

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

August 10 – August 16, 8 (3), 2015

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Bangladesh

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **UN-EU expresses concerns about the killing of the fourth blogger; Bangladesh is out of the GSP scheme of the USA.**

Expressing grave concern over the brutal murder of blogger Niladri Chattopadhyay Niloy, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called on the Bangladesh government for bringing the perpetrators to justice. The UN chief, in a statement on August 9, has also called upon the government to bring those responsible for the murder of Niloy and other bloggers to justice in an expeditious manner and act to ensure that all Bangladeshis can enjoy freedom of expression and other human rights without fear. The European Union (EU) delegation has also condemned “in the strongest possible terms” the vile aggression committed against Niloy and expressed sympathy to his widow and other family members.¹ Meanwhile Bangladesh police said that they had arrested two suspected members of Ansarullah Bangla Team, a militant group accused of links to previous attacks on bloggers.²

The US has left out Bangladesh from the list of 122 nations for whom US President Barack Obama on June 29 re-authorized the generalised system of preferences (GSP), the US's biggest scheme for the world's poor nations. The reason for the exclusion was Bangladesh's failure to fulfil all the 16 conditions the Obama administration had laid out when it revoked the privilege two years ago on grounds of poor workplace safety and labour rights.³

Sri Lanka

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **India to establish Centre for Skill Development for the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Jaffna; India gives 88 ambulances to Sri Lanka; Japan agrees to grant Sri Lanka a Rs. 26.8 billion loan to improve the power supply; Six Sri Lankans arrested by the Kolkata special task force; Sri Lanka provides relief assistance to Myanmar.**

As part of its development partnership with Sri Lanka in the field of higher education, the Government of India is undertaking a project to establish a Centre for Skill Development for

¹ “Ask Govt to Bring the Perpetrators to Justice”, *The Daily Star*, August 10, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/un-chief-eu-delegation-condemn-niladri-killing-124531>.

² “Two Arrested over Bangladesh Blogger Niloy Neel Killing”, *The Daily Star*, August 14, 2015 at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-33926342>.

³ “Bangladesh Think-Tank CPD Critical of US Decision on GSP”, *The Daily Star*, August 13, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/cpd-critical-us-decision-gsp-126016>.

the Faculty of Agriculture at the Kilinochchi Campus of the University of Jaffna, at a total cost of Rs. 300 million. Following a process of competitive bidding, a contract to construct the building complex was signed on August 11, 2015 with M/s. Link Engineering (Pvt.) Ltd for Rs. 234.50 million in the presence of High Commissioner of India Y.K. Sinha and Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education of Sri Lanka P. Ranepura.⁴

The Indian government has gifted 88 ambulances for the maintenance of free ambulance services within Colombo and the Southern Province. The handing over of these ambulances took place in Colombo on August 12 at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute. India's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Y.K. Sinha handed over the ambulances to the Secretary to the Prime Minister Saman Ekanayake. The ambulances have been gifted in response to a request made by Sri Lanka to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Sri Lanka in March.⁵

The Government of Japan has agreed to grant Sri Lanka a Rs. 26.8 billion loan to improve the island's electricity transmission and distribution network to improve efficiency of power supply. As a result of bilateral discussions between the two governments Japan has agreed to provide a concessional loan amounting to Japanese Yen 24.9 billion through Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for the implementation of National Transmission and Distribution Network Development and Efficiency Improvement Project.⁶

Kolkata special task force on August 14 had arrested six Sri Lankan men suspected to be members of the banned terrorist outfit LTTE. All the six LTTE men arrested from Chadni Chowk in Kolkata are Sri Lankan Tamils and they have come to Kolkata four days before from Chennai.⁷

Sri Lanka presented a cash contribution of US\$ 25,000 to Myanmar as flood relief aid. Foreign Secretary Chitranganee Wagiswara, on behalf of Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera handed over the contribution to the Ambassador of Myanmar in Sri Lanka U Min Thein Zan at a simple ceremony held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on August 14, 2015.⁸

Maldives

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **“Maldives has fully achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals”- Minister of Foreign Affairs Dunya Maumoon.**

⁴ “India Supports To Establish Rs. 300 Million Centre for Skill Development at University of Jaffna”, *ColomboPage*, August 12, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug12_1439380574CH.php.

⁵ “India Gifts 88 Ambulances to Sri Lanka”, *ColomboPage*, August 13, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug13_1439465847CH.php.

⁶ “Japan Grants Rs. 26 Billion Loan to Develop Sri Lanka's Power Transmission and Distribution Network”, *ColomboPage*, August 12, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug12_1439393777CH.php.

⁷ “Six Sri Lankans Tamils Suspected to be LTTE Men Arrested in Kolkata”, *ColomboPage*, August 15, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug15_1439615372CH.php.

⁸ “Sri Lanka Offers US\$ 25,000 Relief Aid to the Flood Victims in Myanmar”, *Colombo Page*, August 14, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug14_1439553376CH.php.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Dunya Maumoon has said that Maldives has fully achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) set by the United Nations in 2000. At the Millennium Summit of the UN in 2000, all 189 UN member states agreed to achieve the following eight goals by 2015: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development. Speaking at a press conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs today, Dunya said that Maldives faced challenges in two out of the eight goals: achieving gender equality, and ensuring environmental sustainability. Foreign Ministry has said that the Post 2015 Development Agenda was compiled after discussions between UN member states held in New York from 20 to 31 July 2015, in which Maldives, as the chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), played a major role.⁹

B. East Asia

China

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **Chinese Vice Premier visits blast hit Tianjin; Chinese State Council releases environmental guidelines; China devalues yuan.**

There was a major explosion in a warehouse in the Tianjin region of China. The Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong visited Tianjin on August 13. She wished the people speedy recovery. She visited two hospitals and also instructed further rescue operations. The blasts killed around 50 people and injured more than 700 people.¹⁰

According to the document released by the Chinese State Council, the agencies, both government and nongovernmental which are involved in environmental monitoring, will be expected to follow the law and adhere to the technical standards. It further added that, “Environmental authorities will seriously punish those breaking rules or falsifying data”.¹¹

In another important development the People’s Bank of China allowed the Chinese yuan to depreciate by 2 percent as against the United States dollar on August 11. This has had major international effects.¹²

⁹ “Dunya: Maldives Has Achieved Most MDGs”, *SunOnline*, August 11, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31580>.

¹⁰ “Chinese vice Premier Visits People Injured in Tianjin Blasts”, *China Daily*, August 14, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-08/14/content_21595201.htm, accessed on August 17, 2015

¹¹ “China to Regulate Environment Monitoring”, *China Daily*, August 12, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-08/12/content_21581187.htm, accessed on August 13, 2015

¹² “China Devalues Yuan In A Shocking Move”, by Charles Riley, *CNN Money*, August 11, 2015 at <http://money.cnn.com/2015/08/11/investing/china-pboc-yuan-devalue-currency/>, accessed on August 17, 2015

Japan

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **Prime Minister Shinzo Abe express profound grief and sincere condolences on the 70th Anniversary of the World War II; Three cabinet ministers visit and Abe sends offering to the controversial Yasukuni shrine on the 70th Anniversary of the World War II; Japan denies reports suggesting Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's likely visit to North Korea.**

On August 14, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expressed profound grief and sincere condolences on the 70th Anniversary of the World War II. While Abe did not offer his personal apology, he did refer that "Japan has repeatedly expressed the feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology for its actions during the war". One of the highlight of the Abe statement is when he argued that since the post-war generations surpass 80 per cent of the populace, "we must not let our children, grandchildren, and even further generations to come, who have nothing to do with that war, be predestined to apologize".¹³ It is important to note that the Abe statement did refer indirectly to the comfort women when he said that one should not overlook women behind the battlegrounds "whose honour and dignity were severely injured"¹⁴. Chinese foreign ministry has registered protest against the issued statement which they argued to be "evasive on this major issue of principle".¹⁵ The South Korean foreign ministry expressed that Japan should follow up its declaration with concrete actions and urged Japan to make practical efforts to resolve promptly the undecided historical issues together with the comfort women issue¹⁶. Meanwhile, Japan's most important ally, the US has welcomed the Abe statement.

