

# THE WEEK IN REVIEW

June 24-July 7, 7 (1), 2013

**Editor:** Sanjeev Kumar Shrivastav

## Contributors

**Gulbin Sultana**

**Gunjan Singh**

**Rajorshi Roy**

**Mahtab Alam Rizvi**

**Princy Marine George**

**Prashant Pradhan**

**Sanjeev Kumar Shrivastav**

**Amit Kumar**

**Shristi Pukhrem**

Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh

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**Review Adviser:** S. Kalyanaraman

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1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg, New Delhi-110010  
Telephone: 91-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191 Website: [www.idsa.in](http://www.idsa.in); Email: [twir@idsa.in](mailto:twir@idsa.in)

# CONTENTS

<b>In This Issue</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>I. COUNTRY REVIEWS</b>	
A. South Asia	2-6
B. East Asia	6-11
C. West Asia	11-15
D. Russia	15-18
E. USA	18-21
<b>II. DEFENCE REVIEW</b>	21-24
<b>III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW</b>	24-25

## I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

### A. South Asia

#### Bangladesh

(June 24-30)

- **High Level border conference held between BSF and BGB; Sixth meeting of the India-Bangladesh joint steering committee on cooperation in the power sector held in New Delhi; Bangladesh Government approves \$45.9 million for conducting surveys and feasibility studies for construction of Rooppur nuclear power plant in Pabna; Bangladesh signs a contract with Russian state corporation Rosatom; Bangladesh recorded a rise in FDI in 2012; US suspends trade privileges for Bangladesh**

Reports noted that a high-level border conference between Border Guards Bangladesh and Indian Border Security Force was held at Party Point Community Centre in Rajshahi city on June 26, 2013.<sup>1</sup>

In another development, reports noted that the sixth meeting of the India-Bangladesh joint steering committee on cooperation in the power sector was held on June 26-27, 2013 in New Delhi.<sup>2</sup>

According to reports, Bangladesh Government on June 23, 2013 approved \$45.9 million for conducting surveys and feasibility studies for construction of Rooppur nuclear power plant in Pabna, to produce 2,000 megawatt (MW) of electricity. The cabinet committee on purchase, chaired by Finance Minister AMA Muhith awarded the work to the Russian state-owned company Atomstroyexport for constructing the plant.<sup>3</sup>

Reports noted that Bangladesh signed a contract with Russian state corporation Rosatom to conduct three vital studies to complete preparation for the construction of Rooppur nuclear power project on June 27, 2013. The first component of the deal was to conduct a feasibility study to determine the technical and economic aspects of the project. The second component involves conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and developing an environmental impact monitoring programme that would act as one of the watchdogs of the plant. And the third component deals with conducting a site engineering survey and an environmental study to characterise the project site based on which the power plant will be designed. Chairman of Bangladesh Atomic Energy

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<sup>1</sup> "High-level Border Talks: BGB meets BSF in Rajshahi", *The Daily Star*, June 27, 2013 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/bgb-meets-bsf-in-rajshahi/>.

<sup>2</sup> "Talks in New Delhi to strengthen power sector cooperation", *The Daily Star*, June 27, 2013 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/talks-in-new-delhi-to-strengthen-power-sector-cooperation/>

<sup>3</sup> "Rooppur Power Plant: Govt approves \$45m for feasibility", *The Daily Star*, June 24, 2013 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/govt-approves-45m-for-feasibility/>.

Commissioner Abu Sayeed Mohammad Feroz and head of Rosatom's affiliate company NIAEP-ASE Valeriy Limarenko signed the deal on the sideline of the "International Conference on Nuclear Power for 21st Century" held in St Petersburg, Russia. To be implemented in 18 months, the arrangement will be financed under a \$ 500 million loan with Russia that was secured in January at a rate of 3 percent interest.<sup>4</sup>

In other developments, reports noted that Bangladesh recorded a rise in foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2012, bucking a global downturn in cross-border investments, Bangladesh Board of Investment (BoI) said on June 26, 2013. Actual FDI inflows rose 13.75 percent to \$1.29 billion in 2012, the highest ever in the history of Bangladesh, said BoI referring to the World Investment Report 2013 by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).<sup>5</sup>

According to reports, the US has suspended trade privileges for Bangladesh after a six-year review exposed "serious shortcomings" in safety and labour standards. The decision will bring tariffs back on some of Bangladesh's exports to US markets under the programme known as the Generalised System of Preferences. However, the scheme does not apply to Bangladesh's main export: garment. The suspension underlines the lack of progress by the government in improving factory conditions.<sup>6</sup>

## Sri Lanka

(June 24-30)

- **President Mahinda Rajapaksa visits Tanzania and Seychelles; Pakistan Army General visits Sri Lanka; Government of Pakistan offers help to Sri Lankan Government to revive the handloom sector in Mirigama of Gampaha district**

Reports noted that President Mahinda Rajapaksa went on a three day official visit to Tanzania on June 27, 2013 and a two day visit to Seychelles on June 29, 2013.<sup>7</sup> In Tanzania, at the conclusion of the bilateral talks between President Rajapaksa and President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, three key agreements were signed on exempting visa for diplomatic and state officials, co-operation on intelligence, defense and cultural co-operation. During the visit to Seychelles, President Rajapaksa three cooperation agreements were between the governments of Sri Lanka and Seychelles.<sup>8</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, Sri Lanka and Pakistan have explored the avenues of receiving more and more training opportunities for Sri Lankan officers in Pakistan, in addition

<sup>4</sup> Khan, Sharier, "Deal signed with Russia for study: Nuke Power Plant", *The Daily Star*, June 28, 2013 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/deal-signed-with-russia-for-study/>.

<sup>5</sup> "FDI rises despite global downturn", *The Daily Star*, June 27, 2013 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/fdi-rises-despite-global-downturn/>.

<sup>6</sup> "US suspends GSP for Bangladesh", *Daily Star*, June 28, 2013 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/us-set-to-suspend-bangladeshs-gsp/>.

<sup>7</sup> "MR leaves for Tanzania and Seychelles", *The Daily Mirror*, June 27, 2013 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/31532-mr-leaves-for-tanzania-and-seychelles.html>.

<sup>8</sup> "Sri Lankan President begins historic visit to Seychelles", *The Colombo Page*, June 30, 2013 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_13A/Jun30\\_1372600768CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13A/Jun30_1372600768CH.php).

to ongoing training programmes. This was discussed when visiting Chief of Army Staff, Pakistan Army General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani met with his Sri Lankan counterpart General Jagath Jayasuriya in Colombo on June 27, 2013.<sup>9</sup>

Reports noted that the Government of Pakistan through its High Commission in Colombo is collaborating with the Government of Sri Lanka to revive the handloom sector in Mirigama of Gampaha district of Sri Lanka. High Commissioner of Pakistan, Major General (Retd.) Qasim Qureshi offered a US \$ 72,000 grant to the Minister of Economic Development Basil Rajapaksa on June 27, 2013 for the project.<sup>10</sup>

(July 1-7)

- **Sri Lanka's Economic Development Minister Basil Rajapaksa visits India; President of Maldives visits Sri Lanka; Sri Lanka expresses shocks and concern over blasts inside Mahabodhi temple; Madras Highcour upheld ban on LTTE; 21 more fishermen arrested by Sri Lankan Navy**

According to reports, Sri Lanka's Economic Development Minister and President's Senior Adviser Basil Rajapaksa, who was on a visit to New Delhi, met representatives of the Tamil Nadu Fishermen Federation in New Delhi on July 5, 2013 and held discussions to reach an amicable and meaningful solution to the problems between the fishermen from the two countries. The minister extended an invitation to Tamil Nadu fishermen to visit Sri Lanka to hold discussions with the fishing communities in northern Sri Lanka.<sup>11</sup>

In another development, reports noted that the President of Maldives, Dr. Mohamed Waheed accompanied by First Lady Ilham Hussain and a business delegation made a two-day working visit to Sri Lanka. Reportedly, the objective of President Waheed's visit is to meet Sri Lankan President Rajapaksa in order to facilitate a way by which Maldives can acquire food commodities and construction stone and sand from Sri Lanka.<sup>12</sup>

According to reports, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa has expressed shock and concern over the series of blasts inside the Mahabodhi temple in Bihar's Bodhgaya district of India.<sup>13</sup> Sri Lanka's Buddhist extremist organization Sinhala Ravaya expressed thorough dissatisfaction about India's response over the incident.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "More training for SL officers discussed-Army", *The Daily Mirror*, June 28, 2013 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/31612-more-training-for-sl-officers-discussed-army.html>.

