

# THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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## I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

### A. South Asia

#### Bangladesh

- **Joint team of Bangladesh and India visits Ashuganj River Port and the Meghna river; New gas layer detected at a well in Kailashtila gas field in Sylhet; UAE imposes restrictions on renewal and issuance of work visas to the Bangladeshis**

According to reports, a joint team of Bangladesh and India visited Ashuganj River Port and the Meghna river on August 23, 2012 to study what infrastructure it would require to transit goods from Paschimbanga to “seven sisters” of India through the port.<sup>1</sup>

In another development, reports noted that the state-run oil and gas exploration company has detected a new gas layer at a well in Kailashtila gas field in Sylhet. According to Mortuza Ahmad Faruque, Managing Director of Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Ltd (Bapex), there were three gas zones in the well no. 4 of the gas field. A new layer has been identified between upper and middle layers of the well at a depth of 2,722 metre. The new zone of the well would add about 20 million cubic feet of gas per day (20 mmcfd), which would take 10 to 12 days to go for commercial production, and thus inclusion to the national grid. It would be worth noting that about 90 mmcfd gas is being produced at the six wells in Kailashtila at present.<sup>2</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, the United Arab Emirates has imposed restrictions on renewal and issuance of work visas to the Bangladeshis. Bangladesh’s Consul General Abu Zafar in Dubai said they had been receiving such reports for two weeks but the UAE authorities were yet to officially inform them about it.<sup>3</sup>

#### Sri Lanka

- **Maldivian President visits Sri Lanka; Oil Spills in Sri Lanka’s western coast; Sri Lanka to control the import, export and production of HCFC; Sri Lanka to enter into the loan agreements with China’s Exim Bank to finance the second phase of the Hambantota Harbor project and construct the Matara-Beliatta segment of the southern rail line expansion project; Sri Lanka installed five nuclear disaster detectors; Sri Lankan External Affairs Minister G.L. Peiris meets the British High Commissioner to Sri Lanka to discuss the travel advisory issued**

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<sup>1</sup> “Transit to India: Indo-Bangla team visits Ashuganj port”, *The Daily Star*, August 25, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=246964>.

<sup>2</sup> “New gas layer found in Kailashtila”, *The Daily Star*, August 23, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=246749>

<sup>3</sup> Palma, Porimol, “UAE slaps visa ‘restrictions’: Reasons unknown”, *The Daily Star*, August 25, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=246940>.

**by British Foreign Office; Representative of the Government of Japan for Peace-Building, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in Sri Lanka Yasushi Akashi visits Sri Lanka**

Reports noted that President of Maldives Dr. Mohamed Waheed Hassan Manik accompanied by First Lady Ilham Hussain arrived in Sri Lanka on August 23, 2012 on a two-day official visit. His Sri Lankan counterpart President Mahinda Rajapaksa welcomed the Maldivian leader at the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo. Leaders of Sri Lanka and Maldives agreed to extend and strengthen bilateral cooperation on a wide range of issues when they met for discussions.<sup>4</sup>

In another development, according to reports, the Cypress flagged 15,600-ton Bulk Carrier MV Thermopylae Sierra, which has been anchored since 2009 in the sea about 20 kilometers off Panadura coast due to a pending court case, sank completely on August 23, 2012 after efforts to move the ship before the monsoon rains failed. The 155-meter long and 127-meter wide ship manufactured in 1985 is believed to contain 20 to 30 tons more of petroleum oil. The Chairman of Sri Lanka Marine Protection Authority R.S. Ariyapperuma said that steps will be taken to sue the company which owns the ship. According to the official, the case is to be filed soon in the maritime court seeking damage from the owners of the ship.<sup>5</sup>

Reports noted that Sri Lanka, as a measure to phase out hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) use, will start the control of the import, export and production of the chemical from 1st of January 2013. The cabinet has approved a proposal made by the Minister of Environment, Anura Priyadarshana Yapa to implement the recommendations made by the Officials' Committee appointed by the Secretary to Ministry of Environment to start the control of the import/export and production of HCFCs. Sri Lanka, which has ratified the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, is under obligation to completely phase out HCFCs by 2030.<sup>6</sup>

According to reports, the Sri Lankan government has received approval from the Cabinet of Ministers to obtain financial assistance from China for two major infrastructure projects in the Southern Province. Accordingly, the Sri Lankan government will enter into the loan agreements with China's Exim Bank to finance the second phase of the Hambantota Harbor project and construct the Matara-Beliatta segment of the southern rail line expansion project. The Exim Bank of China has agreed to provide a loan of US \$600 million and a Chinese Government Concessional Loan Renminbi Yuan 1 Billion (approximately US\$ 157 million) to finance Phase II of the Hambantota Port Development Project.<sup>7</sup>

In another development, reports noted that Sri Lanka installed five nuclear disaster detectors to alert the people on nuclear accidents. The detectors will provide early warnings during both

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<sup>4</sup> "Sri Lanka, Maldives agree to extend and strengthen bilateral cooperation", *The Colombo Page*, August 23, 2012 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_12A/Aug23\\_1345738584CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Aug23_1345738584CH.php).

<sup>5</sup> "Sri Lanka to sue Cyprus company over marine pollution", *The Colombo Page*, August 25, 2012 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_12A/Aug25\\_1345878197CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Aug25_1345878197CH.php).

<sup>6</sup> "Sri Lanka to begin phase-out of hydrochlorofluorocarbons from next year", *The Colombo Page*, August 24, 2012 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_12A/Aug24\\_1345823801CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Aug24_1345823801CH.php).

