

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghansitan

- **Afghan Taliban rejects an appeal for a 'Ramazan truce'; Two NATO service members killed in Western Afghanistan**

According to reports, an appeal for a 'Ramazan truce' from the government-backed peace council has been rejected by the Afghan Taliban. According to the Afghan Taliban, Muslims have emerged victorious in wars fought during the holy month. The Afghan High Peace Council had earlier asked insurgents to stop fighting and show respect for the holy month of Ramazan which started across Afghanistan on July 20, 2012.¹

Meanwhile, according to reports, two NATO service members were killed in an insurgent attack in the western Afghanistan. The casualties bring the number of international service members killed in Afghanistan so far this month to at least 44. It also underscores the volatility of Afghanistan as NATO scales back its operations, planning to hand over security responsibility to local forces by the end of 2014.²

Pakistan

- **Gunmen attack NATO trucks in Northwest Pakistan; New MoU on renewed engagement with US to be signed at earliest; ISI and CIA chiefs to meet in August**

According to reports, gunmen in northwest Pakistan have attacked a convoy of container trucks carrying supplies for NATO troops in Afghanistan, killing one of the drivers. The assault on July 24, 2012, was the first such attack since the supply lines reopened three weeks ago, following a seven-month blockade imposed by the Pakistani government. The attack took place near the market in Jamrud, on the outskirts of Peshawar, the provincial capital of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province.³

In another development, according to reports, Pakistan on July 24, 2012, expressed hope that the new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding new terms of engagements with United States and ISAF on the issue of resuming NATO supplies through Pakistan will be signed soon. In his weekly news briefing, the Foreign Office Spokesman Moazzam Ahmed Khan said the MoU, which has already been approved by the federal cabinet in its meeting held on July 18, 2012, is in

¹ "Afghan Taliban snub Ramazan truce appeal", *The Express Tribune*, July 23, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/411917/afghan-taliban-snub-ramazan-truce-appeal/>

² "At least Two NATO service members killed in Afghanistan", *Dawn*, July 30, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/07/30/at-least-two-nato-service-members-killed-in-afghanistan/>

³ "NATO supply trucks attacked in Pakistan", *Al Jazeera*, July 24, 2012 at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2012/07/20127248507432668.html>

line with the recommendations of the parliament. He noted that at this stage there is only one MoU concerning the ministry of defence. Replying to a question about strategic dialogue between Pakistan and the United States, the spokesman said the schedule in this regard has not yet been finalised.⁴

In other developments, reports noted that Director General of Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) Lieutenant General Zaheer-u-ul Islam will hold talks in Washington on August 1-3, 2012 with his CIA counterpart. It is the first time in a year that the chief of the Pakistan military's powerful ISI will make the trip, signaling a thaw in relations after US troops found and killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in May 2011. Lieutenant General Islam, who was appointed in March, "will visit USA from 1st to 3rd August. This will be a service-to-service bilateral visit," a Pakistan military statement said.⁵

Bangladesh

- **PM Hasina greets India's newly-elected President Pranab Mukherjee; Annual India-Bangladesh Foreign Office consultations held in New Delhi; India will set up 383 additional border outposts (BOPs) on its border with Bangladesh by 2014; A constitutional amendment to ratify the India-Bangladesh boundary agreement gets nod from the Indian Cabinet committee on Security; Chinese Embassy in Dhaka: China and Bangladesh will forge closer military ties in the upcoming years; Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina pays an official visit to UK**

Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has greeted India's newly-elected President Pranab Mukherjee on July 22, 2012, describing his election as recognition of the Congress leader's vast experience and knowledge gained over the last 50 years in politics. Hasina also recalled the steadfast support that Pranab had provided to the people of Bangladesh during the days of struggle for independence in 1971, and hoped that Shri Mukherjee would continue to do the same after being installed in his new exalted position.⁶

In another development, annual India-Bangladesh Foreign Office Consultations was held in New Delhi on July 24, 2012. The full range of bilateral issues including agreement on Teesta river, Tipaimukh dam, trade imbalance, demarcation of boundary, exchange of enclaves and adverse possession territories, and killing in the border were discussed at the foreign secretary-level meeting. Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes and his Indian counterpart Ranjan Mathai led the delegations of their respective countries at the consultation.⁷

⁴ "Pakistan hopes new MoU with US to be signed soon", *Dawn*, July 27, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/07/26/pakistan-hopes-new-mou-with-us-to-be-signed-soon/>

⁵ "ISI, CIA chiefs to meet in August: drone attacks will be main agenda", *Dawn*, July 29, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/07/29/isi-cia-chiefs-to-meet-in-august-drone-attacks-will-be-main-agenda/>

⁶ "PM greets Pranab", *The Daily Star*, July 23, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=243213>.

⁷ "Indo-Bangla Bilateral Issues: Foreign secretaries meet today", *The Daily Star*, July 24, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=243339>.

Reports noted that India will set up 383 additional border outposts (BOPs) on its border with Bangladesh by 2014 to effectively monitor the borders and check infiltration. Indian Home Minister P. Chidambaram said this while addressing members of parliamentary consultative committee attached to his ministry on July 24, 2012.⁸

According to reports, stalled since September last year, a constitutional amendment to ratify the India-Bangladesh boundary agreement got the nod from the Indian Cabinet committee on Security (CCS) on July 26, 2012. It is likely to be placed before parliament in the monsoon session.⁹

According to a Chinese embassy release, China and Bangladesh will forge closer military ties in the upcoming years. "The upcoming years will witness a growing number of high level exchange visits, training programmes, defence procurement and security cooperation such as counter-terrorism, anti-piracy and disaster relief," it read.¹⁰

In other developments, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid an official visit to UK on July 25, 2012 to attend the opening ceremony of London 2012 Olympic Games. During her five-day stay, the prime minister held important bilateral meetings with leaders of the UK government and opposition, British MPs, the Commonwealth Secretary General and other heads of government participating at the Olympic Games.¹¹

Sri Lanka

- **President Rajapaksa congratulates Pranab Mukherjee on his election as President of India; Over 750 Sri Lankan refugees returned to Sri Lanka from India with the monetary support from the UNHCR; Sri Lankan High Commissioner to India Prasad Kariyawasam: "Joint patrolling by Indian Coast Guard and the Sri Lankan Navy could be the answer to settle the problem of fishermen" IOC will set up its first refinery in Sri Lanka; The Sri Lankan government sent its report for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR); United States EXIM Bank authorizes a US\$ 64.9 million loan to build a water supply system in Sri Lanka; Sri Lanka and Pakistan recognize the potential to increase the bilateral trade; Sri Lankan government decides to hand over twenty Pakistani nationals imprisoned in Sri Lankan jails**

President Rajapaksa has conveyed his congratulatory message and best wishes to the newly elected President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee.¹²

⁸ "India to set up 383 more BOPs", *The Daily Star*, July 26, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=243596>.

