

# THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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## I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

### A. SOUTH ASIA

#### AFGHANISTAN

- **President Karzai's NATO pullout plan praised by the US; Taliban abducts group of future Afghan police recruits**

The United States has welcomed President Karzai's announcement that Afghan forces will take over the charge of security in seven areas of the country from July. That is the time when the first step in a long process of withdrawal of foreign troops will begin.<sup>1</sup> The regions named in the plan are Panjshir, Kabul, Bamiyan, Herat, Mazar I Sharif, Mehtarlam and Lashkargah in Helmand province.<sup>2</sup>

However, Taliban insurgents have abducted a group of would be Afghan police recruits in Kunar province of North East Afghanistan. The group was ambushed when they had gone to sign up for recruitment for security forces. A negotiation is being by village elders with the Taliban to free the abducted men.<sup>3</sup>

#### PAKISTAN

- **Pakistan PM Gilani solicits talk way forward in India-Pakistan relations; World Bank approves \$400 million for development of education in Pakistan**

Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani has said that his government would like to take Pakistan's relation with India forward through talks on resolution of all impending issues peacefully. This comes on the wake of a meeting scheduled between the interior secretaries of respective countries which is scheduled to be held in New Delhi next week.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "US welcomes Karzai's Nato pullout plan from Afghanistan", *BBC*, March 23 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12827978>

<sup>2</sup> "Karzai announces Afghan forces ready to take over some provinces", *Yahoo News*, March 22, 2011 at [http://news.yahoo.com/s/csm/20110322/wl\\_csm/371483](http://news.yahoo.com/s/csm/20110322/wl_csm/371483)

<sup>3</sup> "Taliban seize group of would-be Afghan police recruits", *BBC*, March 27 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12874692>

<sup>4</sup> "Talks only way forward between Pak, India: Gilani", *Dawn*, March 23 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/03/23/talks-only-way-forward-between-pak-india-gilani.html>

Meanwhile, reports noted that the World Bank has approved a loan of \$400 million for up liftmen of collapsing education system in Pakistan. The World Bank said in a statement that \$300 million would go for projects at university level and \$50 million each for education reforms at provincial level. It would be worth noting that the education system is the worst hit in the country where less than 1.5 % of GDP is invested by the government.<sup>5</sup>

## BANGLADESH

- **Bangladesh celebrated its 41<sup>st</sup> Independence Day and National Day; Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck is on five days visit to Bangladesh to attend the 41<sup>st</sup> Independence and National Day; IMF presents its report on Bangladesh economy; Bangladesh urged restraint in the implementation of the UNSC action on Libya; UNICEF Report: Reduction in maternal mortality rate in Bangladesh; Governor of Tripura meets Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina; Japan to develop fishery in rural Bangladesh; Director General level talks held between drug control nodal agencies of Bangladesh and India; Reports: Bangladesh's overall FDI inflow rose by 66.79 per cent during the January-June period of 2010**

Bangladesh observed its 41st Independence and National Day on March 26, 2011.<sup>6</sup> Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck was on a five day visit to Bangladesh to attend the celebration of the 41<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Bangladesh independence at the invitation of President Zillur Rahman.<sup>7</sup> Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina met with Bhutanese King Wangchuck on March 25, 2011 and discussed regional cooperation with regards to generation of electricity and management of water of common rivers for mutual benefit. Two leaders also discussed a new project for generating hydro-power through joint collaboration between Bangladesh, Bhutan and India.<sup>8</sup> Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Dipu Moni also called on Bhutanese King at Hotel Sonargaon in Dhaka on March 25, 2011.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "World Bank approves \$400m for Pakistan education sector", *Dawn*, March 25 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/03/25/wb-approves-400m-to-support-education-development-in-pakistan.html>

<sup>6</sup> "Independence Day today", *The Financial Express*, VOL 18 NO March 26 2011 at [http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news\\_id=130460&date=2011-03-26](http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=130460&date=2011-03-26)

<sup>7</sup> "Bhutanese king due today", *The Daily Star*, March 24, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=178968>.

<sup>8</sup> "PM meets Bhutan king", *The Daily Star*, March 26, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=179141>

<sup>9</sup> "Warm reception to King Wangchuck", *The Financial Express*, VOL 18 NO -135, March 25 2011 at [http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news\\_id=130444&date=2011-03-25](http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=130444&date=2011-03-25).

Reports noted that an IMF mission after a discussion on \$1 billion credit concluded its ten day visit to Bangladesh and presented their observations to the government of Bangladesh in a report. The IMF has said the macroeconomic and financial pressure on Bangladesh economy has intensified since December 2010. The IMF has noted that it has recommended some steps including a hike in petroleum prices to reduce subsidy burden. The IMF also criticised Bangladesh Bank's intervention in exchange rate and said the Bangladesh Bank had violated an article of the IMF agreement. However the IMF suggested in its report that the monetary policy should be further tightened to slow credit growth and reduce inflation pressures with increased interest rate flexibility.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, Bangladesh has welcomed the fact that the UNSC resolution 1973 aims at protecting civilians and civilian populated areas under threat and excludes categorically an occupation force. However, it has urged restraint in the implementation of the UN Security Council Action on Libya “so that military action is resorted to only when absolutely essential and solely for neutralising military targets.”<sup>11</sup>

According to a UNICEF report, maternal mortality rate in Bangladesh has reduced by 40 percent during the last 10 years due to better health service and dissemination of proper information.<sup>12</sup>

Reports noted that Governor of Indian State of Tripura, Dr DY Patil paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Gonobhaban on March 21. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral issues, including trade between the two neighboring countries especially with Tripura.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, Tamotsu Shinotsuka, Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh, and a representative of OISCA-IDB (JAPAN) signed a US \$ 97,122 grant contract for a development project for fishery in rural Bangladesh through Grant Assistance for Grass Roots Human Security Projects (GGHSP) at Japan embassy in Dhaka.<sup>14</sup>

Reports noted that Director General level talks between drug control nodal agencies of Bangladesh and India was held in Dhaka on March 23-24. Director General of Department of Narcotics Control Khandaker Mohammad Ali led a 15-

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<sup>10</sup> “Economy under stress: IMF”, *The Daily Star*, March 22, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=178631>

<sup>11</sup> “Dhaka for restraint in action on Libya”, *The Daily Star*, March 22, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=178700>

<sup>12</sup> “Maternal Mortality Rate Reduces by 40pc” Says UNICEF, *The Daily Star*, March 22, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=178702>

<sup>13</sup> “Tripura governor calls on PM”, *The Daily Star*, March 22, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=178708>

<sup>14</sup> “Japan grant for fishery dev”, *The Daily Star*, March 22, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=178712>

member Bangladesh delegation while his counterpart Director General of Narcotics Control Bureau OPS Malik led an 11-member Indian delegation.<sup>15</sup>

In other developments, according to the latest survey by Bangladesh Bank, Bangladesh's overall FDI (foreign direct investment) inflow rose by US\$ 228.58 million or 66.79 per cent, to \$570.80 million during the January-June period of 2010 over the corresponding period of 2009 due mainly to significant increase of equity capital inflow.<sup>16</sup>

## SRI LANKA

- **Meeting between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lankan fishermen ends inconclusively; Sri Lankan Government did not approve air strikes on Libya since they cause suffering to the people of that country; Sri Lankan Embassy in Libya shifted to Cairo; Sri Lanka pledges US\$ 1 million to Japan in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake and tsunami; Radiation checks at the Port of Colombo; Japan provides a concessionary loan of Rs 44 bn to Sri Lanka; The ICRC has closes its office in Vavuniya; Norochchilai Coal Power Plant commissioned; Erik Solheim has met representatives of the Tamil diaspora in Oslo**