Three cabinet ministers visited the controversial Yasukuni shrine, which honours Class-A World War II criminals among the war dead, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II on August 15. While Prime Minister Shinzo Abe did not visit the controversial Yasukuni Shrine in person, he sent an offering to Shrine. The three cabinet ministers included Sanae Takaichi (Internal Affairs and Communications Minister), Eriko Yamatani (chair of the National Public Safety Commission) and Haruko Arimura (state minister for women's empowerment).¹⁷ Chinese foreign ministry expressed strong

¹³ Statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, August 14, 2015 at http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201508/0814statement.html

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Remarks on Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Statement on the 70th Anniversary of the End of the War, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, August 15, 2015 at http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/t1288969.shtml

¹⁶ MOFA Spokesperson's Commentary on the Abe Statement Issued to Mark the 70th Anniversary of the End of World War II, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea, August 15, 2015 at http://www.mofa.go.kr/ENG/press/pressreleases/index.jsp?menu=m_10_20

¹⁷ "3 Cabinet ministers visit Yasukuni Shrine", *Jiji Press*, August 15, 2015 at <http://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0002359210>

dissatisfaction stating that this reflects “Japan’s wrong attitude towards history”.¹⁸ South Korea registered objection by saying that “only when leading figures of Japan sincerely carry out self-reflection and demonstrate their remorse through actions, will Japan be able to win trust from its neighbouring countries”¹⁹.

On August 11, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary, Yoshihide Suga denied reports suggesting Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s likely visit to North Korea.²⁰

The Korean Peninsula

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **President Park Geun-hye to visit US in October; South Korea celebrated the 70th Anniversary of Liberation and the 67th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Korea; Baengnyeong Island to have surveillance centre aimed at monitoring North’s military provocations; US-South Korea annual joint military exercise started on August 16.**

The US-South Korea summit is scheduled on October 16. Several important issues are likely to be discussed including security situation on the Korean Peninsula, land mine provocation by Pyongyang besides its nuclear weapons development. President Park was scheduled to visit US in June but had to postpone the trip owing to the outbreak of the Middle East respiratory syndrome.²¹

On August 15, South Korean President Park Geun-hye on the 70th Anniversary of Liberation and the 67th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Korea said that Korean unification is necessary for true liberation. However, she stressed that North Korea has consistently refused to engage in dialogue which undermines peace. President Park emphasized that Pyongyang threatens South Korea’s security with its nuclear capabilities, cyber-attacks. In particular, and mines in the DMZ. She stressed that South Korea is ready to respond confidently to provocations.²² North Korean Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea has registered strong protest by stating that President Park’s language fiercely insulted the regime.²³

¹⁸ Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Remarks on Some Japanese Cabinet Members Visiting Yasukuni Shrine, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China*, August 15, 2015 at http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1289042.shtml

¹⁹ MOFA Spokesperson’s Commentary on the Japanese Prime Minister Sending a Cash Offering to the Yasukuni Shrine, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea*, August 15, 2015 at http://www.mofa.go.kr/ENG/press/pressreleases/index.jsp?menu=m_10_20

²⁰ “Govt Denies Abe To Visit N. Korea”, *The Japan News*, August 12, 2015 at <http://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0002349538>

²¹ “Park to visit U.S. in Oct.”, *The Korea Herald*, August 13, 2015 at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150813001006>

²² Commemorative Address by President Park Geun-hye on the 70th Anniversary of Liberation, Cheong Wa Dae, August 15, 2015, at http://english1.president.go.kr/activity/speeches.php?srh%5Bboard_no%5D=24&srh%5Bview_mode%5D=detail&srh%5Bseq%5D=11748&srh%5Bdetail_no%5D=44#sthash.OUrFh1S.dpuf

²³ “N. Korea Blasts President Park’s Liberation Day Speech”, *The Korea Times*, August 16, 2015 at http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/08/485_184958.html

Baengnyeong Island will have surveillance centre with 40 surveillance cameras aimed at monitoring North's military provocations and increase combat readiness. In May, the Marine Corps' proposed the centre and the Ongjin County is in the concluding phase of discussions with KT Company which will communicate the video footage to the surveillance centre.²⁴

US-South Korea annual joint military exercise known as Ulchi Freedom Guardian, started on August 16 in the middle of swelling tension following Pyongyang's landmine attack in the DMZ. The exercise which is scheduled to continue till August 28, includes participation from 50,000 Korean and 3,000 US troops. It also comprises forces from other countries such as Australia, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Moreover, the exercise will be monitored by the Swiss and Swedish delegations of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission.²⁵

C. Russia

Russia

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **Russia adds new countries to its sanctions list; Russian opposition party allowed to join Kostroma election race; Russia to substitute military hardware imports from EU by 2021; Russia to provide land to its citizens to develop the Far East; Russia's international reserves stood at US\$358 billion as of August 7; 89,000 new AIDS cases reported in Russia in 2014.**

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has said, on August 13, that Russia has added new countries to its list of counter sanctions. This includes Albania, Montenegro, Iceland and the County of Liechtenstein and Ukraine. He explained that these countries had knowingly made a decision to side with the European Union for extending the anti-Russian sanctions. He added that the ban on agricultural import from Ukraine will come into force only if Kiev implements the economic part of the Association Agreement with the European Union. Moscow is concerned that implementation of the economic part of Ukraine-EU Association Agreement will disrupt existing trade balance between these countries and Russia. It will lead to losses of more than \$1.5 billion for the Russian economy and will require Moscow to introduce protective measures.²⁶

Russia's Central Elections Commission has, on August 13, allowed the Parnas opposition party to take part in upcoming regional elections in Kostroma. Earlier, local election officials had barred Parnas from running in the Kostroma region, east of Moscow, because they said

²⁴ "Border Island To have NK Monitoring Centre", *The Korea Times*, August 16, 2015 at http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/08/116_184946.html

²⁵ "Korea, US To Start Joint Drill Today", *The Korea Times*, August 16, 2015 at http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/08/116_184927.html

²⁶ "Russia Adds New Countries To Its Sanctions List", *Itar-Tass*, August 11, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/814183>

the group did not have enough valid signatures from potential voters to qualify for participation. Similar reasons were given for rejecting opposition parties in Novosibirsk and Magadan. Opposition leaders had claimed that the Kremlin was blocking them from elections as an alternative tactic to ballot stuffing, which provoked street protests after it was alleged to have been used in the 2011 Duma elections.²⁷

Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin has said, on August 11, that Russia is set to fully substitute military hardware imports from the European Union by 2021. He added 'as for NATO countries and the European Union, the last positions will be substituted in 2021. But basically, 90 per cent of the items will be substituted by 2018. As for Ukraine, the deadline for import substitution is 2018. The most complex items primarily concern gas generators, power plants for some vessels, and also aviation engines for helicopters and aircraft. All necessary decisions have already been taken on these positions'.²⁸

Deputy Prime Minister and Presidential Envoy to the Far Eastern Federal District Yuri Trutnev has said, on August 11, that authorities in Russia's Far East will start allocating land plots to Russian citizens in early 2016 in order to help develop the region. He added that new land owners will be free to decide how to develop their lands within the limits set by the Russian law. A total of 614 million hectares of land are currently held by the state in the Russian Far East. Land can be provided for the construction of housing, facilities for business, a tourist camp, fishing or forestry.²⁹