<sup>10</sup> "Pakistan grants over Rs.9.3 million for strengthening handloom sector in Sri Lanka", *The Colombo Page*, June 28, 2013 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_13A/Jun28\\_1372432340CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13A/Jun28_1372432340CH.php).

<sup>11</sup> "Tamil Nadu fishermen invited to Sri Lanka for talks", *The Colombo Page*, July 6, 2013 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_13B/Jul06\\_1373084917CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13B/Jul06_1373084917CH.php).

<sup>12</sup> "President of Maldives arrives in Sri Lanka on an official visit", *The Colombo Page*, July 6, 2013 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_13B/Jul06\\_1373120642CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13B/Jul06_1373120642CH.php).

<sup>13</sup> "Sri Lankan President expresses concern over bomb blasts at Mahabodhi Temple in India", *The Colombo Page*, Jul 7, 2013 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_13B/Jul07\\_1373174958CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13B/Jul07_1373174958CH.php).

<sup>14</sup> "Buddhist extremists of Sri Lanka criticize Indian security for lack of actions", *The Colombo Page*, July 7, 2013 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_13B/Jul07\\_1373207804KA.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13B/Jul07_1373207804KA.php).

In other developments, reportedly, MDMK chief Vaiko, along with two pro-Tamil advocates, had challenged the ban on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) between 2010 and 2012, which was earlier upheld by the Unlawful Activities Tribunal in Chennai. Mr Vaiko, who had fought the case himself in courts, had contended that the LTTE's objective of establishing a sovereign nation for Tamils in the island did not pose any threat to the territorial integrity of India, thus contending that the banning of the organisation in India was unlawful. The Madras High Court has however upheld the Centre's ban on the LTTE.<sup>15</sup>

According to reports, the Sri Lankan Navy arrested 21 Indian fishermen in the seas of Thailaimannar for violating Sri Lanka's maritime border on July 6, 2013.<sup>16</sup>

## Maldives

(June 24-30)

- **11% increase in Maldives FDI in 2012; Chinese hospital ship "Peace Ark" arrives in Maldives; Saudi Arabian organisation Rabita al-Alam al-Islami signs an agreement with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs**

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has stated that Maldives had a total of \$284 million in Foreign Direct Investment in 2012, an increase of 11 percent compared to 2011.<sup>17</sup>

According to reports, Chinese hospital ship "Peace Ark", arrived in the Maldives on June 29, 2013, for a visit conducted under the theme "Mission Harmony 2013" organized by Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) in collaboration with the PLA Navy.<sup>18</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, Saudi Arabian organisation Rabita al-Alam al-Islami (Muslim World League) has opened an office in the Maldives on June 30, 2013 and signed an agreement with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs regarding providing support to the Maldives in various areas. Speaking at the ceremony held at the Islamic Ministry to sign the agreement, Islamic Minister Dr Mohamed Shaheem Ali Saeed said that the agreement and the establishment of an office of Rabita al-Alam al-Islami in the Maldives would facilitate assistance to the Maldives in social, religious and humanitarian issues. Minister Shaheem also said that a non-operational office of Rabita al-Alam al-Islami had existed in the Maldives for about 15 years.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> "Madras High Court upholds ban on LTTE", *The Daily Mirror*, July 1, 2013 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/31710-madras-high-court-upholds-ban-on-ltte.html>.

<sup>16</sup> "21 Indian fishermen arrested by SLN", *The Daily Mirror*, July 7, 2013 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/32006-21-indian-fishermen-arrested-by-sln.html>.

<sup>17</sup> "Maldives Foreign Direct Investment at \$248 million last year", *The Sun Online*, June 27, 2013 at <http://sun.mv/english/13807>.

<sup>18</sup> "Mission Commander of Chinese hospital ship calls on Defence Minister", *The Sun Online*, June 30, 2013 at <http://sun.mv/english/13908>.

<sup>19</sup> "Rabita al-Alam al-Islami opens an office in Maldives", *The Sun Online*, June 30, 2013 at <http://sun.mv/english/13907>.

(July 1-7)

- **Doordarshan will train Maldives Broadcasting Commission; MoU signed between Maldives and the US; Maldives and Thailand has commenced efforts to increase joint trade and investment to \$200 million by 2018; President Waheed visits Sri Lanka**

Reports noted that Maldives Broadcasting Commission has arranged for Maldivian broadcasters to gain technical training from Doordarshan, the largest public service broadcaster in India. A delegation from the Maldives Broadcasting Commission visited India on invitation of the Indian government and met with the heads of Doordarshan, including their Director General, Tripurari Sharan.<sup>20</sup>

In another development, reports noted that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Maldives and the United States, to conduct two projects worth \$9.7 million in the Maldives. The MoU was signed by Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abdul Azeez Yoosuf on behalf of the Maldivian government, and Acting Mission Director at the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Todd Sorenson on behalf of the U.S. government. Abdul Azeez said that under this MoU, USAID will provide \$7.2 million as technical assistance for the global climate change adaptation project, and \$2.5 million as technical assistance for election preparations.<sup>21</sup>

In other developments, reports noted that Maldives and Thailand has commenced efforts to increase joint trade and investment to \$200 million by 2018. The two countries signed a Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement which established a Joint Trade Committee on June 1st this year, during a visit by the Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra.<sup>22</sup>

Reports noted that The President Waheed along with a business delegation made a two-day working visit to Sri Lanka. Reportedly, the objective of President Waheed's visit is to meet Sri Lankan President Rajapaksa in order to facilitate a way by which Maldives can acquire food commodities and construction stone and sand from Sri Lanka.<sup>23</sup>

## B. East Asia

### Southeast Asia

(June 24-30)

- **Philippines criticizes China for retaliation threat; Philippines to allow US to use military**

<sup>20</sup> "Doordarshan to train Maldivian broadcasters", *The Sun Online*, July 2, 2013 at <http://sun.mv/english/13966>.

<sup>21</sup> "U.S. provides \$9.7 million to Maldives for two projects", *The Sun Online*, July 7, 2013 at <http://sun.mv/english/14104>.

<sup>22</sup> "Maldives, Thailand aims to increase trade, investment to \$200 million", *The Sun Online*, July 6, 2013 at <http://sun.mv/english/14076>.

<sup>23</sup> "President of Maldives arrives in Sri Lanka on an official visit", *The Colombo Page*, July 6, 2013 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_13B/Jul06\\_1373120642CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13B/Jul06_1373120642CH.php).

**bases; Sikh terrorist arrested in Malaysia, handed over to India; Vietnam, Australia to cooperate in Science and technology; Indonesia apologized to Malaysia and Singapore for haze crisis; Vietnam Secretary General visits Thailand; Vietnam naval ships visit Chinese port**

According to reports, the Philippines slammed China's threat of retaliation in the South China Sea on June 29, 2013, urging Beijing to defer instead to peaceful means of resolving maritime disputes under the UNCLOS. The Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines reminded China of its obligation under international law to settle disputes without the use of threat or force.<sup>24</sup>

The Philippines plans to allow the US and other allies to use its military bases, to defend disputed territory from Chinese presence. This will be done under an arrangement that US forces could use to counter China's creeping presence in the disputed West Philippine Sea.<sup>25</sup>

According to reports, an Indian national, believed to be part of an international Sikh militant group, has been deported from Malaysia. Satpal Singh Raghvir Singh was arrested in the Cheras for immigration offences on January 4 and sent back to India on June 27, 2013.<sup>26</sup>

Australia and Vietnam signed an agreement on Science and technology cooperation in Canberra June 27, 2013. The accord was signed by Australia's Minister for Science and Research Senator Don Farrell and Vietnam's Minister for Science and Technology Nguyen Quan.<sup>27</sup>

Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has apologized to Singapore and Malaysia for the haze that has disrupted normal life in parts of these countries. The President apologized for the haze that had blanketed Singapore and Malaysia in recent days and continues to remain a threat in coming days.<sup>28</sup>