Reports noted that the meeting between a delegation of Tamil Nadu fishermen and the Sri Lankan fishermen ended inconclusively on March 22, 2011. During the meeting, the Indian fishermen asked Sri Lanka's Northern fishermen to give them more time to stop fishing in Lanka's territorial waters. The Indian fishermen said the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) -- the fisheries development arm of the Indian government was training them in tuna fishing. Once the training was completed, the fishermen from Pudukottai, Ramanathapuram, Rameswaram and Nagapattinam, would engage in deep-sea fishing and as such saw no need to fish in Sri Lankan waters.<sup>17</sup>

In his speech during the debate on the military attack on Libya, the External Affairs Minister of Sri Lanka, Prof Peiris said that Sri Lankan Government did not approve air strikes on Libya since they cause suffering to the people of that country. Prof. Peiris said that the fundamental objective of the UN Security Council resolution was to protect civilian lives, and any action that went beyond

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<sup>15</sup> "Dhaka, Delhi talks begin to control drug trafficking", *The Daily Star*, March 24, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=178960>

<sup>16</sup> "FDI inflow rises by 66.79pc in six months", *The Financial Express*, VOL 18 NO -135 March 25 2011 at [http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news\\_id=130439&date=2011-03-25](http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=130439&date=2011-03-25)

<sup>17</sup> "'Allow us to live': Northern fishermen tell Tamil Nadu", *The Daily Mirror*, March 24, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/39116.html>

its mandate was unwarranted.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, according to the External Affairs Ministry, operations of the Sri Lankan embassy in Libya have been shifted to Cairo and the Ambassador serving in Libya is travelling back to Sri Lanka.<sup>19</sup>

Reports noted that Sri Lanka has pledged US\$ 1 million to Japan in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake and tsunami. In parallel to the donation, Sri Lanka also offered to dispatch a team of medical professionals to help care for those who have been affected by the disaster along with a trained search and rescue team comprising armed forces personnel. The Sri Lankan government is ready to extend further assistance to the people of Japan if necessary.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, Sri Lankan tea exporters have given three million tea bags to be sent to those who were affected by the tsunami and earthquake that in Japan.<sup>21</sup> However, Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) has taken immediate action to subject all cargo arriving from Japan, in and around the affected areas, to radiation checks at the Port of Colombo.<sup>22</sup>

Japanese Ambassador to Sri Lanka Kunio Takahashi and Dr. P. B. Jayasundera, Secretary, Ministry of Finance in Sri Lankan government signed the Exchange of Notes for a Japanese concessionary loan of Rs 44 billion. The agreement was also signed by Akira Shimura, Senior Representative of JICA on behalf of JICA. This loan package is provided annually by Government of Japan and this is the 41st Yen Loan Package and it would support the financing of two projects including Greater Colombo Urban Transport Development Phase 2 (II) and Vavuniya Kilinochchi Transmission Line Project (II).<sup>23</sup>

According to reports, the ICRC has closed its office in Vavuniya, the last ICRC office still active in the north, after the Sri Lankan government requested the organization to run its operations exclusively from Colombo.<sup>24</sup> However, Sri Lanka's first ever coal power plant at Norochcholai constructed with a Chinese

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<sup>18</sup> "Govt. disapproves of air strikes on Libya – GLP", *The Daily Mirror*, March 24, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/front-page-news/39136.html>

<sup>19</sup> Silva, Dianne, "SL embassy moved to Cairo", *The Daily Mirror*, March 23, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/front-page-news/39053.html>

<sup>20</sup> Bandara, Kelum and Perera, Yohan, "Sri Lanka offers more help to Japan", *The Daily Mirror*, March 23, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/39047.html>.

<sup>21</sup> "Three million tea bags sent to Japan", *The Daily Mirror*, March 22, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/38919.html>.

<sup>22</sup> Aranze, Janith, "SLPA Checks Japanese Cargo For Radiation", *The Sunday Leader*, March 27, 2011 at <http://www.thesundayleader.lk/2011/03/27/slpa-checks-japanese-cargo-for-radiation/>,

<sup>23</sup> "Notes signed for Rs. 44 bn Japanese loan", *The Daily Mirror*, March 23, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/39048.html>.

<sup>24</sup> "ICRC shuts down last office outside Colombo", *The Daily Mirror*, March 26, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/39402.html>.

grant of US\$455 million and a Sri Lankan government commitment of Rs.5.3 billion was commissioned by President Mahinda Rajapaksa on March 22.<sup>25</sup>

In other developments, Norwegian Minister of International Development and former special peace envoy Erik Solheim met with representatives of the Tamil diaspora in Oslo. During the meeting, minister Solheim listened to the input from the Tamil groups and advised them to promote development and a political solution in Sri Lanka by engaging in dialogue with the Government of Sri Lanka.<sup>26</sup>

## MALDIVES

- **Maldives welcomes International Coalition's enforcement of UNSC Resolution 1973; High Commissioner of Singapore to the Maldives meets with Nasheed; Maritime security coordinating committee formed to formulate Maldives maritime security policy; President attended the reception hosted by High Commissioner of Pakistan to the Maldives to mark the 71st anniversary of Pakistan's National Day; The Maldivian Foreign Ministry denies to have received any report of a Maldivian arrested in a terrorist activity during the ICC World Cup 2011**

The Maldives has welcomed the international coalition's enforcement of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, and hopes that the resolution can be enforced with minimum civilian casualties.<sup>27</sup>

High Commissioner of Singapore to the Maldives Dr Chua Yong Hai met President Mohamed Nasheed and discussed further cooperation between the Maldives and Singapore.<sup>28</sup>

Reports noted that office of the National Security Advisor of Maldives has formed Maritime Security Coordinating Committee with representation from 15 relevant government authorities as part of the formulation of a national maritime security policy within the National Security Framework. The committee held its first meeting on March 24 at the President's Office. Discussions at the first meeting of the committee were focused on the concept of the maritime security

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<sup>25</sup> A Jayasekera, Sandun, "N'cholai coal power plant to be commissioned today", *The Daily Mirror*, March 22, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/front-page-news/38940.html>

<sup>26</sup> "Solheim Meets Diaspora", *The Sunday Leader*, March 27, 2011 at <http://www.thesundayleader.lk/2011/03/27/solheim-meets-diaspora/>

<sup>27</sup> "Maldives Welcomes Enforcement of UNSC Resolution 1973", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, March 21, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=4974>

<sup>28</sup> "Singapore High Commissioner visits Nasheed", *Minivan News*, March 21, 2011 at <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief/page/2>

suitable for the Maldives' maritime domain and how the committee would work to formulate its action plans.<sup>29</sup>

Meanwhile, President Mohamed Nasheed attended the reception hosted by High Commissioner of Pakistan to the Maldives Akhtar Ali Sulehri to mark the 71st anniversary of Pakistan's National Day. In his address, at the reception held at Dharubaaruge President underscored that Pakistan could lead the Islamic world in many areas stating that "many other Islamic countries are just realizing the aspirations of Pakistani leaders 71 years ago."<sup>30</sup>