<sup>7</sup> "Sri Lanka to receive over US\$ 1 billion loans from China for two infrastructure projects in the South", *The Colombo Page*, August 24, 2012 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_12A/Aug24\\_1345749477CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Aug24_1345749477CH.php).

nuclear emergencies and other environmental disasters that may occur in the region. The project was carried out at an estimated cost of some Rs.12 million was a part of an agreement reached among the Atomic Energy Authority, the Disaster management centre and the Sri Lanka Navy.<sup>8</sup>

In other developments, Sri Lankan External Affairs Minister G.L. Peiris met the British High Commissioner on August 20, 2012 to discuss the British Foreign Office travel advisory issued for British nationals visiting Sri Lanka which said there was a heavy military presence throughout the country and a looming terrorist threat. The minister asked that the travel advisory be amended in keeping with the developments in the North.<sup>9</sup> However, despite Monday's discussion between External Affairs Minister G.L. Peiris and British High Commissioner John Rankin, no amendment has been made in the advisory.<sup>10</sup>

Separately, Representative of the Government of Japan for Peace-Building, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in Sri Lanka Yasushi Akashi visited Sri Lanka on August 21, 2012. External Affairs Minister Prof. G.L. Peiris briefed Ambassador Yasushi Akashi in detail about the procedures set in motion by the government for implementation of the LLRC recommendations, the progress already achieved and priority objectives for the future. He explained that the work connected with the resettlement of internally displaced persons, the re-integration of ex-combatants and demining operations are almost complete.<sup>11</sup> Ambassador Akashi said that the Japanese government is willing to aid in repairing the relationship between Sri Lanka and the international community. He also said that he would be visiting India on August 25, 2012 in order to discuss the Sri Lankan issue.<sup>12</sup>

## Maldives

### ● Maldivian President Waheed visits Sri Lanka

Reports noted that President Dr Mohamed Waheed made an official visit to Sri Lanka on August 23-25, 2012 on the invitation of President Mahinda Rajapaksa. President Waheed was accompanied by First Lady Madam Ilham Hussain and a delegation of senior government officials and local media. During his visit, President Waheed met with President Rajapaksa and hold official talks between the Maldives and Sri Lanka. President Waheed also met with the diplomatic community and major business leaders in Sri Lanka.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> "SL braces for nuclear disaster", *The Daily Mirror*, August 21, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/21311-sl-braces-for-nuclear-disaster.html>.

<sup>9</sup> "GL asks Britain to amend latest travel advisory", *The Daily Mirror*, August 22, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/21322-gl-asks-britain-to-amend-latest-travel-advisory.html>.

<sup>10</sup> "No change in British travel advisory", *The Daily Mirror*, August 25, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/21412-no-change-in-british-travel-advisory.html>.

<sup>11</sup> "Akashi briefed", *The Daily Mirror*, August 22, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/21343-akashi-briefed.html>.

<sup>12</sup> "Japan offers to help SL to damage control int'l relations", *The Daily Mirror*, August 25, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/21417-japan-offers-to-help-sl-to-damage-control-intl-relations.html>

<sup>13</sup> "President and First Lady arrive in Male' following the conclusion of their visit to Sri Lanka", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, August 25, 2012 at <http://www.presidentcymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7809>.

## B. East Asia

### South East Asia

- **Northeast insurgents shifting base to Myanmar, Bangladesh; Indonesian Red Cross Organisation (PMI) sends aid to Myanmar; Thousands displaced in Myanmar floods; US cancels anti dumping import duty and countervailing duty on paper products from Indonesia; Indonesia to soon sell weapons and military supplies to Iraq and Uganda**

According to the reports, India's Assam Rifles have said that terrorist outfits of the northeastern region have shifted their bases to neighbouring Myanmar following crackdown by the Bangladesh security forces. Tripura's two militant secessionist outfits - NLFT (National Liberation Front of Tripura) and the ATTF (All Tripura Tiger Force), both banned by the Indian authorities - have set up bases in Bangladesh along with the outhier outfits of the northeast region, and receive support from other separatist outfits of the northeast. According to an official document, currently the number of NLFT cadres is 150 to 155, and the ATTF has 10 to 12 guerillas.<sup>14</sup>

In another development, according to reports, the Indonesian Red Cross organization (PMI) sent personnel and humanitarian aid from Halim Perdana Kusuma Airport in East Jakarta on August 25, 2012 to assist refugees of the deadly conflict between the Rohingya and Rakhine ethnic groups in Myanmar. The PMI sent eight personnel and aid comprising 500 hygiene kits, 3,000 blankets and 10,000 sarongs by cargo plane BAE 146-200/PKJKC. The PMI had decided to send non-food aid based on the assessment of a team lead by PMI chairman Jusuf Kalla when the latter visited Myanmar at the beginning of August. The government of Myanmar recently allowed the PMI, along with other international humanitarian agencies, to send aid to refugees of the conflict between Rohingyas and Rakhines in Myanmar.<sup>15</sup>

According to reports, in worst monsoon flooding in years in Myanmar, hundreds of thousands of hectares of rice fields have submerged. At least 85,000 people in Myanmar have fled their homes. Around 70,000 people have been displaced in the delta and are being housed at 219 emergency relief centres set up at schools and monasteries. Another 15,000 people have been displaced elsewhere in the country, and more than 240,000 hectares (600,000 acres) of rice fields have been swamped. However, no casualties have been confirmed during the recent floods, which have affected 200,000 people nationwide. Some families who have not fled have moved to the upper floors of their dwellings.<sup>16</sup>

Reports noted that the US has announced its final decision canceling anti dumping import duty and countervailing duty on paper products from Indonesia. According to media reports, the decision on August 2, 2012 was a result of "sunset review" of dumping charges against Certain Lined Paper School Supplies (CLPSS) from Indonesia as the United States International Trade

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<sup>14</sup> 'Northeast terror outfits moving to Myanmar: Assam Rifles', *The Times of India*, August 25, 2012, [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-08-25/india/33384384\\_1\\_nlft-security-forces-tripura-tiger-force](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-08-25/india/33384384_1_nlft-security-forces-tripura-tiger-force)

<sup>15</sup> 'PMI sends aid to Myanmar', *The Jakarta Post*, August 26, 2012, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/08/26/pmi-sends-aid-myanmar.html>

<sup>16</sup> 'Burma floods drive tens of thousands from their homes', *Guardian*, August 25, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/25/burma-floods>



Commission (USITC) decided that imports of CLPSS from Indonesia have caused no injuries to the US industries.<sup>17</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, Indonesia may soon sell weapons and military supplies to Iraq and Uganda. Deputy Defence Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin, who recently returned from a visit to Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, said that he met Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki, who instructed his deputy defence minister and military chief to follow up on the Indonesian offer. During the meeting, Sjafrie presented Al-Maliki with an SS-2 assault rifle and a model of an Anoa armored personnel carrier (APC) produced by state arms manufacturer PT Pindad. Sjafrie said that both Iraq and Uganda had shown interest in procuring Indonesian-made weapons.<sup>18</sup>