⁹ "Indian cabinet okays border pact with Bangladesh", *The Daily Star*, July 29, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=243990>.

¹⁰ "Bangladesh, China to strengthen military ties", *The Daily Star*, July 28, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=243818>.

¹¹ "Hasina flies to London tomorrow", *The Daily Star*, July 24, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=243361>.

¹² "Sri Lankan President congratulates his newly elected Indian counterpart", *Colombo Page*, July 23, 2012 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Jul23_1343060951CH.php.

According to reports, over 750 Sri Lankan refugees who were living in India have returned to Sri Lanka with the monetary support from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) this year. A total of 1,728 Sri Lankan refugees returned under UNHCR facilitated voluntary repatriation programme in 2011 and 2,040 have returned in 2010.¹³

Sri Lankan high commissioner to India, Prasad Kariyawasam said that the joint patrolling by Indian Coast Guard and the Sri Lankan Navy could be the answer to settle the problem of fishermen.¹⁴

Reportedly, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) will set up its first refinery outside India with an investment of up to Rs 20,000 crore in Sri Lanka. It will thus become the second Indian company to have a refinery abroad. IOC plans to set up the refinery in a joint venture with the Sri Lankan government, as the route would allow it easy clearances along with the government's commitment.¹⁵

The Sri Lankan government has sent its report for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on human rights to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva.¹⁶

According to reports, the Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im Bank) has authorized a US\$ 64.9 million loan to build a water supply system in Sri Lanka. The 12-year direct loan, authorized for the first time since 2008, will finance the design and construction of the Badulla, Hali Ela and Ella Integrated Water Supply System by Tetra Tech of Pasadena, California.¹⁷

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka and Pakistan have recognized that the bilateral trade between the two countries has potential to increase significantly. Pakistani Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf, on July 26, 2012, said that the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Sri Lanka has the potential to increase much more than the current volume of US\$ 4 billion.¹⁸

In other developments, according to Sri Lanka's Controller of Immigration and Emigration Chulananda Perera, the government has decided to hand over 20 Pakistani nationals who were in Sri Lanka's prisons for a long time for drug related offences.¹⁹

¹³ "Over 750 Sri Lankan refugees have returned from India this year", *Colombo Page*, July 25, 2012 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Jul25_1343156031CH.php.

¹⁴ "Joint patrolling could be the answer-SL", *Daily Mirror*, July 26, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/20603-joint-patrolling-could-be-the-answer-sl.html>.

¹⁵ "IndianOil to set up refinery in Sri Lanka", *The Nation*, July 30, 2012 at <http://www.nation.lk/edition/breaking-news/item/8821-indianoil-to-set-up-refinery-in-sri-lanka.html>.

¹⁶ "Sri Lanka sends UPR report to UNHRC", *Colombo Page*, July 24, 2012 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Jul24_1343137311JR.php.

¹⁷ "US Ex-Im Bank loans US\$ 64.9 million to build water supply system in Sri Lanka", *Colombo Page*, July, 25, 2012 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Jul25_1343221278CH.php.

¹⁸ "Sri Lanka and Pakistan to significantly enhance bilateral trade", *Colombo Page*, July 27, 2012 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Jul27_1343372976CH.php.

¹⁹ "Sri Lanka hands over 20 Pakistani prisoners to their home country", *Colombo Page*, July, 29 at 2012, 10:25 pm SL Time, http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Jul29_1343580937CH.php.

Maldives

- **Maldives celebrates its 47th Independence Day; EU delegates met President Waheed; Maldives and Sri Lanka to establish a collaborative mechanism to combat cyber crime; UNHRC issues concluding observations regarding the Maldives' commitment to universal human rights**

Maldives celebrated its 47th Independence Day on July 26, 2012.²⁰

Meanwhile, according to reports, the delegation of the European Union visiting the Maldives for celebrating Maldives' Independence Day paid a courtesy call on President Dr Mohamed Waheed. At the meeting held at the President's Office on July 26, 2012, President Waheed briefed the delegation on the current political status of the country, and the measures being taken by the government in stabilising the political climate of the country. At the meeting, members of the EU delegation reassured of their full support and assistance in stabilising the political situation of the Maldives. They also spoke of the crucial need to convene all-party talks, to establish unity, and restore peace and calm in the country.²¹

Reports noted that Maldivian and Sri Lankan authorities are looking to establish a collaborative mechanism with which to try and combat cyber crime committed across the South Asia region. Haveeru on July 24, 2012 quoted an unnamed senior Sri Lankan police official as claiming that the country's law enforcement agencies were looking to work with counterparts in the Maldives to investigate cyber crimes such as online financial scams that have defrauded internet users around the world.²²

In other developments, according to reports, the UN Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) has urged the Maldives to guarantee citizens' right to democracy, permit freedom of religion, reform the Judicial Services Commission (JSC), abolish flogging and the death penalty, and deal with human trafficking, among other recommendations. The Committee has issued its concluding observations regarding the Maldives' commitment to universal human rights, following the country's defence of its record in Geneva on July 12-13, 2012. The Maldivian delegation to the UNHRC was headed by Home Minister Dr Mohamed Jameel, a former Justice Minister during the 30 year rule of President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom and co-author of a pamphlet entitled 'President Nasheed's devious plot to destroy the Islamic faith of Maldivians', published in January 2012. Dr Jameel was accompanied by State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dunya Maumoon – Gayoom's daughter – as well as the Maldives' Permanent Representative in Geneva, Iruthisham Adam.²³

²⁰ "President Waheed to address the nation on Independence Day", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, July 25, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7695>.