In other developments, according to media reports, the terrorist from a seven-member terrorist group, who was arrested in Colombo with cooperation and help from several countries across South Asia including Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, for planning an attack on cricketers during the ICC World Cup 2011, is of Maldivian origin. However, the Maldivian Foreign Ministry said that no reports of a Maldivian arrested in a terrorist activity during the ICC World Cup 2011 have been received so far.<sup>31</sup>

## B. EAST ASIA

### CHINA

- **Chen Bingde holds extensive talks with Nepalese leadership; Senior Israeli military official visits China; Ma Xiaotian attends the 4<sup>th</sup> Defense and Security Consultation with Indonesia; Xiaotian also attends 1st Jakarta International Defense Dialogue; PLA's medical team participates in an ARF disaster relief exercise; China publishes Global Nuclear Posture Review; Construction of modern barracks stressed**

Reports noted that last week, Chen Bingde, Chief of General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), visited Nepal for an official 3-day visit He paid this visit at the invitation of General Chhatra Man Singh Gurung, Chief of Army Staff for the Nepalese Army.<sup>32</sup> During his visit, he held discussions with

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<sup>29</sup> "Maritime Security Policy Coordinating Committee Formed; Holds First Meeting", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, March 24, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5003>

<sup>30</sup> "President Nasheed Officiates Pakistan National Day Reception", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, March 24, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=4998>

<sup>31</sup> "'Maldivian' arrested for planning terrorist attack during Cricket World Cup", *Haveeru*, March 26, 2011 at <http://www.haveeru.com.mv/english/details/35542>

<sup>32</sup> "Senior PLA official starts visit to Nepal", *PLA Daily* (Online), 24 March 2011, [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/24/content\\_4409501.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/24/content_4409501.htm)

Nepalese senior political and military leadership.<sup>33</sup> He met the Nepalese President Ram Baran Yadav. The President, on this occasion, said that Nepal and China were neighbors, and the peoples of the two countries had a long history of exchanges. Nepal regards China as a reliable friend and feels gratitude for the understanding and support of the Chinese government, the Chinese people and the Chinese PLA to the social transformation in Nepal, and hopes to work with China to strengthen personnel exchanges at all levels, carry out pragmatic cooperation in a wider range as well as to promote the development of Sino-Nepalese friendly cooperative relations.<sup>34</sup>

Chen Bingde also met with Nepalese Prime Minister Jhulanath Khanal. On this occasion, Khanal said that China was an important neighbor of Nepal, and since the establishment of diplomatic ties, the two countries had witnessed constantly deepened relations, continuously expanded cooperation and increasingly enhanced military exchanges. He also reiterated that the Nepalese side felt sincere thanks for the selfless help offered by the Chinese side to the economic and social development of Nepal for a long time, and appreciated China's understanding and support to Nepal during its peace process and the process of economic and social transformation.<sup>35</sup>

According to reports Amir Eshel, Planning Director of the General Staff Headquarters of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) visited China last week. During the visit, he met Lt. Gen. Wei Fenghe, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Beijing on 21 March. On this occasion, Wei Fenghe said that the peoples of China and Israel enjoyed profound traditional friendship. He reiterated that since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Israel, the two countries had seen a sustained and healthy development of bilateral relations.<sup>36</sup>

Reports noted that the 4<sup>th</sup> Defense and Security Consultation between Chinese and Indonesian ministries was held in Jakarta on 22 March. Ma Xiaotian, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), and Indonesian Deputy Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin co-chaired the consultation. During the consultation, the two sides had an in-depth exchange of views on the regional security situations and bilateral defense cooperation

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<sup>33</sup> "Chen Bingde holds talks with Nepalese counterpart", *PLA Daily* (Online), 24 March 2011, [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/24/content\\_4409906.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/24/content_4409906.htm)

<sup>34</sup> "Nepalese president meets Chen Bingde", *PLA Daily* (Online), 25 March 2011, [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/25/content\\_4410654.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/25/content_4410654.htm)

<sup>35</sup> "Nepalese prime minister meets Chen Bingde", *PLA Daily* (Online), 25 March 2011, [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/25/content\\_4410656.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/25/content_4410656.htm)

<sup>36</sup> "Wei Fenghe meets Israeli guest", *PLA Daily* (Online), 22 March 2011, [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/22/content\\_4408474.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/22/content_4408474.htm)

among other issues of common concern.<sup>37</sup> On this occasion, Ma Xiaotian also attended the 1st Jakarta International Defense Dialogue (JIDD) and delivered a keynote speech entitled “Strengthening mutual trust and cooperation for Asia-Pacific harmony”. This three-day-long dialogue organized by the Indonesian Ministry of Defense aims at promoting dialogue in the fields of defense and security and promotes regional peace and stability. More than 1,000 representatives including defense ministers and chiefs of general staff from 30-odd countries attended this dialogue where they discussed the world’s current security situation and the security cooperation measures for reinforcement of counter-terrorism, disaster relief and peacekeeping operations.<sup>38</sup>

According to reports, recently, a 15-member medical team Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), from the Health Department of the General Logistics Department and the No. 302 Hospital of the PLA, participated in the 7-day disaster relief exercise of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Reports noted that that this was the first time for the PLA medical troops to take part in the international multilateral joint operation and it was also the maiden exercise jointly staged by the PLA medical troops with their counterparts from the member countries of the ARF. The medical team returned to the Nanyuan Airport in Beijing on 20 March.<sup>39</sup>

Meanwhile, China has recently, released its first report on global nuclear posture review in Beijing. The Research Center for Arms Control and International Security under the China Institute of International Studies has released this report. The report gives a briefing on and review of global nuclear events over the past year. This is the first report on the global nuclear posture review publicly released by a Chinese academic research institute.<sup>40</sup>

In other developments, the General Staff Headquarters, General Political Department, General Logistics Department and General Armaments Department of the PLA have recently submitted the Opinions on Speeding up the Construction of Modern Barracks to Central Military Commission (CMC). The Opinions stresses that by 2020, the PLA will basically realize systemized, standardized and regularized construction and management of barracks, so as to

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<sup>37</sup> “4th defense and security consultation between Chinese and Indonesian ministries held in Jakarta”, *PLA Daily* (Online), 23 March 2011, [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/23/content\\_4409095.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/23/content_4409095.htm)

<sup>38</sup> “Ma Xiaotian attends 1st Jakarta International Defense Dialogue”, *PLA Daily* (Online), 25 March 2011, [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/25/content\\_4410339.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/25/content_4410339.htm)

<sup>39</sup> “PLA medical team for ARF disaster relief exercise returns home”, *PLA Daily* (Online), 22 March 2011, [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/22/content\\_4408471.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/22/content_4408471.htm)

<sup>40</sup> “China releases first report on global nuclear posture review”, *PLA Daily* (Online), 23 March 2011, [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/23/content\\_4409096.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/23/content_4409096.htm)

build up integrated support capacity of barracks that is able to meet the needs of PLA troops in combat preparedness, military training, working and living.<sup>41</sup>

## SOUTHEAST ASIA

- **Singapore- Indian receives Padma Shri; China becomes second largest trade partner of Thailand; Vietnam trade deficit with China rises; India-Singapore armies hold joint defence exercise; Brunei to host ASEAN energy meeting in September 2011; Indonesia agrees to refer to Taiwan as 'Chinese Taipei; The Philippines steps up presence in South China Sea**

