

# THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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# I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

## A. South Asia

### Afghanistan

(July 13-26, 2015)

- **NUG inherited corrupt system; 19 new advisors appointed; Tehran's backing of Taliban protested; Talks with Taliban to Continue; Yet to decide pace of withdrawal from Afghanistan; ISIS recruiting fighters in the outskirts of Kabul; Taliban the enemy not 'brothers'; Large military operation in north will be launched; ALP commander joins Taliban group; Certain countries planning to break up Afghanistan in two parts; Government, Taliban delegations to again meet in Murree.**

Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah once again strongly blasted the past government, saying the National Unity Government (NUG) inherited a "corrupt system and deceptive politics." "Afghans must realize that what happened during the past 14 years," Abdullah said during his trip to northeastern Badakhshan. Referring to speculations by former government officials about the collapse of the unity government, Abdullah warned if the government was overthrown, Daesh and Taliban would be its successors." The government during the past 14 years neglected the tragedies and problems of Afghanistan with laughter and humorous and now they are awaiting the collapse of government," Abdullah said at a gathering of Badakhshan elders.<sup>1</sup>

Under a special decree, President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has appointed 19 new advisors on different positions, a statement by the Presidential Palace says on July 14. According to the statement, 19 persons were appointed as president's advisors under the article of 64th of the constitution in different positions. Abdul Hai Niamati was appointed as advisor counter-narcotics, Saleh Mohammad Safari borders and tribal affairs, Nabi Misdaq and Haji Fazal Karim media affairs, Agha Lalai Dastgiri and Mohammad Ali Sadat disputes' solution cases, Asadullah Sayed tribal affairs, Ahmadullah Alizai local governance, Khyal Mohammad Hussaini and Eid Mohammad Ahmadi social affairs and Haji Najibullah Nasar border affairs. Other advisors included Ali Ahmad Jawand, advisor to president on private sector, Sayed Mohammad Ali Javed on religious affairs, Shamim Katawzai on youth affairs and Haji Alam Gul Kochai on nomad's affairs. According to another presidential decree, Eng. Abdul Qayyum Khan was appointed as advisor to information and telecommunication.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "CEO Dr. Abdullah Abdullah: NUG Inherited Corrupt System", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, July 14, 2015, at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=12599](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=12599)

<sup>2</sup> "President Ghani Appoints 19 New Advisors", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, July 15, 2015, at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=12606](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=12606)

President Ashraf Ghani has raised the issue of Iran's cooperation with the Taliban and some rebel leaders' trips to that country with his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani on the side-lines of last week's Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit. Ufa, the capital of Bashkortostan republic, Russia, hosted on July 9 and 10 BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) summits. At his meeting with Rouhani, Ghani urged him to support his government-initiated peace process as part of its efforts to muster more support from regional and international countries for the reconciliation process. Ghani flew to Ufa last week to take part in the 15th BRICS and SCO summits. He told the SCO members that terrorism was a regional threat which should be curbed through joint and regional efforts. In a reference to Taliban's visits to Iran, the president said if Afghanistan took similar steps and invited the Mujahidin-i-Khalq to Afghanistan what will be the reaction of the government of Iran.<sup>3</sup>

President Ashraf Ghani on July 19 praised security forces for their stubborn resistance to Taliban attacks in the Janikhel and Chamkani districts of southeastern Paktia province and thanked local residents for their cooperation with the forces. President Ghani, who arrived in the provincial capital Gardez, visited the 203 Thunder Military Corps base and met with military officers, soldiers and other security officials there. He also held a meeting with civil society activists, provincial council members, tribal elders and others. Happy over no major incident of violence taking place in the central capital Kabul and provinces during Eid holidays, the president said he supported the continuation of peace talks with the Taliban.<sup>4</sup>

A spokesman for U.S. military forces in Afghanistan said that the pace of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan by the end of 2016 has yet to be determined and will be decided in the autumn after an assessment of the capabilities of Afghan government forces. The spokesman, Colonel Brian Tribus, made the remarks in an interview with RFE/RL. Tribus said U.S. General John Campbell, the current commander of the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan and U.S. forces in the country, would make recommendations after his assessment and the White House would then decide on the pace of the 2016 withdrawal. Tribus said the growing number of militants who claim allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) militant group was a concern to both the United States and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, but did not appear to present "an existential threat" to Ghani's government.<sup>5</sup>

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group has started recruitments in the outskirts of Kabul province, Mohammad Mohaqqiq, the Second Deputy to Chief Executive Officer has said. In an interview with the *Voice of America* Ashna TV, Mohaqqiq said based on the information they have received the ISIS recruits are receiving salaries upto \$1,000 along with a motorcycle. He said the group has so far recruited around 700 to 800 fighters in the country and warned that the group poses a serious threat to Afghanistan. Mohaqqiq further added that the group will fight the Taliban

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<sup>3</sup> "Kabul Protests Tehran's Backing of Taliban", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, July 16, 2015, at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=12614](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=12614)

<sup>4</sup> "Peace Talks with Taliban to Continue", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, July 21, 2015, at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=12629](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=12629)

<sup>5</sup> "US Yet to Decide Pace of Withdrawal from Afghanistan: Spokesman", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, July 22, 2015, at, [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=12638](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=12638)

militants in the first step as witnessed in eastern parts of the country where they have captured some districts. Mohaqiq also added that the ISIS affiliates have also started persecution of Hazaras and Shias where they abducted 31 Hazara passengers in Zabul and some others were kidnapped by the group between Jaghoori and Qarabagh.<sup>6</sup>

The first Vice-President General Abdul Rashid Dostum on July 25 said that the Taliban are enemies of Afghans, and that he will never call them 'brothers'. In an exclusive interview with *TOLO news*, Dostum – who is currently visiting battle-weary Faryab province – said there are a number of people inside government that have paved the way for insurgents to destabilize northern parts of the country and that these individuals will be introduced to people very soon. He said that if these individuals don't work in the favour of insurgents and don't help them they cannot carry on their activities. Dostum told *TOLO news* that the Taliban in the north are supported by a number of figures inside the government. "We are not denying the fact that there are a number of individuals inside the government that help militants. It is the intelligence agency's duty to find these figures and make public their names," he said. Dostum has set a two-day deadline for the Taliban in Faryab to lay down their arms or else they will be eliminated. "We are talking from experience. I know that it is like this. It will be revealed. When the situation becomes suitable and security stabilizes they will be unveiled. They will be trialled. They have to be trialled," he added.<sup>7</sup>

A commander of the Afghan Local Police (ALP) forces joined the Taliban group along with his seven men in northern Sar-e-Pul province of Afghanistan. The provincial police spokesman Amanuddin Aman said the policemen were serving with the ALP forces in Kohistanat district. Aman further added that the defected ALP forces had connections with the Taliban group in the past and had assisted them to infiltrate in Kohistan district. He said sporadic gun battle continues between the remaining ALP forces and the Taliban militants in the area. Aman also added that additional forces have been deployed in the area to repress the assailant Taliban militants and clear the district from their presence. The Taliban group spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid claimed around 100 ALP forces have joined the Taliban militants in Kohistanat district. Sar-e-Pul is among the relatively volatile provinces in northern Afghanistan where anti-government armed militant groups have recently increased their insurgency activities in a number of its districts. This comes as over 100 members of the Afghan national security forces surrendered to Taliban group in Wardoj district following days of heavy gun battle.<sup>8</sup>

The former Afghan Intelligence – National Directorate of Security (NDS) chief Amrullah Saleh said on July 27 that certain countries are planning to break up Afghanistan in two parts by sparking divisions among Afghans in North and South. The head of the Green Trend Movement was speaking during the signing of an agreement with Sulaiman Cultural Society and Noor Social Trend from southeastern Paktika and Paktiya provinces. The agreement between the three

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<sup>6</sup> "ISIS Recruiting Fighters in the Outskirts of Kabul: Mohaqiq", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, July 23, 2015, at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=12654](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=12654)

<sup>7</sup> "Dostum Calls Taliban the Enemy Not 'Brothers'", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, July 26, 2015, at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=12671](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=12671)

<sup>8</sup> "ALP Commander Joins Taliban Group Along With His 7 Men in Sar-e-Pul," *Khaama Press*, July 27, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/alp-commander-joins-taliban-group-along-with-his-7-men-in-sar-e-pul-9544>

movements is aimed at launched joint campaigns to thwart the conspiracies to split Afghanistan. Saleh promised to stand against all conspiracies to split the nation and insisted that any other flag apart from the national flag of Afghanistan would mean to create divisions among Afghans in a bid to break up the country. Without naming any specific country Saleh said "all those internal and external groups dreaming to create divisions among Afghans and once again spark civil war, are invalid, since we were one nation and will remain as one nation."<sup>9</sup>

Reports suggest that the Afghan government and Taliban delegations are again meeting in the Murree exurb of Islamabad for peace talks on July 31. Pakistani news agency *Dawn* quotes an unnamed government source close to the reconciliation process as saying that the second round of peace talks are more substantive, raising hopes for a workable peace process to end the conflict in Afghanistan. "The fact that the two sides are re-convening in less than a month is encouraging. It is a big success," he said, reiterating that the talks are intra-Afghan and that Pakistan is only a facilitator. "It is an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace initiative. We are here to facilitate." He said. About reports of factions within Taliban over the peace process, the news agency has asked another government official who replied as saying that there could be some who want an end to the conflict but some others may prefer to fight. He says the group that is participating in the peace talks is the mainstream.<sup>10</sup>

## Pakistan

(July 13-26, 2015)

- **Rangers' stay in Sindh extended; Pakistan asks UN to probe ceasefire violations; Never let the nation down; Pipeline launched to import LNG from China; 'Pak support to Kashmir plebiscite will continue'; Vows to complete CPEC at all costs; Lashkar-i-Jhangvi chief killed 'encounter'.**