²¹ "EU delegation pays courtesy call on the President", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, July 26, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7714>.

²² "Maldives and Sri Lanka to cooperate over regional cyber crime concerns", *Minivan News*, July 25, 2012 at <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief>.

²³ Robinson, J.J., "UN Human Rights Committee calls for widespread institutional reform in the Maldives", *Minivan News*, July 28, 2012 at <http://minivannews.com/politics/un-human-rights-committee-calls-for-widespread-institutional-reform-in-the-maldives-41253>.

B. East Asia

Southeast Asia

- **Myanmar, Thailand to promote bilateral cooperation in key areas; Philippine President Benigno Aquino III: Philippines will not yield to China on the South China Sea dispute; China approves deployment of garrison of soldiers in South China Sea, Philippines criticises the move; Nine Abu-Sayyaf militants killed in Philippines; UN Human Rights leader calls for independent investigation in Myanmar**

Reports noted that Myanmar and Thailand have agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation in four key areas which include: personnel development; Myanmar's role as ASEAN Chair in 2014; economic and social development; and in the infrastructure. The decision in that regard was taken during a meeting between the Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra and Myanmar's President Thein Sein. Thailand has also agreed to support the connecting of Myanmar's Dawei port with Thailand's Laem Chabang port.²⁴

In another development, the Philippine President Benigno Aquino III, on July 23, 2012 said that Philippines won't back down from the South China Sea issue. He added that his country would soon procure dozens of aircrafts and naval ships to boost its defence capabilities; Aquino announced during his annual state of the nation address that more than 40 military aircraft from two newly refurbished C-130 cargo planes to attack helicopters along with other weapons would be delivered in the next two years to bolster Philippine military muscle amid renewed territorial conflicts in the South China Sea.²⁵

According to reports, the Central Military Commission of China has approved the deployment of a garrison of soldiers from the People's Liberation Army to guard islands claimed by China in the South China Sea. It is believed that forty-five legislators elected to govern the 1,100 people who live on the island groups of the Spratlys, the Paracels and the Macclesfield Bank — known in Chinese as the Xisha, Zhongsha and Nansha islands — met for the first time on July 23, 2012. It has also been reported that the new legislators would not only govern the island groups, many of them consisting of rocks and atolls, but also two million square km of the South China Sea over which China claims jurisdiction.²⁶ Philippines slammed China's decision as it would worsen the situation.²⁷

In other developments in the region, according to reports, nine Abu Sayyaf militants and ten soldiers are reported killed, while sixteen wounded during the clash, which happened on July

²⁴ 'Myanmar, Thailand form bilateral cooperative initiatives', *Bernama*, July 24, 2012, <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v6/newsworld.php?id=682692>

²⁵ 'Philippines to boost defence, won't yield to China', *Zee News*, July 23, 2012, http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/philippines-to-boost-defence-won-t-yield-to-china_789265.html

²⁶ 'China sends troops to disputed islands in South China Sea', *The Indian Express*, July 24, 2012, <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/china-sends-troops-to-disputed-islands-in-south-china-sea/978442/>

²⁷ 'Philippines slams China's establishment of Sansha city in South China Sea', *Voice of America*, July 23, 2012, <http://www.voanews.com/content/philippines-slams-chinese-establishment-of-city-in-south-china-sea/1443944.html>

26, 2012, in jungles of Sumisin town in Basilan province. According to reports, the ground forces had found eight wounded rebels among who was the leader of the group identified as Wyms Wakil who was believed to have led the fighting.²⁸

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on July 27, 2012, called for a “prompt, independent” investigation into the human rights violations in Myanmar’s Arakan (Rakhine) State after ongoing violence between the Buddhist and Muslim communities. Earlier, 58 civil society groups condemned what it said is a “wave of abuse launched by state authorities in Myanmar against the Rohingya community,” in a statement released on July 26, 2012.²⁹

Japan

- **Japan may send SDF troops to Senkaku islands in an effort to cope with unlawful activities by any neighbouring country; Tokyo metropolitan government asking for US support to buy the Senkaku islands; Japan and Russia agree to hold regular frequent high-level meetings to resolve the territorial dispute**

While reiterating Japan’s sovereignty over the disputed Senkaku islands, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda recently stated that if any neighbouring country gets involved in any kind of illegal activities in Japanese territory or water, the Japanese government may decide to send its self defense force (SDF) troops there. He also indicated the possibility of Japan patrolling the islands and waters around it with the help of all relevant government agencies.³⁰

In an interesting development, the Tokyo metropolitan government, with an ad in the Wall Street Journal, has recently urged the US to support the former’s planned move to purchase the disputed Senkaku islands from their private owners. The ad titled “To the American People from Tokyo, Japan”, states, “it is with the hope of gaining the understanding and support of the American people for our purchase of the Senkaku Islands that we are running this advocacy ad today.” The tension around the Senkakus has heightened recently with China’s repeated claims over the islands and the Chinese vessels’ reported frequent visits to the disputed region. The ad in the Wall Street Journal claimed Japan’s sovereignty over those islands and indicated “its indispensable geostrategic importance” to US force projection. The ad further warned that “failure to support the Asian nations confronting China would result in the US losing the entire Pacific Ocean.”³¹

In other developments, during Japanese Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba’s recent visit to Russia, he met with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov. During that meeting, both the leaders agreed

²⁸ ‘13 militants killed in Philippines’, *thenews.com*, July 28, 2012, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-60982-13-militants-killed-in-Philippines>

²⁹ ‘UN human rights leader calls for ‘independent’ Rakhine state investigation’, *Mizzima*, July 27, 2012, <http://www.mizzima.com/news/inside-burma/7624-un-human-rights-leader-calls-for-independent-rakhine-state-investigation.html>

³⁰ “Noda says Japan may send SDF to Senkakus”; *Yomiuri Daily*, July 28, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120727004306.htm>

³¹ “Ad in Wall Street Journal seeks US support for Senkaku purchase plan”, *The Japan Times*, July 29, 2012, at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20120729a2.html>

to hold frequent high-level negotiation to bring about a mutually acceptable solution to the long-standing bilateral territorial dispute over Japan's claim to four Russian-held islands off Hokkaido.³²

