

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Pakistan

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **Osama Bin Laden killed in US operation; Osama killing fans doubts about Pakistan; Kayani reassures Pakistan's commitment to war on terror; Osama's wife and children still in Pakistan's custody**

In a covert operation late at night, the US forces killed US and world's most wanted terrorist Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan's garrison town of Abbottabad, north of Islamabad. The targeted operation was held in a compound and took under 40 minutes to be completed. Officials noted that they were finally led to Bin Laden after four years of tracking of his trusted couriers and his brother. The Pakistani Government was notified post operation, which according to analysts, could complicate the already strained US-Pakistani relations.¹

Meanwhile, the United States has questioned how the Pakistani Authority did not have a clue about Osama's whereabouts in Pakistan. The US counter terrorism chief John Brennan said that "it was inconceivable" that Osama did not have any sort of support system that helped him stay in Pakistan on an extended period. Reports noted that it is going to be a period of intensive pressure on Pakistan to prove that it was unknown of Osama's stay, officials recorded.²

However, Pakistan Army Chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani has stated that Pakistan's role in fighting war on terror should not be doubted. This comes in the wake of Osama Bin Laden's killing by the US forces in Abbottabad where he was hiding for a long period of time. The Pakistani Government and the Military were unaware of his presence, which has fueled doubts over its commitment to war on terror.³

In another development, the Foreign Ministry of Pakistan has said that they are still holding the wife and children of slain terrorist Osama Bin Laden as no country has sought their extradition.

¹ "Osama bin Laden killed in Pakistan, says Obama", *Dawn*, May 2, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/05/02/osama-bin-laden-killed-in-pakistan-says-obama.html>

² "After killing bin Laden, US questions ally Pakistan", *Dawn*, May 3, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/05/03/after-killing-bin-laden-us-questions-ally-pakistan.html>

³ "Pakistan's role in war on terror should not be doubted: Kayani", *Dawn*, May 4, 2011, at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/05/04/pakistan%E2%80%99s-role-in-war-on-terror-should-not-be-doubted-kayani.html>

Pakistan gained their custody after the US operation that killed Osama in his Abbottabad hideout. The place where the relatives are being held has not been disclosed by Pakistan but will be returned to their country of origin, officials confirmed.⁴

Bangladesh

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **Indian Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari visits Dhaka; Trade fair organised by the India Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IBCCI) with the support of Indian High Commission in Dhaka; IBCCI for Special Economic Zone in Sylhet for Indian investors; Australian grant to Bangladesh to tackle the challenges caused by climate change, Bangladesh PM visits Turkey to attend the fourth UN conference on LDCs; Bangladesh to lease land in African countries; World Bank estimates Bangladesh's GDP growth to be at 6.2 % for fiscal year 2010-11**

Indian Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari visited Dhaka on May 5, 2011 on a two-day visit to join the 150th birth anniversary celebration of Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore. During his visit, he met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia and discussed bilateral matters and issues of common concern.⁵

India Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IBCCI) with the support of Indian High Commission in Dhaka has organised a three-day trade fair to showcase the products of the two neighbouring countries.⁶ IBCCI has also urged the government of Bangladesh to set up a special economic zone (SEZ) in Sylhet for Indian investors.⁷

Bangladesh State Minister for Environment and Forest Dr Hasan Mahmud met Australian Climate Change Affairs Minister Greg Combet in Australian capital Canberra on May 3 where the Australian minister announced 16 million US dollars grants to Bangladesh for facing the challenges caused by climate change impact.⁸

⁴ "Pakistan still holding bin Laden's wives, children", *Dawn*, May 8 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/05/08/pakistan-still-holding-bin-ladens-wives-children.html>

⁵ "The Indian vice president will leave Dhaka for home on Friday afternoon", *The Daily Star*, May 6, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=184472>; "The Indian vice president will leave Dhaka for home this afternoon", *The Daily Star*, May 7, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=184559>

⁶ "Indo-Bangla trade fair kicks off in Dhaka", *The Daily Star*, May 6, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=184399>

⁷ "Indian investors want special economic zone", *The Daily Star*, May 8, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=184695>

⁸ "\$16m Australian grant for facing climate change challenges", *The Daily Star*, May 5, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=184328>

In another development, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left for Turkey on May 7 on a four-day visit to attend the fourth UN Conference on LDCs to be held in Istanbul.⁹ Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, on May 2, gave a green signal to a proposal that Bangladesh leases land in some African countries and send farmers there to grow crops like rice and cotton for its consumption as well as export.¹⁰

In other developments, the World Bank estimated Bangladesh's GDP growth at 6.2 percent for fiscal year 2010-11, up from 5.8 percent in the previous year.¹¹

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **Bangladesh nominated as co-chair of Green Climate Fund; Khaleda Zia is on a two-week visit to the UK and the US; The World Bank launches the Bangladesh enterprise survey 2011; Australia's ODA to Bangladesh in 2011-12 increases by \$22 million; Bangladesh contributes US\$ 2 million for the reconstruction of Japan wrecked by recent earthquake and tsunami**

Reports noted that Bangladesh along with Sweden has been nominated as co-chair of Green Climate Fund. It will work as a co-chair of Monitoring and Evaluation committee.¹² In another development, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia left Dhaka on May 14 on a two-week visit to the United Kingdom and the United States.¹³

The World Bank has launched the Bangladesh Enterprise Survey 2011 to assess business environment for the country's private sector and investment.¹⁴ Meanwhile, Australia will provide an estimated \$A92 million (Tk 710 crore) in official development assistance (ODA) to Bangladesh in 2011-12, an increase of \$A22 million from the previous year.¹⁵

In other development, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, on May 14, 2011, handed over a cheque for US\$ 2 million to Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Tamotsu Shinotsuka as contribution to the

⁹ "PM leaves for Turkey today", *The Daily Star*, May 7, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=184572>

¹⁰ Tusher, Jahid, Hasan, "Nod to farming in Africa", *The Daily Star*, May 3, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=184019>

¹¹ "WB projects 6.2pc growth", *The Daily Star*, May 4, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=184114>

¹² "Bangladesh co-chair of Climate Fund", *The Daily Star*, May 10, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=185057>

¹³ "Khaleda flies to London today", *The Daily Star*, May 14, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=185601>

¹⁴ "WB launches Bangladesh Enterprise Survey", *The Daily Star*, May 13, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=185413>

¹⁵ "Australian aid increased by \$A 22m", *The Daily Star*, May 13, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=185449>.

reconstruction of Japan wrecked by recent earthquake and tsunami.¹⁶

Sri Lanka

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **Sri Lanka celebrates 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore; Sri Lankan opposition leader visits Bhutan; US Assistant Secretary of South and Central Asian Affairs Robert O' Blake visits Sri Lanka**

On the occasion of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo in association with the University of Colombo, University of Sri Jayewardenapura, University of Kelaniya, the Tagore Society of Sri Lanka, Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Arts, Sri Lanka; Ministry of Postal Services, Sri Lanka; India-Sri Lanka Foundation and Sarvodaya has organised a number of programmes to pay homage to Tagore's multifaceted personality.¹⁷

Reports noted that Sri Lankan Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe met the Prime Minister of Bhutan Jigme Thinley on May 6 during his three day visit to Bhutan. Wickremesinghe also held discussions with the Foreign and Finance Minister of Bhutan Bandu Chanchuk.¹⁸

In other developments, Assistant Secretary of South and Central Asian Affairs Robert O' Blake visited Sri Lanka on a six day trip on May 2, 2011.¹⁹

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **India's National Security Advisor, Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary visit Sri Lanka; Sri Lankan Minister of Foreign Employment, Promotion and Welfare visited Qatar; Tuticorin – Sri Lanka ferry service postponed; A team of fifteen officials from the disaster management ministry had left for Japan to help in relief operations in the areas affected by the recent earthquake and the tsunami; Sri Lanka lodges an official bid with the Commonwealth Games Federation in Kuala Lumpur to host the 2018 Commonwealth Games**

Reports noted that India's National Security Advisor Shiv Shankar Menon, Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao and Defence Secretary Pradeep Kumar visited Sri Lanka on May, 13.²⁰ Meanwhile,

¹⁶ "PM donates \$2m to Japan", *The Daily Star*, May 15, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=185730>.

¹⁷ Kogilavani, G., "Rabindranath Tagore's 150th Birth Anniversary celebrations", *The Daily Mirror*, May 6, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/features/139-feature/43091.html>.

¹⁸ "Opposition Leader meets Bhutan PM", *The Daily Mirror*, May 7, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/43222.html>.

¹⁹ "Robert Blake in Sri Lanka to discuss a range of issues", May 3, 2011 at <http://www.newsradio.me/2011/05/03/robert-blake-in-sri-lanka-to-discuss-a-range-of-issues/>.