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah on July 17 extended the Rangers' stay in the province by one year to assist the civil administration and the provincial police in combating crimes and improving law and order. According to a spokesman for the Sindh chief minister, the Sindh Rangers' stay in the province was coming to an end on July 19. Like the previous practice, this time to the Sindh government extended the Rangers' stay in the province by one year. Earlier, on July 9, the Sindh CM had extended the anti-terror and anti-crime policing powers of the Rangers in the Karachi Division by one month only. The delay in issuance of the notification by the chief minister of an extension in the Rangers stay caused more friction in the civil-military relations in Sindh. Both the anti-terror powers of Sindh Rangers and an extension of stay in the province in aid of the civil administration and police needed the Sindh Assembly's endorsement under the Article-147 of the Constitution after the passage of the 18th Amendment.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "Certain Countries Planning To Break Up Afghanistan In Two Parts: Saleh", *Khaama Press*, July 27, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/certain-countries-planning-to-break-up-afghanistan-in-two-parts-saleh-1337>

<sup>10</sup> "Reports: Government, Taliban Delegations To Again Meet in Murree on Friday", *Khaama Press*, July 29, 2015 at <http://www.khaama.com/reports-government-taliban-delegations-to-again-meet-in-murree-on-friday-3683>

<sup>11</sup> "Rangers' Stay In Sindh Extended By One Year", *The News*, July 17, 2015, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-38675-Rangers%E2%80%99-stay-in-Sindh-extended-by-one-year>

The Pakistan Army on July 17 asked the United Nations Military Observers Group on India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) to investigate the firing and shelling by Indian troops on its side of Kashmir which had killed five people this week. The flare-up between the two countries comes days after their prime ministers met in Russia in an apparent sign of a thaw in relations. The Pakistan Army in a statement said that it had informed the United Nations Military Observers Group on India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) about the ceasefire violations and asked them to investigate. It said it had “highlighted the Indians’ use of heavy mortars and machine guns on (the) civil population” living along the Line of Control (LoC). It said that five civilians were killed and five others were wounded during the past two days as a direct result of the Indian firing and shelling.<sup>12</sup>

The Chief of the Army Staff, General Raheel Sharif, has said that the Pakistan armed forces will never let the nation down in whatever mission they are assigned. He said that the terrorists will not find any refuge on Pakistani soil. He said that alongside the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata), proactive counter-terrorism operations in the urban areas by law enforcement agencies were producing the desired results. He was speaking during his visit to South and North Waziristan Agencies to celebrate Eidul Fitr with the troops on the frontlines. The army chief said, “Our focus will now remain on finding terror financing, choking all their sources, and apprehending all financiers, abettors and sympathisers.” General Raheel was briefed by the operational commanders on the progress of Operation Zarb-e-Azb. He expressed his complete satisfaction at the phenomenal progress and achievements made on the ground so far. He said that the overwhelming support and trust of the nation in armed forces was the biggest asset for them. “Our nation stands united today behind us in accomplishing any mission assigned to us, and we will never let them down,” he asserted.<sup>13</sup>

Pakistan has started construction work on a 700-kilometer pipeline to import liquefied natural gas from China, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has said. Abbasi told the *Voice of America* that the project would be jointly funded by Pakistan and China. He said the Gwadar port would be the central hub for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which would allow western China to gain access to warm waters. He said that Chinese funds would enable Pakistan to complete its Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline project. The minister said Pakistan had been trying to overcome its energy crisis by importing gas from Iran but sanctions on Iran had hampered work on the project. Officials had earlier stated that the 700-km Gwadar-Nawabshah pipeline would also facilitate the Iran-Pakistan Pipeline Project if international sanctions on Tehran were lifted. The recent Iran agreement with the major powers on nuclear programme has raised hopes for the implementation of the IP gas pipeline project.<sup>14</sup>

Pakistan’s High Commissioner to India Abdul Basit has said that Pakistan will continue extending moral, political and diplomatic support to the people of Kashmir in their legitimate struggle for

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<sup>12</sup> “Pakistan Asks UN to Probe Ceasefire Violations by India”, *The News*, July 18, 2015, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-38677-Pakistan-asks-UN-to-probe-ceasefire-violations-by-India>

<sup>13</sup> “Army To Never Let The Nation Down, Says COAS”, *The News*, July 21, 2015, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-38688-Army-to-never-let-the-nation-down-says-COAS>

<sup>14</sup> “Work on 700-km Pipeline Launched To Import LNG from China”, *The News*, July 22, 2015, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-38689-Work-on-700-km-pipeline-launched-to-import-LNG-from-China>

self-determination as provided in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He was addressing an Eid Milan party at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi on July 21. The Eid Milan party was also attended, among others, by the leaders of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC). Abdul Basit, while addressing the party, said it was hoped that India would adopt the course of reconciliation by giving up opposition. He said that there was an appropriate environment for holding the Indo-Pak talks, which was needed to be promoted further. The high commissioner said that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was determined to promote peace between both the countries and hoped that both India and Pakistan would adopt the way of cooperation by leaving the way of opposition. He said Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif wanted pleasant relations between Pakistan and India and both the countries would hold talks on all issues.<sup>15</sup>

Army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif said on July 25 that army was ready to pay any cost for making China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) a reality. He said this while visiting Panjgur and Turbat for inspecting the road network being built by the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) as part of the CPEC project. The FWO is constructing a stretch of 870 km to connect Gwadar Port with Indus Highway at Chaman. The road would become part of the western alignment of the CPEC. About 502 km of the road has already been laid. So far, the FWO has lost 16 of its workers – six military personnel and 10 civilians – in 136 security incidents since the start of the work on the road in March 2014. “The army chief appreciated FWO for amazing pace of construction and quality of work. He paid tributes to FWO men for sacrificing lives and limbs for this national project,” military spokesman Maj Gen Asim Bajwa, who accompanied Gen Sharif on the visit, said. “CPEC and Gwadar Port will be built and developed as one of the most strategic deep sea ports in the region at all costs,” the general said. He underscored the need for peace in Balochistan for the completion of the project.<sup>16</sup>

Malik Ishaq, chief of banned sectarian outfit Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, his two sons Usman and Haq Nawaz, and 11 others were killed in an alleged exchange of fire with police personnel on July 28 night. At least six policemen were injured in the alleged encounter. Ishaq and his sons were arrested by the Counter-Terrorism Department a week ago. Following their latest arrest, the police had interrogated them and had subsequently taken them to Shahwala in Punjab’s Muzaffargarh district to aid the police in recovering weapons and explosives, sources in the CTD said. The encounter appears to have taken place as militants attacked security forces and tried to free Ishaq who was killed in the ensuing exchange of fire, security sources say. A spokesman for CTD Multan said Ishaq, his two sons, one Ghulam Rasool Shah and two other accused, all from Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, were taken to Muzaffargarh by the counter-terrorism department to aid in the recovery of arms and explosives.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> “Pak Support To Kashmir Plebiscite Will Continue”, *The News*, July, 22, 2015, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-38709-Pak-support-to-Kashmir-plebiscite-will-continue>

<sup>16</sup> “Raheel Vows To Complete CPEC At All Costs”, *Dawn*, July 26, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1196440/raheel-vows-to-complete-cpec-at-all-costs>

<sup>17</sup> “Lashkar-i-Jhangvi Chief Malik Ishaq, Two Sons Killed In Muzaffargarh ‘Encounter’”, *Dawn*, July 29, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1197098/lashkar-i-jhangvi-chief-malik-ishaq-two-sons-killed-in-muzaffargarh-encounter>

## Bangladesh

(July 20-26, 2015)

- **Officials from India and Bangladesh meet to finalise the nationality of enclave dwellers.**

No dweller of the 51 enclaves in Indian territory wants to come to Bangladesh while just 979 residents of the 111 enclaves inside Bangladesh are willing to go to India, say officials. Lalmonirhat Deputy Commissioner Habibur Rahman, who led a five-member Bangladesh delegation at a meeting with the Indian side on July 20, confirmed it to media. According to the 2011 census, 14,215 people live in the 51 Bangladeshi enclaves in India while 37,369 people live in the 111 Indian enclaves inside Bangladesh. Officials of the two countries held meeting on July 20 on Changrabandha border in India's Cooch Behar district to finalise the nationality of enclave dwellers based on their choice of citizenship. They exchanged data of the joint survey, conducted in the enclaves from July 6 to July 16, as well as information on the enclave dwellers, land area and dwellers' choice of nationality, reports our Kolkata correspondent quoting Cooch Behar District Magistrate P Ulaganathan. The officials, however, didn't disclose the latest figures of enclave dwellers.<sup>18</sup>

## Sri Lanka

(July 20-26, 2015)

- **The Muslim Council of Sri Lanka condemns the IS; Indian police arrests two former LTTE cadres; Australian High Commission grants Rs. 31 million to support 11 community-based development projects across Sri Lanka; President Sirisena visits the Maldives.**

The Muslim Council of Sri Lanka, on behalf of the Muslim Community has expresses its deep dismay at media reports of the first Sri Lankan killed in battle in Syria with the Islamic State (IS) militants. In a letter to President Maithripala Sirisena, the Muslim Council of Sri Lanka said that the group of extremists who call themselves the caliphate or Islamic State (Formerly known as ISIS) is a threat to Islam and the group violates both Sharia law and humanitarian law.<sup>19</sup>

One of the two Sri Lankan Tamils arrested on July 20 along with communication gadgets and cyanide in Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu, has been identified as Krishnakumar, a close associate of slain LTTE supremo V Prabhakaran, Indian police have said. Sleuths from Intelligence Bureau, Tamil Nadu 'Q Branch' Police, and Special Intelligence Unit were now interrogating the LTTE militant, arrested along with two others during a routine vehicle check at Uchipuli in the district, a top police officer told PTI on condition of anonymity. The arrest of Krishna Kumar and seizure of eight mobile phones, four GPS equipment, 75 cyanide capsules and 300 gm of cyanide from the car in which they were travelling is being viewed seriously by Intelligence sleuths. Police said all

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<sup>18</sup> "Only 979 Want To Leave For India", *The Daily Star*, July 21, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/only-979-want-leave-india-114358>.