The Central Bank has said, on August 13, that Russia's international reserves grew by US\$ 400 million in the week from July 31 to August 7 and reached US\$ 358 billion. Russia's international reserves are highly liquid foreign assets available with the Bank of Russia and the Russian Government. They comprise foreign currency, Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), a reserve position in the International Monetary Fund and monetary gold.³⁰

The head of the Russian consumer rights watchdog Rospotrebnadzor, Anna Popova has said that 0.5 per cent (912,880 people) of Russia's population is HIV-infected. According to Rospotrebnadzor, about 89,177 new HIV cases were detected in Russia in 2014.³¹

²⁷ "Russian Opposition Party Allowed to Join Kostroma Election Race", *The Moscow Times*, August 13, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russian-opposition-party-allowed-to-join-kostroma-election-race/527900.html>

²⁸ "Russia To Substitute Military Hardware Imports from EU by 2021 — Deputy PM", *Itar-Tass*, August 11, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/813843>

²⁹ "Land Lease On Easy Terms In Russia's Far East Will Start In Early 2016 — Deputy PM", *Itar-Tass*, August 11, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/813872>

³⁰ "Russia's International Reserves Stood at \$358 bln as of August 7 — Central Bank", *Itar-Tass*, August 13, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/814218>

³¹ "Over 89,000 New HIV-Infected People Appear in Russia in 2014", *Itar-Tass*, August 13, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/813888>

Russia: International

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **Russian and Saudi Arabian Foreign Ministers meet in Moscow; Russian Foreign Minister hosts Syria's main opposition group for talks; Russian Foreign Minister says that maintaining status quo in Syria is unacceptable; Russia denies hosting Iranian General who is on UN sanctioned list; Russian deputy foreign minister and China's ambassador to Russia discuss developments in the Middle East; Japan says the proposed visit to Kuril islands by Russian Prime Minister will hamper dialogue; Russian Black Sea Fleet conducts missile exercises in the Mediterranean; Russia says Iranian deal makes US missile defence in Europe senseless; Moscow wants Israel to join nuclear non-proliferation treaty; Russia says there exist no grounds to continue dialogue with the US on nuclear disarmament.**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has met with his Saudi counterpart Adel al-Jubeir in Moscow on August 11. One of the key issues discussed involved Russia's initiative for setting up a broad front of all the forces interested in combating the threat of Islamic State (IS). However, the Saudi Foreign Minister did mention the fact that Riyadh's position on the conflict in Syria has not changed and that there is no place for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in the future of the country. He also added that Saudi Arabia is examining the prospect of buying Russia's Iskander tactical missile systems.³²

As part of the Kremlin's new push for a mediation role in the Syrian conflict, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has, on August 13, hosted a delegation of the main Syrian opposition group - Syrian National Coalition. He told the leaders of the coalition that 'Moscow was willing to help all Syrians unite over the core task of preserving their country, ensuring stability and preventing it from becoming a hotbed of terrorism and other threats'. Lavrov had earlier stated Russia's proposal of all forces opposing Islamic State extremists — including the Syrian opposition, the Syrian army, the Iraqi army and the Kurds — to pool their efforts.³³

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said, on August 14 that maintaining the status quo in Syria has become unacceptable due to the growing terrorist threat in the region.³⁴

Russia has denied claims that Major General Ghasem Soleimani, the commander of Quds Force of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, visited Moscow in July in violation of United Nations sanctions banning travel. This was in response to media reports of the General having visited Moscow. The US Secretary of State John Kerry also expressed concern to Russian Foreign

³² "Saudi FM Certain Contract On Russian Iskander Missile Supplies Will Be Signed Soon", *Itar-Tass*, August 11, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/world/813758>

³³ "Russian Foreign Minister Hosts Syria's Main Opposition Group for Talks", *The Moscow Times*, August 16, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russian-foreign-minister-hosts-syrias-main-opposition-group-for-talks/527934.html>

³⁴ "Keeping Status Quo In Syria Is Unacceptable — Lavrov", *Itar-Tass*, August 14, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/world/814477>

Minister Sergei Lavrov in a phone call made on August 16. Soleimani has been on the UN sanctions blacklist since 2007, which bans travel and also mandates all countries to freeze his overseas assets.³⁵

During a meeting between Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov and China's ambassador to Moscow Li Hui on August 11, it was decided that Moscow and Beijing will continue to coordinate their approaches on the Middle East agenda. Russian Foreign Ministry stated that 'the two diplomats exchanged current issues of the development of the situation in Syria and Yemen and consolidation of international efforts in counteracting the terrorist threat of the Islamic State'.³⁶

A Japanese Foreign Ministry representative has said, on August 14, that the planned trip of Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev to the Kuril Islands will become an obstacle for developing the dialogue between Moscow and Tokyo. The diplomat also said that Russia should be "careful" about such actions if it wants the visit of Vladimir Putin to Japan to take place. Meanwhile, the Russian Foreign Ministry has stated that 'the Russian leadership pays increased attention to the task of social and economic development of this Russian region, and Russian officials will continue trips to these Islands. We take no account of Tokyo's stance and have no intention to do that in future. We also advised the Japanese side not to express such 'concerns, which incite unnecessary tensions in bilateral relations, to us in future'. The four islands of Russia's Southern Kurils - Shikotan, Khabomai, Iturup and Kunashir, which Japan calls its northern territories, have been a source of dispute between Moscow and Tokyo all through the post-war period.³⁷

A convoy of six warships from the Russian Black Sea Fleet has conducted missile and artillery drills in the Mediterranean Sea. During the exercise, the warships exercised measures on the protection of convoys, various altitude air attacks defence, combat attacks on vessels of a simulated enemy as well as assistance to a damaged vessel.³⁸

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov has said, on August 14, that 'Russia sees no reason for the United States to continue with its missile defence program in Europe after the nuclear agreement with Iran has been reached'. He also accused the US of making up reasons for establishment of the anti-missile defence (ABM) system in Europe.³⁹

³⁵ "Russia Denies Hosting Top Iranian Commander", *The Moscow Times*, August 16, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-denies-hosting-top-iranian-commander/528013.html>

³⁶ "Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, China's Ambassador Discuss Middle East Agenda", *Itar-Tass*, August 11, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/world/813873>

³⁷ "Russian PM's Trip To Kuril Islands Will Hamper Dialogue — Japanese Diplomatic Source", *Itar-Tass*, August 14, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/814483>

³⁸ "Russian Black Sea Fleet Conducts Missile Drills In Mediterranean", *Itar-Tass*, August 14, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/814456>

³⁹ "Iran Deal Makes US Missile Defense In Europe Senseless — Russian Foreign Ministry", *Itar-Tass*, August 14, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/world/814436>

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov has, on August 14, called on Israel to join the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). He also called on Israel to ratify a convention on banning chemical weapons.⁴⁰

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov has said, on August 14, that there exist no conditions to discuss additional reduction of nuclear weapons with the US. He added that the 'resolution of this issue depends not on who will become the next US president, but rather on US admitting that the matter of nuclear disarmament cannot be considered separately from other factors affecting strategic stability'. However, he mentioned that the new START Treaty of 2010 is being implemented by Russia and US flawlessly. He said that 'what is being done in terms of inspections, in the framework of agreements on monitoring, on quantitative parameters - all this is being done, it is an important stabilizing factor. We hope that this will continue in the future'.⁴¹