Sri Lankan Minister of Foreign Employment, Promotion and Welfare, Dilan Perera left for Qatar for a five-day visit to discuss employment opportunities there.²¹

In another development, the much awaited Tuticorin – Sri Lanka Ferry Service, which was scheduled to begin operations on May 11, 2011, has been postponed because of the low demand for seats.²²

According to reports, a team of fifteen officials from the Disaster Management Ministry had left for Japan to help in relief operations in the areas affected by the recent earthquake and the subsequent tsunami. This team would help in debris clearance operations in Ishinomaki in the Miyagi prefecture for about two weeks starting from May 13, in collaboration with 'Peace Boat', a Non-Governmental Organization.²³

In other developments, Sri Lanka lodged an official bid with the Commonwealth Games Federation in Kuala Lumpur on May 11, 2011 to host the 2018 Commonwealth Games, with Hambantota being likely to be made the host city for the event if the bid succeeds.²⁴

Maldives

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert Blake called on President Nasheed; President met the UNICEF Resident Representative to the Maldives; Secretary General of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity holds dialogue with President Nasheed; New Ambassador of South Korea accredited to the Maldives presents his Letter of Credence to President Nasheed**

Reports noted that United States Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert Blake called on President Mohamed Nasheed on May 2 at the President's Office and discussed whole gamut of domestic and international politics.²⁵ Meanwhile President Mohamed

²⁰ "The Indians (Menon, Rao and Kumar) will arrive", *The Daily Mirror*, May 12, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/opinion1/43704.html>

²¹ "Foreign Employment: Minister leaves for Qatar", *The Daily Mirror*, May 9, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/43334.html>

²² Jayasundere, Olindhi, "Still no go for Indo-Lanka ferry service", *The Daily Mirror*, May 12, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/43728.html>

²³ Bandara, Kelum, "Lanka sends team to help Japan in debris clearance", *The Daily Mirror*, May 12, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/43732.html>

²⁴ Jayasundere, Olindhi, "Lanka bids to host C'wealth Games", *The Daily Mirror*, May 12, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/front-page-news/43742.html>

²⁵ "US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Calls on the President", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 2, 2011 at <http://www.presidency.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5252>

Nasheed met the UNICEF Resident Representative to the Maldives Ms Zeba Tanvir Bukhari on May 4, and discussed the UNICEF programmes in the Maldives focusing on enhancing collaboration between the government and UNICEF.²⁶

In another development, President Mohamed Nasheed met Secretary General of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) Toshiyuki Yamada on May 4, 2011 and updated the ongoing telemedicine project to provide quality healthcare to the islands and the projects initiated by the Maldivian Government to enable the exchange of documents and government communications electronically. Secretary General Yamada praised the rapid progress achieved by the government to embrace the new advancements in information and telecommunication technologies and enhance the connectivity of schools, health centres and hospitals via telecommunication and expressed APT's interest to conduct training programs to contribute to information sharing and public awareness on telecom development in the Maldives.²⁷

In other developments, New Ambassador of South Korea accredited to the Maldives, Choi Jon Moon has presented his Letter of Credence to President Mohamed Nasheed at the President's Office.²⁸

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **IMF mission to review the IMF Programme in the Maldives under its stand-by arrangement met President Nasheed; Maldivian group "Friends of Palestine" launched several activities to mark the third Palestinian Intifada in the Maldives**

President Mohamed Nasheed, on May 15, met the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission to review the IMF programme in the Maldives under its Stand-by Arrangement and Exogenous Shock Facility to assist economic recovery in the Maldives.²⁹

In other developments, showing solidarity with Palestinians, a group of some 20 Maldivians – identified themselves as "Friends of Palestine" on Facebook – launched several week long activities to mark the Third Palestinian Intifada that kicked off in several countries on May 15. Spokesperson for the "Friends of Palestine" group said that their movement is not affiliated to any political party and they would be carrying out peaceful activities.³⁰

²⁶ "President Meets UNICEF Resident Representative to the Maldives", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 4, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5267>

²⁷ "President Meets the Secretary General of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 4, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5266>

²⁸ "New South Korean Ambassador Presents Credential to the President", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 8, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5280>

²⁹ "President Meets IMF Mission", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 15, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5324>

³⁰ "Maldives Marks Third Palestinian Intifada", *Heveeru Online*, May 15, 2011 at <http://www.haveeru.com.mv/english/details/36371>

B. East Asia

China

(May 2-15, 2011)

- **Senior Chinese military official visits US; Belgium-China rail connection opens; EU president seeks closer ties with China; Chinese, Kazakh FMs pledge to cement ties; China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan stage joint anti-terror drill; China satisfied about China-US dialogue outcomes; Nepal-China meeting on Tibet trade begins in Nepal**

In a significant development Chief of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Chen Bingde arrived Washington for a week-long official visit to the United States. In a written statement issued at the airport, Chen said 'maintaining a healthy, stable and dependable China-US military-to-military relationship, which is an important part of the overall bilateral ties, will provide a positive push for the China-US relations to develop steadily in a long run'.³¹

On the other hand a new rail connection for cargo between Antwerp in Belgium and Southwest China's Chongqing. The first train on this rail was launched from the Antwerp port to Chongqing, signaling the official opening of the rail line.³²

In another development the most senior official of the European Union (EU) started his first official visit to China. He asserted that this visit is to seek closer trade and political ties with Beijing needed for a stronger Europe. Herman Van Rompuy said "I come here as a friend of China with respect and trust, and a strong conviction in honest dialogue".³³

The Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi met with his Kazakh counterpart Yerzhan Kazykhanov on bilateral cooperation. Yang said that "the strategic partnership between China and Kazakhstan is now developing comprehensively and rapidly".³⁴ On the other hand China, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, all member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), conducted a joint anti-terror drill in Kashi of Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.³⁵

³¹ "Senior Chinese military official visits US" *China Daily*, May 16, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-05/16/content_12518122.htm

³² "Belgium-China rail connection opens" *China Daily*, May 5, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-05/10/content_12481084.htm

³³ "EU president seeks closer ties with China" *China Daily*, May 15, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-05/15/content_12513281.htm

³⁴ "Chinese, Kazakh FMs pledge to cement ties" *China Daily*, May 14, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-05/14/content_12511757.htm

³⁵ "China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan stage joint anti-terror drill", *China Daily*, May 7, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-05/07/content_12463459.htm

Meanwhile Beijing expressed its satisfaction about the accomplishments made during the third round of the China-US Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED) held in Washington from May 9 to 10, 2011.³⁶

In other developments, the second meeting on Nepal-China's Tibet Trade Facilitation Committee (NTTFC) was concluded last week. The meeting commonly accepted that as "Nepal-China trade talk" in Nepal is aimed to enhance bilateral trade between the two countries.³⁷

Japan

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **Japanese government considers decommissioning of the Fukushima No.2; Japanese Prime Minister urges Chubu Electric Power Co. to suspend its Hamaoka power plant; Japan is not to abandon its nuclear power plants altogether despite the recent nuclear crisis, states Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshito Sengoku; Beijing continues to prohibit Japanese food products from entering the Chinese market**

Keeping in mind the feelings of Fukushima residents regarding the recent nuke crisis in Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant, and to address people's deepening distrust in nuclear energy, the Japanese government is currently considering decommissioning the Fukushima No. 2 nuclear power plant. Although a final decision is not yet taken on the fate of No. 2 plant, a cold shutdown of Fukushima No. 1 facility has already been completed successfully. Interestingly, Prime Minister Naoto Kan has already announced his intention to review not only Japan's nuclear energy policy and revisit its earlier plan to construct 14 new nuclear power reactors.³⁸

With a view to addressing the increasing concern that another powerful earthquake in the region could once again trigger serious nuclear crisis in Hamaoka nuclear power plant in Shizuoka Prefecture, Prime Minister Naoto Kan has urged Chubu Electric Power Co. to suspend all its operations at that plant. Kan himself however acknowledged that the request is not legally binding.³⁹ Still, the officials of Chubu Electric have decided to halt all its reactors at Hamaoka, until the company erects a coastal levee of 15 meters or higher in 2-3 years.⁴⁰

³⁶ "China satisfied about China-US dialogue outcomes" *China Daily*, May 14, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011sinousdialogue/2011-05/14/content_12510048.htm

³⁷ "Nepal-China meeting on Tibet trade begins in Nepal" *China Daily*, May 9, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2011-05/09/content_12472388.htm

³⁸ "Shutdown being considered for Fukushima No. 2", *Japan Times*, May 8, 2011, at <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20110508a2.html>

³⁹ "Decision to suspend Hamaoka power plant delayed: Chubu Electric mulling impact", *Japan Times*, May 8, 2011, at <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20110508a1.html>

⁴⁰ "Chubu Electric to halt reactors in line with Kan request", *Asahi Shimbun*, May 8, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201105070136.html>

Despite the current nuke crisis in Fukushima, Japan is not ready to abandon its nuclear power plants altogether. Neither it has any plan to shut down any more functioning nuclear reactors other than the three at the Hamaoka power plant. Instead it would continue maintaining atomic power as a major part of its energy policy, according to Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshito Sengoku.⁴¹

While citing the recent nuclear crisis in Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant, China continues to impose strict sanctions on the imports of Japanese food products. Recently it has introduced a new regulation under which Japanese exporters have been demanded to produce certificates from Japanese government itself stating the products are radiation free. All these regulations have made the export of Japanese food items to China virtually impossible.⁴²

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **UN Chief's remark on neutrality issue in the UN peacekeeping missions could influence Japan; Japan, China and South Korea are to strengthen information sharing system during nuclear crisis**

Reports noted that UN Chief Ban Ki-moon's recent remark that while UN peacekeeping operations are impartial in principle, it might not be able to abide by that rule when civilians' human rights are at stake, could largely influence Japan's participation in such missions in the future. It is so, because, according to a law passed by Japanese Diet in 1992, impartiality is one of primary conditions that must be met for Japan's deployment of troops in such missions. It is worth noting that recently the UN peacekeeping mission in Ivory Coast had to face serious criticism due to its April 4 attack on military camps controlled by Laurent Gbagbo, president of the western African country. Ivory Coast is currently going through a political turmoil as Gbagbo has refused to cede power and accept the outcome of the elections held in November 2010. According to Ban Ki-moon, the peacekeepers had to launch attack in the interest of protecting the civilians as well as themselves.⁴³

In another development, Japan, China and South Korea are reportedly in the process of formulating a framework for information sharing during a nuclear crisis. The plan is expected to be incorporated in the joint documents to be issued at the upcoming trilateral summit among the leaders of these countries on May 21 and 22, 2011, in Tokyo. Under this system, as and when an emergency occurs in one country, the status of the accident and government countermeasures will be reported to other two countries in order to maintain transparency. A joint declaration on this would not only refer to disasters other than nuclear and mention about joint precautionary and disaster response

⁴¹ "Japan won't abandon nuclear power despite crisis", *Mainichi Shimbun*, May 8, at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/news/20110508p2g00m0dm043000c.html>

⁴² "China cites radiation concerns, holds up Japanese food products", *Asahi Shimbun*, May 5, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201105040103.html>

⁴³ "UN Chief's stance on neutrality could affect Japan deployments", *Asahi Shimbun*, May 15, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201105140155.html>

measures, but also might call for improving the countries domestic systems for strengthening the communication and information sharing networks in case of a disaster.⁴⁴