In other developments, Vietnam's Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong left Hanoi for Bangkok on June 25, beginning a three-day official visit to Thailand. Vietnam and Thailand are expected to issue a joint statement on establishing a strategic partnership during Trong's visit.<sup>29</sup>

According to reports, two Vietnamese naval ships arrived in the coastal city of Zhan Jiang in the Chinese southern province of Guangdong on June 25, 2013 in a courtesy visit to the region's

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<sup>24</sup> 'Philippines slams China for retaliation threat', *Hong Kong Herald*, 30 June 2013, <http://www.hongkongherald.com/index.php/sid/215527393/scat/9366300fc9319e9b>

<sup>25</sup> 'Allies needed vs bullies': they're near our doorsteps', *Phil Star*, 29 June, 2013, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2013/06/29/959542/allies-needed-vs-bullies-theyre-near-our-doorstep-dnd-chief>

<sup>26</sup> 'Sikh terror suspect in M'sia deported to India', *Yahoo Malaysia*, 28 June 2013, <http://my.news.yahoo.com/sikh-terror-suspect-msia-deported-india-035005882.html>

<sup>27</sup> 'Australia, Vietnam sign technology accord', *Australian Herald*, 28 June 2013, <http://www.australianherald.com/index.php/sid/215491992/scat/ae0def0d9b645403>

<sup>28</sup> 'Indonesia President Susilo Bambang Yudhono apologises for haze', *BBC News*, 25 June, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-23026599>

<sup>29</sup> 'Party leader begins Thailand visit', *The Voice of Vietnam*, 25 June 2013, <http://english.vov.vn/Politics/Diplomacy/Party-leader-begins-Thailand-visit/261893.vov>

municipal authorities and the High Command of the Nanhai Fleet. The visit, by HQ 011 and HQ 012, forms part of a wider tour of China which took place on Vietnam's 15th joint patrol with Chinese naval forces.<sup>30</sup>

#### CHINA

(JUNE 24-30)

- **Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi: China's new leadership will continue to place high importance on its relationship with the ASEAN, China warns of striking hard on violent terrorist attacks in Xinjiang; Li Keqiang meets Henry Kissinger in Beijing; Chinese Vice Premier meets visiting ROK President; China and India hold the 16<sup>th</sup> round of border talks; China accuses Japan and Philippines officials for stirring up trouble and mislead international opinion; Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to visit China in the first week of July; China-ROK stress on a joint commitment towards the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula; Chinese President meet Suriname president; China slams an overview of Japan's Defense Ministry's white paper for 2013; 32nd round of the EU-China Dialogue on Human Rights held; Chinese State councilor visits Nepal**

According to reports, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi said that China's new leadership will continue to place high importance on its relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which remains a priority of China's neighboring diplomacy. He noted a united, self-sustaining, prosperous and vigorous ASEAN accords with China's strategic interests.<sup>31</sup>

In another development, according to reports, Yu Zhengsheng, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee said that China will strike hard on violent terrorist attacks according to law and maintain social stability in Xinjiang. This statement was made after Xinjiang witnessed violent attacks in the last few days.<sup>32</sup>

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang met with the former United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in Beijing on June 28.<sup>33</sup>

Reports noted that Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong met the visiting Republic of Korea (ROK) President Park Geun-hye with the two countries looking to increase people-to-people exchanges. Liu said she is happy about the two countries' decision to set up a China-ROK joint committee on people-to-people exchanges.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> 'Vietnamese naval ships visit China's Nanhai fleet', *The Voice of Vietnam*, June 26, 2013, <http://english.vov.vn/Society/Development/Vietnamese-naval-ships-visit-Chinas-Nanhai-Fleet/261973.vov>

<sup>31</sup> "ASEAN ties remain priority of China: FM" *China Daily*, June 30, 2013 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/30/content\\_16691976.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/30/content_16691976.htm)

<sup>32</sup> "China to strike hard on violent terrorist attacks" *China Daily*, June 30, 2013 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/30/content\\_16689313.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/30/content_16689313.htm)

<sup>33</sup> "Premier Li meets Kissinger in Beijing" *China Daily*, June 29, 2013 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/photo/2013-06/29/content\\_16688873.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/photo/2013-06/29/content_16688873.htm)

<sup>34</sup> "Chinese vice premier meets ROK president" *China Daily*, June 29, 2013 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/29/content\\_16688833.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/29/content_16688833.htm)

According to reports, China and India on June 28 held their 16th round of border talks. State Councilor and Special Representative Yang Jiechi and Indian National Security Adviser and Special Representative Shiv Shankar Menon attended the boundary talks, exchanging ideas for solving border problems and developing bilateral relations.<sup>35</sup>

Reports noted that Chinese spokeswoman for China's Foreign Ministry, Hua Chunying rebuffed Japanese and Philippine officials' comments about China's maritime operations, saying those officials are trying to stir up trouble and mislead international opinion. "We are glad to see other countries develop normal and friendly relations, but we are opposed to relevant countries' moves to form factions, stir up trouble, deliberately play up tensions in the region and mislead international opinion," spokeswoman Hua Chunying said at a regular press conference. She stated.<sup>36</sup>

Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif will pay an official visit to China from July 3-8 on the invitation of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang. This was announced by Hua Chunying, the Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson.<sup>37</sup>

President Xi Jinping and visiting Republic of Korea President Park Geun-hye stressed a joint commitment towards the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and also maintaining regional peace. They also called for an early start of the Six Party Talks.<sup>38</sup>

In other developments, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with the Surinamese President Desi Bouterse. Xi stated that the bilateral exchanges and relations between the two sides has seen remarkable progress since the two countries established diplomatic ties 37 years ago.<sup>39</sup>

According to reports, Hua Chunying the Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman slammed the an overview of Japan's Defense Ministry's white paper for 2013, urging the country to conduct some introspection and do more to facilitate regional peace and stability. "China adheres to a road of peaceful development and pursues a national defense policy with a defensive nature" she said.<sup>40</sup>

Reports noted that China and the European Union exchanged in-depth views on human rights issues during the 32nd round of the EU-China Dialogue on Human Rights in Guiyang, capital of southwest China's Guizhou province.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>35</sup> "China, India hold 16th round of border talks" *China Daily*, June 29, 2013 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/29/content\\_16685454.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/29/content_16685454.htm)

<sup>36</sup> "Japan, Philippines 'stirring up trouble': FM" *China Daily*, June 28, 2013 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/28/content\\_16685180.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/28/content_16685180.htm)

<sup>37</sup> "Pakistani prime minister to visit China" *China Daily*, June 28, 2013 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/28/content\\_16684856.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/28/content_16684856.htm)

<sup>38</sup> "Visit aids 'trust-building process'" *China Daily*, June 28, 2013 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/28/content\\_16676314.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/28/content_16676314.htm)

<sup>39</sup> "China, Suriname presidents meet" *China Daily*, June 27, 2013 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/27/content\\_16667713.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/27/content_16667713.htm)

<sup>40</sup> "China slams Japan's new defense white paper" *China Daily*, June 27, 2013 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/27/content\\_16667682.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/27/content_16667682.htm)

<sup>41</sup> "China, EU hold human rights dialogue in SW China" *China Daily*, June 26, 2013 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/26/content\\_16658946.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/26/content_16658946.htm)

According to reports, Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi arrived in Kathmandu on June 24 for a two-day official visit. Yang is the first senior foreign government official to visit Nepal after the formation of Interim Election Government on March 14. During his visit Yang is expected to focus on current political situation in Nepal, investment in development projects and China's security concerns, Nepal government officials told Xinhua. Two agreements will be signed during the visit, one with Nepal's Election Commission to provide the commission 10 million yuan (\$1.63 million) for the November polls, another on setting up an Armed Police Force (APF) training academy.<sup>42</sup>

## Japan

(June 24-30)

- **The Japanese government considers the possibility of permanently deploying PAC-3 missile interceptor; Tokyo to send MSDF destroyer to join an international anti-piracy fleet**