D. The United State of America

National

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **Hillary Clinton turned over all relevant emails by signing an official court document; Trump holds steady at the top of the Republican presidential race; Democratic Party candidate Sanders draws crowds in his anti-billionaire message campaign for the U.S. presidency; Federal authorities accuses an international group of hackers and stock traders of stealing insider information; Demonstrators mark the first anniversary of the shooting death of Brown; President Obama says recent events has opened the door for him to speak out on race; Find common sense steps to "build up trust and cooperation between communities and police: Obama; AT&T gave valuable assistance to the NSA's programme to spy; Freedom in America requires a continuing commitment to maintaining strong, equipped, well-led and well-trained ground forces: New Army chief of staff.**

On August 10, former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has signed an official court document declaring that she has turned over all relevant emails sent and received on her personal email account during her tenure as US Secretary of State. Clinton, who is seeking the 2016 Democratic presidential nomination, has been under scrutiny in recent months after it was revealed that she used her personal email account to send official messages. She said she has turned over 55,000 pages of emails to the State Department, and has authorized the

⁴⁰ "Moscow Wants Israel To Join Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty — Diplomat", *Itar-Tass*, August 14, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/world/814403>

⁴¹ "Russian Diplomat: No Grounds To Continue Dialogue with US on Nuclear Disarmament", *Itar-Tass*, August 14, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/world/814409>

agency to make the emails public.⁴² Clinton has been pressured by Republican lawmakers to relinquish the server ever since it was revealed back in March that she used her personal email account to send official messages.⁴³

The latest *Reuters-Ipsos* national poll found Republican presidential Donald Trump holding steady at the top of the Republican field with 24 percent, followed by former Florida Governor Jeb Bush at 12 percent. Bush was at 17 percent before the debate. No one else garnered more than 8 percent support in the online survey, which was conducted between the end of the debate on August 6 and August 9. The reaction among Trump's Republican rivals to his debate comments and penchant for attacking critics remains mixed. Kentucky Senator Rand Paul said in a conference call with reporters that Trump is "an empty suit here, full of bravado."⁴⁴

On August 9 night Democratic Party candidate Bernie Sanders drew another overflow crowd in his campaign for the U.S. presidency, as he brings his anti-billionaire message and calls for addressing income inequality in America. He has so far emerged as the leading opponent of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the quest for the Democratic nomination. Without financial resources, he has been on a tour of the north-western U.S. to drum up support. His campaign, while not directly aimed at billionaire Republican Party candidate Donald Trump, stands in stark contrast to Trump's personal resources.⁴⁵ It was reported that the Presidential election is still more than 14 months away and a lot can and will happen between now and then, but the rise of Trump and Sanders and why they are striking some chords with the public says a lot about the current state of U.S. politics.⁴⁶

On August 11, U.S. Federal authorities in New Jersey have accused an international group of hackers and stock traders of stealing insider information and making as much as \$100 million in illegal profits. It said that it is the biggest scheme of its kind ever prosecuted, and one that demonstrated yet another way in which the financial world is vulnerable to cybercrime. So far nine people in the United States and Ukraine have been indicted for alleged fraud. More than 20 other individuals and companies face related civil complaints. The charges included securities fraud, wire fraud and money laundering conspiracy. The breaches could put more

⁴² "Clinton Says She Turned Over All Relevant Emails", *VOA News*, August 11, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/clinton-says-she-turned-over-all-emails/2913197.html>

⁴³ "Clinton Turns Over Private Email Server", *VOA News*, August 12, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/clinton-turns-over-private-email-server-to-investigators/2914659.html>

⁴⁴ Malone, Jim, "Trump Continues to Lead Republican Field Despite Controversy", *VOA News*, August 11, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/trump-leads-republican-field-despite-controversy/2913899.html>

⁴⁵ McKitterick, Molly, "Presidential Candidate Sanders Draws Crowds With Anti-Billionaire Message", *VOA News*, August 10, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/presidential-candidate-sanders-draws-crowds-with-anti-billionaire-message/2909503.html>

⁴⁶ Malone, Jim, "Unlikely Duo Dominates White House Race", *VOA News*, August 14, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/unlikely-duo-dominating-race-for-white-house/2918245.html>

pressure on the information distribution business, which was founded decades ago and depends on clients trusting the distributors with sensitive information.⁴⁷

On August 11 night, the central U.S. city of Ferguson, Missouri was much calmer as riot police appeared to outnumber the small number of demonstrators marking the first anniversary of the shooting death of an unarmed black man by a white police officer. It was a stark contrast to August 10 night, when police arrested about two dozen protesters in the St. Louis suburb after demonstrators pelted them with rocks and bottles. The demonstrations that followed Michael Brown's killing in August 2014 threw the St. Louis suburb into the national spotlight and sparked calls for better treatment of minorities by police.⁴⁸ Earlier on August 9, President Barack Obama, the nation's first black president told *National Public Radio* (NPR) that an "awakening around the country" to problems in race relations and police-community relations has opened the door for him to speak out. While the problems are not new, the president said social media has brought them to the attention of the public. Obama said, "I think people have become more aware of them, both black and white. And that gives me an opportunity, I think, then, to try to help to constructively shape the debate".⁴⁹

Meanwhile, U.S. President Barack Obama says in the year since the "tragic death" of Brown, the United States has "come to see more clearly than ever, the frustration in many communities of colour and the feeling that ... laws can be applied unevenly." Obama said on August 15 in his weekly address that in order to face the issues of discrimination "squarely," he convened a task force on community policing — made up of police officers, activists and academics — to find common sense steps to "build up trust and cooperation between communities and police."⁵⁰

According to *The New York Times*, the U.S. telecommunications giant AT&T gave valuable assistance to the National Security Agency's programme to spy on domestic Internet and telephone traffic. On August 15, the newspaper cited newly disclosed NSA documents leaked by fugitive former contractor Edward Snowden. While the documents do not specifically name AT&T, they use code names that the *Times* and several ex-intelligence officials said point to the telecommunications company.⁵¹

⁴⁷ "US: Hackers, Traders Used Stolen Data, Made \$100 Million", *VOA News*, August 12, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/hackers-traders-accused-biggest-us-insider-trading-scheme/2914001.html>

⁴⁸ Macchi, Victoria and Farabaugh, Kane, "Protests Dwindle in Ferguson", *VOA News*, August 12, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/protests-dwindle-in-ferguson/2914675.html>

⁴⁹ McKitterick, Molly, "Obama Says Events Have Made Him More Open About Race", *VOA News*, August 10, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/obama-events-have-made-him-more-open-about-race/2913143.html>

⁵⁰ "Obama: America Must Deal 'Honestly With Issues of Race, Poverty and Class'", *VOA News*, August 15, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/obama-america-must-deal-honestly-with-issues-of-race-poverty-and-class/2919150.html>

⁵¹ "New York Times: AT&T Helped NSA Spy on Emails, Phone Calls", *VOA News*, August 15, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/new-york-times-att-helped-spy-emails-phone-calls/2919470.html>

Army Gen. Mark A. Milley, the newest and the 39th Army chief of staff, said on August 14 that freedom in America requires a continuing commitment to maintaining strong, equipped, well-led and well-trained ground forces. Milley said, "There are many who think wars only can be won from great distances -- from space, the air, the sea... Unfortunately, those views are very, very wrong." Milley spoke immediately after his oath, assuming responsibilities from Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, who retired during the same ceremony at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Virginia. However, he warned that flagging commitment to maintaining ground forces will have a devastating cost in terms of lives and freedom. Milley most recently served as commander of U.S. Army Forces Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.⁵²

