties are concerned.” “Strong India-US ties will benefit people of our nations and the world at large. I am optimistic that our relations are going to get even better in the times to come,” he said.⁸⁷

The US State Department has said that only a regular engagement between India and Pakistan could generate a new trend in the relationship between the two countries. The department’s spokesman John Kirby said that no single effort, even by a super power, could bring the change in the ties between the two South Asian neighbours. The Prime Ministers of the two countries will get a chance to discuss bilateral relations next week in the Russian city of Ufa, where both leaders will be attending a summit meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and their senior aides have indicated that they could also have a separate, bilateral meeting as well.⁸⁸

As the world gears up for the UN Climate Change Conference to be held in Paris this year-end, a lot of attention is focused on India and the role it will play in what many see as a make-or-break deal on climate change. With the US, Europe and now China having put out their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), or emission target actions, for the Conference of Parties (also known as COP 21), India is the next country to be watched out for. India has to submit its INDCs by September 30. The 21st session of the conference will be hosted in Paris in December 2015 to find consensus on keeping global warming below 2 degree Celsius by cutting down on greenhouse gas emissions.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ “PM Narendra Modi: Confident About Renewed Energy in India-US Ties”, *The Times of India*, July 4, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/PM-Narendra-Modi-Confident-about-renewed-energy-in-India-US-ties/articleshow/47934245.cms>; “Confident About Renewed Energy Ties Between India and US: PM Narendra Modi”, *Press Trust of India*, July 04, 2015 at <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/confident-about-renewed-energy-ties-between-india-and-us-pm-narendra-modi-778119>

⁸⁸ “Only Regular Engagement Can Generate New Trend In India-Pakistan Relations: US”, *The New Indian Express*, July 4, 2015 at <http://www.financialexpress.com/article/miscellaneous/only-regular-engagement-can-generate-new-trend-in-india-pakistan-relations-us/94675/>.

⁸⁹ “Paris Climate Meet: India To Market Its Action Plan For Achieving Emission Targets”, by Anubhuti Vishnoi, *The Economic Times*, July 4, 2015, at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-07-04/news/64091027_1_nationally-determined-contributions-indcs-paris-climate; Davenportjune, Coral, “Global Climate Pact Gains Momentum as China, U.S. and Brazil Detail Plans”, *The New York Times*, June 30, 2015 at http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/01/world/americas/us-and-brazil-agree-on-climate-change-actions.html?_r=0; Rajendran, K, “India’s Next Weapon Against Climate Change? The Heat-Tolerant Dwarf Cow”, *Reuters*, June 29, 2015 at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/29/us-india-livestock-climatechange-idUSKCN0P916X20150629>

A technical glitch that paralyzed US embassies around the world from issuing non-emigrant visas and US passports has now been fully resolved after a week's delay and the operations are back to normal. The Department of State experienced technical problems with their visa systems due to which all non-immigrant visa interviews scheduled at the US Embassy in New Delhi and the US Consulates General in Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, and Hyderabad during the period June 22 to June 26, 2015 were cancelled. The problems resulted from a hardware failure in a State Department facility in the United States on June 9.⁹⁰

II. DEFENCE REVIEWS

National

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **Three indigenously developed Follow-on Water Jet Fast Attack Craft for the Indian Navy launched; IXth Indo-Mauritius joint hydrographic committee meeting held at Mauritius.**

Three Follow-on Water Jet Fast Attack Craft (FO-WJFAC) for the Indian Navy were launched on June 30 at Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd (GRSE), Kolkata. The ships are named as 'INS Tarmugli', 'INS Tilanchang' & 'INS Tihayu'. The names of the ships are based on picturesque places in the Andaman and Nicobar islands in the Bay of Bengal. Vice Admiral P Murugesan, Vice Chief of the Naval Staff during the occasion, asserted that Indian Navy has been the torch bearer in the drive for indigenous construction of warships and acknowledged the role of GRSE as a reliable partner in pursuing the national goal of 'Make in India'. These follow on Water Jet Fast Attack Craft are powered by the latest 4000-series of MTU engines, along with advanced machinery control system and water jets and can attain a maximum speed of 35 Knots. The craft would also have the latest communication equipment and radars which would enable effective surveillance.⁹¹

The IXth Indo – Mauritius joint hydrographic committee meeting was held at Mauritius recently from June 29 to July 1, 2015. The Indian delegation was headed by Vice Admiral SK Jha, Chief Hydrographer to the Government of India. A significant outcome of this bilateral meeting was the renewal of the existing Memorandum of Understanding on hydrographic cooperation for the next five years. The MoU would pave way for continued cooperation between the two countries and assist Mauritius in further consolidating its hydrographic organisation. India and Mauritius have shared strong maritime bonds over the years with myriad areas of mutual cooperation. Hydrography has emerged as one of the strongest pillars of this bilateral engagement and has been a significant source of capacity and capability building for Mauritius. Since 2005 when a landmark MoU was inked, the two countries have periodically reviewed the progress and charted