<sup>19</sup> "Probe Sought Over Reports on Lankan ISIS Militant", *Colombo Gazette*, July 21, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/07/21/probe-sought-over-reports-on-lankan-isis-militant/>.

coastal districts in the state had been alerted to monitor for movement of members of LTTE and check posts asked to be extra vigilant.<sup>20</sup>

The Australian High Commission has granted Rs 31 million to support 11 community-based development projects across Sri Lanka. Australian High Commissioner, Robyn Mudie handed over cheques to several community organisations which will implement these projects in a number of provinces around the country. The grants were provided as part of the Australian government's annual small grant funding program, the Direct Aid Programme.<sup>21</sup>

The Australian Government noted the assistance given by Sri Lanka in thwarting human smuggling at sea. This was conveyed by the Australian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka Robyn Mudie during her meeting with the Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy Vice Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne at the Naval Headquarters in Colombo today. She was accompanied by the Defence Adviser to the High Commission Captain Jasen Sears.<sup>22</sup>

President Maithripala Sirisena went to the Maldives on July 26 on a State Visit to participate in the events held to mark the Golden Jubilee of National Independence. The visit was made at the invitation of President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom.<sup>23</sup>

## Maldives

(July 20-26, 2015)

- **Parliament debates the issue of Maldives leaving the Commonwealth; President appoints new Vice-President; Former President Mohamed Nasheed will serve the remaining part of his 13-year prison sentence in house arrest; Parliament passes the bill allowing the foreigner to own land in the Maldives; Indian Health Minister, J.P. Nadda visits Maldives.**

Following a request by President Abdulla Yameen for advice on the degree of Maldives' participation in the Commonwealth, the parliament debated the issue of Maldives leaving the Commonwealth on July 20. Parliamentary Group Leader of ruling party, Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM), Ahmed Nihan Hussain Manik said that the President has requested to review Maldives' level of participation in the Commonwealth, and that the issue has nothing to do with withdrawing from Commonwealth membership. He said that the inclusion in the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) agenda has caused difficulties for the Maldives, and that Maldives should not have to face pressure because of its small size. On July 19, Vice President Dr. Mohamed Jameel Ahmed issued a statement saying that leaving the Commonwealth would have

<sup>20</sup> "Ex LTTE Member Arrested Is a Close Aide of Prabhakaran", *Colombo Gazette*, July 22, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/07/22/ex-ltte-member-arrested-is-a-close-aide-of-prabhakaran/>.

<sup>21</sup> "Australia To Help Marginalised Communities in Lanka", *Colombo Gazette*, July 23, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/07/23/australia-to-help-marginalised-communities-in-lanka/>.

<sup>22</sup> "Australia Hails Lanka's Help Against Human Smuggling", *Colombo Gazette*, July 24, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/07/24/australia-hails-lankas-help-against-human-smuggling/>.

<sup>23</sup> "President Sirisena in Maldives on a State Visit", *Colombo Gazette*, July 26, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/07/26/president-sirisena-in-maldives-on-a-state-visit/>.

a negative impact on the whole economy. He said that being “angry” with the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) and hence deciding to leave the Commonwealth would be “a mistake on the part of the government”.<sup>24</sup>

Maldivian Parliament has passed the no-confidence motion against Dr. Jameel on July 21. The motion was voted in favour by 78 MP, and against by 2 MPs. Following the vote, the Speaker announced that the Vice President has been removed from his post.<sup>25</sup> President Abdulla Yameen has appointed Ahmed Adeb as the Vice President of the Maldives on July 22.<sup>26</sup>

According to the Sun Online former President Mohamed Nasheed will serve the remaining part of his 13-year prison sentence in house arrest. Reportedly, since Nasheed’s transfer to house arrest, MPs of his party and main opposition, Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), have been voting in support of bills pushed by the government.<sup>27</sup> However, MP for the Hoarafushi constituency, MDA’s, Mohamed Ismail has said that the former President Mohamed Nasheed who is serving a 13-year prison sentenced was moved to house arrest permanently, not under a deal made between the Government and the MDP.<sup>28</sup>

An Amendment Bill to the Constitution has been submitted to the parliament on July 21, to allow foreigners to own land in the Maldives. The bill, submitted by Parliamentary Group Leader of Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) Ahmed Nihan Hussain Manik, states that land ownership rights shall be issued to foreigners who make investments exceeding \$1 billion in the Maldives, for projects specified in a law which must be approved by the parliament. The bill states that land ownership in this regard shall be subject to several conditions, and the owner shall have the right to pass ownership to another person. The State can only reclaim ownership of such lands following a court order, and after providing a fair compensation. Nihan said that the purpose of the amendment is to increase mega investments and establish an environment that ensures sustainable progress for those investors.<sup>29</sup> The bill has been passed by the Parliament Committee.<sup>30</sup> Reportedly, President Abdulla Yamin Abdul Gayoom has advised the MPs of PPM and MDA on the amendment to allow foreign ownership of land in the Maldives.<sup>31</sup> Former President Maumoon

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<sup>24</sup> “Parliament debates leaving Commonwealth”, *SunOnline*, July 20, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31178>.

<sup>25</sup> “VP Impeached, Removed from Office through No-Confidence Vote”, *SunOnline*, July 21, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31197>.

<sup>26</sup> “Adeb Appointed as Vice President”, *SunOnline*, July 22, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31224>.

<sup>27</sup> “Nasheed To Serve Remaining Part Of Sentence In House Arrest”, *SunOnline*, July 21, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31204>.

<sup>28</sup> “Mohamed Ismail: Nasheed’s Transfer To Home Was Not Under A “Deal”, *SunOnline*, July 22, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31213>.

<sup>29</sup> “Constitutional Amendment Seeks To Allow Foreign Ownership Of Land”, *SunOnline*, July 21, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31205>.

<sup>30</sup> “Committee Passes Amendment Bill To Allow Foreign Ownership Of Land”, *SunOnline*, July 22, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31218>.

<sup>31</sup> “President Advises On The Amendment To Allow Foreign Ownership Of Land”, *SunOnline*, July 21, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31208>.

Abdul Gayoom has appealed to President Abdulla Yameen to seek public opinion regarding the constitutional amendment to allow land ownership to foreigners.<sup>32</sup> The bill has been passed by the Parliament by 70 votes in favour and 14 against.<sup>33</sup> Adhaalath Party has said that the recent amendment to Constitution allowing for foreign ownership may have an adverse effect on the country's Islamic values and the country's independence sovereignty. The press statement released by Adhaalath Party on July 23 said that such amendments to Constitution needed to be brought after intensive research and deep discussions among Maldivian citizens. However, President Yameen, during the ceremony held at President's Office on July 23 to ratify the amendment had said that foreign investors who owned land would not be allowed to build temples or conduct any other illegal activities such as playing poker.<sup>34</sup>

Indian Health Minister, J.P. Nadda had a meeting with the Maldivian Health Minister, Iruthisham Adam at the Health Ministry on July 26. Indian ambassador to the Maldives, Rajeev Shahare and the Maldivian ambassador to India, Ahmed Mohamed also took part in the meeting between the two Health Ministers. Minister Nadda was visiting Maldives on the occasion of the 50th Independence Day of the Maldives.<sup>35</sup>

## B. East Asia

### China

(July 20-26, 2015)

- **Xi Jinping and Barack Obama discuss issues over telephonic conversation; China and New Zealand discuss trade and cooperation; Japanese Defence White Paper upsets China; Chinese Navy start exercises in South China Sea; China outlines goals for the 13<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, 2016-2020.**

Chinese President Xi Jinping and the President of the United States Barack Obama discussed the Iran Nuclear Agreement and Xi's upcoming visit to the United States over a telephonic conversation on July 21. During the conversation, Xi said that, "the two sides have kept close contact with each other, steadily promoted their pragmatic cooperation in all fields and maintained close communication and coordination on major international, regional and global issues". Xi will be visiting the United States in September.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> "Gayoom Requests President To Seek Public Opinion Regarding Land Ownership Amendment", *SunOnline*, July 22, at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31228>.

<sup>33</sup> "Constitutional Amendment To Allow Foreign Ownership Of Land Passed", *SunOnline*, July 22, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31232>.

<sup>34</sup> "Allowing Foreign Ownership Of Land Will Affect Independence And Sovereignty: Adhaalath", *SunOnline*, July 24, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31261>.

<sup>35</sup> "India: The People Of The Two Countries Have A Friendly Relationship", *SunOnline*, July 26, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31291>.