International: Asia

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **Afghan forces still need and deserve the broad international support; Iranian exporters anticipate a boost in exports post-sanctions; Outgoing Army chief of staff says the fight against IS may require US troops on the ground with Iraqi forces; US has begun flying manned missions from a Turkish air base; Turkey is a welcome partner against IS: US couple arrested on charges of trying to join IS militants in Syria; Only one in three Americans approves of Obama's Iran policy; Chinese and Russians have been accused of recent cyberattacks on U.S. government offices;**

The Resolute Support deputy chief of staff for communication, Gen. Wilson A. Shoffner said on August 13 that Afghan forces are fully responsible for their nation's security but still need and deserve the broad support of U.S. and coalition forces under the Resolute Support mission. Shoffner briefed the Pentagon press corps live from Kabul by telephone, discussing Afghan forces, the 2015 fighting season, Afghanistan security, and the movement of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) into Afghanistan with fighting between ISIL and the Taliban. Afghan forces, Shoffner said, have "definitely been tested this fighting season, but they're holding their own and they have demonstrated their courage and resilience. But it's clear that they "still require broad support, and that's one of the reasons why the Resolute Support mission remains critical," he added, noting "capability gaps" in close air support, aviation, intelligence and logistics, and that the fighters will require help "over the next few years."⁵³

Anticipating a boost in exports as sanctions are set to be lifted in the months ahead, Iran's famed carpet weavers are busy at work following the country's historic nuclear deal with world powers. An Iranian exporter Jila Rassam Arabzadeh said, "The Persian hand-woven carpet is Iran's ambassador. I'm delighted that the ambassador is in the process of resuming

⁵² Lopez, C. Todd, "Ground Forces 'Must Never, Ever Fail,' New Army Chief Says", *DoD News*, August 14, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/613672/ground-forces-must-never-ever-fail-new-army-chief-says>

⁵³ Pellerin, Cheryl, "General Discusses Afghan Forces, Security, ISIL Threat", *DoD News*, August 13, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/613666/general-discusses-afghan-forces-security-isil-threat>

work in the U.S.". As part of the deal, the U.S. will resume imports of Iranian carpets, which were halted in 2010. Persian carpets were the Iranian non-oil commodity that suffered most as a result of sanctions. The U.S. market had made up one-fifth of Iran's carpet exports. However, Iran's carpet producers have to compete with other producers as they have taken American market since 2010.⁵⁴

On August 12, Army General Ray Odierno, the outgoing Army chief of staff, said that the fight against Islamic State (IS) rebels is at a stalemate, and if the U.S. military does not see progress in the coming months it should consider putting support troops on the ground with Iraqi forces. Odierno backed the current US strategy against IS, saying at his last Pentagon news conference that while U.S. troops could defeat the militants, they could not solve the broader political and economic problems besetting Iraq and Syria.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, the Pentagon said in a statement on August 12 that the US has begun flying manned missions from a Turkish air base to deliver airstrikes against IS targets in Syria. The F-16 airstrikes began earlier that day, launched from Incirlik Air Base in southern Turkey. Turkey agreed in July 2015 to let U.S. forces use the Incirlik air base near Turkey's southern border with Syria.⁵⁶ Air Force Col. Pat Ryder briefed reporters at the Pentagon on August 14 that the United States and Turkey were finalizing details of Turkey's recently announced participation in the air campaign against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Syria. Ryder told reporters, speaking by phone from Centcom that "Turkey has been a welcome partner in terms of opening up Incirlik Air Base and allowing us to conduct manned and unmanned operations out of [that base]".⁵⁷

On August 8, a young Mississippi couple Muhammad Dakhllalla, 22, and his fiancé, Jaelyn Young, 20, were arrested by the FBI on charges of trying to join Islamic State (IS) militants in Syria. After travelling to the Golden Triangle Airport in Columbus, Mississippi, they were to board flights to Amsterdam en route to Istanbul. The pair was charged with conspiring and attempting to provide material support to Islamic State. An affidavit from an FBI agent says

⁵⁴ "Iran's Carpet Weavers at Work, Anticipating Jump in Exports", *Associated Press*, August 11, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/irans-carpet-weavers-at-work-anticipating-jump-in-exports/2913353.html>

⁵⁵ "Retiring Army Chief: Some US Troops May Be Needed on Ground in Iraq", *Reuters*, August 12, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/retiring-army-chief-odierno-says-some-us-troops-may-be-need-on-ground-in-iraq/2916030.html>; and, Lopez, C. Todd, "Ground Forces 'Must Never, Ever Fail,' New Army Chief Says", *DoD News*, August 14, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/613672/ground-forces-must-never-ever-fail-new-army-chief-says>

⁵⁶ "US F-16s Fly 1st Anti-IS Missions from Turkey", *VOA News*, August 13, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-begins-manned-airstrikes-over-syria/2916106.html>; And, Pellerin, Cheryl, "Air Force F-16s Arrive in Turkey to Join ISIL Fight", *DoD News*, August 10, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/613330/air-force-f-16s-arrive-in-turkey-to-join-isil-fight>

⁵⁷ Pellerin, Cheryl, "U.S., Turkey Finalizing Details of Anti-ISIL Airstrikes", *DoD News*, August 14, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/613670/us-turkey-finalizing-details-of-anti-isil-airstrikes>

both confessed to the charges after their arrest.⁵⁸ On August 16, Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve officials reported that U.S. and coalition military forces have continued to attack Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorists in Syria and Iraq.⁵⁹

According to a new Gallup survey, only one in three Americans approves of President Obama's handling of the international agreement to restrain Iran's nuclear programme. The pollster questioned more than 1,000 people in the last few days. On August 13 said that 55 percent disapproved of Obama's handling of Iran policy and 33 percent approved of it. The finding was similar to that of another pollster, Quinnipiac University, which showed recently that Americans opposed the internationally brokered Iran deal by a 2-to-1 margin. The U.S. Congress is now in a summer recess but plans to vote next month on whether to approve or reject the accord, which would bar Iran from building a nuclear weapon in exchange for lifting sanctions that have hobbled Tehran's economy.⁶⁰

On August 11, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said it is "very likely" that his emails are read by the Chinese and Russians, both of whom have been accused of recent cyberattacks on U.S. government targets. Kerry said when asked about the matter during an interview on *CBS Evening News* that "It is very likely. It is not outside the realm of possibility". When pressed further on the issue, the top U.S. diplomat said, "It's very possible. I certainly write things with that awareness." The U.S. has recently blamed China for a series of high-profile cyberattacks on U.S. government and business entities in recent years. One of the most recent instances occurred earlier this year, when hackers broke into the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and stole the personal data of more than 21 million federal employees. However, China has strongly denied these allegations.⁶¹

India-US Relations

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **US committed to a permanent seat for India in a reformed UN Security Council; US offers India joint development of defence equipment; US Navy hosts a delegation of senior Indian naval officers; Defence ministry identifies aircraft carrier technology to pursue under DTTI; US seeks more clarity on India's FDI stance.**

A day after it emerged that the US, Russia and China had opposed negotiations to reform the powerful global decision making body, US ambassador to India Richard Verma on August 14 said that the US is committed to a permanent seat for India in a reformed UN Security

⁵⁸ "US Couple Charged with Trying to Join IS", *VOA News*, August 11, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-couple-charged-with-trying-to-join-islamic-state/2913885.html>

⁵⁹ "Coalition Continues Strikes Against ISIL Targets", *DoD News*, August 16, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/613725/coalition-continues-strikes-against-isil-targets>

⁶⁰ "Gallup: Majority of Americans Give Obama Low Marks on Iran Policy", *VOA News*, August 13, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/gallup-poll-majority-americans-give-obama-low-marks-on-iran-policy/2916933.html>

⁶¹ Gallo, William, "Kerry: Chinese, Russians 'Very Likely' Reading My Emails", *VOA News*, August 12, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/kerry-chinese-russians-very-likely-reading-my-emails/2914706.html>