A businessman of international repute, Sat Pal Khattar has become the first Singapore- Indian to be honoured with the Padma Shri. Khattar chairs the Singapore-India Partnership Foundation. He is also a member of the City-State's presidential panel on minority rights, besides being an advisor to the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.<sup>42</sup>

According to the China-ASEAN Expo Secretariat, China has become Thailand's second largest trade partner, after Japan. China is not only the second largest export market for Thailand, but also the second largest source of imports. According to the reports, the bilateral trade in 2010, between Thailand and China, has gone up more than 30 percent from 2009. In 2010, the bilateral trade between the two countries was US\$ 46 billion.<sup>43</sup>

According to the Vietnamese official sources, Vietnam's trade deficit with China has surged eight-fold since 2002 to US\$ 12.7 billion in 2010, or 102 percent of the total trade deficit. As is the case with other trade partners of China, most of the items that Vietnam imports belong to the low-value goods such as; apparels, toys, footwear, fruits and vegetables. Mobile phones, however, are amongst the largest imported items.<sup>44</sup>

Reports noted that the Indian and Singapore army troops are holding a month-long joint exercise in Madhya Pradesh state of India. The exercise, which

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<sup>41</sup> "PLA to accelerate construction of modern barracks", *PLA Daily* (Online), 24 March 2011, [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/24/content\\_4409905.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/24/content_4409905.htm)

<sup>42</sup> "Singapore-Indian Sat Pal Khattar to receive Padma Shri today", *The Hindu*, 23 March, 2011 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article1565375.ece>

<sup>43</sup> "China becomes Thailand's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest trade partner", *People's Daily Online*, 23 March, 2011, <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/98649/7329282.html>

<sup>44</sup> "Vietnam trade deficit with China surges", *Vietnam Net*, 26 March, 2011, <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/en/business/6353/vietnam-trade-deficit-with-china-surges.html>

involves war games like the 'battle tank scenario' was witnessed by the Indian Army chief General V.K. Singh also, who visited the venue on March 25 and 26.<sup>45</sup>

According to reports, 29<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministers' meeting on Energy will be hosted by Brunei Darussalam in September 2011. The proposed theme of the meeting is 'ASEAN connectivity', which, if adopted, would highlight ASEAN Energy ministers' agenda on regional initiative with support of AMEM to help expedite the ASEAN master plan on energy.<sup>46</sup>

Meanwhile, reports noted that on 24 March, 2011, Taiwan scored a diplomatic gain after it successfully convinced Indonesian government to change the reference to Taiwan as 'Chinese Taipei'. Taiwan had been referred to as 'Taiwan, PRC' in the official documents and websites.<sup>47</sup>

In other developments in the region, the Philippines has increased its air and naval patrolling and is planning to upgrade an airstrip in South China Sea to strengthen its claims on disputed islands of South China Sea. The Philippine army is planning a capability upgrade programme worth US \$ 233 million, which, according to the government is an attempt to safeguard the interests of the country in the South China Sea.<sup>48</sup>

## JAPAN

- **Japan asks people within 30 km of nuke plant to voluntarily leave; Japanese firms pool resources to aid quake victims; Japan urges Gaddafi to stop violence and consider resignation; South Korea's quake donation campaign to Japan exceeds \$52 million; China, Japan and South Korea agree on disaster management**

Reports noted that the Japanese government has encouraged people living within 30 kilometers of the troubled nuclear plant in Fukushima Prefecture to voluntarily leave. This has been suggested with respect to increasing concerns over access to daily necessities rather than resident safety.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> "India, Singapore troops hold joint exercise", *Sify News*, 26 March 2011, <http://www.sify.com/news/india-singapore-troops-hold-joint-exercise-news-national-ld0tOmdjjjd.html>

<sup>46</sup> "Brunei to host ASEAN Energy Meeting in Sept", 26 March, 2011, <http://www.brudirect.com/index.php/2011032543447/Local-News/brunei-to-host-asean-energy-meeting-in-sept.html>

<sup>47</sup> "Indonesia agrees to change Taiwan's designation", *Taipei Times*, 25 March, 2011, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2011/03/25/2003499056>

<sup>48</sup> "Philippines steps up presence in South China Sea", *Strait Times*, 28 March, 2011, [http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/SEAsia/Story/STIStory\\_650268.html](http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/SEAsia/Story/STIStory_650268.html)

<sup>49</sup> "Gov't asks people within 30 km of nuke plant to voluntarily leave" *Kyodo News*, March 25, 2011 at [http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9M61C8O0&show\\_article=1](http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9M61C8O0&show_article=1)

On the other hand, various Industrial organizations and individual firms have taken steps to help people affected by the massive March 11 quake and ensuing tsunami. They have been working towards transporting relief supplies to stricken areas and boosting output of products in short supply.<sup>50</sup> Meanwhile there are reports that the South Koreans have raised 58.1 billion won (about \$52 million) in public donations for victims of Japan's massive earthquake and tsunami.<sup>51</sup>

On the international front, the Japanese Foreign Minister Takeaki Matsumoto has said that Japan is urging Libya to immediately stop violence against its civilians and suggested leader Muammar Gaddafi consider voluntarily stepping down. "A person who is effectively responsible for the government that has been attacking its own citizens will be required to consider what steps he should take," Matsumoto said at a press conference.<sup>52</sup>

On the regional front, the foreign ministers of Japan, China and South Korea have been discussing disaster management and nuclear-power safety in Kyoto, Japan. These talks are specifically aimed at boosting the cooperation on the regional front in responding to regional disasters.<sup>53</sup>

### C. CENTRAL ASIA & RUSSIA

#### CENTRAL ASIA

- **Russia, United States to combat Central Asian drug trafficking; SCO to hold anti-terror drills in China; Kazakhstan to set up independent monitoring bodies to prevent torture; Kazakhstan legalizes the concept of 'nationalization'; Kazakh-Japan to supply rare earth metals; OSCE criticizes Kazakh election process; Russia hikes taxes on energy exports to Tajikistan; Pakistani PM Gilani visits in Uzbekistan**

Reports noted that Russia and the United States are planning joint operations to crack down on drug trafficking in Central Asia. Russian Anti-drugs Chief Viktor Ivanov speaking at a Drug Trafficking Working Group meeting of the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission said that the revenue from the sale of

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<sup>50</sup> "Firms pool resources to aid quake victims" *The Yomiuri Shimibun*, March 24, 2011 at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T110323003622.htm>

<sup>51</sup> "S. Korea's quake donation campaign to Japan exceeds \$52 million+" *Associated Press*, March 22, 2011 at [http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9M464480&show\\_article=1](http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9M464480&show_article=1)

<sup>52</sup> "Japan urges Gaddafi to stop violence, consider resignation" *Associated Press*, March 22, 2011 at <http://newsonjapan.com/html/newsdesk/article/88278.php>

<sup>53</sup> "China, Japan and South Korea agree on disaster management" *Xinhua*, March 21, 2011 at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/video/2011-03/21/c\\_13790031.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/video/2011-03/21/c_13790031.htm)

narcotics “is being pumped into organized crime in the region”.<sup>54</sup> Both countries are working on a strategy of joint operations to destroy the trade at its source, which are drug laboratories in Afghanistan.<sup>55</sup>

However, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) announced during a meeting in Tashkent on 25<sup>th</sup> March that it will hold anti-terrorism drills in China in May this year. The meeting included SCO officials from member states Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Russia, China and Kyrgyzstan. The anti-terror drills aim to improve the capacity of member states’ forces in combating terrorism while strengthening cooperation between the organization and member states.<sup>56</sup>