South Korea

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **Return of slave South Korean forced labourers continues to strain South Korea-Japan relation; South Korean marines stages drills under the observance of the US Marine officials; US nuke carrier makes a port call in South Korea; FTA between South Korea and EU ratified by the South Korean National Assembly**

Despite the current talks over the return of the South Korean forced labourers mobilized by Japan during the latter's colonial rule in Korea, a final decision has not yet been arrived at due to the different positions maintained by both South Korea and Japan on the issue. The issue has been highlighted recently following Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan's promise in August last year to repatriate the remains of the labourers to South Korea. Seoul maintains that as Japanese colonialists were responsible in forcefully and systematically mobilizing the forced labourers, the Japanese government should spearhead the entire process of repatriation. Tokyo, on the other hand, states that as the mobilization process was conducted by Japanese companies voluntarily, the government could not spearhead the entire repatriation process, and can only provide assistance if the South itself decided to bring the labourers back.⁴⁵

Recently, the South Korean marines staged a two-hour long live-fire artillery drills on the frontline islands off the west coast under the observance of the US marine officials. Such drills are part of the regular exercise aimed at establish a solid defensive posture on the five islands close to North Korea. They are reportedly carried out to enhance the interoperability of tactical as well as operational systems between South Korea and the US.⁴⁶

USS Michigan, a nuclear powered submarine recently made a port call at Busan, South Korea's largest port. The submarine is reportedly equipped with 150 Tomahawk cruise missiles capable of intercepting objects some 1,600 kilometers away.⁴⁷

According to reports, recently, the South Korean National Assembly ratified an FTA been the

⁴⁴ "Japan, ROK, China to up N-disaster info sharing", *The Yomiuri Shimbun*, May 11, 2011, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T110510005368.htm>

⁴⁵ "Dispute with Japan erupts over return of slave worker remains", *Dong-A-Ilbo*, May 4, 2011, at <http://english.donga.com/srv/service.php3?biid=2011050440318>

⁴⁶ "US military observes Marine firing drills on west coast islands", *Dong-A- Ilbo*, May 4, 2011, at <http://english.donga.com/srv/service.php3?biid=2011050439488>

⁴⁷ "US nuke carrier in Busan", *Dong-A-Ilbo*, May 2, 2011, at <http://english.donga.com/srv/service.php3?biid=2011050205978>

South and the European Union.⁴⁸ The FTA is expected to boost exports of products made by small and medium sized enterprises, particularly in areas like light-emitting diode lighting, satellite antennas, closed circuit TV cameras, energy efficient bulbs, digital door locks and polyester.⁴⁹

C. Central Asia & Russia

Central Asia

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **CIS holds anti-terror exercise; CARs on Operation Geronimo; Kazakhstan ratifies air space agreement for US mission; Russia is negotiating to deploy border troops to boost security in Tajikistan; Caspian Sea division into national zones opposed by Russia; Nabucco Pipeline Company is ready to break ground in Turkey; Turkmen, Uzbek leaders hold talks; International IV Astana Economic Forum held; Indian steel baron to buy 35% stake of Kazakh hydrocarbon company**

Reports noted that security services of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) held an anti-terror exercise near the southern city of Osh in Southern Kyrgyzstan aimed at preventing attacks against vital energy infrastructure. Law enforcement and special service contingents from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan took part in the joint command-post drill to practice interoperability in the event of a real terror threat. This included the carrying out of coordinated tactical and search operations to prevent subversive acts at vital facilities which include hydropower plants or energy facilities. Observers from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan studied the exercise along with representatives of the Bureau for Coordinating the Fight against Organized Crime, the Secretariat of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Executive Committee of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO) Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure.⁵⁰

Meanwhile, according to reports, the announcement by U.S. President Barack Obama that terror mastermind Osama bin Laden had been killed lowered the oil stocks by 3%, wherein the oil futures on the New York Stock Exchange were down \$1.58 after reaching the day's low at \$112.21

⁴⁸ "National Assembly ratifies Korea-EU FTA", *Korea Herald*, May 5, 2011, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20110504001031>

⁴⁹ "EU FTA can boost exports of South Korean SMEs: Kotra", *Korea Herald*, May 5, 2011, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/pop/NewsFlash.jsp?newsMLId=null>

⁵⁰ "CIS holds anti-terror drills in Kyrgyzstan", *Central Asia Newswire*, May 04, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/CIS-holds-anti-terror-drills-in-Kyrgyzstan/viewstory.aspx?id=3970>

⁵¹ "Bin Laden death calms worries over Central Asian oil", *Central Asia Newswire*, May 02, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/Bin-Laden-death-calms-worries-over-Central-Asian-oil/viewstory.aspx?id=3958>

a barrel.⁵¹ Financial analysts are cautiously hopeful that the news will bring more stability to oil supplies in Central Asia Republics (CARs) which has been marred often by geopolitical uncertainty and terrorism.⁵² Kazakhstan has been the first Central Asian government to have officially commented on the news. Kazakh Foreign Ministry spokesman Askar Abdrakhmanov said in a published statement that “Kazakhstan sees the success of the operation to eliminate Osama bin Laden as a major blow to international terrorism.” In July 2010 it had agreed to allow the U.S. to move armored personnel carriers through Kazakhstan to support military operations in Afghanistan.⁵³ A leader of the Tajik opposition group Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) first deputy leader Umarali Hisaynov said that international terrorism will continue so long as “world superpowers” do not rethink their approach to third-world countries.⁵⁴ Tajik President Emomali Rahmon has been silent on the death of Osama bin Laden, although he publicly scorned by saying that “After the disappearance of threat of Communism and Cold War, some world powers have thought up the so-called ‘international terrorism’ and by their classification terrorists are divided into ‘criminals’ and ‘patriots’”.⁵⁵ It is believed that a senior Tajik counter-terror official, Abdullo Sadulloevich Nazarov, tipped off U.S. diplomatic staff in 2009 that Pakistan was shielding Osama bin Laden and likely knew his exact location. “In Pakistan, Osama bin Laden wasn’t an invisible man, and many knew his whereabouts in North Waziristan, but whenever security forces attempted a raid on his hideouts, the enemy received warning of their approach from sources in the security forces,” Nazarov said in a diplomatic cable dated December 16, 2009 as per the U.S. government documents released this week by WikiLeaks. Pakistan, however, rebuffed criticism and denied complicity in hiding bin Laden from international allies.⁵⁶

In another development, Kazakhstan has ratified a formerly loose arrangement of November 2010 with Washington on providing air space to U.S. planes to supply troops and supplies in Afghanistan. The earlier air transit agreement provided U.S. access to new transit routes that

⁵² “Bin Laden death calms worries over Central Asian oil”, *Central Asia Newswire*, May 02, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/Bin-Laden-death-calms-worries-over-Central-Asian-oil/viewstory.aspx?id=3958>

⁵³ “Kazakhstan calls bin Laden death ‘major blow to international terrorism’”, *Central Asia Newswire*, May 03, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Kazakhstan-calls-bin-Laden-death-Isquomajor-blow-to-international-terrorismsquo/viewstory.aspx?id=3967>

⁵⁴ “Kazakhstan calls bin Laden death ‘major blow to international terrorism’”, *Central Asia Newswire*, May 03, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Kazakhstan-calls-bin-Laden-death-Isquomajor-blow-to-international-terrorismsquo/viewstory.aspx?id=3967>

⁵⁵ “Kazakhstan calls bin Laden death ‘major blow to international terrorism’”, *Central Asia Newswire*, May 03, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Kazakhstan-calls-bin-Laden-death-Isquomajor-blow-to-international-terrorismsquo/viewstory.aspx?id=3967>

⁵⁶ “Tajikistan revealed bin Laden-Pakistan connection to US in 2009”, *Central Asia Newswire*, May 04, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Tajikistan/Tajikistan-revealed-bin-Laden-Pakistan-connection-to-US-in-2009/viewstory.aspx?id=3979>

shortened route by crossing over the North Pole and passing over Kazakh territory into Afghanistan. This helps the U.S.-led military forces to gain northern access into Afghanistan after Taliban and other militant forces stepped up attacks on land routes through Pakistan.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, Russia is negotiating with the Tajik government on plans to deploy as many as 3,000 border troops to boost security on Tajikistan's poorly-protected border with Afghanistan. Moscow is worried that Afghan-based Islamist militants will penetrate into Central Asia through the largely unmanned borders after U.S.-led NATO troops leave Afghanistan by 2014. It is believed that Russia plans to send the 3,000 border guards to train and supervise local Tajik security officers. If the deal materializes this will be in contrary to what the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Chief Nikolay Bordyuzha said in mid-March this year that "There is no need to strengthen Russia's military presence in Central Asia."⁵⁸

Reports noted that Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have been involved in talks with other Caspian states, including Russia, Azerbaijan and Iran, to resolve the legal status of the sea over the past few months. Russia considers the Caspian Sea as a unique landlocked basin. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov explained that Russia opposes the division of the Caspian Sea in to national zones as this will require a radical review of guidelines regulation the use of this reservoir over the past 70 years. Caspian states met in the Azerbaijani capital Baku on April 26 to resolve long-standing Caspian issues, including security issues and a ban on fishing sturgeon.⁵⁹

Nabucco Pipeline Company spokesman Christian Dolezal announced that the company "can start the construction work and capacity bookings after the final decisions (by the involved countries) are made. The date we determined is the end of 2012. The construction will start simultaneously in all countries and the lines would be connected later. Before starting we need guarantees from supplier countries". The bulk of the construction will take place in Turkey and will cost \$4 billion. Representatives of the Nabucco firm have finalized land agreements that will be used by the pipeline once it is constructed.⁶⁰

Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov who visited Uzbekistan on a on May 5-6 held meeting with his counterpart President Islam Karimov and discussed overall relations between the two countries. During the discussions, they focused on regional and international events of mutual interest with emphasis on regional security and the situation in Afghanistan, regional

⁵⁷ "Kazakhstan formalizes air space agreement for US mission in Afghanistan", *Central Asia Newswire*, May 04, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Kazakhstan-formalizes-air-space-agreement-for-US-mission-in-Afghanistan/viewstory.aspx?id=3974>