South Korea

- **South Korea to conduct annual Ulchi exercise with the US**

Reports noted that South Korea and the US, under the Combined Forces Command are to conduct the annual Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercise from August 20-31, 2012. This exercise is aimed at strengthening the readiness of both the forces. Based on realistic scenarios, this exercise helps the two teams in training their essential tasks with the whole government. In this year's exercise, around 30,000 US troops, including 3,000 troops based outside South Korea, and around 56,000 South Korean troops will participate.³³

C. Central Asia & Russia

Central Asia

- **Malaysia and Turkmenistan to enhance bilateral ties; Tajikistan and Afghanistan leaders agreed to strengthen Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) border; Uzbekistan begins construction of a new US\$ 4 billion gas to liquid plant in collaboration with Sasol firm of South Africa; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan adopts a visa-free regime for 44 countries; Kyrgyzstan to hold talks with energy grid partners of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan**

According to reports, the Malaysian and Turkmen governments have decided to create a Joint Commission Meeting to strengthen economic ties between the countries. Malaysian Foreign Minister Mr. Datuk Seri Anifah Aman met with his Turkmen counterpart Rashid Meredov as part of a two-day visit to Ashgabat. They also discussed future cooperation in the construction and transportation industries, as well as the tourism sector. Petronas is a major foreign investor in Turkmenistan's oil and gas sector.³⁴

In another development, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon and Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai have agreed to work to secure the joint border in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) of Tajikistan, the site of recent clashes between government forces and militants.³⁵

According to reports, South African firm Sasol and Uzbekistan's state gas firm Uzbekneftegaz have begun construction on the water and electricity infrastructure of a \$4 billion gas-to-liquid

³² "Japan, Russia to hold frequent high-level talks on territorial row", *Mainichi Daily*, July 29, 2012, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120729p2g00m0dm003000c.html>

³³ "Korea, US to conduct annual Ulchi exercise", *Korea Herald*, July 23, 2012, at <http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20120723001024>

³⁴ "Malaysia, Turkmenistan look to increase bilateral ties", *Central Asia Newswire*, July 27, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12501>

³⁵ "Tajik, Afghan leaders agree to strengthen GBAO border", *Central Asia Newswire*, July 25, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12479>

(GTL) plant with Malaysia's Petronas. Upon its completion, it will reprocess 3.5 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas annually, producing \$1.5 billion worth products including diesel and jet fuels, naphta and liquefied gas.³⁶

Reports noted that Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev has signed a bill in a law to remove visa restrictions for visitors hailing from 44 countries. Visitors from 44 countries – which include all 27 European Union states, Canada, the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, and several South American countries – will be able to stay in the country for sixty days. This is seen as an attempt to boost tourism and improve the investment climate in the country.³⁷

In other developments, according to reports, Kyrgyzstan will hold talks with its partners Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan of the Central Asian United Energy System (UES) on account of tensions over the UES, as Uzbekistan has withdrawn more electricity from the grid than it paid for. Meanwhile, Kazakhstan has threatened to withdraw from the energy-sharing organization unless the Uzbek government paid the \$7.5 million it owes for electricity usage. Kyrgyzstan is in the midst of building the 500-kiloVolt Datka power station and its accompanying 500-kV Datka-Kemin power line, located in the southern Jalalabad province. Construction of the power infrastructure is estimated to take two and a half years.³⁸

Russia

- **President Putin expresses confidence that the South Stream project will be implemented; Russia to become a WTO member on August 22, 2012; Russia is ready to send 30 military observers to U.N. Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS); Russia to retain its Tartus naval base in Syria; RF not to back draft Arms Trade Treaty in its current form; EU and Ukraine signs an additional agreement on simplifying visa regime; Rosneft and Italy's ENI signs financial agreements on joint development of oil fields in the Black and Barents Seas; Vietnamese President begins his official tour to Russia; Russian Defence Ministry denies talks of establishing logistic points in Cuba, Vietnam and Seychelles; Foreign Ministers of Russia and Japan to discuss bilateral economic cooperation and the contentious peace treaty issue**

According to reports, in a news conference with the Italian Prime Minister, President Putin has expressed confidence that the South Stream project will be implemented despite the prevalent Eurozone financial crisis in Europe. The construction is expected to start in December 2012 and should be implemented by 2015.³⁹

In a significant development, reports noted that Russia will join the World Trade Organization

³⁶ "Sasol, Uzbekistan begin construction on \$4B GTL plant", Central Asia Newswire, July 23, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/uzbekistan/viewstory.aspx?id=12468>

³⁷ "Kyrgyzstan passes visa-free regime", Central Asia Newswire, July 24, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kyrgyzstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12473>

³⁸ "Kyrgyzstan to hold talks with energy grid partners", Central Asia Newswire, July 26, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/uzbekistan/viewstory.aspx?id=12493>

³⁹ "Putin confident South Stream project to be implemented", ITAR-TASS, July 23, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/479184.html>

(WTO) on August 22, 2012. Foreign Ministry Spokesman Alexander Lukashevich has said that Russia will ‘pursue a policy towards constructive cooperation with all member states in order to observe the current rules of international trade and to work out its new principles that would meet the present-day challenges of global development.’⁴⁰

In another development, Russia has informed the United Nations about its readiness to send 30 military observers to the U.N. Supervision Mission in Syria and give a platform for talks in Moscow to the Syrian authorities and the opposition.⁴¹

Meanwhile, Russian Navy chief Vice-Admiral Viktor Chirkov has said that Russia will retain its naval base in the Syrian port of Tartus. At present the supply center provides maintenance and technical support to Russian warships during anti-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden. However, he also stressed that the Mediterranean coast was the Russian navy’s Black Sea Fleet’s strategic operational area. Currently, there are 10 Russian warships, including large landing ships, and 10 more auxiliary vessels in the Mediterranean Sea. The Western Syria port of Tartus is Russia’s only foreign naval base outside the former Soviet Union.⁴²

Reports noted that the European Union and Ukraine have signed an additional agreement on simplifying the visa regime. The list of documents, which are to be presented for getting visas for representatives of civil society and non-governmental organizations, journalists, relatives of citizens Ukraine and the European Union living abroad, as well as drivers professionally engaged in international transportations, has been reduced. Besides, a number of categories of office employees will get the right to get repeat five-year visas.⁴³