Meanwhile, Kazakhstan’s authorities, in a conference, sponsored by the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE), in Astana, have decided to set up independent monitoring bodies to prevent torture in Central Asia’s largest country. The plan to establish a National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) on torture in Kazakhstan is in accord with the government’s responsibilities as a 2008 signee of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture.<sup>57</sup> Kazakhstan has legalized the concept of ‘nationalization’ as a step toward establishing a transparent investment climate wherein the government will only resort to nationalizing private property in extreme situations. Economy Minister Zhanar Aitzhanova said that under the new law, authorities can resort to nationalization only if there were “a threat to national security”.<sup>58</sup> Kazakh firm Summit Atom Rare Earth Company, a joint venture between the Kazakh state-owned firm Kazatomprom and Japanese trader Sumitomo Corp, will produce 1,500 tons of rare earth metals next year to supply the global market with materials for electronics. This announcement follows after China decided to scale back exports of the valuable commodity to meet its domestic demand.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> ‘Russia, U.S. prepare joint operations to combat Central Asian drug trafficking, *Central Asia Newswire*, March 24, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Region/Russia-US-prepare-jointnbsoperations-to-combat-Central-Asian-drug-trafficking/viewstory.aspx?id=3634>

<sup>55</sup> -ibid-

<sup>56</sup> ‘Shanghai Pact to hold anti-terror drills in China in May, *Central Asia Newswire*, March 25, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Region/Shanghai-Pact-to-hold-anti-terror-drills-in-China-in-May/viewstory.aspx?id=3645>

<sup>57</sup> ‘Kazakh government hosts torture prevention conference, *Central Asia Newswire*, March 25, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Kazakh-governmentnbsphosts-torture-prevention-conference/viewstory.aspx?id=3644>

<sup>58</sup> ‘Kazakhstan clarifies laws on nationalization of private property, *Central Asia Newswire*, March 25, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Kazakhstan-clarifies-laws-onnbspnationalization-of-private-property/viewstory.aspx?id=3642>

<sup>59</sup> ‘Kazakh-Japanese joint venture to supply rare earth metals, *Central Asia Newswire*, March 24, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Kazakh-Japanese-joint-venture-to-supply-rare-earth-metals/viewstory.aspx?id=3627>

Reports noted that in the run-up to Kazakhstan's Presidential election on April 3, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) criticized the election process in the country. The OSCE, Europe's leading vote-monitoring group, criticized the country for failing to implement key recommendations it had made after previous elections, none of which it has ever judged free and fair. Its interim report states that previous OSCE recommendations for improving the legal framework remain unaddressed; the mandatory Kazakh language test, which all candidates have to pass, lacked any clear criteria for success, while the checking of signatures supporting candidates wasn't "transparent". It also criticized the restrictions imposed on candidates holding rallies, and the "harsh penalties" faced by journalists under the country's stringent defamation laws.<sup>60</sup>

According to reports, Russia has decided to ramp up export duties on crude oil and related products sold to Tajikistan which depends on the former for 90% of its energy needs. The tax hike slaps a 5.3% increase in the cost of oil products exported to Tajikistan which earlier enjoyed tariff-free Russian energy imports from 1995 until Moscow applied the tax in May 2010. It is believed that this move is to let Russia to set up a military base in the country for offering the waiver.<sup>61</sup>

In other developments in the region, reports noted that Pakistani Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani was in Uzbekistan with a high-power delegation on the first of a two-day visit to meet the Uzbek leadership and to strengthen bilateral ties. Uzbekistan and Pakistan agreed to formalize an extradition treaty between their countries.<sup>62</sup> PM Gilani stated, "Both Pakistan and Uzbekistan face common threats and challenges from extremism and have a stake in Afghanistan, where the deteriorating security situation for the past three decades has destabilized the entire region."<sup>63</sup> The two sides signed several agreements ranging from shipment of goods to animal husbandry and cooperation in veterinary sciences. The Uzbek Minister for Economics Ravshan Gulomov ratified an agreement with his counterpart Hina Rabbani Khar on the transit of goods which permits bilateral trade partners to transport goods through a multimodal transport system that is being built between the two countries.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> 'Kazakhstan poll slammed by election observers, *Central Asia Newswire*, March 25, 2011 at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/kazakhstan/8405553/Kazakhstan-poll-slammed-by-election-observers.html>

<sup>61</sup> 'Moscow increases taxes on fuel to Tajikistan, *Central Asia Newswire*, March 25, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Tajikistan/Moscownbspincreases-taxes-onnbspfuel-to-Tajikistan/viewstory.aspx?id=3638>

<sup>62</sup> 'Uzbekistan, Pakistan to formalize extradition treaty, *Central Asia Newswire*, March 25, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Uzbekistan/Uzbekistan-Pakistan-to-formalize-extradition-treaty/viewstory.aspx?id=3646>

<sup>63</sup> -ibid-

<sup>64</sup> "Uzbek, Pakistani prime ministers sign wide-ranging agreements in Tashkent", *Central Asia Newswire*, March 24, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Uzbekistan/Uzbek-Pakistani-prime-ministers-sign-wide-ranging-agreements-in-Tashkent/viewstory.aspx?id=3633>

## RUSSIA

- **Russia and the United States to begin data exchange under New START Treaty; President Medvedev calls PM Putin's remarks on Libya "unacceptable"; Russia says NATO not doing enough to intercept Afghan drugs trade; Prime Minister Putin discusses the South Stream project in Slovenia; Putin signs agreements on tourism, transportation and science in during his second visit to Serbia; Reports: Russia to invest US 100 billion in defence industry till 2020; Russia to double the production of all ballistic missile systems; Russia-US talks on tactical nuclear arms cuts will take time; Reports: Russia-China oil price dispute valued at US\$ 100 million; Russia sets forward the clocks for the last time; Alarming drop in Russian population since 2002; Duma ratifies Norwegian boundary treaty**

According to reports, Russia and the United States are set to implement an extensive regime of mutual monitoring and information exchange on their nuclear stockpiles under the New START Treaty. The US Nuclear Risk Reduction Centre transmitted the U.S. database to Russia which included information about missiles, launchers, heavy bombers, and warheads that are covered under the Treaty. Data exchanges are to be held every six months and the right to begin conducting on-site inspections officially begins 60 days after the treaty's entry into force on April 6. The treaty was ratified by the US Congress in December, 2010 and by the Russian Duma in January 2011. The obligations under the treaty are reciprocal and act as a confidence building measure. The treaty was signed in April 2010 by the Presidents of Russia and the US and it aims to bring down the number of nuclear warheads to 1550 from the current upper limit of 2200.<sup>65</sup>

In a rare split between Russia's two top leaders, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev described Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's comments on Libya "unacceptable". Earlier, PM Putin had denounced the United Nations resolution allowing military action in Libya as "a medieval call to crusade." The Russian Prime Minister called the UN resolution "defective and flawed." However, President Medvedev said he considered the UN resolution to be correct, adding if he did not believe the UN-mandated action was the proper way of handling the Libyan crisis, he would have ordered the Foreign Ministry to oppose the measure when it was voted on in the Security Council. Medvedev stressed, "Under no circumstances is it acceptable to use expressions that essentially lead to a clash of civilizations, such as 'crusades' and so on. It is unacceptable,". "Medvedev further noted,"Under no circumstances is it acceptable to use expressions that essentially lead to a clash of civilizations, such as 'crusades' and