Council. Recalling that US president Barack Obama had in 2010 and in 2015 voiced support for India's candidature for a seat in a reformed UN Security Council, Verma said the American commitment to support India's bid was explicit. The US ambassador said on the sidelines of an event hosted by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) a New Delhi based think tank that "US policy is clear, it has not changed, it supports India's bid to (be a permanent part of)...Security Council".⁶²

Ambassador Verma also said at the event that the US can help India fill a key gap in its defence architecture by collaborating with it to build the planes that are needed to safeguard the country's airspace. He added that the two countries had taken joint action against a "high-profile hacking group" operating in India. "India faces a critical shortage of frontline fighter aircraft to patrol its skies and keep its airspace safe," Ambassador Verma said, "Expanding our bilateral defence cooperation could help address that challenge."⁶³ Countries like the UK, Germany, Sweden and France, too, are looking to join hands with India to manufacture fighter aircraft as the country faces a depletion of its air strength due to modernisation delays. Referring to US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter's visit to India in June, Verma said both countries had established a new aircraft carrier working group to support India's indigenous programme.⁶⁴

Aiming at deepening India-US defence ties, the US Navy recently hosted a delegation of senior Indian naval officers for the inaugural "Joint Working Group on Aircraft Carrier Cooperation" on the US eastern coast during August 12-14. The Indian delegation led by Vice Admiral SPS Cheema, Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, visited the US Navy's state-of-the-art aircraft carrier, PCU Gerald Ford, currently under construction at Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia. The Joint Working Group on Aircraft Carrier Technology Cooperation, co-chaired by United States Navy's Programme Executive Officer for Aircraft Carriers, RADM Tom Moore, and India's Controller for Warship Production and Acquisition, VADM GS Pabby, is part of the larger India-US Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI). A US Embassy press release stated that "During the working group the US and Indian navies held candid and open discussions on various aspects of aircraft carrier development, including design, integration, test, evaluation, management and oversight of

⁶² Roche, Elizabeth, "US committed to a permanent seat for India in a reformed UN Security Council", August 15, 2015 at <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/DYmDGB3gSiaqZaKmvS2pWJ/US-committed-to-a-permanent-seat-for-India-in-a-reformed-UN.html>; George, Varghese, K., "U.S. Backs India's UNSC Claim, Says Ambassador", *The Hindu*, August 15, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/us-backs-indias-unsc-claim-says-ambassador/article7542508.ece>

⁶³ "Make in India: US Offers To Jointly Manufacture Fighter Jets with India", *The Economic Times*, August 15, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/make-in-india-us-offers-to-jointly-manufacture-fighter-jets-with-india/articleshow/48485999.cms?prtpage=1>

⁶⁴ "USA Offers To Jointly Make Fighter Jets with India", *The Indian Express*, August 15, 2015 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/usa-offers-to-jointly-make-fighter-jets-with-india/>; "US Offers Fighter Jets, Aircraft Carrier Technology to India", *Defenceworld.net*, August 15, 2015 at http://www.defenseworld.net/news/13748/US_Offers_Fighter_Jets_Aircraft_Carrier_Technology_to_India#.VeMwHswqHw; and, "India, US Kick Off Talks On Cooperation In Construction Of Aircraft Carriers", *The Times of India*, August 16, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-US-kick-off-talks-on-cooperation-in-construction-of-aircraft-carriers/articleshow/48498596.cms?prtpage=1>

carrier construction".⁶⁵ India's defence ministry identified aircraft carrier technology as one of the topics of interest to pursue under DTTI.⁶⁶

Pitching for FDI in India's multi- brand retail and e-commerce sector, the US said on August 12 that it expects to see some progress on these issues even as it sought more clarification on sectors where foreign investment caps have been hiked. US Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade Stefan M Selig said, "There has not been progress in FDI in multi-channel (brand) retail as well as web-based (e-commerce) retailing in which we hope to see more progress on". "In particular", he said, "even in those areas in which we have seen increase in investment caps, there is still hope that we can have some more clarification on what those caps will ultimately mean to the business and investors community".⁶⁷ India has received \$14.30 billion FDI from the US during April 2000 and May 2015. America accounts for 6% of India's total FDI during this period. India has recently raised the FDI limit in the defence and insurance sectors to 49% each and opened up the railway infrastructure segment. FDI ceiling in the sensitive defence sector has been hiked to 49% from 26%. As for the railways, 100% FDI has been allowed in areas such as high-speed train systems, suburban corridors and dedicated freight line projects implemented in PPP mode.⁶⁸

II. Defence Reviews

National

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **India-US combined military training exercise YUDH ABHYAS 2015 to be held in September in USA; Indian Army initiates several measures to increase intake from the Left Wing Extremism affected states.**

The India-US combined military training exercise YUDH ABHYAS 2015 will be held from September 09-23 2015 at Joint Base Lewis McChord, USA. The exercise will bring together troops of an Infantry sub unit and a Formation Headquarter of Indian Army and similar

⁶⁵ "Boost for Defence: India & US Explore Opportunities For Cooperation On Aircraft Carrier Technology", *The Economic Times*, August 15, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/boost-for-defence-india-us-explore-opportunities-for-cooperation-on-aircraft-carrier-technology/articleshow/48494684.cms?prtpage=1>

⁶⁶ "US, India Navy Meet Over Aircraft Carrier Cooperation", *The Statesman*, August 15, 2015 at <http://www.thestatesman.com/news/world/us-india-navy-meet-over-aircraft-carrier-cooperation/82794.html>

⁶⁷ "US Seeks Clarity on India's FDI Stance In E-Comm, Defence", at http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/economy/us-seeks-clarityindias-fdi-stancee-comm-defence_2476341.html

⁶⁸ "US Seeks More Clarity on India's FDI Stance In E-Commerce And Defence Sectors", *DNA News*, August 12, 2015 at <http://www.dnaindia.com/money/report-us-seeks-more-clarity-on-india-s-fdi-stance-in-e-commerce-and-defence-sectors-2113674>; "US Seeks More Clarity on India's FDI Stance in E-commerce, Defence", *The New Indian Express*, August 12, 2015 at <http://www.newindianexpress.com/business/news/US-Seeks-More-Clarity-on-Indias-FDI-Stance-in-E-commerce-Defence/2015/08/12/article2970920.ece>

participation from the US Army for the joint training. This will be the eleventh exercise in the Yudh Abhyas series, which started in 2004 under US Army Pacific partnership programme. This exercise will strengthen and broaden interoperability and cooperation between both the Armies and complement a number of other exchanges between the two forces. Significantly, over the years, the two countries have decided to progressively increase the scope and content of the combined training. The exercise will also provide a platform for the personnel of the two countries to share their experiences on Military Operations in Urban Terrain, under the UN mandate.⁶⁹

Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar has informed the Rajya Sabha that the Indian Army has initiated several steps with a view to increase intake in the Other Ranks from the Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected states which include; requesting the state governments to encourage, train and motivate candidates to join Army; making efforts to ensure maximum participation of candidates from LWE affected areas in Army Recruitment Rallies; and giving motivational lectures by Army personnel to join Army in remote areas of LWE affected States etc.⁷⁰

International

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **Nigerian air force deploys more jets to counter Boko Haram; Turkish Aerospace Industries has been awarded a contract to upgrade Turkey's F-16 Block 30 fighter aircraft.**