In other developments, according to reports, Rosneft and Italy’s ENI have signed financial agreements on joint development of oil fields in the Black and Barents Seas, the exchange of technologies and personnel, as well as Rosneft’s participation in ENI’s international projects.⁴⁴

On the eve of his official visit to Russia, Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang has said that Russia and Vietnam have everything needed to bring their strategic partnership relations to an ever higher level. He highlighted the success of the Russian-Vietnamese joint venture Vietsovpetro, which develops oil fields on the Vietnamese shelf and stressed the importance of bilateral cooperation in the nuclear energy sector with an eye of building Vietnam’s first-ever nuclear power plant. Construction of the plant is expected to start in the year 2014.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ “Russia to become WTO member on August 22”, ITAR-TASS, July 24, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/479961.html>

⁴¹ “RF ready to send 30 military observers to UNSMIS”, ITAR-TASS, July 25, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/481021.html>

⁴² “Russia to retain Tartus naval base in Syria”, ITAR-TASS, July 26, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/481692.html>

⁴³ “EU, Ukraine sign additional agt on simplifying visa regime”, ITAR-TASS, July 24, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/479294.html>

⁴⁴ “Rosneft, ENI sign financial agreement”, ITAR-TASS, July 23, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/478643.html>

⁴⁵ “Russia, Vietnam have everything to further boost cooperation – Vietnamese president”, ITAR-TASS, July 27, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/481961.html>

According to reports, the Russian Defence Ministry has denied mass media reports quoting Navy commander-in-chief, Vice Admiral Viktor Chirkov as saying that discussions are under way to create logistical assistance points in Cuba, the Seychelles Islands and Vietnam.⁴⁶

Reports noted that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his Japanese counterpart Koichiro Gamba will discuss cooperation in the Far East and Asia-Pacific Region and the peace treaty problems, in Sochi on July 28, 2012. Japan is among Russia's 10 leading economic partners. In 2011 the bilateral trade turnover accounted for some 30 billion US dollars, and the total volume of accumulated Japanese investment in Russia exceeded 10 billion dollars.⁴⁷

D. West Asia

Saudi Arabia

- **Security forces open fire on protesters in Eastern Province**

According to reports, Saudi security forces have opened fire on Shia protesters in the Qatif district of Eastern Province on July 27, 2012, injuring several of them as hundreds demonstrated to demand the release of some detainees. The Saudi interior Ministry said security forces dealt with 'rioters who burned tyres' in parts of Qatif, and has arrested several people. The demonstrators carried posters of Shia detainees, including prominent cleric Nimr al-Nimr, who was arrested earlier this month. The family of Nimr said that he had been transferred from the military hospital in Dhahran, where he was receiving treatment for a bullet wound, to another in Riyadh.⁴⁸

UAE

- **Crackdown on the Islamists continue**

Reports noted that at least 10 local Islamists have been arrested in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) over the past several days as part of a widening crackdown on dissidents. A total number of around 20 dissidents, most of them Islamists, have been arrested since July 15, 2012 by the UAE authorities in investigating a foreign-linked group planning "crimes against the security of the state". Activists say around 40 dissidents have been arrested since March this year. Many of them are Emiratis but an Omani and stateless residents of the UAE were among those detained. Most of the men detained over the past months are from the more religiously conservative emirates such as Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah, which are also less affluent than the oil-rich capital Abu Dhabi and trade hub Dubai. The UAE authorities are concerned about the rise of Islamists in their country and last week Dubai police chief Dahi Khalfan warned of an "international plot" to

⁴⁶ "DM denies RF's talks on creating logistic points in Cuba, Vietnam, Seychelles", ITAR-TASS, July 27, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/482704.html>

⁴⁷ "Russia, Japan FMs to discuss cooperation, peace treaty issue", ITAR-TASS, July 28, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/482832.html>

⁴⁸ "Saudi forces 'open fire' on protesters" *Al Jazeera*, July 28, 2012, at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/07/201272713452985699.html>

overthrow the governments of Gulf Arab countries, saying the region needed to be prepared to counter any threat from Islamist dissidents as well as Syria and Iran.⁴⁹

E. Africa

- **Sustainable development discussed in Africa- China Forum meeting; Al-Qaeda role suspected in Mali occupation; Hesham Qandil appointed as PM of Egypt; RAF pilots flew armed US drones in Libya; China calls for international coordination on Somalia piracy; Libyan rebels entered into Syrian battlefield; Nigeria arrests 26 militants over murder of two Indians**

During the China-Africa forum meeting, the African leaders and independent groups impress upon China to prioritize sustainable development in its trade with African countries. The officials mentioned that they increasingly recognize the importance of sound environmental practices for building strong relations with the continent. Particularly, World Wildlife Fund Director General Jim Leape opined that the growing trade between China and Africa presents a chance to create a new model of development in emerging economies. It is to be noted that the Chinese investments in environmentally sensitive sectors, including forestry, agriculture, fishing, oil and gas, have spurred anti-Chinese sentiment in many African countries.⁵⁰

According to reports, the armed Islamist groups who have occupied northern Mali, Ansar Dine (Defenders of Faith) and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), were acting under the aegis of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). They argue that the group benefits from its perfect knowledge of northern Mali and its vast desert terrain, where it has spun a tight network across tribal and business lines, supporting poor communities and protecting traffickers.⁵¹

In another development, Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi appointed Irrigation Minister Hesham Qandil as the new prime minister of Egypt and asked him to form a new cabinet as soon as possible. It is mentioned that Qandil is a prominent independent national figure who has never been a member of any party. Qandil promised that he would form a technocrat government and would consult with the president over all his choices, assuring that all national powers will be represented in Qandil's government.⁵²

According to reports, Britain's Ministry of Defence has revealed that the RAF pilots flew armed US drones in Libya as part of NATO's military effort in 2011 Libyan conflict. The disclosure came ten months after the end of a campaign in which the UK government had insisted that no British

⁴⁹ "UAE arrests 10 more Islamists in crackdown activists", *The Times of India*, July 29, 2012, at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/middle-east/UAE-arrests-10-more-Islamists-in-crackdown-activists/articleshow/15256519.cms>