## China

- **Beijing wants a new military to military relation with Washington; Beijing asserts that application of US-Japan treaty to Diaoyu Island not appropriate; Seoul-Beijing mark 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic ties; China argues for betterment of relationship with Japan; German Chancellor to visit China, Russian and Chinese officials discuss security**

According to reports, a high ranking Chinese Army Officer visiting United States has noted that there is a need to boost a new type of military to military relationship with the United States in order to boost cooperation.<sup>19</sup> In addition Beijing also asserted that it opposes any application of the United States-Japan security treaty with respect to the Diaoyu Island.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, China and South Korea celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Hu Jintao and Lee Myung-bak exchanged messages.<sup>21</sup>

According to reports, Beijing has urged that Tokyo should undertake practical action to improve the bi-lateral relations post the dispute over Diaoyu Island.<sup>22</sup>

Reports noted that German Chancellor Angela Merkel has decided to visit China on August 30-31, 2012, on the invitation of Premier Wen Jiabao.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> 'Us lifts dumping charges against Indonesian paper products', *Bernama*, August 24, 2012, <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v6/newsworld.php?id=689618>

<sup>18</sup> 'Indonesia may sell weapons, supplies to Iraq, Uganda', *Asia One*, August 25, 2012, <http://news.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/Asia/Story/A1Story20120825-367497.html>

<sup>19</sup> "China calls for new-type military relationship with US" *China Daily*, August 26, 2012 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-08/26/content\\_15705780.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-08/26/content_15705780.htm)

<sup>20</sup> "Application of US-Japan treaty to Diaoyu Islands opposed" *China Daily*, August 25, 2012 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-08/25/content\\_15705778.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-08/25/content_15705778.htm)

<sup>21</sup> "S. Korean, Chinese leaders celebrate 20 years of ties" *China Daily*, August 24, 2012 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2012-08/24/content\\_15704857.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2012-08/24/content_15704857.htm)

<sup>22</sup> "China urges Japan to improve ties" *China Daily*, August 24, 2012 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-08/24/content\\_15704946.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-08/24/content_15704946.htm)

<sup>23</sup> "Merkel to visit China late August" *China Daily*, August 23, 2012 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-08/23/content\\_15700966.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-08/23/content_15700966.htm)

In other development, Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo has argued that Beijing and Moscow should work towards strengthening their cooperation and coordination over strategic issues.<sup>24</sup>

## Japan

- **Japanese Prime Minister Noda reiterates Japan's sovereignty over the Takeshima islands; Japan urges South Korea to jointly refer their Territorial dispute to the ICJ**

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda recently reiterated Japan's sovereignty over the Takeshima islands which has also been claimed by South Korea. While claiming that Takeshima (Dokdo in South Korea) is historically an inherent territory of Japan, Noda argued that the South occupied those islands illegally by force. He also vowed to "deal with the issue calmly, but in an uncompromising manner with unwavering determination."<sup>25</sup>

In the meantime, to resolve the bilateral territorial dispute, Tokyo proposed to Seoul to jointly refer the issue to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. However while refusing to recognize a territorial dispute over the Takeshima/Dokdo islands, Seoul rejected that proposal.<sup>26</sup>

## South Korea

- **South Korea reacts strongly to Japanese Prime Minister Noda's recent comment on the Dokdo islands; Diplomatic row between South Korea and Japan aggravates further; South Korean plan to conduct Dokdo defense drills next month might get delayed**

According to reports, while reacting strongly to Japanese Prime Minister Noda's recent comment on the South occupying the Takeshima/Dokdo Islands illegally by force, Seoul has demanded the former to withdraw his comment immediately. While reiterating South Korea's own sovereignty over those disputed islands, the South Korean Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry spokesperson Cho Tai Young opined that instead of reiterating its unjust claims over the Dokdo islets, Japan should make efforts to develop future-oriented relations between the two countries, based on a correct understanding of history.<sup>27</sup>

In the meantime, the diplomatic row between South Korea and Japan has reached a new height. South Korean government has recently retuned an official letter from Japanese Prime Minister Noda to South Korean President Lee Myung-bak. In the letter, Noda expressed regret over Lee's recent controversial visit to the disputed Dokdo/Takeshima islands and his demand for an apology from the Japanese Emperor to the South Koreans who suffered during the Japanese colonial rule in Korea. As South Korea's return of the letter runs completely counter to diplomatic protocol, this development might further strain the bilateral relationship.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> "Chinese, Russian officials meet on security" *China Daily*, August 21, 2012 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-08/21/content\\_15692171.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-08/21/content_15692171.htm)

<sup>25</sup> "Noda vows to handle frays / PM says South Korea 'illegally occupies Takeshima by force', *Yomiuri Daily*, august 25, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120824004347.htm>

<sup>26</sup> "Japan asks ROK to Join ICJ Takeshima Action", *The Yomiuri Daily*, August 22, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120821004503.htm>

<sup>27</sup> "South Korea rebuts Noda comments", *Yomiuri Daily*, August 26, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120825002808.htm>

<sup>28</sup> "Lee returns Noda's letter on Takeshima/Unusual move goes against protocol", *The Yomiuri Daily*, August 24, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120823004602.htm>



In other developments, according to reports, the South Korean military's plan to carry out a regular military exercises near the waters of the Dokdo islands early next month might be delayed due to the ongoing dispute between South Korea and Japan over those disputed territories. The South Korean Defense Ministry however is of the view that the biannual military exercise should be conducted as planned just to demonstrate Seoul's determination to defend Dokdo as part of its territory.<sup>29</sup>

## C. Central Asia & Russia

### Central Asia

- **Kyrgyz government collapses after two coalition parties resign; Tajikistan president to visit Turkmenistan for bilateral talks; Kazakhstan aims to diversify exports to China; Kazakhstan forces to participate in anti-terror drills in Russia; Kazakhstan President to visit Kyrgyzstan for trade discussions; Kazakhstan accuses Russia of dumping goods; Russia to support Kazakhstan and Belarus's bids to become part of the World Trade Organization; Vietnam's trade with the Customs Union has seen a substantial increase this year; Kyrgyzstan government recalls its ambassador to Minsk**