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<sup>65</sup> "Russia, US begin data exchange under New START", *Ria Novosti*, March 22, 2011 at <http://en.rian.ru/world/20110322/163137551.html>

so on. It is unacceptable," Medvedev said. He however clarified that Russia would not participate in the coalition campaign in Libya but would act as a mediator if needed. He noted it was unclear in Libya "with whom to speak".<sup>66</sup>

However, Russia's Presidential envoy for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov has criticized NATO allies for not doing enough to help Moscow curb drug trafficking from the land north of the Hindukush. Kabulov said Russia continues its operations to intercept drugs on a regular basis. But he accused Russia's partners in NATO of only sending observers instead of doing any, in his words, "practical participation." Kabulov accused the Europeans of taking for granted that Russia will absorb the flow of Afghan drugs before it can reach Europe. He also said he believed the United States is far more concerned with synthetic drugs and Colombian cocaine travelling through its borders than heroin from Afghanistan. Russian officials have long advocated for bigger effort to destroy poppy fields and drug laboratories in Afghanistan. According to UN reports, 92 percent of the world's opium poppies are grown in the South Asian country.<sup>67</sup>

Meanwhile, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and a high level delegation comprising of Communications Minister Igor Shchegolev, Agriculture Minister Yelena Skrynnik, and the head of Russian gas giant Gazprom Alexei Miller discussed the implementation of the South Stream project and the European energy situation in Slovenia. The major goal of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin visit to Slovenia was to sign a "shareholder agreement and the corporate charter of a project company to design, build and maintain the Slovenian segment of South Stream. Slovenia will become "one of the leading gas transit states in the Balkans" when its segment of South Stream is brought into operation. Putin also signed a number of agreements on tourism, transportation and science on his second visit to Serbia since June 2001.<sup>68</sup>

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov has said that Russia will invest 3 trillion roubles (\$100 billion) in the development of the country's defence industry in the next decade. Russia will invest 77 billion roubles (\$2.6 billion) in the production of ballistic missiles alone in the next ten years.<sup>69</sup> However, Prime Minister Putin has declared that Russia will double the production of ballistic

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<sup>66</sup> "Putin, Medvedev engage in rare public spat over Libya", VOANews.com", March 21, 2011 at <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/Putin-Medvedev-Engage-in-Rare-Public-Split-Over-Libya-118399039.html>

<sup>67</sup> "Russian envoy: NATO not helping enough to intercept Afghan drugs", March 27, 2011 at <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/europe/Russia-Envoy-NATO-Not-Helping-Enough-to-Intercept-Afghan-Drugs-118735054.html>

<sup>68</sup> "Putin to discuss South Stream in Slovenia, science in Serbia", March 21, 2011 at <http://en.rian.ru/world/20110321/163133053.html>

<sup>69</sup> "Russia to invest \$100 bln in defence industry until 2020", RIA Novosti, March 21, 2011 at [http://en.rian.ru/mlitary\\_news/20110321/163131244.html](http://en.rian.ru/mlitary_news/20110321/163131244.html)

missile systems starting in 2013. The Armed Forces will receive new strategic and tactical missile systems, such as RS-24 Yars, Bulava and Iskander M. Putin said Russia will invest 77 billion roubles (\$2.6 billion) in the production of ballistic missiles in line with a state program on the modernization of the defence industry until 2020. Missile manufacturers, including a missile production plant in Votkinsk, will receive 15 billion roubles (\$500 million) in the next three years for the development of production capacity.<sup>70</sup>

The U.S. Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs Ellen Tauscher has said that reaching an agreement with Russia on cutting the tactical nuclear weapons stockpiles is likely to be a complicated process and will take some time to materialize. The U.S. Senate adopted a resolution in December 2010 obligating the US government to start bilateral talks on cutting the TNW stockpiles - landmines, artillery shells and short-range missiles which it believes Russia has in large numbers. President Barack Obama said in a message to the Senate in February his country expects to hold talks with Russia on TNW within a year after the New START arms reduction deal came into force on February 5. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov has said that it is too early to discuss limiting the number of TNWs because Russia needs to see the way the U.S. fulfils its commitments under the New START<sup>71</sup>.

Reports noted that as part of the ongoing oil dispute between Russia and China, Moscow believes Beijing has underpaid it \$100 million for oil in 2011 under a landmark 20-year supply deal. Analysts said the dispute around the deal could jeopardize cooperation between the world's No. 1 energy producer and consumer. Rosneft and Transneft borrowed an unprecedented \$25 billion from China in 2009 to finish building Russia's first pipeline link to China as part of a broader deal to supply Beijing with 300 million tons of crude over 30 years. The deal is worth \$220 billion under current prices. Industry sources said the current dispute centres around the pricing formula, with China saying Russia should give it a discount because it is cheaper to send crude to China than to the Pacific port of Kozmino, while Moscow insists it applies similar tariffs to both routes.<sup>72</sup>

In another development, Russia has shifted to a permanent daylight-saving time after people set their clocks ahead one hour early on March 27 under a decree from President Medvedev. Under Medvedev government, the total number of

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<sup>70</sup> "Russia to double production of ballistic missile systems- Putin", RIA Novosti, March 21, 2011 at [http://en.rian.ru/mlitary\\_news/20110321/163130424.html](http://en.rian.ru/mlitary_news/20110321/163130424.html)

<sup>71</sup> "US-Russian talks on tactical nuclear arms cuts will take time-US official", RIA Novosti, March 22, 2011 at <http://en.rian.ru/world/20110322/163136512.html>

<sup>72</sup> "Russia-China oil price dispute valued at \$100 M", "Reuters and The Moscow Times", March 28, 2011 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/russia-china-oil-price-dispute-valued-at-100m/433814.html>

time zones has been brought down to 9 from 11 and the new policy has been justified on health grounds. A poll conducted in February indicated that about 60 percent of Russians support Medvedev's decision to permanently set Moscow's time four hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.<sup>73</sup>

According to reports, Russia's population has dwindled by 2.2 million people since 2002 to 142,905,200 people. The all-Russia census, the second since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, was held between October 14 and 25, 2010. Volga and Siberian federal districts are the most populated, with over 61% of the country's residents living there. Russia remains a highly urbanized country. The share of urban population grew to 73.7% from 73.3% back in 2002. The share of men dropped to 46.3% from 46.6%, and the share of women rose to 53.7% from 53.4%.<sup>74</sup>

In other developments, the Duma has ratified a treaty signed between Russia and Norway that divides the Barents Sea into clear Norwegian and Russian zones, bringing Norway closer to a new oil and gas drive in the Arctic. The area to be divided after 40 years of dispute is about half the size of Germany. Last year Russia and Norway signed a deal to delimitate their maritime border in the Barents Sea and Arctic Ocean after 40 years of negotiations. Both countries have been disputing the 175,000 square km area since 1970. The absence of defined maritime border often resulted in detentions of fishing vessels in the region. The agreement has also paved the way for the lifting of a 30-year-long moratorium on oil and gas extraction in the previously disputed zone<sup>75</sup>.