<sup>36</sup> "Xi and Obama Exchange Views On Visit, Iranian Nuclear Deal Over Phone", *China Daily*, July 22, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2015-07/22/content\\_21375022.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2015-07/22/content_21375022.htm), accessed on July 24, 2015

Chinese President Xi Jinping met with the Governor-general of New Zealand, Jerry Mateparae on July 21. During the meeting both sides discussed bilateral cooperation. Xi said that, "China wants to work with New Zealand and others to build the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank into a mutually beneficial, professional and efficient lending platform that boosts regional connectivity and development".<sup>37</sup>

The Japanese Cabinet approved its annual defence white paper. It is a 429 page document and starts with a section which discusses the role of China in increasing regional tensions. China has been very upset with this development. The document states that, "Japan will continue to apply high pressure on China's maritime presence in areas such the South China Sea and will continue to offer no concessions". The Chinese Defence Ministry expressed firm dissatisfaction.<sup>38</sup>

Starting on July 22 the Chinese Navy has announced that it will conduct military training in the waters near eastern Hainan Island in the South China Sea. According to the China's Maritime Safety Administration, "during the training no vessel is allowed to enter the designated maritime areas". Tensions in the South China Sea have increased in the last few months.<sup>39</sup>

On July 20 the Chinese Top Leadership states that China will continue to focus on economic development. This statement was made while discussing the 13<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (2016-2020). The 13<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, "is critical time frame for building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects". It was also announced that the 18<sup>th</sup> Communist Party of China Central Committee will hold its fifth plenary session in October.<sup>40</sup>

## Japan

(July 20-26, 2015)

- **The 2015 Defence white paper of Japan released; Japanese government released a map and several photographs showing the status of Chinese construction activities in the East China Sea; Mitsubishi Materials Corp offered apology to US POW; Mitsubishi Materials to settle several thousand Chinese wartime labour compensation claims; Japan urged Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev not to visit the disputed Etorofu Island.**

On July 21, during the Cabinet meeting the 2015 white paper *Defence of Japan* was circulated. The white paper stresses on several issues including the revised US-Japan Defence Guidelines, organizational reform of the Ministry of Defence, Okinawa base, shift in Japanese security policy

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<sup>37</sup> "Xi Seeks Expanded Trade with New Zealand", By Zhao Shengnan, *China Daily*, July 22, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2015-07/22/content\\_21374939.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2015-07/22/content_21374939.htm), accessed on July 24, 2015

<sup>38</sup> "Defence Paper Accusations Against China Provoke Anger", By Cai Hong in Tokyo and Zhang Yunbi in Beijing, *China Daily*, July 22, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2015-07/22/content\\_21374932.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2015-07/22/content_21374932.htm), accessed on July 24, 2015

<sup>39</sup> "Navy Starts Exercise in S. China Sea" By Chen Mengwei, *China Daily*, July 22, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2015-07/22/content\\_21374277.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2015-07/22/content_21374277.htm), accessed on July 24, 2015

<sup>40</sup> "Nation Outlines Goals for 13th Five-Year Plan" By Lan Lan, *China Daily*, July 21, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-07/21/content\\_21364317.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-07/21/content_21364317.htm), accessed on July 24, 2015 at

and the related bills submitted to the National Diet. Additionally, the white paper reportedly has a segment on developments at Sea which talks about China's involvement in building a platform on their side of the intermediate line in the East China Sea. The paper also discusses the China led developments in the South China Sea especially on the seven reefs in the Spratly Islands, expressing it as a source of concern for Japan and the US. Defence Minister Nakatani, during the press conference, referred to Chinese "unilateral assertions without making any compromises" in the maritime domain. The white paper charts Chinese actions in the waters and airspace surrounding Japan, together with sporadic intrusion into the territorial waters by Chinese Government vessels. Moreover, defence of remote islands together with the positioning of GSDF units in Yonagunijima and the establishment of the ninth Air Wing of the ASDF is mentioned. Besides China, the white paper refers to the threats from ISIL to the international community. About ISIL, Japan intends to offer support in non-military areas.<sup>41</sup> The white paper has sparked strong response from the Chinese authorities blaming Japan for "irresponsible remarks on China's normal military growth and maritime activities".<sup>42</sup>

On July 22, the Japanese government issued a map along with 14 photographs (available at the foreign ministry website) showing the positions of offshore platforms built by the Chinese in the East China Sea connected to gas field development. Yoshihide Suga, the Chief Cabinet Secretary, confirmed that thus far there are a total of 16 structures, counting the 12 structures that were revealed in June 2013. Japan urged that while the construction is on Chinese side of the median line, "it is extremely regrettable that China is proceeding with unilateral development, given the situation in which the boundaries have not yet been demarcated". While the offshore construction is meant for drilling, processing and storing natural gases, Japanese security may possibly be considerably affected in case the offshore platforms are transformed to support military purposes. Since June 2013, Japan has called for China to halt construction<sup>43</sup>.

Mitsubishi Materials Corp offered an apology to the US prisoners of war during a gathering in Los Angeles for forced labour during WWII. The company executive communicated a "deep sense of ethical responsibility for past tragedy". The senior executive officer conveyed a "most remorseful apology" to approximately 900 prisoners of war who were subjected to severe hardships while compelled to work in Mitsubishi mines and industrial plants. Meanwhile, the Japanese government has twice offered apology to US prisoners of war in 2009 and again in 2010 for forced labour throughout War.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Press Conference by the Defence Minister Nakatani, Ministry of Defence July 21, 2015 at <http://www.mod.go.jp/e/pressconf/2015/07/150721.html>

<sup>42</sup> Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang's Remarks on Japan's Issuance of Defence of Japan 2015, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, July 21, 2015 at [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/2535\\_665405/t1282988.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/t1282988.shtml)

<sup>43</sup> "Govt. Reveals Map, Photographs of China's Structures in East China Sea", *The Japan News*, July 23, 2015 at <http://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0002304821>

<sup>44</sup> Dalton, Andrew, "Japanese Company Apologizes to U.S. POWs for WWII Forced Labour," *Japan Today*, July 20, 2015 at <http://www.japantoday.com/category/national/view/japanese-company-apologizes-to-u-s-pows-for-wwii-forced-labor>

Reports on July 24 suggested that Mitsubishi Materials Corp. has reached an understanding with around 3,765 Chinese to resolve a dispute regarding the practice of wartime forced labour. They have agreed to issue an apology and make a payment of 100,000 yuan to every victim. This is significant since this is the first occasion when a Japanese corporation has agreed to make an apology and give financial compensation to war victims from China with regard to a suit that has previously been rejected by Supreme Court of Japan. Both parties are expected to sign the reconciliation agreement in Beijing.<sup>45</sup>

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida reportedly called on the Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev not to visit disputed Etorofu Island of Hokkaido. Russian reports suggest that Prime Minister Medvedev is scheduled to visit Etorofu Island from August 12-24 reiterating its control of the four islands at a time when Japan and Russia are engaged in making arrangements for President Vladimir Putin's visit later in 2015. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Kishida talked down any likely bearing of Prime Minister Medvedev's visit to Etorofu Island on President Vladimir Putin's trip to Japan.<sup>46</sup>

## The Korea Peninsula

(July 20-26, 2015)

- **North Korea reportedly finished modifying its long-range rocket launch facility near China border; North Korea criticized the US for artillery drills near Northern Limit Line; South Korea summoned Japanese Defence Attaché and Political Affairs Minister at Japanese Embassy in Seoul to register protest against Japanese claim over Dokdo Islands**

North Korea reportedly finished modifying its long-range rocket launch facility adjacent to the China border. The work started in late 2013. Satellite image suggested a 67-meter-tall gantry in the Dongchang-ri site. Reports further indicated that North Korea may utilise the extended gantry to launch a missile longer than the Unha-3 on October 10 during the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party. South Korean Defence Ministry is carefully monitoring developments connected to missile launches and construction at the Dongchang-ri site. Additionally, there are intelligence inputs that North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong-un has instructed the launch of a satellite to observe the Workers' Party anniversary.<sup>47</sup>

The South Korean defence ministry summoned the Japanese Defence Attaché Col. Nobuhisa Goto at Japanese Embassy in Seoul and presented a written protest regarding Japan's claim over Dokdo/Takeshima Islands as featured in the 2015 defence white paper of Japan. The letter cautioned that

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<sup>45</sup> "Mitsubishi Materials Set To Settle 3,765 Chinese Wartime Labour Redress Claims," *Kyodo*, July 24, 2015 at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/07/24/national/history/mitsubishi-materials-apologize-settle-3765-chinese-wwii-forced-labor-redress-claims/#.Vb8BNIK6a1t>

<sup>46</sup> "Japan Urges Russian Prime Minister Not To Visit Disputed Isles", *Kyodo*, July 24, 2015 at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/07/24/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-urges-russian-prime-minister-not-visit-disputed-isles/#.Vb8BKIK6a1t>

<sup>47</sup> "N. Korea Upgrades Long-Range Missile Launch Facility", *Yonhap News Agency*, 22 July 2015 at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150722000403>

fostering military cooperation between Japan and South Korea is at jeopardy given that Japan maintains “wrongful claims” over the disputed Islands. Since 2005, Japan has professed its sovereignty over the Dokdo Islands. Meanwhile, Lee Sang-deok of the South Korean Foreign Ministry summoned political affairs minister Kobayashi Kenichi from Japanese Embassy in Seoul to reiterate Korea’s sovereignty over Dokdo.<sup>48</sup>

North Korea criticized the US for South Korean artillery drills near Northern Limit Line. North Korean authorities blamed the US for the military provocations and said that the US is “hurling the puppet forces into ceaseless arms build-up and military provocations in the above-said waters in a sinister bid to preserve the illegal northern limit line”.<sup>49</sup>

## C. The United State of America

### National

(July 20-26, 2015)

- **Deputy Defence Secretary Work outlines findings of the review committee on Anthrax; Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command outlines special operations challenges; US indicts Charleston shootings suspect; Presidential campaign on full swing; Donald Trump defends attack on one-time POW; Democratic voters strongly favour the former secretary of state Clinton.**

On July 23, Deputy Defence Secretary Bob Work, calling the Defence Department’s inadvertent May delivery of live anthrax to a commercial lab “a massive institutional failure,” outlined findings of the review and steps DoD will take to ensure it never happens again. But given the failure Work, Defence Secretary Ash Carter and DoD senior leadership “take absolutely no comfort in this.” Work said that the live-anthrax shipment to a commercial lab was narrowed down to one of four DoD labs and added that of the total batches in the lab’s inventory, more than half tested positive for live anthrax — 17 of 33. The four labs that handle anthrax are the Army’s labs at Dugway Proving Ground in Utah, and in Maryland, the Edgewood Chemical Biological Centre, the Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases and the Naval Medical Research Centre. The review committee found the four labs had irradiated — destroyed the bacterium with radiation — 149 batches of live anthrax spores and reported them inactivated and safe for testing since 2003. All were accounted for and tested or destroyed. Work said the live anthrax was delivered in small amounts of liquid in “extremely low concentrations,” and all were handled in labs.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> “Korea Slams Japan Over Dokdo Claim”, *The Korea Times*, July 21, 2005 at [http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/08/120\\_183234.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/08/120_183234.html)