⁹⁰ "Visa, Passport Operations Back To Normal At American Embassy, Consulates in India", *The American Bazar*, July 2, 2015 at <http://www.americanbazaaronline.com/2015/07/02/visa-passport-operations-back-to-normal-at-american-embassy-consulates-in-india/>

⁹¹ "Three Follow-On Water Jet Fast Attack Craft Launched today at GRSE Kolkata," *PIB*, June 30, 2015, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=122879>

a future course of action through conduct of a Joint Indo – Mauritian committee meeting on hydrography, hosted alternately by the two Governments.⁹²

International

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **US-led coalition carries out raids on ISIS Syria Stronghold Raqa; Turkey's interim government of Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu appoints Vecdi Gonul as the new defence minister.**

Reports say that a US-led coalition has carried out some of its heaviest airstrikes yet on the Islamic State group's de facto Syrian capital, killing more than 30 people, including six civilians. The strikes also damaged infrastructure in Raqa city, the group's bastion in northern Syria. The US-led coalition said the strikes were some of its heaviest since it began carrying out raids against IS in Syria last September. USA has said that the air strikes were executed to deny Daesh (IS) the ability to move military capabilities throughout Syria and into Iraq and it will have debilitating effects on Daesh's ability to move from Raqa.⁹³

Meanwhile, according to reports, Turkey's interim government of Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has appointed Vecdi Gonul as the new Turkish defence minister. The previous minister, Ismet Yilmaz, had to resign from office to run for election as parliament speaker. Yilmaz was elected parliament speaker on July 01. Gonul has served as defence minister in three consecutive governments formed by Turkey's Justice and Development Party beginning in 2002 when the party was first elected to power. Gonul's appointment has been made at a critical time when Turkey is dealing with the terrorist threat in neighbouring Syria. Turkey prefers somebody like Gonul whose knowledge and experience it trusts and who has worked with the TSK [Turkish Armed Forces] in the past. Turkey has been alarmed by Syrian Kurd advances against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Turkey also fights to topple Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad and various other radical Islamist groups at its border with Syria.⁹⁴

⁹² "IXth Indo – Mauritius Joint Committee Meeting on Hydrography Held at Port Louis, Mauritius," *PIB*, July 03, 2015, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=122965>

⁹³ "Heavy US-led Raids on ISIS Syria Stronghold Kill Dozens," *Defence News*, July 5, 2015, at <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/mideast-africa/2015/07/05/heavy-us-led-raids-isis-syria-stronghold-kill-dozens/29734837/>

⁹⁴ "Turkey Appoints Gonul New Defence Minister," *Defence News*, July 3, 2015, at <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/leaders/2015/07/03/turkey-appoints-defense-minister-gonul/29663887/>

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEWS

Jammu & Kashmir

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **Government chalks out plan to check radicalisation of Kashmiri youth; Amnesty International advocates repeal of AFSPA in J&K; J&K Police move court to block FB pages of young militants.**

The Ministry of Home Affairs has taken serious note of the possibility of youths in Jammu & Kashmir getting attracted to the ISIS and has initiated preparation of a “plan of action” to prevent such radicalisation through both overt and covert measures. The home ministry is in the process of consulting experts in this field before preparing a plan of action which is expected to be implemented in the states concerned. There have been reports of ISIS flags being waved in J&K this year and at least a dozen youths being identified for these acts and put under surveillance. Home minister Rajnath Singh had last month said that ISIS had little traction in India while conceding that a few youths may have joined the outfit based in Syria and Iraq. It was earlier reported that at least 11 Indian youths may have joined the ISIS after travelling to Iraq and Syria.⁹⁵

In a report that called for an end to the use of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in Jammu and Kashmir, human rights group Amnesty International has released a detailed report on the basis of 58 case studies of alleged excesses by the armed forces in the State. The report, which is likely to spark a strong response from the government, recommends that India withdraw AFSPA, turn over cases of alleged human rights violations and disappearances to civil courts, and invite the UN Special Rapporteur and the UN Working Group on disappearances to visit with “unimpeded access” to victims and witnesses. The report - “Denied: Failures in accountability for human rights violations by security force personnel in Jammu & Kashmir” — suggests that the government has neutralised all the allegations with AFSPA’s Section 7, which allows the armed forces to kill anyone in the State on the basis of a mere suspicion.⁹⁶