Reports say that the Nigerian military has deployed additional combat aircraft to the northeast of the country as part of Operation 'Lafiya Dole' (peace by force). This is the current name of the counter-insurgency campaign of the country against the militant group Boko Haram. Details about the kind of aircraft deployed is not available, however, some photographs are showing three Chengdu F-7 and two Dassault/Dornier Alpha Jets at Yola Air Base in Adamawa state, which is the only fast jet base in northeast Nigeria. F-7s and Alpha Jets have been seen at Yola in commercial satellite imagery since March 2014.⁷¹

Meanwhile, according to reports, Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) has been awarded a contract to upgrade Turkey's Lockheed Martin F-16 Block 30 Fighting Falcon fighter aircraft. Known as the F-16 Block 30 Structural Modernisation Programme, the modernization programme will include the Turkish Air Force's 35 oldest F-16s in order to increase their service life.⁷²

⁶⁹ "EX-YUDH ABHYAS 2015," *PIB*, August 15, 2015, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=126091>

⁷⁰ "Recruitment in the Army from LWE Districts," *PIB*, August 11, 2015, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=124769>

⁷¹ "Nigerian Air Force Deploys More Jets To Northeast," *IHS Jane's*, August 13, 2015, at <http://www.janes.com/article/53642/nigerian-air-force-deploys-more-jets-to-northeast>

⁷² "Turkey To Upgrade F-16 Block 30 Aircraft," *IHS Jane's*, August 17, 2015, at <http://www.janes.com/article/53688/turkey-to-upgrade-f-16-block-30-aircraft>

III. Internal Security Reviews

Jammu & Kashmir

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **Two LeT militants killed in Pulwama; Five security men injured in grenade attack in Srinagar; Six civilians killed as Pakistan continues with heavy firing along the border in Poonch district of J&K.**

Two militants of Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) were killed in a fierce gun battle with security forces on August 11 during an overnight operation in Pulwama district of south Kashmir that also left a policeman injured. The encounter triggered protests in the area with some youths pelting stones at the security forces. The deceased have been identified as Gulzar Ahmad Bhat, a resident of Tilangam and Showkat Ahmad Lone, a resident of Lelhar areas of the district. Police said the two militants were killed in the paddy fields between Ratnipora and Naru villages, where they were trapped by the search parties early morning after the gunfight resumed.⁷³

Four policemen and one CRPF personnel were injured after suspected militants launched a grenade attack outside the Khanyar Police station in Srinagar on August 12.⁷⁴ In yet another incident in Shopian district of south Kashmir, at least ten people were injured on August 13 in a mysterious explosion outside a mosque, police said. An official said that the blast took place when some namazis after offering Fajr or dawn prayers landed on an explosive device in the courtyard of the mosque in Tranz area of the south Kashmir district. During the search operation, police later recovered a live grenade from the spot, he added.⁷⁵

Six civilians were killed and at least 15 others were injured in the continuous ceasefire violation by Pakistani troops along the border in Jammu & Kashmir's Balakot region of Poonch district on August 15. Heavy mortar shelling was going on in the area and the villagers living around the border were being vacated by the army. An Army official said the Indian troops retaliated strongly, as the exchange of heavy gunfire continued intermittently in the night of August 15 after Pakistan continued to violate ceasefire for the seventh consecutive day in Jammu region with at least four violations reported in four sectors in Poonch.⁷⁶

⁷³ "2 LeT Militants Killed In Pulwama District of Kashmir", *The Economic Times*, August 11, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/2-let-militants-killed-in-pulwama-district-of-kashmir/articleshow/48440485.cms>

⁷⁴ "4 Policemen, 1 CRPF Personnel Injured In Grenade Attack Outside Police Station in J&K", *The Times of India*, August 12, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/4-policemen-1-CRPF-personnel-injured-in-grenade-attack-outside-police-station-in-JK/articleshow/48457519.cms>

⁷⁵ Dar Showkat, "10 Injured In Mysterious Explosion Outside Mosque In South Kashmir", *Greater Kashmir*, August 13, 2015 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/kashmir/6-injured-in-mysterious-explosion-outside-mosque-in-south-kashmir/194151.html>

⁷⁶ "Heavy Firing By Pakistan Continues in J&K, 6 Civilians Killed", *The Times of India*, August 16, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Heavy-firing-by-Pakistan-continues-in-JK-6-civilians-killed/articleshow/48499113.cms>

Northeast India

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **Police arrest KCP militant in Manipur; Task Force on Myanmar border recommends replacement of Assam Rifles with ITBP; No solution without sovereignty & integration: Muivah; Ultra killed, IED recovered in Kokrajhar.**

A combined team of Imphal West district police commando and 25 Assam Rifles arrested one active member of outlawed Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) from Kameng Bazar in Manipur's Imphal west district on August 8. The arrested militant was identified as Thonglensang Vaiphei (48) of Kangvai village of Manipur's Churachandpur district, a press release issued by the police said on August 11. Police recovered a demand letter of KCP organisation from the arrested militant, the release said adding that on investigation, the arrested militant revealed that he was involved in supplying arms to the outlawed organisation KCP group.⁷⁷

The Task Force constituted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to study the problems in guarding the international border with Myanmar and to suggest measures to improve it has recommended replacement of the Assam Rifles with Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). The Task Force has also recommended a series of other measures to improve border management and regulating movement of people of both the countries. The Task Force, headed by the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, RN Ravi, submitted its report with recommendations to the Prime Minister last week. Members of the Task Force visited the international border areas and held discussions with all the stakeholders, including the governments of the States sharing international border with Myanmar before finalising the report.⁷⁸

Contrary to the propaganda and apprehension that the NSCN-IM had made concessions on the two most contentious issues while signing the framework agreement with the Government of India on August 3, NSCN-IM general secretary Th. Muivah, while addressing an event to mark 69th Independence Day celebration of NSCN/GPRN on August 14 at its headquarters at Camp Hebron near Dimapur, affirmed that there will be no solution without 'integration' and also the issue of sovereignty for the Naga people has not been given up. Also, on the opposition by neighbouring States on integration of Naga-inhabited areas, he impressed upon them to respect the rights of neighbours while assuring to respect theirs. He also reiterated that the Government of India accepted the Naga issue as a political issue which

⁷⁷ "Police Arrest Militant in Manipur", *The Economic Times*, August 11, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/police-arrest-militant-in-manipur/articleshow/48442319.cms>

⁷⁸ Choudhury, R Dutta, "Call To Replace Assam Rifles with ITBP", *The Assam Tribune*, August 13, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug1315/at050>

required political solution and agreed to seek a political solution. "Let's work together in the interest of the nation," Muivah appealed reaching out to other Naga underground factions.⁷⁹

Rabi Roy (24), a hardcore KLO cadre, was killed in an encounter with a joint team of Army and Police on August 13 at Rabhapara under Fakiragram Police Station in Kokrajhar district of Assam, informed Superintendent of Police, Kokrajhar, SP Saikia. The encounter took place around 11.45 pm when security personnel launched an operation in the area, acting on a tip-off about movement of terrorists. However, other terrorists fled from the spot under the cover of darkness, he said. Police also recovered a 7-kg IED and other arms and ammunition. The SP added that the militants had planned to blast the railway track.⁸⁰

Left-wing Extremism

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **Seven Maoist cadres held in Chhattisgarh; Jharkhand: Police recovers over 400 IEDs; M.P. to raise special force to fight Naxals; Maoists kill sarpanch, deputy sarpanch in Bastar; Kolkata witnesses Maoist campaign in places across city.**