⁵⁸ "Russia may send 3,000 guards to Tajik-Afghan border", *Central Asia Newswire*, May 05, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Tajikistan/Russia-may-send-3000-guards-to-Tajik-Afghan-border/viewstory.aspx?id=3982>

⁵⁹ "Russia opposes Caspian Sea division", *Central Asia Newswire*, May 05, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/Russia-opposes-Caspian-Sea-division/viewstory.aspx?id=3988>

⁶⁰ "Nabucco pipeline construction can begin in 2012, executive says", *Central Asia Newswire*, May 02, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/Nabucco-pipeline-construction-can-begin-in-2012-executive-says/viewstory.aspx?id=3956>

water and energy issues like the planned natural gas pipeline linking Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan with China. Both leaders are also likely to promote a deal on the planned transnational transportation-communication corridor through Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Oman and Qatar, which the two signed last October in the Turkmen capital Ashgabat.⁶¹ The two concluded this meeting by signing a raft of bilateral agreements to strengthen the legal basis to intensify intergovernmental collaboration on a long-term basis – Agreement on the establishment of the trade representations between the Government of Turkmenistan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan; the Agreement on scientific and technological cooperation between the Government of Turkmenistan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan; the Memorandum of Understanding between the National Library of the National Cultural Centre of Turkmenistan and Alisher Navoyi National Library of Uzbekistan.⁶²

Kazakhstan hosted its international IV Astana Economic Forum entitled “New Decade: Challenges and Perspectives” drawing more than 3,500 delegates from 80 countries worldwide. Investment deals worth \$2.5 billion were signed through the staging of the second international investment forum “2011 Astana Invest” including the construction of a new thermal power station and a steel plant in the city. The next five years will see the implementation of 11 important investment projects worth over \$5 billion in Astana. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) chief Jacques Diouf, in his address to the forum’s conference entitled “New Decade: Calls and Prospects”, emphasized that Central Asian republics need to enhance their trade ties to enhance the free flow of food and agricultural commodities in the face of erratic global food prices and climatic changes. As net food importers Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan were especially vulnerable to price and supply shocks.⁶³ Participants discussed the results of the global financial crunch, the food crisis and development of alternative economic sectors, challenges facing regional and global integration, and reforms of the financial and currency systems.⁶⁴

In other developments in the region, Indian steel baron LN Mittal is close to buying a 35 percent stake in Kazakhstan-based hydrocarbon company KazStroy Group. If the acquisition goes ahead, Mittal will gain indirect holdings of 19 percent in KazStroy Group’s Indian subsidiary Petron Engineering Construction. KazStroy has a 55.2 percent equity stake in Petron Engineering through Petron Investments.⁶⁵

⁶¹ “Turkmen, Uzbek leaders hold talks in Tashkent”, *Central Asia Newswire*, May 05, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/Turkmen-Uzbek-leaders-hold-talks-in-Tashkent/viewstory.aspx?id=3985>

⁶² “Enriching centuries-old traditions of good neighbourliness, friendship and brotherhood”, *State News Agency of Turkmenistan (TDH)*, May 07, 2011 at http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/_en/?idr=4&id=110507a

⁶³ “Central Asian cooperation needed to combat food crisis, FAO chief says”, *Central Asia Newswire*, May 03, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/Central-Asian-cooperation-needed-to-combat-food-crisis-FAO-chief-says/viewstory.aspx?id=3961>

⁶⁴ “Astana investment forum yields \$2.5B worth of deals”, *Central Asia Newswire*, May 05, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Astana-investment-forum-yields-25B-worth-of-deals/viewstory.aspx?id=3981>

⁶⁵ “Indian billionaire may buy large share of Kazakh hydrocarbon company”, *Central Asia Newswire*, April 29, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Indian-billionaire-may-buy-large-share-of-Kazakh-hydrocarbon-company/viewstory.aspx?id=3944>

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **NATO's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia: NATO will remain in Afghanistan beyond 2014; Uzbekistan's Birlik opposition party demands fair treatment for Uzbek minorities in Kyrgyzstan; Uzbek dictator Islam Karimov blames West for funding Arab revolts; Kazakhstan pulls out of Iraqi gas project; Tajikistan's central bank shore up the weakening national currency**

James Appathurai, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia commented that the NATO will remain in Afghanistan beyond 2014 to ensure continued security. The envoy said, "NATO will maintain its presence in this country, though in another capacity. We will act as a support for the changes that take place there. The most important thing is that we will not leave behind a security vacuum." He met the Kazakh Deputy Foreign Minister Konstantin Zhigalov in Astana and also met with leaders of both houses of Parliament and top officials at the Foreign and Defense ministries in Uzbekistan as part of the a two-day visit to Central Asia.⁶⁶ Kyrgyzstan President Roza Otunbayeva appealed to the NATO's envoy for military help in protecting the republic's porous frontiers and assistance in overhauling rocket and artillery storage facilities.⁶⁷

Uzbekistan's Birlik (Unity) opposition party, unregistered party, gave a call that minority ethnic Uzbeks residing in Kyrgyzstan should receive "fair treatment" from Kyrgyz authorities at a conference held in the Uzbek capital Tashkent to mark the group's 22nd anniversary of existence, despite persecution by governing authorities. The conference participants discussed the findings by the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission (KIC) into ethnic violence of June 2010 between the majority Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities in south Kyrgyzstan that left 470 people dead and displaced hundreds of thousands of Uzbeks. The group's exiled leader Abdurahim Polatov participated in the conference via phone from the United States. Four ethnic Uzbeks leaders of the ethnic Uzbek political party Votan-Rodina fled Kyrgyzstan after the violence and have not returned because they are facing charges related to the June events.⁶⁸ In a broadcast on the anniversary of the end of the Second World War, Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov accused the West of funding this year's Arab uprisings to gain access to oil, gas and mineral reserves. Mr Karimov used the Victory Day celebrations to issue a warning to his people not to follow the Arab example, urging his

⁶⁶ "NATO to stay in Afghanistan beyond 2014, visiting envoy tells Kazakhs", *Central Asia Newswire*, May 13, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/NATO-to-stay-in-Afghanistan-beyond-2014-visiting-envoy-tells-Kazakhs/viewstory.aspx?id=4044>

⁶⁷ "Kyrgyzstan asks NATO to help secure frontiers", *Central Asia Newswire*, May 10, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kyrgyzstan/Kyrgyzstan-asks-NATO-to-help-secure-frontiers/viewstory.aspx?id=4013>

⁶⁸ "Uzbek opposition party demands 'fair treatment' for Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan", *Central Asia Newswire*, May 10, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kyrgyzstan/Uzbek-opposition-party-demands-fair-treatment-for-Uzbeks-in-Kyrgyzstan/viewstory.aspx?id=4009>

people “to be always vigilant in the current turbulent and challenging times, and to appreciate the peaceful life.”⁶⁹

In another development, Kazakh state-owned energy giant KazMunaiGas (KMG) has pulled out of the Akkas natural gas deposit development in Iraq as it was unable to reach agreement on the Akkas natural gas deposit in the western Iraqi province on Al Anbar following months of negotiations between Iraq and South Korean state company Korea Gas Corp (Kogas). The talks failed to resolve all issues which emerged at a late stage and it has not been possible to develop a consensus document that would fully meet the interests of all parties. KazMunaiGas and Kogas won a gas auction to develop the field in October 2010 and had initially agreed a 50-50 venture to produce 400 million cubic feet of gas a day at Akkas which holds 5.6 trillion cubic feet of gas.⁷⁰

In other developments in the region, Tajikistan’s central bank has taken action to shore up the weakening national currency, the somoni, in the foreign exchange market by setting aside \$1 million. The currency fell to 4.68 against the US dollar from 4.53 in the past week alone. Nuriddin Qyumov, an economist attributes the steady fall of the currency as an outcome of a slew of national financial and economic woes. He says it is a result of the weak economy and reduced exports wherein Tajiks are hoarding dollars and other currencies in an attempt to protect their wealth in the face of inflation and uncertainties.⁷¹

Russia

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **Russia refuses to bail out crisis stricken economy of Belarus; Russian President has criticised the defence industry on the ground that it has failed to deliver on its promises; Russia faces one last hurdle in its effort to join the WTO; Russia marks victory day with big parade; Russia and Pakistan pledge to increase cooperation; Japan has protested the visit of Russian government delegation to Kuril islands; Russia-Slovenia Presidents to hold talks in Moscow; Russian President has declared the missile defence shield should take into consideration Russia’s concerns; Russia calls for talks on Libya; Amnesty International: Russia has made some progress in human rights protection**

Russia has rebuffed Belarus’s request for a \$1 billion stabilization loan and has asked the country to look for funds from elsewhere. The announcement by Russian Finance Minister Aleksei Kudrin

⁶⁹ “Uzbek president accuses the West of funding Arab revolts”, *The Telegraph*, May 10, 2011 at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/uzbekistan/8505104/Uzbek-president-accuses-the-West-of-funding-Arab-revolts.html>

⁷⁰ “azMunaiGas pulls out of Iraqi gas project”, *Central Asia Newswire*, May 11, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/KazMunaiGas-pulls-out-of-Iraqi-gas-project/viewstory.aspx?id=4021>

⁷¹ “Tajikistan steps in to shore up weakening national currency”, *Central Asia Newswire*, May 13, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Tajikistan/Tajikistan-steps-in-to-shore-up-weakening-national-currency/viewstory.aspx?id=4043>

on May 11 came as a bolt from the blue for Belarus which is reeling under a severe economic crisis. Kudrin has now told journalists that the most Belarus could hope to get from Eurasec's regional fund would be \$1 billion and that the amount "would not be enough" to stem the crisis. He said Minsk should seek help from the International Monetary Fund. The announcement came at a time when Belarus's Central Bank lifted exchange-rate controls, allowing a steep currency devaluation in all but name. Officially, the Belarusian rouble's exchange rate remains at 3,037 to the U.S. dollar. But the lifting of controls sent the local currency plummeting to around 4,000 to the dollar – a 25 percent drop in one day. The collapsing currency has many Belarusians scrambling to buy foreign currency, precious metals, imported goods, and consumer staples like sugar and oil. Economist Yauhen Preigerman has said that the Minsk authorities are struggling to cope, and they "understand that if they formally announce a devaluation then that jump would instantly bring the wages of Belarusians almost to the level of Moldova, which is considered the poorest country in Europe." President Lukashenka has blamed the developing crisis on the interference of unspecified foreign governments and on Belarusians purchasing too many foreign automobiles. Independent experts blame it on populist pledges Lukashenka made during last year's presidential election campaign, rising energy tariffs, and widespread inefficiency in Belarus's state-dominated economy. The reasons for Moscow's apparent about-face have left experts baffled and there has been speculation for weeks that the talks largely cantered on Moscow's desire to purchase key Belarusian state companies, and it is possible those talks broke down.⁷²