Jammu & Kashmir Police on July 3 moved a local court seeking directions for blocking the pages on ‘Facebook’ which carried pictures of 11 young Kashmiri militants donning army fatigues and holding firearms. “We have initiated legal action and approached court for orders to block it,” said Inspector General (Kashmir) S J M Gilani. Once an order is received, the Jammu and Kashmir police will ask the social networking site to block the pages carrying pictures of the Hizbul Mujahideen militants which included Burhan Wani, who has become a poster-boy for the terror outfit. The central security agencies have sought details from the social networking site about the

⁹⁵ Sharma, Aman, “Home Ministry Preparing Plan Of Action To Check Radicalisation of Jammu & Kashmir Youth”, *The Economic Times*, June 30, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/home-ministry-preparing-plan-of-action-to-check-radicalisation-of-jammu-kashmir-youth/articleshow/47873241.cms>

⁹⁶ Jeelani, Mehboob, “Amnesty Slams India on AFSPA; Wants Spl. Rapporteur For Probe On Disappearances”, *The Hindu*, July 2, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/amnesty-slams-jk-record-on-afspa-cases/article7374598.ece>

Internet Protocol addresses from where the photos were uplinked and then deleted, the sources said. Preliminary enquiry show that the IP seems to be masked and it was difficult to know the exact location from where it had been uploaded, the sources said. Young militant leaders like Burhan, with an appeal among the youth of the region, are helping swell the militant ranks, a development, security agencies feel, carry grim portents for the Valley.⁹⁷

Northeast India

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **Security cooperation: Myanmar's Army chief to visit India; Manipur ambush: NIA arrests top leader of NSCN (K); 4 NDFB(S) militants arrested and RDX recovered in Assam; LBA: Verification of people in Bangladesh' enclaves to start from July 6; ULFA (I), NDFB(S) under pressure to 'show strength': Security sources.**

The Government of India has termed the recent visit of the National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval to Myanmar as a "fruitful one" and the Army Chief of the neighbouring country is scheduled to visit India in the early part of next month to have a detailed discussion on the possibility of launching offensive against the militants using the territory of that country as safe sanctuaries for years. Talking to The Assam Tribune, highly placed sources in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said that during the NSA's visit, though Myanmar assured full cooperation to India to tackle the problem, but the leaders of that country also admitted that they had some problems in administering the remote areas where the militants are camping. However, the Government of Myanmar has agreed to move additional troops to the areas bordering India, while, on its part, the Government of India has also decided to augment security measures along the international border.⁹⁸

A top leader of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Khaplang (NSCN-K), the militant outfit suspected to be involved in ambush on the Army convoy in Manipur's Chandel district on June 4, was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on June 29. Khumlo Abi Anal alias Ambison, a senior functionary and the 'regional chairman' of NSCN (K) in Chandel district, is being brought to Delhi on a transit remand, said NIA officers. This is the first arrest by the NIA in its probe into the ambush in Manipur. According to the NIA, Ambison "was extensively involved in the conspiracy to attack the army personnel, and had met with the offenders immediately before the attack. He was also in touch with the offenders before and after the attack." Investigations had indicated that 23 NSCN (K) members had carried out the ambush, said sources. While two NSCN (K) members were killed in the attack, the NIA has identified 14 of the other NSCN (K) members who carried out the attack, sources added.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ "J&K: Police Move Court To Block Facebook Pages Of Young Militants", *The Indian Express*, July 3, 2015 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/jk-police-move-court-to-block-facebook-pages-of-young-militants/>

⁹⁸ Choudhury, R Dutta, "Myanmar Army Chief To Visit India", *The Assam Tribune*, June 29, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun2915/at050>

⁹⁹ "Manipur Ambush: Top Leader Of NSCN (K) Held", *The Indian Express*, June 30, 2015 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/nia-arrests-man-behind-manipur-ambush/>

Four NDFB(S) militants, including its self-styled commanding officer, were arrested and arms and RDX explosives were recovered in Baksa district of Assam. The four insurgents, including two in NIA list, were held when they were coming from Meghalaya on June 29 night, police officials said. They were identified as NDFB(S) 'Commanding Officer (CO)' Lankeswar Bodo alias Lachi, 'deputy CO' Santosh Kherkotari alias Chimang and two cadres Rabiram Basumotary and Gambar Gayari. Lachi and Chimang were involved in the Narayan Guri massacre in 2014 and their names were in the NIA list for some murder cases in Narsingbari in the same year. With leads provided by the four insurgents, police recovered a huge quantity of arms and ammunition from remote areas of Salbari, they said. The arms included one AK-56 rifle with magazine, 82 rounds of cartridges, two grenades, one pistol, two detonators, and 10 kg RDX explosive.¹⁰⁰