<sup>49</sup> “N. Korea Bashes U.S. for Artillery Drills Near NLL”, *Yonhap News Agency*, 25 July 2015 at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150725000087>

<sup>50</sup> Cronk, Terri Moon, “Work Vows DoD’s Live Anthrax Incident ‘Will Never Happen Again’”, *DoD News*, July 23, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129333>; and, “US Report: Live Anthrax Samples Shipped to Dozens of Labs”, *VOA News*, July 23, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/live-anthrax-samples-shipped-dozens-labs/2876578.html>

Talks on the complex and controversial Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) are said to be nearing completion as top negotiators from 12 nations gathered in Hawaii on July 24. Trade ministers will join the talks on July 28 in an effort to resolve remaining issues. The TPP nations are Japan, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Mexico, Chile, Peru, and the United States which together make up about 40 percent of the global economy. If completed, the TPP would cut tariffs and trade barriers among participants, something supporters say would boost economic growth.<sup>51</sup>

Army Gen. Joseph L. Votel told *Fox News* correspondent Catherine Herridge that the problems of Russia, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and state and non-state actors is made more complex because of the speed and ubiquity of communications. The “hyper connectivity” of the world today complicates an already complex set of global security issues. The Socom commander said Russia’s use of hybrid warfare in Crimea and eastern Ukraine must be countered. Russia’s use of conventional and non-conventional forces and the use of military and non-military governmental capabilities present problems beyond a simple military solution. All this, the general said, helps “perpetrate this idea of coercion and pressure on neighbours along their periphery to meet their particular objectives.”<sup>52</sup>

The man charged in the shooting deaths of nine African-American churchgoers in Charleston, South Carolina, has been indicted on federal hate crime charges. U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch announced on July 22 that a federal grand jury had indicted Dylann Roof, 21, on 33 charges “for killing and attempting to kill African-American parishioners ... because of their race and in order to interfere with their exercise of their religion.”<sup>53</sup>

On July 18, ten Republican U.S. presidential hopefuls began auditioning in front of huge crowds in the state of Iowa, hoping to win support from a key Christian conservative coalition. Analysts see no clear favourite among the candidates: Scott Walker, Donald Trump, Rick Santorum, Marco Rubio, Rick Perry, Bobby Jindal, Mike Huckabee, Lindsey Graham, Ted Cruz and Ben Carson. Summit organizer Bob Vander Plaats said support could eventually be split among several candidates.<sup>54</sup> On July 19, U.S. real estate mogul Donald Trump, among the top contenders for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination, refused to back off his attack on the Vietnam War record of Senator John McCain, a decorated military veteran and former prisoner of war and the party’s 2008 presidential candidate who was tortured during his five years as a prisoner of war in Hanoi in the 1960s.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Randle, Jim, “TPP Trade Deal May Wrap Up This Week”, *VOA News*, July 24, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/tpp-trade-deal-may-wrap-up-this-week/2877481.html>

<sup>52</sup> Garamone, Jim, “Votel Discusses Special Operations Challenges”, *DoD News*, July 24, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129346>

<sup>53</sup> “US Indicts Charleston Shootings Suspect on Hate Crime Charges”, *VOA News*, July 22, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/united-states-indicts-charleston-shootings-suspect-hate-crime-charges/2873814.html>

<sup>54</sup> “US Presidential Campaign at Full Throttle in Iowa”, *VOA News*, July 18, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/at-party-fundraiser-hillary-clinton-keeps-focus-on-gop/2867627.html>

<sup>55</sup> “US Politics: Trump Defending Attack on One-time POW McCain”, *VOA News*, July 19, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/trump-defending-attacks-on-mccain/2869585.html>

On July 20, U.S. Senator McCain has called on Republican presidential candidate Trump to apologize for belittling the wartime suffering of captive U.S. troops. McCain spoke on U.S. television on July 20 during a campaign appearance, two days after Trump publicly mocked his military record. Trump said of the former captive: "he's not a war hero. He is a war hero [only] because he was captured. I like people who weren't captured."<sup>56</sup> On July 21, Ohio Governor John Kasich became the 16th Republican to join the 2016 presidential race, as Donald Trump stepped up attacks on his rivals.<sup>57</sup> While Republicans wrestle to pick a favourite among 16 candidates, Democratic voters - facing a far smaller field - strongly favour the former first lady and secretary of state, even when presented with a fantasy list of notables, according to a recent *Reuters*/Ipsos poll of 1,033 Democrats. *Reuters* reported that neither her husband, nor George Clooney, Michelle Obama, Oprah or Al Gore would come close to challenging Hillary Clinton's polling dominance for the Democratic presidential nomination.<sup>58</sup>

## International: Asia

(July 20-26, 2015)

- **Afghan President Ghani wants to be partner with the US in a regional counterterrorism; Taliban seizes key Afghan military base and Afghan security forces struggle; Carter visits Baghdad to assess the progress against ISIL; Carter and Yaalon discuss steps to strengthen mutual security in the region; US will continue aiding Kyrgyzstan despite cancellation of cooperation treaty; DoD confirms death of two top al-Qaida leaders, Fadhli and Al-Sudani; Carter meets top Saudi Arabian leaders in Jiddah; Carter thanks troops for helping nation's future; China's land reclamation in the SCS has far-reaching security and economic consequences.**

Army Gen. John F. Campbell, commander of NATO's Resolute Support mission and U.S. forces in Afghanistan, said in Kabul, Afghanistan on July 19 that Afghan President Ashraf Ghani wants to be partner with the United States in a regional counterterrorism aspect. President Ghani has suggested Afghanistan host a regional counterterrorism effort. The general said that Afghan counterterrorism forces are among the best in the region, but they still need training and equipment. Ghani also is reaching out to other regional players including China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan, India, "the 'Stans" and the United States, Campbell said. His message is that terrorism is a regional threat and it needs to be fought on a regional basis. "He is saying to them, 'Afghanistan is fighting your fight,'" the general said. Afghanistan is about halfway through the 2015 fighting season, and Campbell said he is weighing his best military advice to U.S. leaders at the conclusion of this campaign.<sup>59</sup> On July 26, Authorities in northeastern Afghanistan confirmed that the Taliban had

<sup>56</sup> "McCain to Trump: Apologize to US Military Families", *VOA News*, July 20, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/mccain-trump-apologize-us-military-families/2870802.html>

<sup>57</sup> Malone, Jim, "Republican Kasich Joins US Presidential Race", *VOA News*, July 21, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/republican-kasich-joins-us-presidential-race/2871864.html>

<sup>58</sup> "In Clinton vs Clinton Fantasy Run-off, Hillary Wins", *Reuters*, July 23, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/reu-in-clinton-vs-clinton-fantasy-run-off-hillary-wins/2874550.html>

<sup>59</sup> Garamone, Jim, "Campbell: Afghan President Seeks Partnership in Counterterror Fight", *DoD News*, July 19, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129304>

captured a key military base in overnight clashes after more than 100 Afghan security forces surrendered to the insurgents. Fighting in the Tirgaran area of Badakhshan province erupted on July 24 night when scores of rebels staged coordinated attacks on several security outposts, the provincial police chief told reporters. On July 22, *the New York Times* reported a more than 50 percent rise in the casualty rate among Afghan security forces this year compared with the first six months of 2014. It quoted officials with the U.S.-led military coalition as saying that about 4,100 Afghan soldiers and police officers had been killed and around 8,000 had been wounded.<sup>60</sup>

On July 23, Defence Secretary Ash Carter visited Baghdad to assess progress in the campaign to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In a statement, Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said that the defence secretary met with Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and Defence Minister Khaled al-Ubaidi and affirmed the U.S. commitment to support the Iraqi government in the campaign to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL. Carter “emphasized the importance of building an inclusive government and strengthening the Iraqi security forces”.<sup>61</sup> On July 24, Defence Secretary Carter met with President Masoud Barzani of Iraq’s Kurdistan region in the regional capital of Irbil.<sup>62</sup> Carter noted that he was in the midst of a weeklong trip in the Middle East region and that he had been meeting with “important people” in several regional capitals. Carter said, “You’re the most important people to me” ... and I just want you to know that.” The secretary told the service members that he appreciates them serving in Iraq while their families wait back home.<sup>63</sup>

On July 20, Defence Secretary Ash Carter and Israel’s Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon discussed steps to strengthen mutual security in the region, from missile defence and cybersecurity to Israel’s qualitative military edge and joint contingency plans for regional situations. Carter was on the first stop of a weeklong trip to three Middle Eastern nations that also includes Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Some Israeli leaders believe Iran could be strengthened by money and conventional capabilities that the deal allows, but Yaalon and Carter each said no such disagreement could affect the strong bond between Israel and the United States. There’s also no disagreement, the secretary added, about the threats Israel faces every day from Iran’s destabilizing activities and from terrorists like Hezbollah, Hamas and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The U.S. pledge to defend Israel remains rock solid, Carter said, and he summarized Defence Department efforts

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<sup>60</sup> Gul, Ayaz, “Taliban Seizes Key Afghan Military Base”, *VOA News*, July 26, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/taliban-seize-key-afghan-military-base/2878909.html>; and, Goldstein, Joseph, “Afghan Security Forces Struggle Just to Maintain Stalemate”, *The New York Times*, July 22, 2015 at [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/23/world/asia/afghan-security-forces-struggle-just-to-maintain-stalemate.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/23/world/asia/afghan-security-forces-struggle-just-to-maintain-stalemate.html?_r=1)

<sup>61</sup> “In Baghdad, Carter Assesses Progress in Anti-ISIL Campaign”, *DoD News*, July 23, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129332>