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has said that Russia's defence industry has failed to fulfill major weapons contracts, and has warned government and industry officials they will be held responsible. President Medvedev told officials during a televised meeting on May 10 that "The work is going very poorly and slowly," and that "It is unacceptable when decisions are taken – and at the highest level – money is allocated but the product is not delivered." Russia is the world's second-largest arms exporter. Despite that status, however, some analysts say Russia's arms industry has stagnated since the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁷³

Russia's tortured 17-year journey toward accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) seems to be nearing its end. With Washington and the European Union strongly endorsing Russia's bid and pushing for it to happen before the end of the year, the only obstacle remaining, by all appearances, is tiny Georgia. The two countries held a second, inconclusive round of Swiss-mediated talks in Bern last month and have scheduled another meeting for the end of this month. Russia is the largest economy in the world that is not in the global trade body, and Moscow's accession is being advertised as a major achievement for the "reset" of U.S.-Russian relations that was proclaimed in 2009. The sticking point is Tbilisi's insistence that it be able to monitor trade along the borders between Russia and the breakaway Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which Moscow recognized as independent countries following the Russia-Georgia war

⁷² "Russia refuses to bail out the crisis stricken economy of Belarus", *Radio Free Europe*, May 12, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/belarus_rebuffed_by_russia_as_crisis_worsens/24099417.html

⁷³ "Medvedev: Russian defence industry fails to deliver", *Reuters*, May 10, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/medvedev_russian_defense_industry_failing/24097350.html

in 2008. Tbilisi maintains that WTO rules stipulate that members must have control of their own borders. It is a rare instance in which Georgia – which says Russia is illegally occupying 20 percent of its territory – has leverage over its giant neighbour.⁷⁴

Russia has paraded the best of its nuclear armaments and fighting forces to celebrate the 66th anniversary of the World War II victory over Nazi Germany. Some 20,000 troops marched through Red Square saluting President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. The display of advanced military hardware culminated in a display of the latest Topol-M intercontinental ballistic missile launchers. In a speech to the troops and guests, President Dmitry Medvedev said that “today Russia firmly upholds the principles of peaceful cooperation.”⁷⁵

In an apparent sign of Pakistan’s improvement of relationship with Moscow, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari have promised to build up their cooperation in areas of mutual interest. President Medvedev pledged to coordinate efforts in the fight against terrorism, adding: “We have to do everything so that we can jointly counter this main evil of the 21st century.” Russia has signed a new trade and aid agreements, including a plan to modernize a Soviet era steel plant in Pakistan. As the American killing of Osama bin Laden strains relations with the United States, Pakistan’s president is offering Russia a special relationship, saying in one interview, “Tsarist Russia was dreaming about getting access to the southern seas.”

During the four-day visit to Russia, President Zardari also discussed energy cooperation, including Russia’s participation in a proposed natural gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to India that would cross Afghanistan and Pakistan. Tensions also still linger over the Pakistani secret service’s backing of mujahedeen insurgents against Soviet forces in Afghanistan during the 1980s. But at a rare summit in Russia’s Black Sea resort of Sochi last year, which also included Afghanistan and Tajikistan, the four states agreed to pursue joint economic projects to help bring stability to the volatile region.⁷⁶

In another development, Japanese Foreign Ministry has lodged an official protest against the visit of a Russian high-ranking delegation to the disputed Kuril Islands. The Russian delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov visited the island of Kunashir and Iturup on Sunday as part of a working tour around Russia’s Far East. The delegation included Minister of Transport Igor Levitin, Minister of Economic Development Elvira Nabiullina, Minister of Natural Resources Yuri Trutnev, Minister of Regional Development Viktor Basargin, and governor of the Sakhalin region Alexander Khoroshavin. Japan has termed the visit as unacceptable and regretful. Both Japan and Russia have laid claims to the South Kuril Islands, called the Northern Territories by the Japanese,

⁷⁴ Coalson, Robert, “Russia’s 17 year old bid to join the WTO faces one last hurdle”, *Radio Free Europe*, May 9, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/russia_wto_bid_faces_last_hurdle/24095878.html

⁷⁵ “Russia marks victory day with big parade”, *Radio Free Europe*, May 9, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/russia_marks_victory_day_with_big_parade/24095524.html

⁷⁶ “Russia, Pakistan leaders pledge to increase cooperation”, *Radio Free Europe*, May 12, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/russia_pakistan_leaders_pledge_cooperation/24099155.html

since they were annexed by the Soviet Union at the end of World War II. The dispute has prevented the two countries from signing a peace treaty to formally end hostilities.⁷⁷

Reports noted that Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and his Slovenian counterpart Danilo Turk will discuss bilateral relations and urgent global issues during a meeting on 16th May 2011. They plan to discuss possibilities of closer foreign policy cooperation. The presidents are expected to focus on conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa, and issues of European security. The agenda of the talks also includes the review of bilateral economic and cultural ties. Russian-Slovenian trade grew 38 percent in 2010 year-on-year, and the sides are planning to further develop economic cooperation by expanding the presence of Russian investors on the Slovenian energy market through the implementation of the South Stream gas pipeline project in Slovenia. The Kremlin has also said that "traditionally close cultural ties could be expanded through cooperation in the framework of the Forum of Slavic Cultures - an international non-government organization with the headquarters in Ljubljana, established at the initiative of the Russian and Slovenian presidents in order to provide assistance to promote Slavic culture."⁷⁸

In another development, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has sent a letter to the Russia-NATO Council asking for guarantees that the European missile defence project would be safe for Russia. The letter said the European missile defence shield would only be truly effective and feasible if Russia is involved in the project on an equal basis, and asked for reliable guarantees that the missile shield in Europe would not undermine strategic stability or be targeted at any of the parties. After years of dispute over the issue, Russia and NATO agreed to cooperate on the missile defence shield at a summit in Lisbon in November 2010. But the sides remain in dispute over how the shield should be implemented. NATO favours two separate shields which exchange information while Russia is pushing for a joint system. The United States and Romania have announced a deal to deploy missile interceptors in Romania as part of its plan to erect a missile shield over Europe. Russia has criticized the move on the ground that the scheme may compromise its security by weakening its nuclear missile arsenal.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, Russia's Foreign Minister Lavrov has called for negotiations as soon as possible between Libyan rebels and Gadhafi's government and emphasized Moscow's opposition to any foreign interference in Syria or other regional states. In wide-ranging remarks in Kazakhstan, Lavrov also said Iran must engage in "serious conversation" with global powers to dispel concerns it could be seeking nuclear weapons. He suggested that a resolution of the conflict would usher in a new government but that talks with Gadhafi's government were unavoidable. Russia has said that a Western-led coalition conducting airstrikes in Libya is overstepping its UN Security Council mandate to protect civilians, and has vocally opposed foreign intervention in other conflicts

⁷⁷ "Japan protests visit of Russian govt. delegation to Kurils", *Ria Novosti*, May 16, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20110516/164044740.html>

⁷⁸ "Russian, Slovenian Presidents to hold talks in Moscow", *Ria Novosti*, May 16, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20110516/164042647.html>

⁷⁹ "Europe missile shield should be safe for Russia", *Ria Novosti*, May 14, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20110514/164024281.html>

in the Middle East and North Africa. Lavrov said efforts to end bloody confrontation in Syria were complicated by "the desire of some participants in these processes to attract external forces to support their actions. On Iran, which has been involved in a diplomatic to-and-fro with Russia and five other global powers over potential new talks on its nuclear program, he said that Tehran must not avoid questions about activities that fuel suspicion."⁸⁰

In other developments, the Amnesty International has said that the Russian government's rhetoric on freedoms has changed and activism is growing, but police crackdowns on protesters and attacks on journalists have continued in a climate of impunity. The human rights group, in its annual report, also said President Medvedev's efforts to end police violence, legal impunity and unfair detention have been "piecemeal" and done little to curb frequent rights abuses. The Foreign Ministry criticized the report as "politically biased" and accused Amnesty of using rights rhetoric to apply political pressure on the government. In the three years since Medvedev promised to fight graft and widespread flouting of the law, the authorities have voiced more support for freedoms, and people have shown more willingness to fight for their rights, Amnesty said. But the authorities, it said, continue to crack down hard on political opponents and others.⁸¹

D. West Asia

Iran

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **Iran's non-oil exports grown over four times: Iranian President; US Congressional Panel Report: Iran's Al Quds force offers support to Al Qaeda**

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Iran's non-oil exports have grown by over four times in the past five years. He stated that the growth in the volume of non-oil exports in the past years which has now reached dollars 30 billion proves the fact that Iranians "are a capable nation." He also noted the country needed to make a massive move in exploiting its all resources to gain the level of dollars 45 billion in non-oil exports this year. He further referred to the removing problems in the housing sector as the government's major agenda at the meeting with the exemplary and top laborers from all over the country.⁸²

A Congressional panel released a report that alleges that Iran's elite Al Quds force offers support

⁸⁰ "Lavrov calld for Libya talks, warns on Syria", *Reuters*, May 16, 2011, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/lavrov-calls-for-libya-talks-warns-on-syria/436815.html>

⁸¹ "Amnesty sees mixed Kremlin signals", *The Moscow Times*, May 16, 2011, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/amnesty-sees-mixed-kremlin-signals/436811.html>