According to reports, the Kyrgyz coalition government has collapsed due to two factions walking out over accusations that Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov had abused his power and was involved in corrupt practices. Trouble had been brewing in the coalition for weeks, as the Ata-Meken party, a junior partner, accused Babanov of accepting a \$1.5 million racehorse from a Turkish company in exchange for a building contract.<sup>30</sup>

In another development, reports noted that Tajik President is scheduled to visit Turkmenistan for bilateral talks. Amongst the issues slated for discussion are drug trafficking, stability in neighbouring Afghanistan and organized crime.<sup>31</sup>

According to reports, Kazakhstan is looking to diversify its exports from the predominant hydrocarbon mode. The total trade between the two countries in 2011 was US\$ 25 billion with a majority of it coming from the hydrocarbon exports. The two neighbours are also working on creating a trans-border free trade center at Khorgos, on the Chinese-Kazakh border.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, Kazakhstan is participating in anti-terrorism exercises with Russia and Ukraine in the southern Russian region of Rostov.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> "Korea plans to conduct Dokdo defense drills early next month", Korea Herald, August 25, 2012, at <http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20120825000103>

<sup>30</sup> "Kyrgyz government collapses after two coalition parties resign", Universal Newswires, August 22, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12660>

<sup>31</sup> "Rahmon heads to Ashgabat for bilateral talks", Universal Newswires, August 23, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12676>

<sup>32</sup> "Exports to China will be diversified, Kazakh ambassador says", Universal Newswires, August 24, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12682>

<sup>33</sup> "Kazakh forces join anti-terror drills in Russia", Universal Newswires, August 24, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12679>

Reports noted that Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev is scheduled to visit Kyrgyzstan on an official visit with trade and economic relations topping the discussions agenda. Kazakhstan has already committed US\$110 million for supporting new industries in Kyrgyzstan and they have also reached agreement on implementation of four new joint-venture projects. Two-day trade reached \$470 million in the first five months of 2012.<sup>34</sup>

In a sign that the tripartite customs union has not worked out quite as well as originally envisioned, a Kazakh official has accused Russian firms of 'dumping' goods on Kazakhstan to intentionally undercut Kazakh producers.<sup>35</sup>

According to reports, Russia will support the bids of customs union partners Kazakhstan and Belarus to enter the World Trade Organization (WTO) after its own bid for membership was finally accepted. The entry of Russia into the global trade body means that Russia will have to relax its borders and import restrictions to competing nations' products, which will in turn force Russian manufacturers and producers to improve their products to compete in their own markets. This will then have a domino effect on Kazakh and Belarusian economies, as the customs union means that goods can freely flow across borders of the three states.<sup>36</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, trade between Vietnam and customs union partners Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus increased substantially in the first seven months of the year 2012. Bilateral trade with Kazakhstan increased by 91.3% with total trade for the period being US\$ 41 million, with Russia it was US\$ 1.34 billion and with Belarus the trade figure was US\$ 100 million.<sup>37</sup>

Separately, the Kyrgyz government has recalled its ambassador to Belarus following the discovery of photos of deposed President Kurmanbek Bakiev's brother in the Belarusian capital Minsk. He is wanted in Kyrgyzstan to stand trial for felonies. However, Belarus has stated that it will not extradite Bakiev's brother since it believed that were issued for political purposes.<sup>38</sup>

## Russia

- **Russia to complete its chemical weapons elimination programme by 2015; Russia officially joins the WTO as its 156<sup>th</sup> member; European Union and Japan welcome Russia's WTO accession; Russia to continue with its economic and commercial relationship with Syria; Russia allows NATO to move armoured vehicles through Ulyanovsk; Russia actively assisting South Korea in its civilian space programme; Gazprom chief and Ukrainian minister discuss**

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<sup>34</sup> "Nazarbayev arrives in Kyrgyzstan for trade talks", Universal Newswires, August 22, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12664>

<sup>35</sup> "Kazakhs accuse Russians of 'dumping' goods", Universal Newswires, August 21, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12656>

<sup>36</sup> "Russia, now in WTO, will champion Kazakh, Belarus applications", Universal Newswires, August 22, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12666>

<sup>37</sup> "Vietnam trade with customs union sees quick surge", Universal Newswires, August 23, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12675>

<sup>38</sup> "Kyrgyz government recalls its ambassador from Minsk", Universal Newswires, August 24, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12684>

**Russian gas transit to Europe; Russia and China state that any action which is designed to circumvent UN rules is not acceptable to them**

In a significant development, Russia has officially joined the World Trade Organization to become the 156th member after a long accession process. The talks on entry into the Organization were held within the scope of the Working Group which included representatives of countries which had unresolved issues in trade with the Russian Federation (RF). Talks to this effect with Georgia, the European Union, and the United States were the most complex. The RF accession bid was finally decided upon at the WTO ministerial conference in Geneva on December 16, 2011. Russia's accession to the WTO was approved unanimously. As far as the US is concerned, WTO norms may not be applied in trade with it till the Jackson-Vanik Amendment is abrogated. According to the understanding reached, trade in this case will be regulated by the current bilateral trade agreement.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile, the European Union has welcomed Russia's WTO accession and has said that the move will facilitate investment and trade, help to accelerate the modernisation of the Russian economy and offer plenty of business opportunities for both Russian and European companies. Similar views have been echoed by Japan.<sup>40</sup>

In another development, according to reports, Russia will be through with the elimination of its chemical weapons stockpiles by December 2015. At present Russia is implementing the federal program for the elimination of chemical weapons stockpiles adopted back in 1996. The program's costs stand at 371 billion roubles. So far 226 billion roubles have been spent. Russia has eliminated 26,500 tonnes of chemical weapons – about 66 percent of the total amount.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, the Foreign Ministry of Russia has come out with a statement that said that "Russian-Syrian commercial and economic relations, despite an internal conflict in Syria, develop dynamically" and that unilateral sanctions against Syria should not be deterrent for Russia to continue with its trade relations.<sup>42</sup>

According to reports, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin has said that Russia has allowed NATO to move armoured vehicles through the Ulyanovsk transit hub.<sup>43</sup>