The Japanese government is reportedly considering the possible deployment of the Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) units at the Defense Ministry permanently in order to deal with any possible attack from North Korean side. Earlier in April this year, under a government order issued to the Japanese Self Defense Force (SDF), PAC-3 missile interceptor units were deployed in a number of places (including Okinawa) to intercept any ballistic missile launched by the North that could hit Japan. On June 28, the government lifted the April order. However, concerned by the uncertain behaviour of North Korea in recent times, the government has concluded that there is a need to continue deploying the PAC-3 units to defend the capital functions of Tokyo.<sup>43</sup>

In another development, Japanese Defense minister Itsunori Onodera, on June 23, announced that Japan will send a Maritime SDF (MSDF) destroyer to join an international fleet to combat piracy off Somalia. He further stated that MSDF's ongoing anti-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden, which is scheduled to end on July 23 this year, is to be extended by one more year.<sup>44</sup>

## South Korea

(June 24-30)

- **South Korean President visits China, seeks greater economic ties between the two countries**

South Korean president Park Geun-hye, on June 27, arrived at Beijing on a four-day long trip. During her summit talk with Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, both the leaders agreed that North Korea nuclear weapon programme poses a major threat to regional security. They also emphasized

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<sup>42</sup> "State councilor begins official visit to Nepal" *China Daily*, June 25, 2013 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/25/content\\_16653593.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-06/25/content_16653593.htm)

<sup>43</sup> "PAC-3 may be permanently deployed in Tokyo", *The Yomiuri Shimbun*, June 30, 2013, at <http://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0000345865>

<sup>44</sup> "MSDF ship to join intl anti-piracy fleet", *The Yomiuri Daily*, June 27, 2013, at <http://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0000338834>

on the necessity of the two countries' close cooperation in denuclearizing the North. Both also vowed to expand further their already flourishing bilateral economic ties, including moving speedily towards the conclusion of a FTA.<sup>45</sup>

## C. West Asia

### Turkey

(June 24-30)

- **Turkish government proposes amendment to curb army power**

According to reports, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government has proposed an amendment of the Armed Forces Charter that has in the past been used to justify military coups. Turkey's military has toppled four governments in forty years, with the last one in 1997 being led by an Islamist party to which Erdogan belonged. The amendment proposes to replace the declared duty to "protect and watch over the republic" with a more limited obligation to defend "the Turkish homeland against foreign threats".<sup>46</sup>

### Israel/Palestine

(June 24-30)

- **No breakthrough in peace talks as US Secretary of State hails "real progress"**

According to reports, another attempt by the US to broker the resumption of peace talks between the Israeli and Palestinian leadership has achieved no breakthrough, while the US Secretary of State John Kerry hailed "real progress" in the efforts. The Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erakat said there had been no breakthrough, and that Israel wanted to resume negotiations while continuing settlement construction in occupied Palestinian territories. Kerry described the talks as "positive" and pledged to return to the region. Reports noted that Israeli officials have refused to work on key issues for Palestinians, such as return to pre-1967 borders. In a move likely to impede peace efforts, Israel has pushed through plans to build nearly 1,000 new homes in occupied East Jerusalem.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> "Park urges greater economic ties with China", *The Korea Herald*, June 28, 2013, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20130628000609>

<sup>46</sup> "Turkey's Erdogan seeks to further curb army power", *The Daily Star*, June 27, 2013 at <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Jun-27/221809-turkeys-erdogan-seeks-to-further-curb-army-power.ashx#axzz2XISHN3vQ>

<sup>47</sup> "Kerry winds up marathon Mideast talks", *The Daily Star*, June 30, 2013 at <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Jun-30/222048-no-breakthrough-in-kerry-talks-palestinian-negotiator.ashx#axzz2XISHN3vQ>

## Saudi Arabia

(June 24-30)

- **Saudi Arabia and Qatar urge EU to arm Syrian rebels**

According to reports, Saudi Arabia and Qatar urged the European Union to “immediately” arm Syrian rebels fighting the regime of Bashar Al Assad. At a meeting between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the European Union (EU) officials in Manama on June 30, 2013, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal stated that the EU “must immediately implement its decision” to lift an arms embargo on weapons destined for Syria’s opposition. He said that this was essential to offset assistance the Assad regime received from “Hezbollah and other forces backed by Iran’s Revolutionary Guards who get unlimited supplies of Russian weapons.” The EU has decided in May to lift an embargo on Syria’s armed opposition but it will only go into force in August. Saudi foreign minister also stated that, “The international community must ban the supply of weapons to the Syrian regime and demand that foreign occupation forces withdraw from Syria.”<sup>48</sup>

## GCC

(June 24-30)

- **GCC and EU plan meeting on Syria**

Reports noted that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the European Union (EU) pledged on June 30 to make efforts to help convene a peace conference on Syria. The GCC and the EU countries met for a one-day ministerial meeting in Bahrain which was attended by EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton and the foreign ministers of the GCC countries. The ministers “reiterated the utmost urgency of finding a political settlement of the Syrian conflict.” They also pledged to “spare no effort in helping to create the appropriate conditions for a successful convening of the peace conference on Syria” which Russia and the United States have been striving to hold in Geneva. The GCC and the EU also took a swipe at Lebanon’s Shia militant movement Hezbollah which backs the Assad regime.<sup>49</sup>

(July 1-7)

- **GCC calls for urgent UN Security Council meeting on Syria**

According to reports, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has urged the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on July 1, 2013, to hold an emergency meeting. The GCC calls for the UNSC meeting to prevent a “massacre” in Syria’s central city of Homs, the target of a fierce offensive by

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<sup>48</sup> “Saudi Arabia, Qatar urge European Union to arm Syria rebels”, *Gulf News*, July 1, 2013, at <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/saudi-arabia-qatar-urge-european-union-to-arm-syria-rebels-1.1204018>

<sup>49</sup> “GCC, EU plan Syria peace meeting”, *The Peninsula*, July 1, 2013, at <http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/middle-east/243459-gcc-eu-plan-syria-peace-meeting.html>

regime troops. They urged the “Security Council to urgently meet to break the siege on Homs and prevent the Syrian regime and its allies from committing horrific massacres.” In a statement, the GCC announced that they are “following with deep concern... the unjust siege Syrian regime forces are imposing on Homs... with military support from the militias of the Lebanese Hezbollah movement and under the umbrella of Iran’s Revolutionary Guards.”<sup>50</sup>

## Qatar

(June 24-30)

- **Qatar gets a new Emir and a new Prime Minister**

Reports noted that Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the ruler of Qatar for 18 years, has transferred the reins of power to his son. In his address to the nation on July 25, Sheikh Hamad made the announcement to hand over power to his son Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and called on his countrymen to support the new Emir. In his address, Thani said, “I declare that I will hand over the reins of power to Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and I am fully certain that he is up to the responsibility, deserving the confidence, capable of shouldering the responsibility and fulfilling the mission.”<sup>51</sup> On the very next day, Qatar has also got a new prime minister. Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, has been named Qatar’s new prime minister on June 26, 2013 replacing Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber bin Muhammad Al Thani. Sheikh Abdullah has been the minister of state for internal affairs since February 2005, and has now been promoted to interior minister and the prime minister as well.<sup>52</sup>

## Iran

(June 24-30)

- **President-elect Hassan Rohani: Iran follows moderate foreign policy; The bilateral trade between Iran and Iraq increased during the last financial year**

According to reports, Iran’s President-elect Hassan Rohani has stated that he will follow a moderate foreign policy based on detente and constructive interaction with the world to help resolve the problems facing the country. He also mentioned “moderation in foreign policy is neither surrender nor conflict, neither passiveness nor confrontation, but rather is interaction.” He has repeatedly emphasized that the tension between Iran and the West over the country’s nuclear programme should be defused only through logical dialogue and active interaction. Commenting on the composition of his cabinet, Rohani said “my cabinet will be completely extra-factional, and its

<sup>50</sup> “Gulf Cooperation Council calls for urgent Security Council meet on Syria”, *Gulf News*, July 1, 2013, at <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/gulf-cooperation-council-calls-for-urgent-security-council-meet-on-syria-1.1204118>

<sup>51</sup> “Qatar’s emir transfers power to son”, *Aljazeera*, June 25, 2013, at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/06/2013625516403468.html>

<sup>52</sup> “Qatar’s new PM Shaikh Abdullah bin Nasser Al Thani”, *The Khaleej Times*, June 27, 2013, at [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=/data/middleeast/2013/June/middleeast\\_June282.xml&section=middleeast](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=/data/middleeast/2013/June/middleeast_June282.xml&section=middleeast)

reliance will be on merit. And given that the administration has given no commitment to any party or faction, it is not indebted to any party or faction.”<sup>53</sup>