Seven Maoist cadres were arrested from separate places in the insurgency-hit Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh, a police official said in Raipur on August 10. Bijapur Additional Superintendent of Police Indira Kalyan Elesela told *PTI* that while six Maoist cadres were apprehended from the Bhairamgarh police station area, another Maoist cadre was nabbed from Gangaloor police station limits. A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) team rounded up the rebels identified as Sitaram Bhaskar (20), Budhram Weko (22), Salki Sodhi (30), Payku Mandavi (25), Pardeshi Ram (28) and Ganesh Bhaskar (20) during a combing operation in Bhairamgarh, located around 450 km away from the Chhattisgarh state capital, the official said. In a separate search operation, a joint team of the Special Task Force (STF) and state's district reserve group (DRG) arrested a Maoist cadre in uniform from Kawadgaon village forests under Gangaloor police station limits. The arrested Maoist has been identified as Punem Sukku (20). One muzzle loading gun, a grenade, two bombs, a couple of detonators, gunpowder, bags and Maoist literature were also recovered from his possession, the police official said.⁸¹

The Jharkhand police foiled a major bid of the CPI Maoist to target them when security personnel recovered around 400 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) hidden in the earth in Latehar and Palamu districts on August 9 and August 10. State police spokesperson S N Pradhan said: "250 IEDs were recovered on August 9 and 162 on August 8 in Maoist dominated forests spread across Latehar and Palamu." All the IEDs have been safely disposed

⁷⁹ Gogoi, Bhadra, "No Solution Without Integration: Muivah", *The Assam Tribune*, August 15, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug1515/oth052>

⁸⁰ "Ultra Killed, IED Recovered in Kokrajhar", *The Assam Tribune*, August 15, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug1515/at055>

⁸¹ "Seven Maoist Cadres Held in Chhattisgarh", *Business Standard*, August 10, 2015 at http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/seven-maoist-cadres-held-in-chhattisgarh-115081001226_1.html

off. A senior police official said the IEDs were planted in a way to cause police patrolling party utmost damage.⁸²

Madhya Pradesh has decided to form a Special Indian Reserve Battalion (SIRB), a force that can be deployed across the country for maintaining law and order and fighting Naxalism. A total of seven companies and 1,107 posts will be created in the special force. "The SIRB is being established in MP to combat the Naxalites. Its headquarters will be at village Kanki of Balaghat district, neighbouring Naxal-hit Chhattisgarh," state Home Minister Babulal Gaur told reporters. He said the force will be available for other states to help them in maintaining law and order related issues. "In this case, the reimbursement of the expenditure will be done by concerned state government," Mr Gaur said. The central government will provide Rs 19 crore for arms and ammunition, among others, he said.⁸³

A Sarpanch and a deputy Sarpanch were killed by the Maoists in restive Bastar region of Chhattisgarh on August 13. "Sukhdev Negi, the Sarpanch of Gudsakal village and Asaram Modiyami, the deputy Sarpanch of Bhatwada village in Bijapur district were murdered by the Maoists. Kisuram, a resident of neighbouring Chihka village, was also attacked by the ultras. He was grievously injured in the attack and has been taken to a hospital," informed Mr. SRP Kalluri, the Inspector General (IG) of Police, Bastar range. "The deceased Sarpanch and the deputy Sarpanch were killed by the Maoists on the pretext of being police informers. But the fact is that they have been killed because they contested and won elections despite Maoists' opposition," claimed the IG.⁸⁴

After almost five years of a lull period, Kolkata witnessed Maoist campaign launched in several places in the city, demanding the release of their jailed leaders. Maoist's posters appeared in crossings of Ultodanga and Narkeldanga in north Kolkata on August 14. The posters read, "Abar Megh Asche Akashe" (the cloud again looms large). The posters were written using newspaper pages that carried news of Maoists violence in different states. The statement further adds, "The red revolution would be taking place again and would bring independence in its real sense."⁸⁵

⁸² "Over 400 Can-Bombs Recovered In Maoist Den", *The Times of India*, August 10, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ranchi/Over-400-can-bombs-recovered-in-Maoist-den/articleshow/48422085.cms>

⁸³ "M.P. To Raise Special Force To Fight Naxals", *The Hindu*, August 13, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/mp-to-raise-special-force-to-fight-naxals/article7532290.ece>

⁸⁴ Dahat, Pavan, "Maoists kill Sarpanch, Deputy Sarpanch in Bastar", *The Hindu*, August 13, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/maoists-kill-sarpanch-deputy-sarpanch-in-bastar/article7534609.ece?ref=sliderNews>

⁸⁵ Das, Madhuparna, "After Five Years Of Lull Period, Kolkata Witnesses Maoist Campaign In Places Across City", *The Economic Times*, August 14, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/after-five-years-of-lull-period-kolkata-witnesses-maoist-campaign-in-places-across-city/articleshow/48480989.cms>

IV. United Nations Reviews

India and the UN

(August 10-16, 2015)

- **India likely to spell out INDCs soon; India claims criminal jurisdiction in Italian marines case; UNMOGIP observers visit LoC again; Text-based negotiations for UNSC expansion suffer setback.**

In preparing its INDCs for submission to the UNFCCC, the Minister for Environment, Prakash Javadekar, explained that the government had held consultations with various concerned stakeholders in think tank, industry and the civil society. He also underlined the fact that India's per capita emissions are one-third of the global average.⁸⁶

India has argued for criminal jurisdiction over the Italians accused of killing two Indian fishermen in its EEZ. It said that Italy had misrepresented the case to the Hamburg-based Tribunal.⁸⁷

In a repeat of its reaction to the 'unprovoked firing' by India's border guarding forces in July, Pakistan raised the issue of the August 4 firing with the UNMOGIP.⁸⁸ UNMOGIP observers visited the site of the firing along the Sialkot border on August 12, 2015.⁸⁹

A text prepared under the aegis of the Inter-Governmental Negotiations for Security Council Reform was tabled in the General Assembly, only to be rejected by the US, Russia and China. The denial of the three countries to contribute to the text in anyway came as setback for India, since it has supported text-based negotiations for reform of the Council.⁹⁰

While the US favours modest expansion without dilution of veto powers of the existing members, China would like small and medium sized countries represented in the Council and Russia would not like any dilution of the powers of the P5. India however is hoping to get the required 2/3rd support in the General Assembly for seeing through a proposal to seek reform

⁸⁶ "India Coordinating With Nations for Equitable, Balanced", *Business Standard*, August 11, 2015, at http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/india-coordinating-with-nations-for-equitable-balanced-115081101377_1.html

⁸⁷ "Marines Case: Italian Govt Distorting Reality, India Tells International Tribunal", *The Indian Express*, August 12, 2015, at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/india-seeks-rejection-of-italys-plea-for-handing-over-marines/>

⁸⁸ "Pakistan Summons Indian Envoy Over Death Of Civilian from LoC Firing", *Dawn*, August 11, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1199833>

⁸⁹ "United Nations Observers Visit Indo-Pak Border Areas Hit By Shelling", *DNA News*, August 12, 2015, at <http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report-united-nations-observers-visit-indo-pak-border-areas-hit-by-shelling-2113563>

⁹⁰ "India Bid For Permanent Seat Suffers Blow as US, Russia, China Oppose UNSC Reform Talks", *The Economic Times*, August 12, 2015, at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-08-12/news/65490331_1_un-askokumar-mukerji-permanent-member-reform-process

of the Council, after which it would stake its claim.⁹¹ The US and Russian positions however do not contradict their pledged support for a permanent seat for India. Moreover, the US clearly favours country-specific expansion rather than having criteria for eligibility.⁹²

⁹¹ "As U.S. Changes Tack, India Redraws UNSC Bid", *The Hindu*, August 13, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/as-us-changes-tack-india-redraws-uns-c-bid/article7537037.ece>

⁹² "India Reviews UNSC Strategy To Fend Off P-5 Naysayers", *Hindustan Times*, August 15, 2015, at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-reviews-uns-c-strategy-to-fend-off-p-5-naysayers/article1-1380209.aspx>