⁵⁰ "Africans Urge China to Help Create Sustainable Development", *Voice of America*, July 23, 2012, at http://www.voanews.com/content/africans_urge_china_to_help_creating_sustainable_development_in_africa/1443475.html

⁵¹ "North Africa Al-Qaeda the puppet masters in Mali occupation", *New Vision*, July 25, 2012, at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/633364-north-africa-al-qaeda-the-puppet-masters-in-mali-occupation.html>

⁵² "Egyptian president appoints Hesham Qandil as new PM", *Xinhua News*, July 25, 2012, at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-07/25/c_131736347.htm

drones, or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), were involved. On the other hand, the British MoD admitted that RAF personnel, who were on an exchange programme in the US, flew American Predator drones, which were a key component of the air campaign. The deployment of drones has become a sensitive subject, primarily because of the way the Americans have used them for cross-border raids on Taliban and al-Qaeda suspects in Pakistan.⁵³

Addressing the 12th Plenary Meeting of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), Wang Min, China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations said that the issue of piracy off the Somalia coast has always posed a serious threat to stability and development of the region as well as safety and security of international shipping. He insisted that the international community should strengthen its coordination and cooperation on the Somalia piracy issue, especially when the pirates are getting apparently industrialized and violent, with increased all-weather piracy capabilities and expanding scope of attacks.⁵⁴

According to a report, under the command of one of Libya's well known rebel commanders, Al-Mahdi al-Harati, more than 30 Libyan fighters have made their way into Syria to support the Free Syrian Army rebels in their war against President Bashar al-Assad's regime. It was mentioned that Al-Harati, who commanded the Tripoli Revolutionary brigade, the first group of rebels to enter the Libyan capital in August 2011, has been in Syria for months.⁵⁵

In other developments, according to reports, spokesman of the Joint Task Force, Lt. Col. Sagir Musa, announced that two suspected members of the Islamic sect Boko Haram were killed and twenty six others arrested by the Nigerian military in the northern Maiduguri city for their alleged involvement in the killing of two Indians. Earlier, two Indians – Shanker Saha (35) and Bokul Chander Mondal (35) – were stabbed to death when they were attacked in a Gum Arabic factory while another Indian, Biresh Yadav (43), was injured in the attack. Later, the Indian High Commissioner to Nigeria, Mahesh Sachdev, had demanded prompt investigation into the attack on Indian nationals.⁵⁶

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

- **Indian Army developing Tactical Communication System (TCS) to modernize military communication; Naval fighter jet MIG makes first landing on INS Vikramaditya**

Reports noted that Indian Army is working on providing a safe and seamless exchange of data

⁵³ "British pilots flew armed US drones in Libya, MoD reveals", *Guardian*, July 26, 2012, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jul/26/british-pilots-drones-libya>

⁵⁴ "Somalia: China Calls for Further Coordination On Somalia Piracy", *All Africa*, July 26, 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201207270012.html>

⁵⁵ "Libya rebels move onto Syrian battlefield", *CNN*, July 28, 2012, at <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/07/28/world/meast/syria-libya-fighters/index.html>

⁵⁶ "Nigerian military kills 2, arrests 26 over murder of 2 Indians", *Daily News & Analysis*, July 28, 2012, http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_nigerian-military-kills-2-arrests-26-over-murder-of-2-indians_1720989

between various formations involved in fighting a modern war. Army's Signal Officer-in-Chief Lt General S P Kochhar said, "The need for a state-of-the-art Tactical Communication System (TCS) has been long felt. The TCS being conceived for the force will bridge the gap between existing and contemporary technologies in the sphere of military communication." "An information grid is required to be established to generate precise war-fighting effects and orchestrated operations at an unprecedented operational tempo," Kochhar said, highlighting the need for establishing an independent defence communication network. Further, noting that a network-centric force will have the ability to share and exchange information in "near real time", he said, "Challenge is to achieve a successful integration of sensors, shooters and decision makers through a dynamic, reliable and secure loop." For the TCS project two development agencies- Bharat Electronics (BEL) and a consortium of L&T, Tata Power and HCL Infosys Ltd- has been selected by the government as per the laid down norms of Defence Procurement Policy.⁵⁷

In another development, according to reports, a Russian-built fighter jet has made the first landing on the INS Vikramaditya as part of comprehensive sea trials, the aircraft carrier is undergoing ahead of its induction in the Indian Navy later this year. A MiG-29KUB two-seat naval fighter jet landed on the Vikramaditya's deck for the first time on July 28, 2012 after performing several touch-and-go approaches in the Barents Sea in the Russian Arctic. The former Soviet Admiral Gorshkov heavy aviation cruiser, rechristened Vikramaditya, has been extensively refurbished and upgraded to a light aircraft carrier at the Sevmash shipyard in the Russian city of Severodvinsk under a \$2.3 billion contract with India. It had its flight deck extended and turned into a full runway with a ski jump and arrestor wires. A MiG-35 jet will also be used for landings and take-offs from the flight deck of the aircraft carrier to test its new short-takeoff-but-assisted recovery (STOVAR) system.⁵⁸

International

- **Australian Defense Minister defends big defence budget cuts; Qatar considering buying up to 200 German tanks**

Australian Defence Minister Stephen Smith on July 29 defended military spending cuts, saying the belt-tightening would not impact overseas operations or those with key ally the United States. Australia announced in May that it would slash Aus\$5.5 billion (U.S. \$5.76 billion) from its defense budget as part of sweeping government cuts, deferring or scrapping jet and weapons deliveries and sacking 1,000 staff. Smith said he had spoken with U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta on three occasions about the cuts, which do not involve cutting military personnel numbers or overseas operations, most recently last week. "And he is absolutely convinced, as I am, that the cuts that we have made in our defense program continue to protect our long-term capability but most importantly don't have any adverse consequences for our overseas operations," he told ABC TV. "And don't have any adverse implications for what we are doing with the United States, our enhanced practical cooperation, whether that's (U.S.) marines in Darwin or the prospect of enhanced aviation access to our airbases in the Northern Territory." Australia has about 1,500 troops serving in Afghanistan as well as peacekeeping deployments in East Timor and the Solomon