India will start the process of verification of people living in 51 border enclaves, to be handed over to Bangladesh as per the Land Boundary Agreement, on July 6, reports *PTI*. The verification process in Indian enclaves is expected to be completed before July 31, termed as 'Appointed Day' for the exchange of enclaves. Bangladesh and India will implement the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) of 1974 and Protocol of 2011, in a phased manner over the next 11 months.¹⁰¹

The police and security forces involved in counter-insurgency operations in Assam have been kept on the alert following reports that the United Liberation Front of Asom (Independent) and the Songbijit faction of the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) are under pressure from other militant groups of the region to show their strength. Security sources told *The Assam Tribune* that after the formation of the common platform of four militant groups of the North-east in Myanmar, it was decided that the constituent organisations would show their strength in their respective areas. Accordingly, the NSCN (K) has been able to show its strength by ambushing Army personnel. The KYKL, which has not yet formally joined the new platform, but is maintaining close ties with its constituents, was also involved in the ambush in Chandel district of Manipur. But as the ULFA (I) and the NDFB(S) have not been able to indulge in any kind of violence in their respective areas, they are under pressure from the other constituents of the platform. ULFA (I) commander-in-chief Paresh Baruah reportedly called up a number of senior cadres and asked them to ambush security forces to show the outfit's strength.¹⁰² Meanwhile, Paresh Baruah said that the Manipur-based militant groups would join the new platform soon. He said six Manipur-based rebel groups, who formed the CORCOM, are morally bound with the new platform and they were part of the discussion process during its formation. But they have not formally joined the new platform and sought six months' time to settle their own issues.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ "Four NDFB(S) Militants Arrested and RDX Recovered in Assam", *The Economic Times*, July 1, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/four-ndfbs-militants-arrested-and-rdx-recovered-in-assam/articleshow/47895908.cms?cfmid=11001094>

¹⁰¹ "Verification Of People In Enclaves From July 6", *The Assam Tribune*, July 1, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul0115/at056>

¹⁰² "ULFA (I), NDFB(S) Under Pressure To 'Show Strength'", *The Assam Tribune*, July 2, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul0215/at054>

¹⁰³ Choudhury, R Dutta, "All constituents Have Equal Say: Paresh", *The Assam Tribune*, July 3, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul0315/at053>

Left-wing Extremism

(June 29-July 5, 2015)

- **Report indicates Maoist resurgence in Jangalmahal; No forcible suppression of Maoists: Kerala Home Minister; Naxalite outfits trying to recruit from slum pockets in the Mumbai city: Mumbai Police Special Branch.**

Only three days after West Bengal state police DG GMP Reddy said that there was nothing to worry about Maoists activities in the Jangalmahal, a report by the central intelligence department to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs indicated several Maoist groups are operative in the area. It has been mentioned that there are at least ten groups — all from Jharkhand and Odisha — which are frequenting parts of Purulia, Bankura and West Midnapore and conducting meeting with the villagers and local youths.¹⁰⁴

The Kerala government on July 4 asserted that it was committed to ending Maoist threat but made it clear that the activities of Left-wing extremists could not be suppressed through force. Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala said the government was of the view that solution to all problems should be found through dialogues and peaceful way and not by using force. The government also did not want to crush any peaceful protest and violate the human rights of any person, he said.¹⁰⁵

A confidential report by the Mumbai Police Special Branch (SB) has pointed towards banned Naxalite outfits trying to recruit from slum pockets in the city by exploiting the poverty and unemployment amongst the youth there. Police sources said they have learnt about Maoist ideologues aiming to form sleeper cells in the city in order to expand their support base, with some of the members likely to be diverted to their fighting arm in the 'red belt' in central India. Reliable sources from the police department have confirmed these observations and said that clandestine vigilance has been increased in slum ghettos, particularly amongst members of a particular caste, which has "traditionally" produced left and ultra-left ideologues.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Gupta, Saibal and Khanra, Sujay, "Reports Indicate Maoist Resurgence in Jangalmahal", *The Times of India*, July 1, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/Reports-indicate-Maoist-resurgence-in-Jangalmahal/articleshow/47887886.cms>

¹⁰⁵ "No Forcible Suppression of Maoists: Chennithala", *The Hindu*, July 5, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Thiruvananthapuram/no-forcible-suppression-of-maoists-chennithala/article7388399.ece>

¹⁰⁶ Satam, Parth, "Slums Hotbed For Maoist Activity", *The Asian Age*, July 5, 2015 at <http://www.asianage.com/mumbai/slums-hotbed-maoist-activity-635>