⁸² "Ahmadinejad: Iran's non-oil exports up by four times in five years," *IRNA*, May 3, 2011, at <http://www.irna.ir/ENNewsShow.aspx?NID=30369229>

to Al Qaeda, adding a new dimension to the militant threat to the United States. The report was released by the caucus after US troops killed Osama bin Laden in a raid in Pakistan that raised fresh doubts about Pakistan's willingness or ability to track down Al Qaeda suspects. "Iran has quietly forged a strong working relationship with core Al-Qaeda's leaders," said the report's author Michael S. Smith II. The report added that "through it, Iran will likely also help Al Qaeda mobilize terrorists to carry out attacks against the US and our allies, providing the support required to extend Al Qaeda's operational reach." The ties date back to the 1990s when Al Quds members worked with the Iranian-backed Hezbollah to train and equip bin Laden's warriors. He cites the 9/11 Commission Report for operational linkages between the two. He also mentioned in report that "since 9/11, these partnerships have become all the more pronounced. Hundreds of al-Qaeda members, along with family members of core Al Qaeda leaders like Osama bin Laden, have found refuge inside Iran."⁸³

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **Iran reveals second and third generation of nuclear centrifuges; Ahmadinejad ignores parliament approval regarding merger of ministers**

According to reports, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has unveiled the second and the third generation of the country's latest nuclear centrifuges. According to Director of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, Fereydoun Abbasi, Iran is currently using the first generation of its centrifuges to produce uranium enriched to the purity level of just below 5 percent. Speaking on the sidelines of the ceremony, Abbasi said efforts should be made to make Iran the hub of nuclear technology. Ahmadinejad also criticized Western countries for adopting double-standard policies, saying the West is causing a commotion at a time when the Bushehr nuclear power plant has not even completely come on stream.⁸⁴

In another development, Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made another bold move in his power struggle with rival conservative by firing three key Cabinet ministers and bypassing several steps that require parliamentary approval. The dismissals are an apparent attempt by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to send a message of defiance to critics in parliament, who are now emboldened after Ahmadinejad lost a humbling confrontation with Iran's supreme leader. A new law requires Ahmadinejad to trim his government from 21 to 17 ministries. Parliament has pushed for the restructuring of the government, which lawmakers say is oversized. Firing the three ministers paves the way for merging several ministries, but plans for the restructuring were supposed to have been drawn up first and approved by parliament. Ahmadinejad and his backers are struggling to regroup after a stinging public rebuke by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei over Iran's intelligence minister, whom Ahmadinejad wanted off his Cabinet. The supreme leader

⁸³ "Report highlights alleged Iran force's Al Qaeda links," *Khaleej Times*, May 5, 2011, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/May/middleeast_May87.xml§ion=middleeast

⁸⁴ "Iran unveils third generation of nuclear centrifuges," *Tehran Times*, May 10, 2011, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/Index_view.asp?code=240256

ordered him reinstated.⁸⁵

Iraq

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **Deadly car bomb killed 24 and wounded 72 in Hilla, South of Baghdad; Gunmen also killed six people in Baquba**

According to the director of Hilla's main surgical hospital, a suicide bomber who drove his bomb-filled car into a police station south of Baghdad killed 24 policemen and wounded 72 others. The latest attack in Hilla, 95 kilometres (60 miles) south of the capital, was the deadliest to hit Iraq in more than a month as security chiefs braced for revenge attacks by Al Qaeda following the death of Osama bin Laden. Medical official also added that among the wounded, 25 remained in serious condition. Hilla lies just beyond the edge of a confessionally mixed area south of the capital that earned the monicker Triangle of Death during the sectarian bloodshed that peaked in Iraq in 2006 and 2007. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack, but security forces nationwide began tightening security in the wake of the bombing.⁸⁶

In another incident, gunmen killed at least six people and wounded ten others in the Iraqi city of Baquba. The attackers killed several merchants and left a car bomb at the scene that detonated when security forces responded to the initial attack. Baquba is the capital of Diyala, a troubled province where al Qaeda and other Sunni Muslim insurgents still battle Iraqi security forces. Iraq became a major battleground for the Islamist militant group after the 2003 US-led invasion that ousted Sunni dictator Saddam Hussein.⁸⁷

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **Iraqi Al-Qaeda extends its support to Al-Zawahri for Osama successor; Iraqi Prime Minister willing to continue US troops for next year**

Al-Qaeda's front group in Iraq reaffirmed its support for the terror network's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahri, a week after US commandos killed Osama bin Laden. Al-Qaeda has not yet announced a successor and there is some uncertainty about whether al-Zawahri will indeed take over for Osama bin Laden. In a statement posted on an insurgent website, the Islamic State of Iraq also taunted President Barack Obama as "the rat in the black house" and said he should remain

⁸⁵ "Iran president sacks 3 ministers in power struggle," *Khaleej Times*, May 14, 2011, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.aspx?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/May/middleeast_May340.xml§ion=middleeast

⁸⁶ "Iraq suicide car bomb killed 24 police," *Khaleej Times*, May 6, 2011, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.aspx?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/May/middleeast_May111.xml§ion=middleeast

⁸⁷ "Six killed, 10 wounded in attack in Iraq's Baquba," *Khaleej Times*, May 7, 2011, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.aspx?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/May/middleeast_May145.xml§ion=middleeast

fearful of bin Laden's promise to threaten the United States. The statement amounts to an official letter of condolence for bin Laden, was signed by Abu Bakr al-Husseini al-Baghdadi, a pseudonym for the anonymous new leader of al-Qaida's front group in Iraq. Al-Qaida in Iraq has by and large limited its attacks to its home country.⁸⁸

In another development, Iraq's Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki said that he would be willing to ask thousands of American troops to remain in the country next year as long as the main political parties back the idea. He said reporters that he will meet the country's political leaders soon to gauge support for having US troops stay beyond a December withdrawal deadline. The issue of the US troops staying has sharply divided Iraqis who face deadly security threats every day but want to assert independence more than eight years after the 2003 US military invasion. Sunni and Kurdish leaders generally want US troops to continue protecting the country. But hardline Shiites who helped al-Maliki get a second term have threatened to revolt if American soldiers remain.⁸⁹

Syria

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **Bahrain conveys full support to Syria; Syrians protest against French government's stance regarding events in Syria; Syria and Lebanon discuss ways to boost agriculture cooperation; European Council on International Relations, and International Relations and Economic Cooperation Institute express support to Syria**

According to reports, Bahraini Foreign Minister Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, during his meeting with President al-Assad, conveyed King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's message regarding his country's full support to Syria's security and stability, and for reforms led by its President Bashar al-Assad. The meeting between the foreign minister and the President dealt with the current situation in the region, especially in Bahrain and Syria, and the importance of continuing consultations between the two countries on the issues on the Arab and international arenas.⁹⁰

However, many Syrian protesters gathered in front of the French Embassy in Damascus, in protest against the French stances regarding recent developments in some Syrian cities and conveyed the message of protest against the statements of the French officials against Syria. The protestors held banners reading, "We will not react in kind... We, the Syrians, are civilized".⁹¹

⁸⁸ "Al-Qaeda in Iraq pledges support for al-Zawahri," *Khaleej Times*, May 10, 2011, http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/May/middleeast_May200.xml§ion=middleeast

⁸⁹ "Iraqi PM seeks political support to keep US," *Khaleej Times*, May 11, 2011, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/May/middleeast_May239.xml§ion=middleeast

⁹⁰ "President al-Assad Receives Message from King of Bahrain", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 8, 2011 <http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2011/05/08/345344.htm>

⁹¹ "Hundreds of Syrians Protest against French Government Stances Concerning Events in Syria", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 6, 2011 <http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2011/05/06/345081.htm>

In another development, Syrian Minister of Agriculture Riad Hijab discussed with Secretary General of Syrian-Lebanese Higher Council Nasri al-Khouri cooperation between Syria and Lebanon, particularly in agriculture and animal wealth. "Agriculture in Syria is the backbone of economy, it mainly contributes to increasing the national domestic production," Hijab said.⁹² Al-Khouri pointed out the necessity of developing agriculture cooperation between the two countries and boosting joint projects in this domain.

In other developments, the European Council on International Relations and the International Relations and Economic Cooperation Institute, in a message, expressed support and solidarity with Syria against the incitement campaign targeting the nation which includes all forms of lies, fact-twisting and manipulation of the events which took place in Syria. The message was conveyed by President of the ECIR and Director of IIREC Anton Caragea to the Syrian Embassy in Bucharest. It included a statement issued at the conclusion of an extraordinary meeting held jointly by the Council and the Institute board of directors on April 27-28, which sent a strong message of support to the Syrian people and its national unity.⁹³

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **Ex-offender Rami Mwaffaq Radwan confesses guilt ; Security forces confront with armed criminal elements in Telkalakh; Syrians express rejection of foreign intervention in Syrian affairs; Syrian PM and FAO discuss joint cooperation**

The Syrian TV broadcasted confessions of ex-offender Rami Mwaffaq Radwan, who admitted rioting, terrorising citizens and opening fire on them and sabotaging public and private properties along with a group of rioters. Radwan later surrendered to the security forces to benefit from the amnesty announced by the Interior Ministry to those who participated in unlawful acts if they give themselves up to police.⁹⁴

Meanwhile, according to a military source, armed criminal elements assaulted civilians, attacked border guard posts, vandalized public properties, erected blockades in al-Arida area in Telkalakh, and terrorised inhabitants and locals, which necessitated the intervention of the army. As a result of the confrontation, two members of the army and security forces lost their lives and 11 were injured, while a number of armed criminals were either killed or injured.⁹⁵ The confrontation also resulted in large number of guns, sniper rifles and ammunition being seized.