⁵⁷ "Army develops technology to modernise military communication," July 27 2012, at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/army-develops-technology-to-modernise-military-communication/980269/>

⁵⁸ "MiG fighter makes first landing on INS Vikramaditya," The Hindu, July 29, 2012, at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article3697040.ece>

Islands, and is set to become a critical regional ally of the United States in the Asia-Pacific. About 2,500 U.S. Marines are to be stationed in northern Australia by 2016-17 under a military deal signed with U.S. President Barack Obama last year.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, Qatar is considering buying up to 200 German tanks at a cost of around 2 billion euros (\$2.46 billion), according to a report published on July 29. News weekly Spiegel reported that the Qataris were interested in acquiring the Leopard-2, Germany's main battle tank and that a delegation from defense firm Krauss-Maffei Wegmann had already travelled to Qatar to discuss the possible deal. Spiegel reported that both Chancellor Angela Merkel's office and the economy ministry were in favor of the deal with Qatar.⁶⁰

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Protests in Bandipora district after alleged killing of a youth; Defence Minister A K Antony visits J&K; Defence Minister stresses upon reduction in the visibility of armed forces in Jammu and Kashmir; Informer in the Bandipora killing hatched conspiracy to stage encounter; PWD Supervisor in a blast in Kathua district; Man shot at in Shopian**

According to reports, after death of a youth on July 24, 2012 night in Bandipora district, mourners alleged that Hilal Ahmed Dar was tortured to death by armed forces. Aloosa, the largest village of district Bandipora, is immersed in gloom and anger over the killing. Thousands of people from various parts of the district and outside visited the bereaved family amid protests and clashes in various localities.⁶¹

Meanwhile, reports noted that Defence Minister AK Antony was on a two day visit to Jammu and Kashmir from July 28, 2012. During the visit, he stressed for reduction in the visibility of armed forces in Jammu and Kashmir, stressing that there can be no justification for human rights violations. Revocation of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) also figured during a brief one-to-one between Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and the Defence Minister. The Defence Minister, according to sources, was all praise for J&K government. Defence Minister also expressed his satisfaction at the improved level of coordination among various security agencies in J&K, leading to significant reduction in infiltration from across the border in recent times.⁶²

⁵⁹ "Australia Defense Minister Defends Military Spending Cuts," July 29, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120729/DEFREG03/307290003/Australia-Defense-Minister-Defends-Military-Spending-Cuts?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

⁶⁰ "Qatar Mulls Purchase of 200 German Tanks: Report," July 29, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120729/DEFREG04/307290007/Qatar-Mulls-Purchase-200-German-Tanks-Report?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

⁶¹ "Bandipora seethes in anger", *Greater Kashmir*, July 26, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jul/27/bandipora-seethes-in-anger-44.asp>

⁶² "Reduce footprints of forces: Antony", *Greater Kashmir*, July 28, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jul/29/reduce-footprints-of-forces-antony-53.asp>

According to reports, Police said that two persons have been arrested in connection with the killing of Hilal Ahmed Dar. The prima facie evidence reveals that it was a “planned killing” and the matter is being investigated minutely. Initial Investigation has revealed that an Army informer Muhammad Ramzan Bhat of Aloosa got Hilal killed allegedly for monetary benefits and Police have recovered a weapon from the house of the another arrested person Nazir Ahmed.⁶³

In other developments, reports noted that a government employee was killed and eight persons, mostly labourers, were injured in a powerful blast in the compound of a police station in Kathua district on July 23, 2012. During disposal of old blasting material by the Public Works Department (PWD) officials, a powerful explosion took place inside the compound of Bani police station near an under-construction building.⁶⁴

According to reports, unidentified gunmen shot dead a man and a Sarpanch escaped a life bid in two separate incidents across the Valley. A police officer said that suspected militants opened fire on Muhammad Rafi Malla son of Ghulam Ahmad of Pahalpora in South Kashmir’s Shopian district.⁶⁵

Northeast India

- **Fresh violence in Assam, Rajdhani train service attacked; Tension continued in Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD); PM visits Assam to take stock of Kokrajhar situation, announces Rs. 300 crore package; MHA officials review Kokrajhar situation; GNLA-ULFA camp busted in Meghalaya; North-East ultras in Myanmar under pressure; Cadre of National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) killed; CRPF, SI killed in firing; Militants explode grenade in Manipur**

According to reports, fresh violence rocked the trouble-torn Bodoland Territorial Administered Districts in Assam where the Rajdhani Express train service was attacked by some persons even as the entire train services to and from the North East was hit. Unidentified persons pelted stones and attacked the coaches of the Guwahati-bound Rajdhani Express at Gossaigaon in Kokrajhar district damaging four coaches, though there was no casualty or injuries.⁶⁶

According to reports, Army staged a flag march in the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) of Assam as there was no let-up in tensions with three more bodies recovered from Chirang district and five villages set on fire. The Army also staged a flag march in the four districts of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri that comprise the BTAD. Kokrajhar and Chirang have become a cauldron of communal tension since July 19, 2012 with 35 people killed and thousands rendered homeless in the violence between the Bodos, who are tribals, and Bengali-

⁶³ “Informer hatched conspiracy to stage encounter”, *Greater Kashmir*, July 29, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jul/30/-informer-hatched-conspiracy-to-stage-encounter-60.asp>

⁶⁴ “PWD Supervisor killed, 8 injured in Kathua blast”, *Greater Kashmir*, July 23, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jul/24/pwd-supervisor-killed-8-injured-in-kathua-blast-53.asp>

⁶⁵ “Man shot at in Shopian”, *Greater Kashmir*, July 29, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jul/30/man-shot-at-in-shopian-43.asp>