According to reports, Russia is actively assisting South Korea to develop its civilian space programme. Within the framework of the bilateral intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, Russia and South Korea have agreed to jointly design and create the South Korean space rocket complex with the light class carrier rocket KSLV-I. The contract on the creation of the complex was signed in October 2004. The first stage of the rocket was produced by Russia has been sent to South Korea.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> "RF officially joins WTO Wed to become 156th member", ITAR-TASS, August 22, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/501184.html>

<sup>40</sup> "EU welcomes Russia's WTO accession after 18 years of negotiations", ITAR-TASS, August 23, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/502080.html>

<sup>41</sup> "Russia to be through with chemical weapons elimination in 2015", ITAR-TASS, August 21, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/500955.html>

<sup>42</sup> "Russia not to give up commercial, economic coop with Syria", ITAR-TASS, August 23, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/502777.html>

<sup>43</sup> "Russia allows NATO to move armored vehicles through Ulyanovsk", ITAR-TASS, August 23, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/502673.html>

<sup>44</sup> "First stage of Naro-1 rocket dispatched to S Korea by rail", ITAR-TASS, August 23, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/502321.html>

Reports noted that Gazprom's chief Alexei Miller and Ukrainian Minister of Energy and Coal Mining Industry Yuri Boyko have discussed preparations for the forthcoming autumn-winter period, including uninterrupted transit of Russian gas by Naftogaz Ukrainy. In June 2012 Gazprom had given an advance of 2 billion US\$ to Ukraine to ensure smooth gas transit.<sup>45</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, Russia and China have stated that any action which is designed to circumvent UN rules is not acceptable to them. This was in response to US State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland's announcement that Washington still planned to act in circumvention of the UN Security Council's decisions on Syria, as it doubted that the Security Council would manage to reach a consensus on the crisis settlement.<sup>46</sup>

## D. West Asia

### Saudi Arabia

- **Terror cells busted in Riyadh and Jeddah; Saudi Arabia raises SR 552 million for Syrian's sufferings**

According to a Saudi Interior Ministry statement on August 26, 2012, security forces busted two terror cells in Riyadh and Jeddah and foiled their attack plans. Two Saudi and six Yemeni members of the two cells have been arrested. Interior Ministry Spokesman Major General Mansour Al-Turki also informed that, "They (terrorists) maintained direct contact with Al-Qaeda outfits outside the Kingdom. The security forces also learned that they set up a terror cell in Riyadh and engaged in promoting '*takfiri*' (branding the other as an infidel) ideology and the recruitment of youth for terror operations against security forces, citizens, expatriates and government installations." According to the police sources, the cell had reached an advanced stage in executing their plans after developing explosive devices and testing them outside Riyadh. Security forces have seized explosives materials, documents and cash from a chamber attached to a mosque in Riyadh. Interrogation has revealed that both the cells had contacts with each other and with the terrorists outside the kingdom.<sup>47</sup>

In another development, according to reports, a major donation campaign launched by Saudi Arabia to help the Syrian people has been able to raise SR 552 million as of August 26, 2012. The campaign under the title 'Saudi National Campaign for the Support of Brothers in Syria,' was launched last month by King Abdullah with a donation of SR 20 million and has been joined by a large number of Saudi philanthropists and donors, including businessmen. The campaign was launched under the supervision of the Interior Minister Prince Ahmad bin Abdulaziz. The

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<sup>45</sup> "Gazprom chief, Ukrainian minister discuss Russian gas transit to Europe", ITAR-TASS, August 22, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/501880.html>

<sup>46</sup> "Lavrov: RF, China agree actions in circumvention of UN rules impermissible", August 21, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/500745.html>

<sup>47</sup> "Two terror cells busted in Riyadh, Jeddah", *Arab News*, August 27, 2012, at <http://arabnews.com/two-terror-cells-busted-riyadh-jeddah>

campaign has also collected food, medicines, medical equipment, clothes, tents, blankets and above all, gold and silver jewellery to be supplied to Syria.<sup>48</sup>

## E. Africa

- **Somalia's new parliament sworn in Mogadishu; Egypt seeks \$4.8 billion loan from IMF; Iran keen to restore diplomatic relations with Egypt; Nigerian Islamists rule out peace talks with government; Nearly 53 people died in ethnic clashes in Kenya; Australia and South Africa to lead green climate fund; South Africa to discuss with EU on Iran sanctions; Libyan Interior Minister resigns amid criticism; Nearly twenty four South Sudan soldiers killed in Jonglei**

According to reports, Somalia's new parliament, the first since 1991, was inaugurated in Mogadishu when 250 MPs were sworn in by the chief justice in the presence of President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and UN special representative Augustine Mahiga. However, the parliament is short of the final target of 275 members. It is hoped that this would mark a new chapter after the civil war and bloodshed that followed the collapse of central government in 1991.<sup>49</sup>

In another development, reports noted that during International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Christine Lagarde's visit to Egypt to discuss means of helping the ailing economy, Egyptian officials have requested a \$4.8 billion loan from the IMF and hopes for a deal by the end of 2012. This could help in neutralizing balance of payments crisis and rebuild confidence among investors. Earlier, the exodus of foreign investors has left local banks shouldering much of the lending to the state. The government in the twelve months has also borrowed nearly \$12 billion, or about 4.5% of GDP, directly from the central bank.<sup>50</sup>

According to reports, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said that Iran and Egypt were moving toward restoring diplomatic ties, severed more than three decades ago. Salehi said that Tehran was keen on establishing relations of "friendship and brotherhood" with Cairo as Egypt is the cornerstone of the region and has a special stature in the Arab and Muslim countries.<sup>51</sup>

Reports noted that Nigerian Islamist sect Boko Haram ruled out holding peace talks with the government and also threatened to strike media houses for reporting against the sect. Earlier, the local press and two foreign news organisations have reported that talks were going on between the government and the militants who have been staging an insurgency against it. On his part, the

<sup>48</sup> "SR 552 million raised so far for victims of brutal Assad", *Arab News*, August 27, 2012, at <http://arabnews.com/sr-552-million-raised-so-far-victims-brutal-assad>

<sup>49</sup> "Somalia's first parliament since 1991 inaugurated in Mogadishu", *The Guardian*, August 20, 2012, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/20/somalia-first-parliament-inaugurated>