⁹² "Syria and Lebanon to boost agriculture cooperation", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 4, 2011 <http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2011/05/04/344870.htm>

⁹³ "European Council on International Relations, International Relations and Economic Cooperation Institute Express Support to Syria", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 5, 2011 <http://www.sana.sy/eng/22/2011/05/05/345100.htm>

⁹⁴ "Ex-Offender Confesses Rioting, Sabotaging and Shooting in Damascus Countryside", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 15, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/337/2011/05/15/346780.htm>

⁹⁵ "2 Army and Security Forces Members Martyred, 11 Wounded during Confrontation with Armed Criminal Elements in Telkalakh", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 16, 2011 <http://www.sana.sy/eng/337/2011/05/16/346993.htm>

In another development, hundreds of Syrians gathered in front of the European Commission to condemn the European intervention in Syria's internal affairs. They handed over a statement to commission in which they expressed condemnation of the stances of EU governments over the events in Syria. They also denounced the EU bias through ignoring the existence of armed terrorist groups and their acts of terrorising citizens, undermining the national economy and their attempts to undermine the national unity among the Syrian people.⁹⁶

In other developments, Syrian Prime Minister Adel Safar held meeting with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) representative in Syria, Abdulla Tahir Bin Yehia and discussed the prospects of joint cooperation to support the agricultural and social development. They also discussed possibilities of benefiting from the scientific and agricultural experiments in developing and increasing production capabilities as well as introducing new agricultural crops in Syria.⁹⁷

Libya

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **France expels 14 Libyan diplomats loyal to Gaddafi; Meeting of tribal leaders called for ending armed uprising in Libya**

According to reports, French foreign ministry has ordered 14 people who served as Libyan diplomats and were loyal to Libyan leader Muammar Al Gaddafi to leave the country within 48 hours. It has declared these ex-diplomats as persona non grata indicating that France no longer recognizes their diplomatic status.⁹⁸

Separately, in Rome, members from the 22-nation Contact Group on Libya agreed to set up an internationally-monitored fund that the rebels can access to provide basic services to the Libyan people. These countries have already pledged \$250 million in humanitarian aid. The United States announced that it would free nearly \$30 billion frozen Libyan assets, while others agreed to start a new fund to supply food and medicines for civilians.⁹⁹

Meanwhile, Russia reiterated its opposition to any foreign ground operation in Libya and criticised the Western-led grouping that has pledged aid to the rebels. The Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was quoted as saying that the UN Security Council resolution that authorised military intervention in Libya 'directly and unequivocally rules out' ground operations.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ "Hundreds of Syrians gather outside European Commission, Express Rejection of Foreign Intervention in Syria's Affairs", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 15, 2011 <http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2011/05/15/346979.htm>

⁹⁷ "Safar, FAO Discuss Cooperation", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 16, 2011 at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2011/05/16/347080.htm>

⁹⁸ "France Expels 14 Libyan Diplomats", *The Tripoli Post*, May 6, 2011 <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=5975>

⁹⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*

A meeting of tribal leaders, labeled as “the National Conference of the Tribes of Libya”, from government-controlled areas of Libya in Tripoli called for an end to an armed uprising against the Libyan leader, Muammar al Gaddafi and for NATO to halt airstrikes on the regime’s forces. Reports noted that the aim of the meeting was to show a nationwide support for the leader wherein English and Arabic signs on the cloth walls read, “Stop the War,” “Libya First,” and “No War for Oil”.¹⁰¹

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **Libya bombards residential area outside Misrata; UK Military Chief: NATO must intensify military campaign in Libya**

Libyan government forces bombarded a residential area outside Misrata, while rebels were trying to maintain their grip on the city in the face of a fierce onslaught. Rebel council spokesperson Ibrahim Betalmal in Misrata called on Gadhafi forces to abandon the eight-week-old battle. Nonetheless, fresh battles erupted in Souk Al Arab south of the city and at Al Ghiran near the city’s airport, a rebel spokesperson said. On the other hand, NATO carried out missile strikes in the Tripoli area on targets that appeared to include Gadhafi’s compound. NATO said later that it carried out a strike against a government command and control facility in downtown Tripoli.¹⁰²

In another development, the head of the British armed forces, General Sir David Richards opined that the NATO must intensify its military campaign in Libya by easing restrictions on bombing targets. He told that direct attacks should be launched against the infrastructure supporting the Libyan leader’s regime. Meanwhile, British Defence Secretary Liam Fox was quoted as saying that there had already been an extension of the targeting in Libya. On the other hand, former NATO commander Rear Admiral Chris Parry said the military plan had been made too hastily.¹⁰³

Egypt

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **Clashes erupt in Egypt after rumour about religious conversion; Iran and Egypt discuss bilateral ties and the Palestinian issue**

Twelve died and 232 injured in Imbaba clashes, which were fueled by a rumour that a Christian woman who converted to Islam was being abducted inside Marimina Church in a Cairo suburb. According to reports, among those killed were four Christians and six Muslims, while two other

¹⁰¹ “Libyan Tribes Call for End to Armed Uprising”, *The Tripoli Post*, May 6, 2011 <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=5974>

¹⁰² “Libya bombards residential area”, *The Jordan Times*, May 11, 2011 <http://jordantimes.com/index.php?news=37361>

¹⁰³ “UK Military Chief Says NATO ‘Must Widen’ Libya Targets”, *The Tripoli Post*, May 15, 2011 <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=6014>

bodies were still unidentified. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces said that 190 people were arrested and would be tried in front of a military court.¹⁰⁴

In another development, Egypt's government announced tough measures to curb religious violence. According to reports, the fighting threw a new challenge for generals ruling the country since the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak in February. Further, Egypt's highest religious authority, Al Azhar, held an emergency meeting to discuss the clashes, and the Grand Mufti called for a conference of national reconciliation. The governor of Giza province, where the church is situated, said relatives of the dead and injured would receive financial compensation.¹⁰⁵

In other developments, reports noted that Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi held discussions with his Egyptian counterpart Nabil Al-Araby regarding "latest developments in bilateral ties" and the Palestinian issue.¹⁰⁶

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **Egypt confirmed as the Arab League's Next Chief**

Egypt's foreign minister Nabil Al Arabi was confirmed as the Arab League's next chief after last minute diplomacy left him as the only candidate in the race. Nabil Al Arabi will take over from Amr Musa, another former Egyptian foreign minister who led the League for 10 years.¹⁰⁷ Arabi was a former judge at the International Court of Justice and previously Egypt's representative at the United Nations.

Israel

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **Ban Ki-moon calls on Israel to give Palestinian deal a chance; EU stresses Israel must resolve Palestinian tax row**

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to give the new Palestinian unity deal a chance to lead to a historic peace accord. According to UN spokesman Martin Nesirky, the Secretary General also spoke against Israel's move to freeze payments to the Palestinian Authority after President Mahmoud Abbas signed a

¹⁰⁴ "12 dead, 232 injured and 190 arrested in Imbaba violence", *Daily News Egypt*, May 8, 2011 <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/crime-a-accidents/12-dead-232-injured-and-190-arrested-in-imbaba-violence-dp1.html>

¹⁰⁵ "Egypt vows tough measures after 12 die in religious strife", *The Jordan Times*, May 9, 2011 <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=37281>

¹⁰⁶ "Iran and Egypt discuss ties, Palestinians", *Daily News Egypt*, May 3, 2011 <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/egypt/iran-and-egypt-discuss-ties-palestinians.html>

¹⁰⁷ "Egypt to lead Arab League amid regional turmoil", *The Jordan Times*, May 16, 2011 <http://jordantimes.com/?news=37521>

reconciliation deal with the militant Hamas group which controls Gaza. Further, Ban Ki-moon reaffirmed UN support for Palestinian unity under the leadership of Abbas and in line with the diplomatic Quartet demand that the Palestinians renounce violence and recognise Israel, the spokesman added.¹⁰⁸

In another development, the EU demanded that Israel should find a “permanent solution” for the Palestinian tax transfers, after Israel criticised the EU for granting fresh aid in the wake of a Fateh-Hamas unity agreement that saw Israel freeze payments. Earlier, the EU decided to boost aid to the Palestinians by 85 million euros, essentially to cover public sector salaries after Israel halted the transfer of tax revenues.¹⁰⁹

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **Clashes between Israeli occupation army and civilian demonstrators left many killed and several injured; The incident receives wide criticism**

According to reports, ‘Israeli occupation army’ opened fire on Syrian, Palestinian, Lebanese civilian demonstrators who were celebrating the 63rd anniversary of al-Nakba Day, with participants denouncing the Israeli occupation policies and stressing the need to end occupation and adhere to the right to return. In the firing, a number of civilian demonstrators were killed, and many others wounded, few of them in critical conditions. In Ein al-Tineh in Quneitra province and Majdal Shams in the Occupied Syrian Golan, two citizens were killed and 170 others wounded in the attack. According to Palestinian sources, in Gaza, one Palestinian was killed and 160 were injured by Israeli artillery fire that targeted areas near Beit Hanoun crossing point north of Gaza Strip and near Kalandia crossing point in occupied Jerusalem. Further, reports from Lebanon noted that 10 people were killed and 112 injured in the firing at Palestinian demonstrators in Maroun al-Ras area in southern Lebanon.¹¹⁰

Reacting to the situation, Syria condemned Israel’s criminal practices against the people in Golan, Palestine and South Lebanon, an official source at the Foreign and Expatriates Ministry said. It also demanded that the international community hold Israel fully accountable for its practices.¹¹¹ Meanwhile, Lebanese designate Prime Minister Najib Mikati denounced the Israeli aggressive practices and massacres against unarmed protestors, saying that through these actions, Israel wanted to relay a message to the international community that it is above reproach, accountability and denouncement. The Arab League also condemned the Israeli occupation’s crimes against

¹⁰⁸ “UN chief calls on Israel to give Palestinian deal a chance”, *The Jordan Times*, May 8, 2011 <http://jordantimes.com/?news=37231>

¹⁰⁹ “Israel must resolve Palestinian tax row – EU”, *The Jordan Times*, May 9, 2011 <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=37256>

¹¹⁰ “Israeli occupation army opens live fire on Syrian, Palestinian, Lebanese civilian demonstrators on al-Nakba Day”, *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 16, 2011 <http://www.sana.sy/eng/22/2011/05/16/346893.htm>

¹¹¹ “Foreign Ministry: Syria Condemns Israel’s Criminal Practices in Golan, Palestine and South Lebanon”, *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 16, 2011 <http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2011/05/16/346925.htm>

Arab demonstrators in Golan, Palestine and Southern Lebanon with Assistant Secretary General for Palestine and Occupied Arab Lands Affairs, Ambassador Mohammad Sbeih, decrying the occupation's forces aggression and opening fire against unarmed civilians in Maroun al-Ras, the occupied Syrian Golan, Beit Hanoun and the West Bank.¹¹²