Reports noted that the bilateral trade turnover between Iran and Iraq surpassed \$6.35 billion in the previous calendar year, which ended on March 20, 2013. Tehran’s exports to Baghdad accounted for 98 percent on the mentioned amount. Iraq exported goods worth of \$83 million to Iran. Baghdad also became Tehran’s third largest trade partner in 2012-13. Iran’s technical and engineering services exports to Iraq reached \$3 billion in the previous year. The two countries trade volume stood at \$9.7 billion two years ago.<sup>54</sup>

(July 1-7)

- **Iran to launch major air defence system Velayat 5; MRPL preparing to resume oil imports from Iran**

According to reports, the commander of the Khatam-ol-Anbiya Air Defense Base, Brigadier General Farzad Esmaeili said that Iran would stage a major air defense exercise, entitled the Defenders of the Sky of Velayat 5, in the second half of the current Iranian calendar year, which started on March 21. He also mentioned that domestically manufactured Hazem radar-evading UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) would be used in the war games.<sup>55</sup>

In another development, according to reports, Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals (MRPL) is preparing to resume oil imports from Iran, after stopping in April, having secured local reinsurance for claims of up to 5 billion rupees, its managing director said. MRPL which was Iran’s top Indian client, halted imports because local insurers said they could no longer cover plants that process Iranian crude.<sup>56</sup>

## Iraq

(June 24-30)

- **Seven people killed in attacks in west Baghdad**

Reports noted that in an attack seven people killed in west Baghdad on June 29. Police officials say that the blast in the capital’s western suburb of Abu Ghraib killed four people and wounded 12 others. Also, police said that attackers using guns fitted with silencers killed three off-duty policemen in a drive-by shooting near Fallujah, 65 kilometers (40 miles) west of Baghdad.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> “Rohani vows to pursue a moderate foreign policy based on détente,” *Mehr News Agency*, June 30, 2013, at <http://old.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1824170>

<sup>54</sup> “Iran, Iraq trade hits \$6.3b,” *Mehr News Agency*, June 25, 2013, at <http://old.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1823965>

<sup>55</sup> “Iran to stage major air defense exercise,” *Mehr News Agency*, July 5, 2013, at <http://old.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1824432>

<sup>56</sup> “India’s MRPL ready to resume Iran oil imports,” *Mehr News agency*, July 4, 2013, at <http://old.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1824406>

<sup>57</sup> “Market bomb, shooting kill 7 in Iraq,” *Khaleej Times*, June 29, 2013, at [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=/data/middleeast/2013/June/middleeast\\_June304.xml&section=middleeast](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=/data/middleeast/2013/June/middleeast_June304.xml&section=middleeast)

(July 1-7)

- **Kurdistan's President Barzani visits Iraq; ready to resolve problems through dialogue**

According to reports, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki has said that "the circumstances and large challenges in the region, which surrounding Iraq need a firm stand and National Front to solve all the problems in the spirit of national fraternal to immunize the country from what is going on in the region of the problems and implications." Maliki's statement came during a joint news conference with Kurdistan's president, Massoud Barzani. He also stated, "We are, in every inch of Iraq, responsible for the provision of services after being freed from all restrictions and most recently the Chapter IIV to make our country strong." President of Kurdistan, Massoud Barzani stated "all outstanding problems between the centre and the region will be resolved through mutual understanding and through the Constitution." Barzani stressed that Maliki's recent visit to Arbil had a big impact in softening the atmosphere where it was agreed to form committees to resolve outstanding problems between the centre and the region.<sup>58</sup>

## D. Russia

(June 24-30)

- **Russia, US and the UN holds preparatory meeting for an international peace conference on Syria; Russia will not close its military base in Tartus; President Putin and Turkish Prime Minister discuss the situation emanating in Syria; Syrian opposition praises Russia's efforts to contribute towards Syrian settlement; Moroccan Foreign Minister: Russia is playing a positive role in the Sahara-Sahel settlement issue; Russia and Fiji sign an agreement to combat money laundering; Russian Foreign Minister: Israel should stop building settlements on occupied territories; Russia and Myanmar agreed to step up their defence cooperation; Russia Foreign Ministry: Russia law enforcers have no legal grounds to detain American whistleblower Snowden; Iran's President elect has praises ties with Russia**

According to reports, at their preparatory meeting for an international peace conference on Syria held on June 25, 2013, representatives of Russia, the United States and the United Nations have resolved certain issues regarding the format of the future talks, but failed to set a specific date or agree on the list of participants.<sup>59</sup>

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said that Russia does not intend to close its embassy in Damascus and the technical support base in Tartus.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> "Maliki: Large challenges surround Iraq Barzani: All problems can be solved through dialogue and Constitution," *National Iraqi News Agency*, July 07, 2013, at [http://www.ninanews.com/english/News\\_Details.asp?ar95\\_VQ=GIKKIG](http://www.ninanews.com/english/News_Details.asp?ar95_VQ=GIKKIG)

<sup>59</sup> "Russia, US, UN Fail to Agree on Syrian Conference Date", *Rianovosti*, June 25, 2013, <http://en.ria.ru/russia/20130625/181874392/Russia-US-UN-Fail-to-Agree-on-Syrian-Conference-Date.html>

<sup>60</sup> "Russia not to close embassy in Damascus and base in Tartus", *Itar-Tass* June 28, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/789061.html>

President Putin and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan have discussed, on June 27, 2013 over telephone, the situation emanating in Syria. Both leaders expressed their readiness to coordinate efforts aimed at achieving the political settlement of the crisis. The conversation was held at Turkey's initiative.<sup>61</sup>

The Syrian opposition has praised Russia's consistent efforts aimed at fulfilling the obligations of the Geneva communique of June 30, 2012 and starting the talks as soon as possible with due account for the rights and interests of all citizens.<sup>62</sup>

Moroccan Foreign Minister Saad-Eddine Al-Othmani has said that Russia is playing a positive role in the Sahara-Sahel settlement issue.<sup>63</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, Russia and Fiji have agreed to step up their military-technical cooperation, to counteract money laundering and terrorism financing and to cooperate in healthcare and education. The documents were signed during the first-ever visit of Prime Minister of Fiji Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama to Russia.<sup>64</sup>

Russian Foreign Ministry has said that Israel should stop its settlement policy on the occupied territories and that the final status of the Palestinian territories, including the future of Jerusalem and the settlements, should be solved by Palestinian-Israeli talks.<sup>65</sup>

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu has said that Russia and Myanmar have agreed to step up their defence relations. At present, Myanmar's Armed Forces have 30 MiG-29, 30 Mi-17 and 11 Mi-24 jets apart from Pechora air defence systems in its service. At least 150 officers and students from Myanmar study at Russian military schools. At the end of the year, ships of Russia's Navy will visit Myanmar.<sup>66</sup>

A top Russian Air Force General has said that Russia will open an airbase in north-western Belarus near the Polish and Lithuanian borders, within the next few months. The Su-27SM3 fighter jets will be stationed there.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> "Putin, Turkish premier discuss Syria, bilateral issues - Kremlin", Itar-Tass, June 27, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/787799.html>

<sup>62</sup> "Syrian opposition praises Russia's efforts to contribute to Syrian settlement", Itar-Tass, June 26, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/786425.html>

<sup>63</sup> "Russia plays positive role in Sahara-Sahel settlement - Moroccan FM", Itar-Tass, June 28, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/789157.html>

<sup>64</sup> "Russia, Fiji sign agreements to cancel visa and fight money laundering", Itar-Tass, June 28, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/789220.html>

<sup>65</sup> "Israel should stop building settlements on occupied territories - Russian Foreign Ministry", Itar-Tass, June 27, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/788010.html>

<sup>66</sup> "Russia, Myanmar step up defence relations", Itar-Tass, June 24, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/783160.html>

<sup>67</sup> "Russia to Open Airbase in Belarus Within Months", Rianovosti, June 26, 2013, <http://en.ria.ru/world/20130626/181896268/Russia-to-Open-Airbase-in-Belarus-Within-Months.html>