<sup>50</sup> "Egypt seeks \$4.8 billion IMF loan for stricken economy", *Daily News & Analysis*, August 22, 2012, at [http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report\\_egypt-seeks-4-8-billion-imf-loan-for-stricken-economy\\_1731487](http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_egypt-seeks-4-8-billion-imf-loan-for-stricken-economy_1731487)

<sup>51</sup> "Iran, Egypt move to restore diplomatic relations", *The Daily Star*, August 22, 2012, at <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Aug-22/185305-iran-egypt-move-to-restore-diplomatic-relations.ashx#axzz24io1w5fP>



Information minister Labaran Maku declined comment on the talks, citing government instructions not to discuss the issue.<sup>52</sup>

Kenyan police and aid workers reported that nearly 48 people were killed in ethnic clashes between Pokomo and Orma groups in Kenya's coastal region as attackers armed with rudiment weapons attacked villagers and set structures on fire. The raid was part of a long-running dispute between these groups over grazing land and water. The Coast Province Commissioner, Samuel Kilele, recalled that he had a meeting with leaders from both groups earlier and they appeared to resolve the dispute.<sup>53</sup> Later, Kenyan police have arrested five clan leaders and four chiefs in connection with these attacks. They were accused of organising and leading the raid and the chiefs of failing to alert authorities about the planned attacks. Meanwhile, the initial death toll of 48 rose to 53 after five more victims died in hospital. However, the Kenya Red Cross put the death toll at 62.<sup>54</sup>

According to reports, the Green Climate Fund, a new global fund on climate change created as part of a deal struck in December 2011 at the 194-nation climate talks in Durban, has selected officials from Australia and South Africa as its leaders at its first meeting. The fund, aims to channel \$US100 billion (\$A95 billion) a year in aid to poor countries, will be led by Ewen McDonald, deputy head of Australia's international development agency, and Zaheer Fakir, head of international relations for South Africa's environment agency.<sup>55</sup>

In another development, according to reports, after a meeting with European Union (EU) foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, the South African International Relations Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane said that South Africa would send an inter-departmental delegation to Brussels to discuss with Europe the impact on South Africa and the rest of the Southern African region of Western-led imposition of sanction on Iran. This has assumed importance as South Africa used to import about one third of its crude oil from Iran and the EU sanctions against Iran remains a hurdle for South Africa.<sup>56</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, Libyan Interior Minister Fawzi Abdelali has resigned after being criticized for the performance of security forces during recent violence that rocked Libya. Libyan security services were censured following double car bombings that killed two people on Eid al-Fitr in Tripoli and attacks on several Muslim shrines later. The criticism has been led by the General National Congress, which accused the interior ministry's High Security

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<sup>52</sup> Ibrahim Mshezilla (2012), "Nigeria Islamists rule out peace talks, threaten media", *Reuters*, August 23, 2012, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/23/us-nigeria-bokoharam-idUSBRE87M0F220120823>

<sup>53</sup> "Kenya: At least 48 people die in ethnic clashes", *The Independent*, August 23, 2012, at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/kenya-at-least-48-people-die-in-ethnic-clashes-8073718.html>

<sup>54</sup> Joseph Akwiri (2012), "Kenya police arrest 9 community leaders after clashes kill 53", *Reuters*, August 24, 2012, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/24/kenya-clashes-arrests-idUSL6E8JNDIR20120824>

<sup>55</sup> John Heilprin (2012), "Aust, S Africa to lead Green Climate Fund", *The Australian*, August 24, 2012, at <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/breaking-news/aust-s-africa-to-lead-green-climate-fund/story-fn3dxix6-1226457085143>

<sup>56</sup> "South Africa protests to EU over Iran sanctions", *Tehran Times*, August 25, 2012, at <http://www.tehrantimes.com/component/content/article/100803>



Committee of being lax or even implicated in the destruction of shrines, including those of the Sufi sect.<sup>57</sup>

Separately, Jonglei governor Kuol Manyang reported that rebels in South Sudan's Jonglei state have killed at least 24 soldiers, with several others missing or wounded, in the latest outbreak of violence. The attack took place in the Pibor region of Jonglei after soldiers were sent to investigate sightings of rebel leader David Yau Yau, who split from South Sudan's army (SPLA).<sup>58</sup>

## II. DEFENCE REVIEW

### National

- **India's nuclear-capable Prithvi-II ballistic missile successfully test-fired; Indian Air Force to deploy medium power radars and advanced helicopters in the western sector**

According to reports, India's nuclear-capable Prithvi-II ballistic missile with a strike range of 350 km was successfully test-fired on August 25, 2012 from the Integrated Test Range near Balasore as part of user trial by the army. The flight test of the surface-to-surface missile was conducted around 1100 hrs from a mobile launcher from ITR's launch complex-III at Chandipur. Describing the trial of the indigenously developed strategic missile as "fully successful", ITR Director MVKV Prasad said, "It was a perfect launch. All the mission objectives were accomplished during the trial." Prithvi is the first ballistic missile developed under the country's prestigious Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme and has the capability to carry 500 kg of both nuclear and conventional warheads with a strike range of 350 km. The missile uses advanced inertial guidance system with manoeuvring trajectory. The test-fire of the sophisticated short-range ballistic missile, which has already been inducted into the armed forces, was a user's trial by the army and monitored by scientists of Defence Research and Development Organisation.<sup>59</sup>

In another development, reports noted that Indian Air Force will deploy medium power radars and advanced helicopters in the western sector in order to strengthen its preparedness along the Indo-Pak border in Rajasthan. Air Marshal Anjan Kumar Gogoi, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, South-Western Air command, said at a press conference that while Jodhpur airbase will

<sup>57</sup> Imed Lamloum (2012), "Libya's under-fire interior minister quits", *AFP*, August 26, 2012, at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jIR4TI6x2fXGqH9ikami4qwDihnA?docId=CNG.e223f828e62750350df9154f0a83ad11.d11>

<sup>58</sup> "Rebels killed at least 24 South Sudan soldiers: officials", *AFP*, August 26, 2012, at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gBfQ7PWxjhvKg4tU8KWb-GhvcLJw?docId=CNG.a761e4e7f96f4b5911c444241d635c3d.551>