## D. WEST ASIA

### IRAN

- **Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei: Iran's support to Bahrain is not related with Shia-Sunni; Ahmadinejad condemns western countries for military actions in Libya; Two Security personnel killed in terrorist attacks in Iran**

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<sup>73</sup> "Russia sets forward the clocks for the last time", The Moscow Times, Reuters and MT, March 28, 2011 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-sets-forward-clocks-for-the-last-time/433829.html>

<sup>74</sup> "Russian population dwindles since 2002-statistics", RIA Novosti, March 28, 2011 at <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20110328/163240193.html>

<sup>75</sup> "Duma ratifies Norwegian boundary treaty", The Moscow Times and Reuters, March 28, 2011 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/duma-ratifies-norwegian-boundary-treaty/433817.html>

Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has said that there is no difference between the uprising against tyranny in Bahrain with other Arab countries such as Yemen, Egypt, Tunisia or Libya. This claim that Iran is supporting the Bahrainis because they are mostly Shia is absolutely false. Iran has been supporting the Sunni Muslims in Palestine over the past 32 years and this indicates that Iran creates no difference between Shias and Sunnis. He also pointed out that the Bahrainis are only seeking a legitimate demand of "one man one vote" in their country. He also called Saudi Arabia's military intervention in Bahrain a "mistake" which will make Saudi Arabia disliked in the eyes of the people.<sup>76</sup>

However, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said the US and its Western allies are doing the same "mistakes" by intervening in Libya. Despite the clear lessons that the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan have taught them and despite the public opinion's against the oppressive governments are repeating their mistakes. He also added that "under various pretexts, they bomb innocent civilians and destroy the infrastructure of other countries to dominate them." This statement came in presence of Presidents Jalal Talabani of Iraq, Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan and Emomali Rakhmon of Tajikistan, Serzh Sargsyan of Armenia and Turkmenistan's Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov who are in Tehran at the invitation of Ahmadinejad to celebrate Nowruz, or the Persian New Year festival which marks the transition from winter to spring.<sup>77</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, in two separate terrorist attacks in the western city of Sanandaj, Kordestan province Iran, a serviceman and a policeman were killed. The attacks came in a two-hour difference. In the first act, armed men shot dead a serviceman who was identified as Morteza Vaziri Afshar and also injured a policeman and a passerby. In the second brutal attack a policeman was killed and another person was wounded.<sup>78</sup>

## SYRIA, LIBYA, YEMEN

- **Protesters set fire buildings, dozens killed in clash with the security forces in Syria; Al Qaeda terrorists and security personnel killed in separate clashes in Yemen; NATO to take over operations in Libya**

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<sup>76</sup> "Uprising in Bahrain has nothing to do with Shiism or Sunnism: Leader," *Mehr News*, March 22, 2011 at <http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1277180>

<sup>77</sup> "West repeating 'mistakes' in Libya: Ahmadinejad," *Khaleej Times*, March 27, 2011 at [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/March/middleeast\\_March446.xml&section=middleeast](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/March/middleeast_March446.xml&section=middleeast)

<sup>78</sup> "Terrorists kill two security forces in western Iran," *Tehran Times*, March 17, 2011, at [http://www.tehrantimes.com/index\\_View.asp?code=237743](http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=237743)

According to reports, demonstrators in the Syrian city of Deraa have set fire to several buildings during protests over the last week, calling for an end to Syria's 48-year-old emergency law. Unrest in Deraa came to a head this week after police detained more than a dozen schoolchildren for writing graffiti inspired by slogans used by pro-democracy demonstrators in other countries.<sup>79</sup> According to some reports, the protesters targeted the headquarters of the ruling Baath Party. Violent clashes between anti-government protesters and security forces have started and there are reports of many protesters being killed around the country. The protests again took place on March 20 as a government delegation arrived in Deraa to offer condolences for those killed. Police had used tear gas and live ammunition to try to clear demonstrators.<sup>80</sup>

While there are conflicting reports of the people killed during the protest, Amnesty International put the death toll in Deraa in the past week at 55 at least. Meanwhile, thousands of Assad's supporters waved flags, marched and drove in cars around Damascus and other cities to proclaim their allegiance to the Baath party and to Assad. Meanwhile, an adviser to Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, Buthaina Shaaban, stated on March 27 that the country's emergency law would be lifted soon without giving an exact timetable for the action. The emergency law imposes restrictions on public gatherings and movement and authorizes the arrest of "suspects or persons who threaten security." The law also authorizes interrogation of any individual and the surveillance of personal communication as well as official control of the content of newspapers and other media before publication.<sup>81</sup>

In Yemen, reports noted that at least seven suspected Al-Qaeda militants were killed in clashes between Al Qaeda militants and security forces in its southern province of Abyan. An armed group of Al Qaeda attacked a security checkpoint at Amain in Lawder district on March 26 which resulted in the killing of the Al-Qaeda members.<sup>82</sup> Elsewhere, in Mareb seven security forces were killed in an attack by Al Qaeda in Mareb province. Seven other security forces were also injured. The attack took place at a military checkpoint near the governmental complex in Mareb province. Grenades and machine guns were used by the attackers and they fled away two military vehicles that were being used at the

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<sup>79</sup> "Protests and shooting in Syria as unrest spreads" *Asharq Al Awsat*, March 26, 2011, at <http://www.aawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=1&id=24644>

<sup>80</sup> "Protesters in south set fire to buildings", *BBC News*, March 20, 2011, at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12800243>

<sup>81</sup> "Syria to lift emergency law", *Saudi Gazette*, March 28, 2011, at <http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentID=2011032896911>

<sup>82</sup> "Seven Suspected Al-Qaeda Militants Killed in Abyan", *Yemen Post*, March 26, 2011, at <http://www.yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=3&SubID=3333&MainCat=3>

check point.<sup>83</sup> At least 12 Al Qaeda terrorists were killed and five others wounded during clashes with armed forces in the Akad area in the Lawder district on March 22. Al Qaeda fighters launched an offensive at a military battalion located in Akad the battalions resisted the offensive.<sup>84</sup>

In a significant development, NATO has announced that it will assume overall responsibility for enforcing UN-mandated mission in Libya. This was announced by Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO's Secretary General, on March 27 following a meeting in Brussels. He stated that, "We have directed NATO's top operational commander to begin executing this operation with immediate effect. Our goal is to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas under threat from the Gaddafi regime." He also said that, "NATO will implement all aspects of the UN resolution. Nothing more, nothing less." The operations will be led by Canadian General Charles Bouchard who has said that the alliance "will do everything it can to deny any use of air power and it will do so with care and precision to avoid harming the people of Libya."<sup>85</sup>

#### D. USA

- **Secretary Gates and Secretary Clinton justify US military action in Libya**

US Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates has acknowledged that the unrest in Libya did not pose an immediate threat to the United States. He and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the Obama administration was justified in taking military action to avert a massacre there that could have altered the course of the popular revolts roiling the Arab world. It was a rare joint appearance by Secretary Gates and Secretary Clinton. According to reports, improbable allies who started out with sharply different views of what to do about Libya but have converged in the belief that the brutality of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi demanded a military response. Meanwhile, comments made by President Obama's two top national security officials, on various talk shows offered a striking illustration of the complex calculus that President Obama faced in committing the military to impose a no-fly zone over Libya.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>“ Al-Qaeda Kills seven soldiers in Mareb”, *Yemen Post*, March 27, 2011, at <http://www.yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=3&SubID=3337&MainCat=3>

<sup>84</sup> “Yemen army battalion resists al-Qaeda offensive, kills 12 insurgents”, *Yemen Observer*, March 22, 2011, at <http://www.yobserver.com/local-news/10020999.html>

<sup>85</sup> “NATO to take over Libya operations”, *Al Jazeera*, march 27, 2011, at <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/europe/2011/03/201132720844213695.html>