Russia has said that its law enforcers have no grounds to detain CIA's ex-agent Edward Snowden since neither Snowden is on a wanted international list nor has he committed any unlawful activity in Russian territory.<sup>68</sup>

Iran's president-elect Hasan Rouhani has said that Tehran's relations with Russia will take high importance during his term in office.<sup>69</sup>

(July 1-7)

- **Foreign Ministers of Russia and US discuss the possibility of organising the Geneva-2 conference on Syria; Russia criticises the supply of weapons from Libya to Syria; Russia and Indonesia agree on no first deployment of weapons in outer space; Russia and ASEAN call for strengthening of trade, economic and investment cooperation; Russia and Colombia sign a number of agreements; Russian and Chinese Foreign Ministers discuss North Korean nuclear issue; Russian and Venezuelan oil companies sign an agreement on cooperation in shelf projects; Russia urges all political forces in Egypt to show restraint; Sea trials of the INS Vikramaditya aircraft carrier commenced; Russia and Kazakhstan Presidents discuss various aspects of their bilateral cooperation**

According to reports, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his American counterpart John Kerry have discussed the possibility of organising the Geneva-2 conference on Syria aimed at finding a lasting solution to the ongoing quagmire.<sup>70</sup>

On the sidelines of the ASEAN Security Forum in Brunei, Foreign Ministers of Russia and Indonesia have signed a statement on no first deployment of weapons in outer space on July 1, 2013.<sup>71</sup>

Russia and ASEAN have called for strengthening of trade, economic and investment cooperation. The declaration was made in the backdrop of the ASEAN Security Forum in Brunei.<sup>72</sup>

As part of Colombian Foreign Minister Maria Angela Holguin's visit to Moscow, Russia and Colombia have signed a programme of exchanges in the field of culture, education and sport for the period 2013-2015.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> "Russian law enforcers have no grounds to detain Snowden", Itar-Tass, June 24, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/782480.html>

<sup>69</sup> "Iran's President-Elect Praises Ties With Russia", The Moscow Times, June 26, 2013, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/irans-president-elect-praises-ties-with-russia/482283.html>

<sup>70</sup> "Kerry, Lavrov discuss Geneva-2 conference on Syria July 2", Itar-Tass, July 1, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/791588.html>

<sup>71</sup> "Russia, Indonesia agree on no first deployment of weapons in outer space", Itar-Tass, July 1, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/791795.html>

<sup>72</sup> "Russia, ASEAN call for strengthening trade, economic, investment cooperation", Itar-Tass, July 1, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/791865.html>

<sup>73</sup> "Russia and Colombia sign agt on cultural, sport, education exchanges", Itar-Tass, July 4, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/796657.html>

Russia's Foreign Ministry has come out with a statement criticising the supply of weapons from Libya to the Syrian armed opposition via Qatar and Turkey and that it goes against the international embargo on arms trade with Libya.<sup>74</sup>

Reports noted that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi have discussed prospects for resolving the nuclear problem on the Korean Peninsula on the sidelines of the ASEAN Security Forum.<sup>75</sup>

Russia's Rosneft and Venezuela's PDVSA have signed an agreement on cooperation in oil and gas projects on the continental shelf. This was signed in the backdrop of the meeting between Russian President Putin and his Venezuelan counterpart Nicolas Maduro.<sup>76</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, Russia's Foreign Ministry has come out with a statement that has urged all political forces in Egypt to show restraint.<sup>77</sup>

Sea trials of the INS Vikramaditya aircraft carrier have commenced with the ship expected to start sailing for India towards the end of October.<sup>78</sup>

Russia and Kazakhstan Presidents have discussed various aspects of their bilateral cooperation including those on space industry and the integration process.<sup>79</sup>

## E. United States of America (USA)

(June 24-30)

- **Fourth India-US strategic dialogue held in New Delhi; United States tries to ease India's concerns about the impending withdrawal of US troops from war-torn Afghanistan; US Secretary of State John Kerry: If some "impediments" in trade between India and the US were removed, the two-way trade could surpass \$100 billion; India-US Higher Education Dialogue held; US Vice President Biden to visit India in late July; President Obama visits Senegal, South Africa, and Tanzania; calls Nelson Mandela a "personal hero"**

India and the United States held fourth round of annual strategic dialogue in New Delhi on June 24. A joint statement issued after the dialogue noted that External Affairs Minister of India Shri

<sup>74</sup> "Moscow condemns supplies of weaponry from Libya to Syria", Itar-Tass, July 5, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/797329.html>

<sup>75</sup> "Lavrov, Chinese foreign minister discuss North Korea's nuclear problem", Itar-Tass, July 1, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/791960.html>

<sup>76</sup> "Russian, Venezuelan oil companies sign agrmnt on cooperation in shelf project", Itar-Tass, July 2, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/793196.html>

<sup>77</sup> "Russia urges all political forces in Egypt to show restraint", Itar-Tass, July 4, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/795798.html>

<sup>78</sup> "Russian, Indian seamen to have practical drill in combat control of Vikramaditya carrier", Itar-Tass, July 4, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/795845.html>

<sup>79</sup> "Putin, Nazarbayev discussing cooperation, including space industry, integration processes", Itar-Tass, July 7, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/799076.html>

Salman Khurshid and Secretary of State John F Kerry met in New Delhi and co-chaired the fourth India-US Strategic Dialogue. During their first meeting, they reviewed the extensive transformation of the bilateral relationship and identified key sectors of cooperation that will continue to add strategic depth to the partnership. The two co-chairs expressed satisfaction at the consistent progress being made in the annual Strategic Dialogues towards deepening the India-US partnership.<sup>80</sup>

Meanwhile, reports noted that US Secretary of State John Kerry on June 24 tried to ease India's concerns about the impending withdrawal of US troops from war-torn Afghanistan as he embraced a greater role for the regional power. In a speech after he arrived in New Delhi on June 23, Kerry said that the United States was "very realistic" about the difficulties in Afghanistan and acknowledged that a final settlement "may be long in coming". "Afghanistan cannot again become a safe haven for international terrorism," he said. Kerry embraced India's role in Afghanistan, saying that the world's largest democracy should assist the country in 2014 elections which will choose Karzai's successor just ahead of the departure of foreign troops.<sup>81</sup>

According to reports, US Secretary of State John Kerry has said that if some "impediments" in trade between India and the US were removed, the two-way trade could surpass \$100 billion. "There are always mutual concerns that we have. Trade between India and the US has grown five-fold just in the years of the Obama Administration. Investments between our countries have grown by a factor of 10. Last year, we almost topped \$100 billion in two-way trade in goods and service and we are on track to do even better in 2013. We can do even more, we can break down trade and investment barriers." Kerry said at a press conference with External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid in New Delhi on June 24 after concluding the fourth India-US Strategic Dialogue. Emphasising on the outcome of the dialogue, Kerry said he and Khurshid are "eager and committed to take the relationship to new heights".<sup>82</sup> Meanwhile, Secretary Kerry also announced that US Vice President Biden will be visiting India in late July. US President Barack Obama visited India in 2010.<sup>83</sup> Secretary Kerry also met Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on June 24 evening.