<sup>62</sup> “Carter Meets With President of Iraq’s Kurdistan Region”, *DoD News*, July 24, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129338>

<sup>63</sup> Banusiewicz, John D., “Carter Thanks Troops in Iraq for Helping Nation’s Future”, *DoD News*, July 24, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129341>; and, “Carter Commends Iraqi Government, Security Forces”, *DoD News*, Defence July 24, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129342>

to help strengthen Israel's security. The department also will continue to provide advanced capabilities, Carter said.<sup>64</sup>

On July 21, Kyrgyzstan cancelled a cooperation treaty with the United States, raising the stakes in a diplomatic row triggered by the award of a human rights prize to a jailed dissident. Kyrgyz Prime Minister Temir Sariyev ordered his cabinet to renounce the 1993 Bilateral Agreement with the U.S. It will not be valid starting August 20, the government said in a statement. The agreement provided for U.S. aid to Kyrgyzstan to be brought into and out of the country without the levying of taxes, customs duties or any other payment.<sup>65</sup> On July 22, the United States said it was disappointed by Kyrgyzstan's decision to cancel a cooperation treaty, but it would continue to provide assistance to the ex-Soviet republic despite a diplomatic row over a jailed dissident.<sup>66</sup>

Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, the Defence Department's press operations chief, said on July 21 that Muhsin al-Fadhli, a long-time al-Qaida operative, was killed "in a kinetic strike" on July 8 while traveling in a vehicle near Sarmada, Syria. Fadhli was the leader of a network of veteran al-Qaida operatives, sometimes called the Khorasan Group, who are plotting external attacks against the United States and its allies, Davis said in a statement. He was a senior al-Qaida facilitator who was among the few trusted al-Qaida leaders who received advance notification of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States and also was involved in terrorist attacks that took place in October 2002, including against U.S. Marines on Faylaka Island in Kuwait and on the French ship MV Limburg.<sup>67</sup> The Defence Department also confirmed that Abu Khalil al-Sudani, a high-ranking al-Qaida operational commander, was killed earlier this month by a U.S. airstrike in Afghanistan. Al-Sudani, a senior shura member and head of al-Qaida suicide and explosive operations, is directly linked to external attack plotting against the United States. The deceased al-Qaida leader also had directed operations against coalition, Afghan and Pakistani forces and maintained a close association with al-Qaida's top leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Pellerin, Cheryl, "Carter, Yaalon Discuss Shared Commitment to Regional Security", *DoD News*, July 21, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129311>; and, "US Defence Chief in Israel to Discuss Iran Nuclear Deal", *VOA News*, July 20, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-defense-chief-in-israel-on-trip-to-see-allies-after-iran-deal/2870039.html>

<sup>65</sup> "Kyrgyzstan Cancels Cooperation Treaty With US", *Reuters*, July 21, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/kyrgyzstan-cancels-cooperation-treaty-with-united-states/2872364.html>; and,

<sup>66</sup> "US Says Will Continue Aiding Kyrgyzstan Despite Cancelled Treaty", *Reuters*, July 22, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/reu-us-kyrgyzstan-aid/2873703.html>

<sup>67</sup> "Pentagon Official Confirms Death of Khorasan Group Leader", *DoD News*, July 21, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129314>; and, "Pentagon: US Airstrike Kills Long-time Al-Qaida Operative", *VOA News*, July 22, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/united-states-airstrike-kills-longtime-al-qaida-operative/2872372.html>

<sup>68</sup> "U.S. Airstrike Kills Senior Al-Qaida Leader", *DoD News*, July 24, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129339>; and, Babb, Carla, "US Kills Top al-Qaida Leader in Afghanistan", *VOA News*, July 24, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-airstrike-in-afghanistan-kills-high-ranking-al-qaida-leader/2876752.html>

On July 22, Defence Secretary Ash Carter met in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, with King Salman, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef and Deputy Crown Prince and Defence Minister Mohammed bin Salman. In a statement summarizing the meeting, Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said the leaders affirmed the long-time security partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia, discussing a range of issues pertaining to both nations' mutual security interests, including checking Iranian destabilizing activities in the region and countering violent extremism from groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.<sup>69</sup> Defence Secretary Carter said, he had "exceptionally substantive" meetings with Saudi Arabia's king and defence minister on regional security issues and new challenges.<sup>70</sup>

Navy Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr., the commander of U.S. Pacific Command said on July 24 that China's land reclamation in the South China Sea could have far-reaching U.S. security and economic consequences by disrupting international rules and norms that have supported the global community for decades. In a security forum panel discussion in Aspen, Colorado, Harris Jr. said China's assertiveness in the South China Sea is an issue the American public must know about and the United States must address. Each year, he noted, more than \$5.3 trillion in global sea-based trade relies on unimpeded sea lanes through the South China Sea, adding that the Strait of Malacca alone sees more than 25 percent of oil shipments and 50 percent of all natural gas transits each day. Harris said, international recognition and protection of freedom of navigation are fundamental to the global economy and the U.S. way of life and unilateral attempts by any nation to disrupt freedom of navigation place the international system and global economy at risk.<sup>71</sup>

## India-US Relations

(July 20-26, 2015)

- **India-US strategic partnership growing and they ready to shape 21<sup>st</sup> century; India hopes to benefit from post-Iran sanctions; Japan set join annual 'Malabar' exercises with India and the United States; India seeks US and other international help in designing its next domestic aircraft carrier; US: India's rise is in US' interest; Indian Ambassador urges US lawmakers to take lead on bilateral economic relations.**

Indian Ambassador Arun Singh and the United States Ambassador to India Richard Verma, in a joint article wrote that "The historic visits of Prime Minister Modi to the United States and President Obama to India helped our relationship soar, moving us past old disagreements and paving the way forward for even more ambitious new collaborations." The two ambassadors stated pointed

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<sup>69</sup> "Carter Meets With Top Leaders in Saudi Arabia", *DoD News*, July 22, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129323>

<sup>70</sup> Pellerin, Cheryl, "Carter, Saudi Leaders Discuss Security, New Challenges", *DoD News*, July 23, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129328>; and, Yeranian, Edward, "Carter: Saudi Leaders Support Iran Nuclear Deal", *VOA News*, July 22, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-defense-chief-visting-saudi-arabia-for-talks-on-iran-nuclear-deal/2872962.html>

<sup>71</sup> Cronk, Terri Moon, "Pacom Chief: China's Land Reclamation Has Broad Consequences", *DoD News*, July 24, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129348>

out that “In a world filled with complex security and economic challenges”, India-US “relationship matters more now than ever before. That’s why our leaders have aggressively set out to increase our defence cooperation, create greater economic opportunities for our people and work more closely on climate change.” They added, “Our national interests are converging on the vital issues of the day. Our two countries, for example, have become indispensable partners in the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean regions, whether our navies are conducting anti-piracy patrols off the Horn of Africa, responding to the latest humanitarian crises or participating in an ever-growing array of military exercises.”<sup>72</sup>

The *Voice of America* reported that India, one of the handful of countries that continued to trade with Iran despite tight sanctions, hopes to reap significant, long term benefits when Tehran’s nuclear deal with major powers is implemented. However, its exporters are also bracing for tougher competition from Western companies. In the last three years, Pankaj Bansal says the exports of his trading firm, TMA International in New Delhi, increased by almost 40 percent. But the days of runaway business growth could be ending. With sanctions on Iran likely to ease, Bansal is bracing for a tougher environment.<sup>73</sup>

Japan is set to take part in joint naval exercises with India and the United States in the Indian Ocean in October, military and diplomatic sources said to *Reuters*, a drill that so riled China eight years ago that Delhi has not since hosted such a multilateral wargame. New Delhi’s decision to expand the “Malabar” exercises that it conducts with the United States each year to include Japan suggests a tightening of military relations between three major maritime powers in Asia, analysts said. The Indian Ocean has emerged as a new arena of competition between China making inroads and India trying to recover its position as the dominant maritime power in the region.<sup>74</sup>

According to a report in *Jane’s Navy International*, the Indian Navy has reached out to four international defence contractors — including a Russian and U.S. firm — for help with the design of its next domestic aircraft carrier. The service sent letters of request (LoR) to U.K. firm BAE Systems, DCNS in France, Lockheed Martin and Russia’s Rosoboronexport on July 15. The letter asks the firms to “provide technical and costing proposals” for India’s indigenous aircraft carrier-II (IAC-II) programme — the planned 65,000-ton carrier Vishal.<sup>75</sup>

US lawmakers and officials have highlighted the importance of India-US relationship, with the administration’s point-person for South Asia, Nisha Biswal, saying India’s rise is in US’ interest

<sup>72</sup> “India and the U.S. Partnering To Shape the 21st Century”, *The Huffington Post*, July 20, 2015 at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arun-k-singh-/india-and-the-us-partnering\\_b\\_7814248.html?ir=India&adsSiteOverride=in](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arun-k-singh-/india-and-the-us-partnering_b_7814248.html?ir=India&adsSiteOverride=in)

<sup>73</sup> Pasricha, Anjana, “India Hopes to Benefit From Easing of Iran Sanctions”, *VOA News*, July 23, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/india-hopes-to-benefit-it-sanctions-on-iran-ease/2874559.html>

<sup>74</sup> Miglani, Sanjeev, “India, Japan, U.S. plan naval exercises in tightening of ties in Indian Ocean”, *Reuters*, July 22, 2015 at <http://in.reuters.com/article/2015/07/22/india-military-exercises-idINKCN0PW1E120150722>