<sup>86</sup> “Gates and Clinton Unite to Defend Libya Intervention, and Say It May Last a While” *The New York Times*, March 27, 2011 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/28/world/africa/28policy.html>

## II. DEFENCE REVIEW

### NATIONAL

- **Indian Defence Ministry's Annual Report: "India is conscious and watchful of the implication of China's evolving military profile"; Agni ballistic missile to be test-fired later this year**

The Indian Defence Ministry's Annual Report for 2010-11 noted, "India is conscious and watchful of the implication of China's evolving military profile in the immediate and extended neighborhood. India's policy is to engage with China on the principles of mutual trust and respect and sensitivity for each other's concerns". However, taking note of the recent political developments in West Asia and North Africa, the reports states, "The impact of these developments on the security situation in the region and on the security of energy supplies is of global concern." While underscoring India's vibrant ties with all countries in the region, according to the report, New Delhi will continue to engage with them on the basis of mutuality of respect and interests. "India has also been actively involved in peacekeeping operations in Africa under the UN mandate and seeks to consolidate its relations with many countries in the region with which we have historical linkages". Meanwhile, the defence ministry has proposed a proactive role under the United Nations flag to tackle the threat to maritime traffic from piracy. "India is in favour of strengthening multilateral cooperation under a UN framework to meet the complex challenges of maritime security," says the Annual Report which was laid in Parliament on Monday. However, the report noted the increased incidence of piracy in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) "is an issue of serious concern."<sup>87</sup>

India's Defence Minister A K Antony said that India is developing a 5,000 km-range Agni ballistic missile. He stated, "India has reached an appreciable level of competence in missile technologies, with a reach capability of 3,500 kilometres. Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is developing Agni missile with a capacity to reach 5000 kilometres,". In his address, the Defence Minister asked the DRDO to speed up the development trials and induction of Interceptor Missile as part of the credible Ballistic Missile Defence ( BMD). To reduce cases of suicides and fratricides in the armed forces, Antony asked the DRDO to undertake a detailed research program to make an assessment of stress profile and mental health of the soldiers.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> "India Watchful Of Threat From China", *The Financial Express*, Monday, March 21, 2011 at <http://www.defencenews.in/defence-news-internal.asp?get=new&id=392>

<sup>88</sup> "India developing 5,000 km-range Agni missile: Antony" *The Economic Times*, March 26, 2011 at [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2011-03-25/news/29188574\\_1\\_agni-missile-agni-v-agni-iii](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2011-03-25/news/29188574_1_agni-missile-agni-v-agni-iii)

## INTERNATIONAL

- **Reports: Pakistan embraces China as new arms partner**

Pakistan recently test-fired a nuclear-capable missile from an undisclosed location, for its short-range surface-to-surface Hatf-2 class rocket, which has been developed with help from China, Fox News reported. The US was the main supplier of weapons to Pakistan since the mid-1960s. But it began to back away from the deals after years of "difficult and sometimes unpredictable" relations following the 9/11 terror attack which led Pakistan to replace the US with China as a main source of defence material, at least in terms of arsenal, development and training.<sup>89</sup>

### III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

#### JAMMU & KASHMIR

- **Radha Kumar: Particular solution not suggested; PSA censured repeal demanded; Attack by militants in Sopore; Chief of Army visit in valley**

New Delhi-appointed interlocutor for Jammu and Kashmir, Radha Kumar has ruled out mentioning of autonomy in their report about the possible political contours to Kashmir resolution. The interlocutors do not seek to recommend a solution but seek voices from Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh on what a lasting solution could be remained the suggestion. After six months of interlocution, the pace of reforms on ground was too slow remained the derivation.<sup>90</sup>

Day after Amnesty International called for an end to "arbitrary arrests" and revocation of Public Safety Act in Jammu and Kashmir, the Government of India-appointed interlocutors said the law, which empowers the authorities to detain a person without trial for two years, "certainly needs to be reviewed." The interlocutors suggested on further discussion of the PSA in the state legislature.<sup>91</sup>

Reports noted that suspected militants fired upon a search party of police in thee north Kashmir town of Sopore. Following the attack, a sub-inspector of police was injured after being hit by a vehicle.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>. "Pakistan embraces China as new arms partner: Report", Deccan Herald, Islamabad, March 28 (IANS) at <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/149470/pakistan-embraces-china-arms-partner.html>

<sup>90</sup> 'Not recommending specific solution', *Greater Kashmir*, March 24, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Mar/24/-not-recommending-specific-solution--32.asp>

<sup>91</sup> 'Interlocutors censure PSA, demand repeal', *Greater Kashmir*, March 23, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Mar/23/interlocutors-censure-psa-demand-repeal-53.asp>

<sup>92</sup> 'Militant attack in Sopore', *Greater Kashmir*, March 22, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Mar/22/militant-attack-in-sopore-52.asp>

In other developments, the Army Chief, General V K Singh, reviewed the operational preparedness in Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of changing environment and security scenario. He also made visits to the troops deployed in high altitude areas and on the Line of Control in the Valley.<sup>93</sup>

#### NORTH EAST INDIA

- **General Secretary of NSCN (IM) Th. Muivah: Rights of Naga people no longer ignored; Tirap Leader of NSCN-K killed; Tensed situation in Roing; Tripura alerts terror strikes ahead of World Cup**

General Secretary of NSCN (IM) Th. Muivah said that there is a significant change in the Center's approach towards Nagas. However, the perspective of sovereignty to the extent how much Indians can exercise sovereignty and how much Nagas can have to be analyzed.<sup>94</sup>

The NSCN-K head from Tirap, Chipu Menon Khunwang was killed in Mon, Nagaland. The cause of the death was done by another Khaplang cadre. Menon's death might weaken the force of NSCN-K as his death is bound to have operational implications on the Arunachal Naga Liberation Front (ANLF).<sup>95</sup>

Meanwhile, the paramilitary forces operating within the Lower Dibang Valley district have been issued a shoot at sight order. Situation in this district is highly volatile, tense and unpredictable. 2000 army personnel have been called in to aid the police in maintaining law and order.<sup>96</sup>

In other developments, Tripura has issued an alert following inputs from the Ministry of Home Affairs that Pak based terrorist outfits have been using Tripura as a corridor for sneaking into India before the World Cup cricket finals scheduled on April 2 in Mumbai.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> 'Army Chief in Valley', *Greater Kashmir*, March 22, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Mar/22/army-chief-in-valley-51.asp>

<sup>94</sup> 'Centre no longer ignoring rights of Naga people: Th. Muivah', *The Sentinel*, March 22, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/northeast/story.php?sec=2&subsec=9&id=68744dtP=2011-03-22&ppr=1#68744>

<sup>95</sup> 'NSCN-K Tirap boss killed', *The Sentinel*, March 22, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/mainneues/story.php?sec=1&subsec=0&id=68497&dtP=2011-03-19&ppr=1#68497>

<sup>96</sup> 'Shoot at sight ordered, situation tense in Roing', *The Sentinel*, March 19, 2011 at <http://www.Sentinelassam.com/arunachal/story.php?sec=2&subsec=7&id=68499&dtP=2011-03-19&ppr=1#68499>

<sup>97</sup> 'Tripura issues terror alert ahead of World Cup finals', *The Sentinel*, March 25, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/northeast/story.php?sec=2&subsec=9&id=691668&dtP=2011-03-25&ppr=1#691>