India and the United States have stressed on collaborations and partnerships in technology driven education to meet the challenges in skill development and knowledge sector. "We need to focus on providing education and skills to the children. I strongly feel that technology could be used as a tool to instil values in children," the US Secretary of State John Kerry said at the India-US Higher Education Dialogue in New Delhi on June 25. The dialogue discussed various enhanced two-way student mobility, research collaborations, faculty development, establishment of community colleges, collaborations for cyber system and technology enabled learning like the Massive Open

<sup>80</sup> "Joint Statement on the Fourth India-US Strategic Dialogue", Ministry of External Affairs, June 24, 2013 at <http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/21872>

<sup>81</sup> "Kerry tries to ease Indian concerns on Afghanistan", Hindustan Times, June 24, 2013 at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/Kerry-tries-to-ease-Indian-concerns-on-Afghanistan/Article1-1081510.aspx>

<sup>82</sup> "Remove 'impediments' in trade ties: Kerry", Business Standard, June 25, 2013 at [http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/kerry-urges-removal-of-impediments-in-india-us-business-relations-113062400882\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/kerry-urges-removal-of-impediments-in-india-us-business-relations-113062400882_1.html)

<sup>83</sup> "US vice president Joe Biden to visit India: John Kerry", The Economic Times, 24 June, 2013 at [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-06-24/news/40166441\\_1\\_vice-president-joe-biden-defining-relationships-india](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-06-24/news/40166441_1_vice-president-joe-biden-defining-relationships-india)

On-Line Courses (MOOCs). Emphasising on the need for new collaborations Kerry said that US was willing to forge partnership in various fields. Meanwhile India's Human Resource Development minister Pallam Raju said that education and knowledge is a key pillar of the India-US strategic partnership." The partnership offers a huge opportunity to use and share the experience and best practices in the development of institutions of higher learning and research," he said. Apart from signing four Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), eight Joint research partnerships, 126 Raman fellows who will travel to the US for post doctoral research, and 'Connect India' programme aimed at inviting students from US universities for short term courses in India, were announced.<sup>84</sup>

In another development, reports noted that US President Obama visited Senegal, South Africa, and Tanzania to meet with leaders from government, business, and civil society, and to reinforce U.S. commitment to expanding economic growth, investment, and trade; strengthening democratic institutions; and investing in the next generation of African leaders.<sup>85</sup> According to reports, White House officials expressed hope that Obama's three-nation tour of Africa - his first substantial visit to the continent since taking office in 2009 - will compensate for what some view as years of neglect by America's first black president.<sup>86</sup>

Meanwhile, President Barack Obama has called for African leaders to follow Nelson Mandela's example of putting the country before self. Speaking June 29 in Johannesburg, President Obama stated, "We as leaders occupy these spaces temporarily and we don't get so deluded that we think the fate of our country doesn't depend on how long we stay in office."<sup>87</sup> Earlier, in Dakar on June 27, Obama said, "He is a personal hero... I think he's a hero for the world and if/when he passes, we know his legacy will linger on throughout the ages."<sup>88</sup>

(July 1-7)

- **United States pledges to focus on the Asia-Pacific region; US secretary of State John Kerry: US presence and interest in the region was not aimed at containing "any one country"; United States celebrates its Independence Day on July 4<sup>th</sup>; President Obama urges US citizens to live up to the words of the Declaration of Independence by securing liberty and opportunity for their own children as well as for future generations; US economy adds a net 195,000 new jobs in June, 2013**

US secretary of State John Kerry on July 1 pledged to focus on the Asia-Pacific region, continuing with the policy of rebalancing towards Asia laid out by US President Barack Obama in his first term in office. But Kerry also clearly pointed out that the US presence and interest in the region

<sup>84</sup> "US, India focus on education and skill", The Hindustan Times, June 26, 2013 at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/US-India-focus-on-education-and-skill/Article1-1082463.aspx>

<sup>85</sup> "PRESIDENT OBAMA'S TRIP", The White House, June 27-July 2, 2013 at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/africa-trip-2013>

<sup>86</sup> "Obama pledges to help Africa, pays tribute to Mandela", Reuters, June 28, 2013 at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/28/us-obama-africa-idUSBRE95R04220130628>

<sup>87</sup> "Obama pays tribute to his 'personal hero' Mandela", The Times, June 29, 2013 at <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/africa/article3803922.ece>

<sup>88</sup> "Obama calls Mandela a 'personal hero'", Afrikinfos.com, June 27, 2013 at <http://en.afrikinfos.com/2013/06/27/obama-calls-mandela-a-personal-hero/>

was not aimed at containing “any one country” – in a bid to assuage China’s concerns on the matter. Kerry was speaking at the US-Asean Ministerial Meeting in the Brunei capital Bandar Seri Begawan. Addressing the 10 foreign ministers representing the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or Asean, grouping, Kerry said the US was committed to a “peaceful, stable and prosperous Southeast Asia.”<sup>89</sup>

In another development, United States celebrated its 237th Independence Day on July 4<sup>th</sup>. On this occasion, President Barack Obama urged Americans to live up to the words of the Declaration of Independence by securing liberty and opportunity for their own children as well as for future generations. Also, in his weekly radio and online address, Obama commemorated the Fourth of July by looking back at the day in 1776 that a small band of patriots declared those in the American colonies “a people created equal” – free to think and worship and live as they please.”<sup>90</sup> India’s President Pranab Mukherjee greeted United States President Barack Obama, the Government and the people of the US on the occasion of that country’s 237th Independence Day. “This is an occasion when we are reminded of the shared values of democracy, pluralism, equality, liberty and rule of law that form the bedrock of the global strategic partnership between India and the United States of America,” President Mukherjee said in a message to President Obama.<sup>91</sup>

In other developments, according to new US Bureau of Labor Statistics figures, United States economy added a net 195,000 new jobs in June, 2013. The figure was well above market expectations for just 165,000. Revisions to data for April and May added a further 70,000 jobs to previous estimates. The unemployment rate held steady at 7.6 per cent of the workforce, according to the data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The dollar jumped on the news, the euro falling two-thirds of a cent to \$1.283.<sup>92</sup>

## II. DEFENCE REVIEW

### National

(June 24-30)

- **INS Trikanth commissioned into the Indian Navy; Defence Minister emphasizes the need for DPSUs to become competitive in order to remain relevant and procure orders**

According to reports, in a boost to its naval prowess, India on June 29 commissioned into the Indian Navy, INS Trikanth, the last of the three “Follow On Talwar Class” frigates built in the

<sup>89</sup> “US pledges to focus on the Asia-Pacific region”, The wall Street Journal, July 2, 2013 at <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/XMH3ZnoQGx1btAD8Zw1RM/US-pledges-to-focus-on-the-AsiaPacific-region.html>

<sup>90</sup> “On Independence Day, Obama urges Americans to live up to words of Declaration of Independence”, The Washington Post, July 4, 2013 at [http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-07-04/politics/40360023\\_1\\_independence-day-president-barack-obama-declaration](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-07-04/politics/40360023_1_independence-day-president-barack-obama-declaration)

<sup>91</sup> “Mukherjee greets Obama, Americans on US Independence Day”, Netindian, July 3, 2013 at <http://netindian.in/news/2013/07/03/00025044/mukherjee-greets-obama-americans-us-independence-day>

<sup>92</sup> “United States of America adds 195,000 jobs in June”, Standard Digital, July 5, 2013 at [http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000087596&story\\_title=us-adds-195-000-jobs-in-june](http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000087596&story_title=us-adds-195-000-jobs-in-june)

Russian Federation. Trikanď's sister ships INS Teg and INS Tarkash were commissioned last year and are now undertaking operations as part of the Western Fleet. INS Trikanď carries a state-of-the-art combat suite which includes the supersonic BRAHMOS missile system, advanced Surface to Air missiles Shtil, upgraded A190 medium range gun, Electro-optical 30 mm Close-in Weapon System, Anti-Submarine weapons such as torpedoes and rockets and an advanced Electronic Warfare system. The ship has a complement of about 300 personnel including officers.<sup>93</sup>

In another development, according to reports, Defence Minister Shri AK Antony has emphasized the need for DPSUs to become competitive in order to remain relevant and procure orders. They have to be competitive not just with private organisations, but also with global companies. The defense minister said, "If the DPSUs want to be truly competitive, they must enhance productivity, reduce costs, increase product quality and align production processes to meet the increasing demands of the Defence Forces... The emphasis must be on working harder and more importantly, in the right direction." Shri Antony also stressed the need for greater emphasis on transparency and probity, not only in procurement, but in every aspect of the working of the organizations under the MoD.<sup>94</sup>

(July 1-7)

- **Defence Minister AK Antony visits China; C-17 Globemaster-III makes its maiden flight to the Andaman & Nicobar Islands**

In a significant development, Defence Minister, Shri AK Antony, paid an official visit to China from 4-7 July 2013. Shri Antony held talks with his counterpart Gen Chang Wanquan and also called on Chinese Premier Li Keqiang. He also met State Councillor Yang Jiechi. The Joint Statement issued at the end of talks with Chinese leaders noted that "peace and tranquility on the border was an important guarantor for the growth and development of bilateral cooperation..." The two sides stressed the importance of "enhancing mutual trust and understanding between the two militaries". The joint statement said that the two ministers agreed on "an early conclusion of negotiations for the Border Defence Cooperation Agreement between the two governments". The two ministers also discussed ongoing and proposed bilateral exchanges and welcomed the holding of the counter-terrorism bilateral joint exercise between their armies in China in 2013.<sup>95</sup>

In another development, according to reports, the Indian Air Force's latest acquisition C-17 Globemaster-III made its maiden flight to the Andaman & Nicobar Islands on 30 June 2013. The aircraft flew to an altitude of 28,000 feet with an unrefueled range of 2400 nautical miles.