<sup>75</sup> LaGrone, Sam, “India Asks International Defence Firms for Help With New Aircraft Carrier Design”, July 21, 2015 at <http://news.usni.org/2015/07/21/india-asks-international-defense-firms-for-help-with-new-aircraft-carrier-design>; and, Keck, Zachary, “India Is Building Second Homegrown Aircraft Carrier”, *The National Interest*, July 20, 2015 at <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/india-building-second-homegrown-aircraft-carrier-13375>

and a strong US is in India's interest. The officials made the comments at a Congressional Reception organised by Senate Caucus on India and Indian Americans at the Capitol Hill on July 22 to welcome Arun K Singh on his taking over as India's Ambassador to the US. The event was hosted by senators Mark Warner and John Cornyn, Democratic and Republican co-chairs respectively of the Caucus. Speaking at the event, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, Nisha Biswal, noted that India's rise is in US' interest and a strong US is in India's interest.<sup>76</sup> Indian Ambassador to the United States Arun Kumar Singh urged members of the Senate Caucus on India and Indian Americans and the US Senate to take the lead in taking the bilateral economic relations to the next level. The envoy, who assumed charge on April 30, was speaking at a welcome event hosted in his honour by the Caucus at the Capitol Hill on July 23.<sup>77</sup>

## II. DEFENCE REVIEWS

### National

(July 20-26, 2015)

- **New Framework for India-US defence relationship to guide the bilateral defence and strategic partnership for the next ten years signed; Fifty four missing defence personnel of 1965 and 1971 wars are believed to be in the custody in Pakistan says the defence minister.**

The Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar has informed the Rajya Sabha that a new Framework for India-US Defence Relationship was signed on 3rd June, 2015, which builds upon the previous Framework to guide the bilateral defence and strategic partnership for the next ten years. The new Framework provides avenues for high level strategic discussions, continued exchanges between armed forces of both countries and strengthening of defence capabilities. Both sides have identified proposals for joint development of Mobile Electric Hybrid Power Sources and Next Generation Protective Ensembles. The proposed cooperation envisages enhancement of India's defence technological and manufacturing capabilities. However, no timeframe for the implementation of the identified projects has been given as these relate to research and development.<sup>78</sup>

The Defence Minister has informed the Lok Sabha that fifty four missing defence personnel of 1965 and 1971 wars are believed to be in the custody in Pakistan. The Government of India has

<sup>76</sup> "India's Rise Is In United States Of America's Interest: US", *Zee News*, July 24, 2015 at [http://zeenews.india.com/news/india/indias-rise-is-in-united-states-of-americas-interest-us\\_1635365.html](http://zeenews.india.com/news/india/indias-rise-is-in-united-states-of-americas-interest-us_1635365.html); and, "India's Rise Is In US Interest, Strong US is in India's Interest", by Indo-Asian News Service, July 24, 2015 at <http://www.india.com/news/world/indias-rise-is-in-us-interest-strong-us-is-in-indias-interest-474436/>

<sup>77</sup> "Arun Singh Urges US Lawmakers To Take Lead On Bilateral Economic Relations Front", *The American Bazar*, July 24, 2015 at <http://www.americanbazaaronline.com/2015/07/24/arun-singh-urges-us-lawmakers-to-take-lead-on-bilateral-economic-relations-front/>

<sup>78</sup> "US-India Defence Framework Agreement, 2015," *PIB*, July 21, 2015, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/mbErel.aspx?relid=123421>

repeatedly been taking up the matter with the Pakistan Government for the release of the missing defence personnel believed to be in Pakistan's custody. However, Pakistan does not acknowledge the presence of any such personnel in its custody. A delegation of 14 relatives of missing defence personnel also visited 10 Jails in Pakistan during June 1-14, 2007. The delegation, however, could not conclusively confirm the physical presence of any missing defence personnel. The minister informed the house that the families of these missing defence personnel were given liberalized pensionary/rehabilitation benefits as per extant rules.<sup>79</sup>

## International

(July 20-26, 2015)

- **Turkey enters into the allied fight against the radical Islamic State of Iraq and Syria; US refusal to arm Nigerian troops due to alleged human rights violations helps Boko Haram, says Nigerian President.**

Reports say that Turkey has entered into the allied fight against the radical Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Turkey recently decided to allow US warplanes to use two critical air bases on its soil and engaged in first direct combat against the group. The NATO ally decided on July 24 to let the US military use two critical air bases in the country's south and southeast – in Incirlik and Diyarbakir – for strikes against ISIS. In the past year, Turkey has been under increasing western criticism for not contributing sufficiently to the allied war against ISIS, which has captured large swaths of both, neighbouring both Syria and Iraq since last summer. Turkey's decision to allow the use of air bases in operations against ISIS will allow for more numerous and frequent bombings and surveillance missions. Turkey was dragged into the fighting after an ISIS suicide bomber killed 32 people on a Turkish town bordering Syria on July 20. Turkey also engaged in its first ever direct cross-border confrontation with ISIS on July 24 when Turkish fighter jets hit four ISIS targets within Syria, across the border from Kilis Province, without crossing into Syria.<sup>80</sup>

Meanwhile, according to reports, Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari has cautioned USA that a US refusal to arm his troops because of so-called human rights violations only helps Boko Haram. The US government has vowed to help Nigeria defeat the insurgency but it is prohibited under law from sending weapons to countries that fail to tackle human rights abuses. The blanket application of the Leahy Law by the United States on the grounds of allegations of human rights violations levelled against Nigerian forces has denied the later access to appropriate strategic weapons to counter Boko Haram. The Nigerian President is reported to have said that, "Unwittingly, and I dare say unintentionally, the application of the Leahy Law Amendment by the United States government has aided and abetted the Boko Haram terrorists."<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> "Missing of Soldiers during Indo-Pakistan Wars," *PIB*, July 24, 2015, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=123699>

<sup>80</sup> "Turkey Now In War Against ISIS," *Defence News*, July 25, 2015, at <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/2015/07/25/turkey-now-war-against-isis/30662647/>

<sup>81</sup> "Nigerian President: US Arms Ban Aids Boko Haram," *Defence News*, July 22, 2015, at <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/mideast-africa/2015/07/22/nigerian-president-us-arms-ban-aids-boko-haram/30545513/>

### III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEWS

#### Jammu & Kashmir

(July 20-26, 2015)

- **Centre approves 5 new IRP bns for J&K; ISIS, Afzal Guru behind Kashmiri youth joining militancy; Pakistan promises 'support' to Kashmir movement; 1 killed, 5 injured in Grenade attack in Anantnag; Curfew lifted in J&K's Rajouri.**

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has approved long pending demand of Jammu and Kashmir Government for raising five new battalions of Indian Reserve Police (IRP), which would help in recruitment of 5500 youths of the State into the police. The MHA would bear 75 per cent expenditure of the raising of battalions while rest of 25 per cent expenses will be borne by the State Government. "The new battalions would come up over a period of two years," official sources said, adding that the MHA has given nod to Jammu and Kashmir Government to complete formalities for approval of the battalions and simultaneously go ahead with the recruitment process. They said the raising of five new IRP battalions would need Rs 305 crore expenditure and the Centre has agreed to bear 75 per cent cost of it i.e. Rs 226 crores worth expenditure would be borne by the Government of India and Rs 79 crores by the J&K Government.<sup>82</sup>

The home ministry has attributed the spurt in educated youth in Kashmir joining terrorist organisations this year to the thrust of the militant organisations on recruiting local youth and the effect of hanging of Parliament attack accused Afzal Guru besides the increasing influence of the ISIS. *The Economic Times* has accessed a home ministry note which cites these reasons for educated Kashmiri youth, including professional degree holders, graduates and postgraduates joining terrorist organisations lately. As per the note "mass contact programmes launched by separatist leaders" and the extensive use of social media by anti-India elements also contributed to educated youths taking the path to terror while the perceived "lack of credibility of mainstream political leaders" and absence of employment opportunities are also driving the youth to take to terror activities. The effect of ISIS and other global jihadi movements on Kashmiri youths is now being closely studied by the home ministry.<sup>83</sup>

Pakistan will continue to extend moral, political and diplomatic support to the people of Kashmir in their legitimate struggle for self-determination as provided in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the country's top envoy to India said according to a media report on July 22. Abdul Basit said this while addressing an Eid Milan party at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi on July 21, which was attended, among others, by Mirwaiz Umar

<sup>82</sup> Pargal, Sanjeev, "Centre Approves 5 New IRP bns for J&K; 5500 Youth To Be Recruited", *Daily Excelsior*, July 20, 2015 at <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/centre-approves-5-new-irp-bns-for-j-5500-youth-to-be-recruited/>

<sup>83</sup> Sharma, Aman, "ISIS, Afzal Guru Behind Educated Kashmiri Youth Joining Terror: Home Ministry", *The Economic Times*, July 21, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/isis-afzal-guru-behind-educated-kashmiri-youth-joining-terror-home-ministry/articleshow/48152736.cms>

Farooq, chairman of his faction of Hurriyat Conference. "It was hoped that India would adopt the course of reconciliation by giving up opposition," said Basit, according to *The News*. He said that there was an appropriate environment for holding the Indo-Pak talks, which was needed to be promoted further.<sup>84</sup>

One person was killed and five others including a CRPF jawan were injured in a grenade blast in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district on July 25. The attack comes a day after militants lobbed three grenades targeting mobile communication facilities in Srinagar. The grenade was tossed at Achabal bus stand, added police. An ice cream vendor was killed. IGP Kashmir SJM Gillani said, "Preliminary reports reveal that the target was a CRPF patrol party."<sup>85</sup>

With situation returning to normal in Rajouri town of Jammu and Kashmir, curfew was lifted on July 26 after remaining in force for six days following clashes over alleged burning of terror outfit IS's flag by VHP activists, which minority groups claimed bore religious scripture. Internet and mobile services were also restored. The authorities in the town have also decided to release over 20 youths who had been arrested after they pelted stones at police personnel. Several cops were reported to have been injured in incidents of stone-pelting.<sup>86</sup>

## Northeast India

(July 20-26, 2015)

- **NIA charge-sheets 4 NDFB(S) ultras; Army nabs NDFB(S), ULFA ultras ahead of the Independence Day celebration; Myanmar deploys additional brigade along border with India.**