⁶⁶ “Fresh violence in Assam, Rajdhani attacked”, *The Assam Tribune*, July 24, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul2412/at0151>

speaking Muslims. Mobs continued to set fire to houses left vacant by thousands who have fled to safer areas.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, reports noted Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh visited Assam on July 28, 2012 to take stock of the situation in Kokrajhar and the steps being taken to control it. Terming the large scale ethnic riots in Assam as a blot on the nation, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh announced a Rs 300-crore Central relief package for the violence-hit people. Dr Singh announced immediate Special Central Assistance of Rs 100 crore for relief and rehabilitation efforts, another Rs 100 crore as Special Plan Assistance for development programmes in the affected areas and an additional fund of Rs 100 crore under Indira Awas Yojana for the affected areas. He also announced an assistance of Rs 2 lakh from the Prime Ministers' National Relief Fund to the family of those who lost lives in the violence and an amount of Rs 50,000 as immediate relief to those who are seriously injured. Moreover, to aid in rehabilitation of the affected people, an assistance of Rs 30,000 will be given to those whose houses are fully damaged and Rs 20,000 for partially damaged houses.⁶⁸

In another development, reports noted that in a bid to restore normalcy, a high-level Central team including Shambhu Singh, Joint Secretary (North East) and Ajoy Chadda, Special Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, arrived at Kokrajhar and held a closed-door meeting with high-level officials of Kokrajhar district administration and security forces including Army at Kokrajhar circuit house. Shambhu Singh said that 44 companies of additional Central forces would be shortly deployed while the Army was given the task of area domination. He also pointed out that the 4 companies of SSB were deployed along the railway tracks to restore normal movement of railway service from today. He also said the process is on to send back the inmates of relief camps to their residences in a phased manner ensuring full security.⁶⁹

According to reports, security forces have busted a joint training camp of the Garo National Liberation Army and the United Liberation Front of Asom in the Garo Hills region in western part of Meghalaya. There were no reports yet if someone was arrested in the crackdown. The camp, located at Memanang in the foothills of Durama, was busted July 23, 2012 by a joint team of Meghalaya's Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) and Combat Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) commandos. Memanang is about 23 km from Williamnagar, the district headquarters of East Garo Hills.⁷⁰

Reports noted that though the Government of Myanmar is yet to launch full scale operations, the militants using the territory of that country are under bit of pressure and the movement of the militants has also come down in recent times. The militants are not having a free run in Myanmar

⁶⁷ "Tension continues, Army stages flag march in BTAD", *The Assam Tribune*, July 25, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul2512/at04>

⁶⁸ "Rs, 300- crore package announced", *The Assam Tribune*, July 28, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul2912/at05>

⁶⁹ "MHA officials review Kokrajhar situation", *The Assam Tribune*, July 25, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul2612/at06>

⁷⁰ "GNLA-UNLF camp busted in Meghalaya", *The Assam Tribune*, July 24, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul2412/at0154>

as was the case in the past and the Government of India is hopeful that the Government of that country would take action against the ultras sooner or later.⁷¹

In other developments, according to reports, in a fierce gun battle, one NLFT insurgent was killed at Majimonipur, 15 km from Raishyabari police station in Dhalai district. One AK-47 rifle with 50 rounds of live bullets and two Chinese grenades were recovered from the spot.⁷² Meanwhile, reports noted that a CRPF sub-inspector was killed and a constable injured in firing by Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) militants in East Garo Hills district even as security forces busted their camp in Durama Hills range.⁷³

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **Syrian Crisis: India calls on all parties to end violence and cooperate with the international envoy, UN worried about 'imminent' face-off in Aleppo; Negotiators fail to agree on Arms Trade Treaty; Mandate of UN missions in Iraq and Cote d'Ivoire extended; Indian professor among one of the lead authors in UNEP Climate Change report**

With the escalation of violence in Syria, India called on all parties both within and outside the country to cooperate with international envoy, Kofi Annan to put an end to the crisis. India also said that it does not see an alternative to the full implementation of UN resolutions 2042 and 2043.⁷⁴ Meanwhile, the UN has warned of an 'imminent' showdown between government troops and opposition forces in Syria's largest city, Aleppo. According to a UN diplomat, the situation in Aleppo was being watched with 'great concern'.⁷⁵

According to reports, negotiators at the UN failed to meet the deadline to complete a new treaty that was aimed at regulating the estimated \$60 billion global arms trade business. Major weapons exporting nations including the US said that they needed more time to finalize an agreement. Further negotiations are likely to take place at the next session of the UN General Assembly.⁷⁶

In other developments, the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) was extended for a year. The UN Security Council also encouraged the government of Iraq to continue with the

⁷¹ "NE ultras in Myanmar facing pressure", *The Assam Tribune*, July 23, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul2412/at07>

⁷² "NLFT cadre killed in Tripura", *The Assam Tribune*, July 23, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul2412/oth06>

⁷³ "CRPF, SI killed in firing, constable injured", *The Assam Tribune*, July 24, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul2512/oth05>

⁷⁴ "India for complete adherence to UN resolutions on Syria", *NDTV.com*, July 26, 2012 at <http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/india-for-complete-adherence-to-un-resolutions-on-syria-247793>

⁷⁵ "UN worried over 'imminent' Aleppo showdown", *The Hindu*, July 27, 2012 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article3692689.ece>

⁷⁶ "UN misses its deadline for global arms trade pact". *The Indian Express*, July 29, 2012 at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/un-misses-its-deadline-for-global-arms-trade-pact/980866/0>

strengthening of democracy and rule of law while also improving security and combating terrorism.⁷⁷

Reports noted that the mandate of the UN peacekeeping mission in Cote d'Ivoire was extended until 31 July 2013. The UN Security Council called on the government to enhance dialogue with the opposition and urged all perpetrators of human rights abuses and international humanitarian law violations be brought to justice.⁷⁸

Separately, a professor from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, P R Shukla is among the lead authors from around the world who are preparing a report for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to ensure that actual global emissions are consistent with the 2 degree Celsius target. The report will be presented at the 2012 UN Climate Change Conference in Qatar.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ "Security Council extends mandate of UN Assistance Mission for Iraq by 12 months", *UN News Centre*, July 25, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42557&Cr=iraq&Cr1=>

⁷⁸ "Security Council grants one-year extension for UN peacekeepers in Cote d'Ivoire", *UN News Centre*, July 26, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42565&ivoire&Cr1=>

⁷⁹ "Indian Institute of Management professor among lead authors of United Nations Environment report", *The Times of India*, July 25, 2012 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-07-25/ahmedabad/32847580_1_celsius-above-pre-industrial-levels-country-pledges-greenhouse-gas-emissionss