<sup>59</sup> "India test-fires 'Prithvi-II' ballistic missile from ITR," *The Economic Times*, August 25, 2012, at [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-08-25/news/33385308\\_1\\_prithvi-ii-strategic-force-command-strike-range](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-08-25/news/33385308_1_prithvi-ii-strategic-force-command-strike-range)

soon have a squadron of transport helicopters Mi-17 V5, medium power radars would also be deployed at Jaisalmer airbase. Gogoi said that the new squadron at Phalodi will be ready by October this year.<sup>60</sup>

## International

- **US Congressman demands investigation into Army acquisition process for Afghanistan; Brazilian Army selects local contractor Embraer Defence and Security for Brazil's \$6B Border Defense Project**

According to reports, Republican Duncan Hunter of California has asked Army Secretary John McHugh to launch an investigation into how and why requests from Army units in Afghanistan for intelligence gathering software were ignored in favor of the Army's preferred system, which some claim is less effective. The issue is in fact, an off-the-shelf software program developed by Palantir, which has had success in bringing intelligence streams together to better anticipate where roadside bombs are placed in Afghanistan. The Army has been developing the Distributed Common Ground System, which is its preferred system for integrating intelligence in the counter-IED fight. In an August 23 letter obtained by Defense News, Hunter wrote that "From the time the Army's first conventional ground force requested the software in 2008, there have been deliberate efforts on the part of mid-level bureaucrats to deny units this resource despite repeated urgent requests from commanders." Army Chief of Staff Gen Ray Odierno has already launched an investigation into why requests for the Palantir software were either denied or ignored, and Hunter's complaints have also spurred Congress to launch their own investigation.<sup>61</sup>

In another development, according to reports, the Brazilian Army has selected local contractor Embraer Defence and Security to build the initial phase of a massive surveillance and protection along the length of its 16,886-kilometer land border. The Tepro consortium, led by Embraer-controlled companies Savis Tecnologica and Orbisat Industria, has been named to undertake contract negotiations on the first part of what could be a \$6 billion program known as Sisfron, or Sistema Integrado de Monitoramento de Fronteiras. Sisfron is set to include land radars and other ground sensors, unmanned air vehicles, communications, command and control and other elements. The Brazilian Army hopes to complete Sisfron by the end of 2019, giving surveillance and protection 150 km deep along a border with Brazil's 11 neighbors.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> "IAF to deploy medium power radars, advanced helicopters," *Deccan Herald*, August 23, 2012, at <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/273684/iaf-deploy-medium-power-radars.html>

<sup>61</sup> "Congressman Demands Investigation into Army Acquisition Process," *Defence News*, August 23, 2012 at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120823/DEFREG02/308230007/Congressman-Demands-Investigation-into-Army-Acquisition-Process?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

<sup>62</sup> "Embraer Picked for Brazil's \$6B Border Defense Project," *Defence News*, August 24, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120824/DEFREG02/308240003/Embraer-Picked-Brazil-8217-s-6B-Border-Defense-Project?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

### III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

#### Jammu & Kashmir

- **Kashmiris returning from Pakistan detained; Union Home Secretary reviews security situation of Jammu and Kashmir; LoC to get new fencing**

According to reports, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) have detained twenty four Kashmiris, including women and children, who were trying to enter India through the Indo-Nepal border. Those arrested are residents of Kupwara and Baramulla districts of North Kashmir and they were returning from Pakistan Administered Kashmir. According to police, these people would be booked under the Egress and Internal Movement Control Act (EIMCA) ahead of their release.<sup>63</sup>

In another development, Union Home Secretary RK Singh, who arrived on a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir on 24<sup>th</sup> August, said that presence of more tunnels along the International Border (IB) with Pakistan cannot be ruled out and the security agencies were on alert to thwart any infiltration bid. The Home Secretary held a detailed review meeting with BSF, Intelligence, police and civil administration officials to ascertain the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The Home Secretary also visited various forward areas including Suchetgarh, Pallanwala, Arnia, Abdullian and Chechwal. It was in Chechwal where the 500-metre tunnel was found on July 28, 2012.<sup>64</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, in a bid to curb infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir, the Government is mulling erection of a new all-weather fence along Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan that can even withstand the harshest snow conditions. This proposal was discussed during the visit of Union Home Secretary R K Singh. The Union Home Secretary R K Singh along with Director General of Police Ashok Prasad and army officers visited Cheema Post in Gulmarg sector of North Kashmir. It would be worth noting that every year nearly 83 kilometers of 740 kilometers of the fencing along the LoC especially in North Kashmir's Gurez, Karnah, Kupwara and Gulmarg sectors is damaged which allows militants to infiltrate into the Kashmir Valley and other parts of the state. The Home Secretary was given an extensive presentation during his visit for having a permanent fence which could withstand all weather conditions. The Home Secretary, according to the sources, appreciated the idea and said that he would send a team of engineers for working on the feasibility report for the project even though the army showed some reservations about the same.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> "24 Kashmiris returning from Pak detained on Nepal border", *Greater Kashmir*, August 23, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Aug/24/24-kashmiris-returning-from-pak-detained-on-nepal-border-32.asp>

<sup>64</sup> "Union Home Secretary reviews security situation", *Greater Kashmir*, August 24, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Aug/25/union-home-secretary-reviews-security-situation-39.asp>

<sup>65</sup> "LoC to get new fencing", *Greater Kashmir*, August 26, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Aug/27/loc-to-get-new-fencing-36.asp>

## North East India

- **Minister of State for DONER remarks that Assam violence not a Hindu-Muslim clash; Centre concerned over arms with surrendered ultras; Central team visits relief camps in violent affected districts of Assam; Naga outfit calls off blockade in Manipur; Bodoland Peoples' Front (BPF) legislator held for role in BTAD violence; Four militants held in Tripura; Lt Gen Ranbir Singh new Assam Rifles DG; Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) Chief remanded to judicial custody**