The aircraft is manufactured by Messrs Boeing of the United States. The C-17 Globemaster-III is a heavy-lift transport military aircraft, developed for the United States Air Force (USAF). India has become the largest customer of this sophisticated aircraft after the United States. C-17 Globemaster-

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<sup>93</sup> "Stealth Frigate 'INS Trikanď' Joins Indian Navy," Press Information Bureau, GOI, June 29, 2013, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=96895>

<sup>94</sup> "DPSUs Need to be Globally Competitive to Get Orders: Antony," Press Information Bureau, GOI, June 25, 2013, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=96769>

<sup>95</sup> "Antony's Visit to China: Joint Statement," Press Information Bureau, GOI, July 06, 2013, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=97065>

III is 174 feet in length, with a wing span of 170 feet. The maximum all up weight is 2,65,350 kg, with an ultra modernized palletized cargo handling capability.<sup>96</sup>

## International

(June 24-30)

- **Air sector drives United Kingdom's best performance in defense exports in five years; IHS Jane Report: Asia-Pacific defense budgets to bypass North America by 2021**

According to reports, United Kingdom has recorded its best defense sales in five years in 2012. The figures released by the British government's Defence and Security Organisation (DSO) show defense exports totaled £8.8 billion (US \$13.6 billion), a 62 percent increase from 2011. Notably, security sales advanced 4 percent in a global market that advanced overall by 3 percent during the year. The upward spiral in defense sales was the result of Hawk jet trainer sales to Saudi Arabia alongside Typhoon and Hawk sales to Oman. According to the DSO figures, maritime sales remained static, and land equipment exports halved. Overall, the figures emphasize how reliant UK is on the air sector for retaining its position among the world's defense export elite.<sup>97</sup>

In another development, according to a report, defense budgets in the Asia-Pacific region will overtake the United States and Canada by 2021. According to a IHS Jane's study "Balance of Trade" published on June 25, spending on weapons in China and other Asia-Pacific countries is expected to rise 35 percent above its 2013 level to \$501 billion (•383 billion) by 2021, outstripping North America.<sup>98</sup>

(July 1-7)

- **Defense firms and government join hands to fight cyber crimes in United Kingdom; Israeli F-16 combat aircraft crashes into the Mediterranean Sea**

According to reports, nine leading British defense companies are collaborating with the government in a scheme to prevent cyber attackers from stealing the defense industry's secrets. Britain has taken many initiatives in recent past to curb the menace of cyber attack. The public-private partnership is a new initiative in this regard. The Defence Cyber Protection Partnership (DCPP) has been working since May to bolster security in the defense supply chain. The UK MoD said in a statement that the partnership is aimed to counter the cyber threat in the defense supply chain by increasing the awareness of cyber risks, sharing threat intelligence and defining risk-driven approaches to applying cyber security standards.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>96</sup> "IAF's C17s Maiden Flight to Port Blair," July 01, 2013, Press Information Bureau, GOI at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=96917>

<sup>97</sup> "Britain Logs Best Overseas Defense Sales in 5 Years," Defense News, June 24, 2013, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130624/DEFREG01/306240013/Britain-Logs-Best-Overseas-Defense-Sales-5-Years>

<sup>98</sup> "Asia-Pacific Defense Budgets 'To Outstrip N. America By 2021' Defense News, June 25, 2013, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130625/DEFREG03/306250018/Asia-Pacific-Defense-Budgets-Outstrip-N-America-By-2021->

<sup>99</sup> "British Defense Firms, Government Partner To Fight Cyber Attacks," Defense News, July 5, 2013, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130705/DEFREG01/307050012/British-Defense-Firms-Government-Partner-Fight-Cyber-Attacks>

In another development, according to reports, an Israeli warplane crashed into the Mediterranean Sea on July 7 following an engine malfunction in the aircraft. The crew members were rescued unharmed. Israeli media reports said the crash took place off the coast of the Gaza Strip Palestinian enclave. Following the incident, Israeli air force Chief Maj. Gen. Amir Eshel ordered all F-16 and F-15 aircraft grounded until the “circumstances are reviewed.” According to the military, it was the first time pilots had to bail out because of a malfunction since the Israeli military began using this model – the F-16-I – in 1998.<sup>100</sup>

### III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

#### North East India

(June 24-30)

- **Migrant workers fleeing on large scale in Western Meghalaya; Border pillars surveyed by both officials of India and Bangladesh; Centre-ULFA peace talks to be held; Assam-Nagaland border meet held; Border fence work at Moreh put on hold following objections by Myanmar; ULFA leader Anup Chetia to be handed over by Bangladesh**

According to reports, hundreds of panic-stricken migrant labourers have started fleeing the insurgency-ravaged Garo Hills region in western Meghalaya after eight coal miners were killed. According to a government official, up to 5,000 migrant workers, mainly from Assam, have left several areas of Garo Hills, fearing fresh attacks on non-indigenous workers. It would be worth noting that June 23rd night's gruesome attacks on the coal miners took place after a mob turned violent while protesting an alleged bid to molest a mentally-challenged girl on June 21 night at Tura, the district headquarters of West Garo Hills.<sup>101</sup>

In another development, according to reports, joint survey of the border pillars along the India-Bangladesh border by officials of both the countries is on and repairing of the pillars found to be damaged will take place immediately after the completion of the survey. A team of Government officials of Bangladesh are camping in Mankachar in Dhubri district to take part in the survey. On the other hand, a team of officials from India are camping in Sherpur in Bangladesh for the same purpose.<sup>102</sup>

Reports noted that the pro-talk group of ULFA has brought in a big delegation of twenty seven members to take part in what is being described as a crucial round of dialogue on June 26.

<sup>100</sup> “Israeli F-16 Crashes Into Sea, Crew Unharmed,” Defense News, July 07, 2013, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130707/DEFREG04/307070007/Israeli-F-16-Crashes-Into-Sea-Crew-Unharmed>

<sup>101</sup> “Migrant workers fleeing Meghalaya”, *The Assam Tribune*, June 25, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun2513/at047>

<sup>102</sup> “India, Bangla officials surveying border pillars”, *The Assam Tribune*, June 24, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun2513/at06>

The ULFA delegation led by Chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa, which arrived on June 24, has been holding preliminary discussions with Centre's interlocutor, P C Haldar. The talks would be chaired by the Union Home Secretary. It has been learnt that the two sides are in the advanced stage of resolving the contentious issues contained in the charter of demands presented by the group in August 2011.<sup>103</sup>

In other developments, reports noted that a two-day joint meeting of the Border Peace Coordination Committee of Assam and Nagaland with the co-mediators was held at Chumukedima near Dimapur in Nagaland on June 21 and 22.<sup>104</sup>

According to reports, the setting up of the Integrated Check Post (ICP) and ongoing border fencing work has been put on hold at Moreh following objections raised by Myanmar Government. According to sources, the Myanmar authorities have asked Government of India to stop the construction of ICP at Moreh when Union Home Ministry officials visited the State recently, according to Manipur Chief Minister O Ibobi Singh.<sup>105</sup>

According to reports, United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) general secretary Anup Chetia, who has been in a Bangladeshi jail since 1997, would be repatriated this month to India according to a senior Union Home Ministry official. It would be worth noting that India and Bangladesh had signed an extradition treaty earlier this year.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> "Centre-ULFA peace talks today", *The Assam Tribune*, June 25, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun2613/at094>

<sup>104</sup> "Assam-Nagaland border meet", *The Assam Tribune*, June 26, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun2713/state07>

<sup>105</sup> "Myanmar objects to border fence at Moreh", *The Assam Tribune*, June 28, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun2913/oth05>

<sup>106</sup> "Bangladesh to hand over ULFA leader Anup Chetia to India", *The Assam Tribune*, July 1, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul0113/at04>