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on July 22 filed charge-sheet against four hardcore members of the Songbijit faction of the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) for their alleged involvement in the killings of Adivasi people in Hatijuli in Sonitpur district on December 23 last year. The charge-sheet was filed in the Court of the Special NIA Court, Guwahati. Those charge-sheeted in the case include, Sanju Bordoloi alias Sibigir, who was the assistant organising secretary of NDFB(S). The second person charge-sheeted is Ajoy Basumatary alias B Buhum, commanding officer of 3rd battalion of NDFB(S). Nitul Daimary alias D Naihab, Dy commanding officer of 3rd Bn. of NDFB(S) and Bishnu Narzary alias N Berama, have also been charged.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>84</sup> "At Eid Milan in New Delhi, Pakistan Promises 'Support' To Kashmir Movement", *Greater Kashmir*, July 22, 2015 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/kashmir/at-eid-milan-in-new-delhi-pakistan-promises-support-to-kashmir-movement/192295.html>

<sup>85</sup> Pandit, M Saleem, "1 Killed, 5 Injured in J&K Grenade Attack", *The Times of India*, July 26, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/1-killed-5-injured-in-JK-grenade-attack/articleshow/48221380.cms>

<sup>86</sup> "Curfew Lifted in J&K's Rajouri", *Business Standard*, July 26, 2015 at [http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/curfew-lifted-in-j-k-s-rajouri-115072600474\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/curfew-lifted-in-j-k-s-rajouri-115072600474_1.html)

<sup>87</sup> "NIA Charge-Sheets 4 NDFB(S) Ultras", *The Assam Tribune*, July 23, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul2315/at055>

In a major success ahead of the Independence Day celebration for the men in olive green under the umbrella of Red Horn division of the Army, troops of Borrangajuli camp in a joint operation with police apprehended four dreaded NDFB(S) militants during a series of operations carried out recently. The apprehended militants were identified as Sonaram Boro, Bilat Narzari alias Togra, Benjamin Basumatary and Rahul Chaudhary. They are suspected to be involved in the recent kidnapping of Robindra Kachari, a businessman of Udalguri district, stated an Army source in Guwahati. A huge cache of arms and ammunition was also recovered from their possession. In a similar recent operation at Bahjani village under Mangaldai Police Station, a joint team of Army from Deomornoi camp and police arrested Sabin Deka (47), an ULFA cadre and a resident of Chitikapara and Amarendra alias Amar Deka, an ULFA linkman and a resident of Barampur under Mangaldai PS respectively.<sup>88</sup>

Myanmar has deployed an additional brigade comprising around 6,000 men and officers along the border with India, apparently to prevent any more surgical strikes by the Indian Army inside its territory. The brigade has been deployed in addition to five already posted along the 1,643km-long Indo-Myanmar border, a senior government official said. Myanmar was upset with India after a crack team of about 70 commandos of the Indian Army, equipped with assault rifles, rocket launchers, grenades and night vision goggles, was airdropped from helicopters and they attacked two camps being run by NSCN (K) and KYKL militants inside that country. The operation was carried out after the Naga militants killed 18 soldiers in an ambush in Chandel area of Manipur on June 4.<sup>89</sup>

## Left-wing Extremism

(July 20-26, 2015)

- **Jharkhand announces Rs 8.69 crore bounty on 73 Maoists; Maoists torch 30 vehicles in Jharkhand; Maoist leader killed, close aide arrested in Gumla encounter.**

Jharkhand government on July 21 announced Rs 8.69 crore bounty for the capture of 73 left-wing extremists who have been involved in multiple violent attacks on security forces in the state. The extremists on whom bounty has been announced include top leaders of CPI (Maoist) and People's Liberation Front of India, a breakaway faction of CPI Maoist. Jharkhand is among the worst Maoist-hit states where around 500 security personnel have been killed by rebels since 2000. The cash reward ranges between Rs 25 lakh to one lakh according to the ranks and positions the rebels hold in CPI Maoists and PLFI. A CMO release said Rs 25 lakh would be given to anyone who helps the police to arrest members of CPI Maoist central committee, special area committee, and members of its regional bureau - top three leadership positions in CPI Maoist. A bounty of Rs 25 lakh was also announced on PLFI founder supremo Dinesh Gope. PLFI is the second most powerful LWE

<sup>88</sup> "Army Nabs NDFB(S), ULFA Ultras", *The Assam Tribune*, July 23, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul2315/state056>

<sup>89</sup> "Myanmar Deploys Additional Brigade Along Border with India", *The Times of India*, July 26, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Myanmar-deploys-additional-brigade-along-border-with-India/articleshow/48226488.cms>

outfit in Jharkhand. A bounty of Rs 15 lakh has been announced for regional committee members of CPI (Maoist), Rs 10 lakh for zonal committee members, Rs 5 lakh for sub zonal committee members, Rs 2 lakh for commanders of area committee, and Rs 1 lakh for members of local guerrilla squads.<sup>90</sup>

Maoists had torched 30 vehicles of the Central Coalfield Limited (CCL) engaged in mining work in Jharkhand's Bokaro district, police said on July 25. More than 100 Maoists on July 24 night raided the CCL project site at Bermo area of the district, some 130 km from Ranchi. After thrashing the security men and asking them to leave, Maoists set on fire the vehicles.<sup>91</sup>

A top Maoist leader, who was carrying a reward of Rs 25 lakh on his head, was killed in an encounter with the police and his close aide was arrested in Jharkhand's Gumla district. "The deceased has been identified as Sylvester Minz, a member of the CPI (Maoist) zonal area committee, and the arrested person is sub-zonal commander Dilbar," said Gumla superintendent of police Bhimsen Tuti. Dilbar had a bounty of Rs 5 lakh on his head and was found carrying an AK-47 assault rifle. Tuti said that a police patrol party surrounded a group of Maoists, who had gathered in Tiril village — around 130 km west of state capital Ranchi – for a meeting early on July 25. Police have also seized a large cache of arms from the meeting site.<sup>92</sup>

## IV. UNITED NATIONS REVIEWS

### India and the UN

(July 20-26, 2015)

- **India's commitment to sustainable development recognised; UNMOGIP visits site of ceasefire violation; Dalit Christian group meets UNSG; India abstains on vote for consultative status for *Freedom Now*; Middle East peace urgent: India.**

India's sustainable energy targets are much more advanced than the global goal envisaged for it. This was explained by the United Nations Under-Secretary General and CEO for Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative, Kandeh K Yumkella. "India targets 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2022, which includes 100 GW of solar, 60 GW of wind power, 10 GW of biomass-fired power and 5 GW of small hydro power." Minister for Power, Coal and New and Renewable

<sup>90</sup> Mishra, Alok K N, "Jharkhand Announces Rs 8.69 Crore Bounty on 73 Maoists", *The Times of India*, July 21, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Jharkhand-announces-Rs-8-69-crore-bounty-on-73-Maoists/articleshow/48157666.cms>

<sup>91</sup> "Maoists Torch 30 Vehicles in Jharkhand", *The Indian Express*, July 25, 2015 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/maoists-torch-30-vehicles-in-jharkhand/>

<sup>92</sup> "Maoist Commander Killed, Close Aide Arrested in Jharkhand's Gumla", *Hindustan Times*, July 26, 2015 at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/ranchi/maoist-commander-shot-dead-in-jharkhand-s-gumla/article1-1372947.aspx>

Energy, Piyush Goyal, said India is likely to benefit greatly from this partnership with the UN.<sup>93</sup> Meanwhile, the world's most widely used green building rating system of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), LEED, has ranked India at No.3 for its increasing use of sustainable building design, construction and transformation. Others in order of rank are Canada, China, Brazil, Republic of Korea, Germany, Taiwan, UAE, Turkey, Sweden and the US.<sup>94</sup>

A UNMOGIP investigation team visited the sites of unprovoked firing by the Border Security Force in the Sialkot Working Boundary along the Line of Control.<sup>95</sup> India, along with Guatemala, Haiti, Niger, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone, are likely to be recipients of \$20 million from Canada through the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to start two-year programmes for ending child, early and forced marriages.<sup>96</sup>

Poor Christian Liberation Movement, an organization of Dalit Christians who constitute nearly 70 per cent of the Christian population in India, have submitted a memorandum to the UN Secretary General alleging exploitation and torture by the Catholic Church and the Vatican. It highlighted the discrimination faced by lower caste converts to Christianity.<sup>97</sup>

India, along with 11 other countries, abstained on a vote at the ECOSOC that provided consultative status to the US-based NGO *Freedom Now*. Among other countries who voted against the resolution were China, Russia, Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Sudan, Pakistan, and South Africa. 29 of the 54 member countries of ECOSOC voted in favour of the resolution. The NGO works for release of political prisoners.<sup>98</sup>

At a UN Security Council discussion on the Middle East peace process, the Indian Permanent Representative to the UN, Asoke Mukherji, urged that the Israel-Palestine issue be settled sooner than later. He also raised concerns regarding the increased activity of radicalized groups in the region, especially in Iraq and Syria and the prolonged conflict in Yemen. He flagged the issue of economic costs of these conflicts for the world.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> "India's Clean Energy Targets Way Ahead Of Others: United Nations", *DNA News*, July 20, 2015, at <http://www.dnaindia.com/money/report-india-s-clean-energy-targets-way-ahead-of-others-united-nations-2106366>

<sup>94</sup> "India Ranks Third Among Top 10 Countries for LEED Green Building", July 23, 2015, at <http://www.prnewswire.co.in/news-releases/india-ranks-third-among-top-10-countries-for-leed-green-building-518237781.html>

<sup>95</sup> "UN Team Visits Loc Areas Affected By Indian Firing", July 20, 2015, at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/923270/un-team-visits-loc-areas-affected-by-indian-firing/>

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