According to reports, Paban Singh Ghatowar, the Minister of State (independent charge) for Development of the Northeastern Region said that the ethnic violence in Assam which led to an exodus of thousands of northeastern people from other parts of India was not a Hindu-Muslim clash. But it did betray a trust deficit among people living in Bodo tribal areas. It would be worth noting that over 400,000 people were uprooted and over 75 killed in the terrible violence between tribal Bodos and Bengali-speaking Muslims which broke out in Kokrajhar in July this year and spread to other areas. The clashes led to the most unexpected exodus of northeastern people from Bangalore, Pune and Chennai after anonymous messages vowed to avenge the killing of Muslims in Assam. Ghatowar agreed the recent clashes were related to disputes over land rights.<sup>66</sup>

In another development, reports noted that the Central Government is concerned over the availability of illegal weapons with the surrendered militants or militants under cease-fire agreement and requested the Assam Government to deal with the matter as such weapons can be used in ethnic clashes as well as for committing crimes. According to reports prepared by the security agencies, almost all the militant groups under cease-fire agreement have been violating the ground rules of such agreements and they are keeping sophisticated weapons illegally. This issue was raised by the MHA in meetings with the State Government on several occasions, but till date, no strong action has been taken by the State to launch an all out offensive to seize such weapons. The recovery of one AK 56 rifle from the possession of senior member of the pro talk faction ULFA leader Hira Sarania on August 20, 2012 once again brought into focus the fact that such illegal weapons are being used for criminal activities.<sup>67</sup>

Reports noted that on August 21, 2012, a seven-member Central team consisting of joint secretaries on visited several relief camps in strife-torn Korakrajhar, Chirang and Dhubri districts to take stock of the situation. The team visited more than 81 relief camps spread over the three districts including those at Bilasipara and Majpara in Dhubri district. The team took stock of the situation and interacted with the camp inmates. The inmates, the sources said, told the members of the team that there were adequate relief materials. The team was led by the joint secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Shambhu Singh, S S Mathur, joint secretary drinking water, K K Srivastava, joint secretary disaster management, Ravi Mittal, joint secretary planning commission, R S Shukla,

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<sup>66</sup> "Assam violence not Hindu-Muslim clash: Minister for Northeast", *The Assam Tribune*, August 21, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug2112/at042>

<sup>67</sup> "Centre concern over arms with surrendered ultras", *The Assam Tribune*, August 21, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug2212/at09>

joint secretary health, Navin Prakash, joint secretary food, and Rajesh Bhusan, joint secretary rural development.<sup>68</sup>

Reports noted that United Naga Council (UNC), which had imposed a 96-hour economic blockade on national highways in Manipur from August 20, 2012 midnight, called off the blockade on August 21 with immediate effect. The Centre had agreed to hold talks on the issue with the UNC on August 29, 30 or 31, according to the convenience of the Naga outfit. A representative from the Manipur Government was also likely to attend the meeting. The UNC had called the economic blockade to press their demand for an alternative arrangement for Nagas in Manipur as they wanted to “dissociate itself” from the Manipur Government. However, official sources confirmed that buses and trucks with essential items were plying on the national highways with security escort vehicles.<sup>69</sup>

According to reports, an Assam legislator Pradip Brahma who belongs to the Bodoland Peoples’ Front (BPF) was arrested on August 23 for his role in the ethnic violence in the State. Soon after his arrest, the district administration imposed an indefinite curfew in Kokrajhar district from 5 am. But hundreds of BPF supporters defied the curfew and came out to the streets and blocked railway tracks at several places, including Kokrajhar railway station, demanding Brahma’s immediate release. The legislator was held after seven cases were registered against him in Fakiragram and Dotama police stations in Kokrajhar district.<sup>70</sup> Meanwhile, reportedly, four militants from the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) have been arrested in Tripura. The guerrillas were held on August 22 evening after entering India from Bangladesh.<sup>71</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, Lieutenant General Ranbir Singh was appointed the Director General of Assam Rifles on August 25, 2012, the major counter-insurgency force in the North East. Lt Gen Singh has been appointed on deputation basis for two years or till his superannuation from Army or until further orders. Lt Gen Singh was commissioned in 1975 in the Bihar Regiment and in his career spanning over 37 years.<sup>72</sup>

Reports noted that Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) chief Champion Sangma has been remanded to fourteen days judicial custody by a local Court. Champion has been under police custody for the past one month and was quizzed by sleuths from the intelligence department both from the Centre and State police.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> “Central team visits relief camps”, *The Assam Tribune*, August 21, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug2212/state06>

<sup>69</sup> “Naga outfit calls off blockade in Manipur”, *The Assam Tribune*, August 21, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug2212/oth06>

<sup>70</sup> “BPF legislator held for role in BTAD violence”, *The Assam Tribune*, August 23, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug2312/at04>

<sup>71</sup> “Four militants held in Tripura”, *The Assam Tribune*, August 23, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug2312/at046>

<sup>72</sup> “Lt Gen Ranbir Singh new Assam Rifles DG”, *The Assam Tribune*, August 25, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug2612/oth06>

<sup>73</sup> “GNLA chief remanded to 14 days judicial custody”, *The Assam Tribune*, August 26, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug2712/oth07>



## IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **India urges Kosovo and Serbia to resolve contentious issues; India pushes for internet regulation at the UN level**

According to reports, India welcomed the willingness expressed by Serbia and Kosovo to resume their EU-facilitated dialogue. India also expressed hope for reaching concrete progress on the contentious issues. Meanwhile, India's representative, H S Puri expressed concern over the recent inter-communal violence in parts of Kosovo and urged the international organizations present in the country to prevent the reoccurrence of such incidents and ensure the safety of the minority.<sup>74</sup>

In another development, reports noted that after consulting civil society and advocacy groups, India will push for formulating internet regulation and governance at the UN level. The proposal that has the support of China, if accepted, would lead to control of social media corporations by the UN and its member nations. India also added that the proposal should not be viewed as an attempt by governments to 'take over' or 'regulate and circumscribe the internet'.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> "India welcomes Serbia, Kosovo's willingness to resume talks", *Business Standard*, August 22, 2012 at <http://business-standard.com/india/news/india-welcomes-serbia-kosovos-willingness-to-resume-talks/183639/on>

<sup>75</sup> "Internet censorship: India to push for internet regulation at United Nations", *The Economic Times*, August 24, 2012 at [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-08-24/news/33366607\\_1\\_internet-governance-internet-censorship-objectionable-content](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-08-24/news/33366607_1_internet-governance-internet-censorship-objectionable-content)