In a statement by Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil al-Arabi, Egypt voiced its full support of the Palestinian people's right to defend their cause, saying that Israel's oppression of peaceful demonstrations shows that it doesn't understand the changes taking place in the region. Separately, in a statement, Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Major-General Alberto Asarta, described the events that took place in Maroun al-Ras and the Israeli forces' attack against Lebanese and Palestinian civilians as grave, calling for exerting self-control to prevent any more injuries and affirming that UNFIL will maintain its presence to support the Lebanese Armed Forces.¹¹³

Palestine

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **Hamas edges towards tacit acceptance of Israel**

Reports noted that even as Israel rejected any dialogue with the Palestinians after a unity deal with Hamas, the Islamic group has been slowly moving towards a tacit acceptance of Israel. Despite being officially dedicated to "liberating all of Palestine", Hamas leader Khaled Mishaal mentioned there was a broad consensus on the 1967 borders among Palestinian groups, implying a tacit acceptance of a Palestinian state alongside Israel.¹¹⁴

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **Arab Parliament, General Authority of Palestinian Arab Refugees sought support for Palestinians in their right to return**

The Arab Parliament Speaker Ali Salem Al Deqbasi called on the world parliaments and the international, Arab and regional organisations to support the Palestinian people in restoring their legitimate and just rights, according to the international legitimacy resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. Director General of the General Authority of Palestinian Arab Refugees, Ali Mustafa stated that, "the international community has to shoulder its responsibility and take critical procedures to protect the Palestinian refugees from Israel's aggression".¹¹⁵

¹¹² *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 16, 2011, no.1

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Selim Saheb Etaba (2011), "Hamas edges towards tacit acceptance of Israel", *Agence France-Presse*, quoted in *The Jordan Times*, May 8, 2011 <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=37228>

¹¹⁵ "Arab Parliament, General Authority of Palestinian Arab Refugees Stress Palestinians Have Right to Return", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, May 16, 2011 <http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2011/05/16/347133.htm>

Jordan

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **Jordan preparing to join the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC); Jordan and Bahrain discuss relations with Gulf; Jordan King visits Washington to discuss latest developments in the Middle East**

Jordanian Prime Minister Marouf Bakhit noted that he has tasked several ministers to prepare special studies on Jordan's accession to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). At the same time, he pointed out that measures to complete membership requirements will take a long time and it is too early to talk about the benefits of the move. On its part, the GCC welcomed bids by Jordan and Morocco to join the bloc after a summit in Riyadh.¹¹⁶

Meanwhile, according to a Royal Court statement, Jordan King Abdullah and Bahrain's King Hamad Ben Isa Al Khalifa discussed the Kingdom's relations with the Gulf States and about the means to boost it further. They also looked into bilateral ties and regional developments, the statement added.¹¹⁷

In another development, Jordan King Abdullah began an official visit to Washington on May 15, during which he proposed to meet US President Barack Obama and discuss the latest developments in the Middle East. According to a Royal Court statement, discussions also scheduled to cover efforts to bring about peace in the Middle East based on the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, in addition to bilateral ties and prospects for further cooperation. The King is also scheduled to meet several US media, intellectual and political figures at the Brookings Institute, where he proposed to highlight the latest developments witnessed in the region and ways to arrive at peace based on the two-state formula.¹¹⁸

Yemen

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **Yemen: Ten persons killed by Al-Qaeda to avenge Bin Laden's killing by USA in Pakistan**

At least 10 people including five soldiers were killed and more than 20 were injured when gunmen believed to be Al Qaeda members attacked two security patrols in the southern province of Abyan on May 4, 2011. The attack in the province of Abyan, which was declared as an Islamic state by Al Qaeda, came only one day after some of Al Qaeda leaders in the south vowed to take revenge for

¹¹⁶ Obeidat, Omar (2011), "Team working on GCC membership procedures", *The Jordan Times*, May 16, 2011 <http://jordantimes.com/?news=37524>

¹¹⁷ "King, Bahrain ruler discuss Kingdom's relations with Gulf", *The Jordan Times*, May 11, 2011 at <http://jordantimes.com/index.php?news=37358>

¹¹⁸ "King arrives in Washington", *The Jordan Times*, May 15, 2011, at <http://jordantimes.com/index.php?news=37475>

their top leader Osama bin Laden who was killed by the American forces in Pakistan. According to eyewitnesses masked Al Qaeda terrorists fired missiles at a patrol car in the market of Qat in Zinjubar, the capital of Abyan killing four soldiers and injuring two others. The same gunmen fired at another patrol car killing one soldier and injuring two others. The terrorists then fired randomly at the people in the market killing three persons and injuring about 20 others some of them seriously.¹¹⁹

E. USA

(May 2-8, 2011)

● US Pakistan relations under stress after Osama killing

Reports noted that after a week since Osama bin Laden was killed by US forces, the US has started asking Pakistan some tough questions regarding bin Laden's stay in Abbotabad. President Obama has now asked Pakistan to give access to bin Laden's wife for investigation, who was injured during the fire fight on May 2, 2011. US has also been putting pressure on Pakistan to explain the fact that bin Laden was living in a mansion in the garrison city of Abbotabad. This has further put pressure on the US – Pakistan relations which have been under stress for a while. "The United States government is demanding to know whether, and to what extent, Pakistani government, intelligence or military officials were complicit in hiding Bin Laden. His widows could be critical to that line of inquiry because they might have information about the comings and goings of people who were aiding him."¹²⁰ To add to the problems, "Pakistani media on Saturday once again publicly named the CIA station chief in Islamabad, a breach of both protocol and trust that is bound to enrage Washington."¹²¹

(May 9-15, 2011)

● US - Pakistan Relations tensed as many questions remains unanswered regarding Osama's killing

In the aftermath of Osama bin Laden's killing in Abbotabad, the situation remains tense between US and Pakistan. There many questions regarding Osama bin Laden's stay within Pakistan that remain unanswered and US – Pakistan relations are under a lot of stress. Senator John Kerry

¹¹⁹ "Al-Qaeda kills Yemen soldiers to avenge Bin laden", *Yemen Observer*, May 4, 2011, at <http://www.yobserver.com/local-news/10021158.html>

¹²⁰ "US Raises Pressure on Pakistan in Raid's Wake", *The New York Times*, May 8, 2011 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/09/world/asia/09donilon.html>

¹²¹ "Pakistan breaches trust, names local CIA boss", *Times of India*, May 8, 2011 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-05-08/us/29522504_1_cia-station-osama-pakistani-military-intelligence-establishment

commented that this was the most critical juncture for US – Pakistan relations. “Kerry, who spoke in Afghanistan before traveling to Pakistan, said sober and serious discussion was needed to resolve the widening rift amid growing suspicion that Pakistan’s security forces were complicit in harboring the al-Qaida leader.”¹²² There have already been bitter exchanges in public between Pakistan and the US, where Pakistan warned US of retaliation in the future, if operation similar to ‘Geronimo’ were conducted. On the other hand, the US has expressed its intention to pursue such actions if the situation required it to do so. To make matters worse for Pakistan, the commencement of the trial of Tahawwur Rana, a co – accused in the Mumbai attacks, in Chicago may further reveal ISI’s ties to various militant and terrorist networks. “A growing chorus on Capitol Hill argues that the discovery of Bin Laden’s hideout and the evidence in Headley’s case leave no doubt that the ISI and its Pakistani military overseers have played a cynical double game with the United States. Pakistan has received \$20 billion in military and development assistance since 2001, and its military, they say, has sheltered Bin Laden, supported Afghan Taliban who kill American troops and guided the militants who attacked Mumbai.”¹²³

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **Indian Navy comes to the rescue of Chinese vessel and crew; Indian Army broadens the Srinagar-Leh national highway to facilitate T-72 tank movement**

Indian naval warships and aircraft successfully thwarted an attack by Somali pirates on a Chinese cargo ship with 24 crew members on board in the Arabian Sea. The operation was carried out by the Indian maritime forces in coordination with the NATO and Chinese task forces on anti-piracy patrol in the Indian Ocean region highlighting the international cooperation in the anti-piracy efforts in the Indian Ocean. The Chinese-owned bulk carrier, MV Full City, came under siege from the pirates at 8.45am on Thursday about 450 nautical miles (850 km) west of Karwar in Karnataka. On receiving the distress call, Indian Navy and Coast Guard ships patrolling in the vicinity rushed to its help, even as the navy’s TU-142 maritime reconnaissance aircraft flew to the spot in 30 minutes and carried out several low passes over the merchant vessel, warning the pirates to abandon their attempt to hijack the Panama-flagged vessel. The Indian Navy has, since January, sunk four pirate mother ships in the Arabian Sea, apart from capturing 120 brigands and

¹²² “Kerry: US – Pakistan alliance at ‘critical moment”, *The Washington Post*, May 15, 2011 at http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/kerry-us-pakistan-alliance-at-critical-moment/2011/05/16/AFiHMn4G_video.html

¹²³ Ginger Thompson and David Rohde. *Chicago Trial May Unmask Pakistan’s Links to Militants*. The New York Times. May 14, 2011.

jailing them in India. There has been a drop of over 80 percent in the number of pirate attacks in the eastern Arabian Sea. In April, there was not a single reported pirate attack in the eastern Arabian Sea.¹²⁴

In another development, the Indian Army has broadened the Srinagar-Leh national highway for the passage of T-72 tanks. Srinagar-Leh road passes through Zojila pass which is prone to avalanches. The Indian Army is hoping to build an all weather road in the near future. The work was carried out by the 32 Border Roads Task Force (BRTF) and 122 RCC. T-72's are already being used in Ladakh as it is flat. The use of the tank is not extensive as the road travel was not possible and bringing in these tanks by air was cumbersome. The move is seen as countering Chinese activity in the Ladakh sector.¹²⁵

(May 9-15, 2011)

● **DRDO Interceptor Missile with 5,000 Km range to be ready by 2016; Biggest Indo-US Defence Deal in the offing**

India has started working on a network of air-defence systems which would be able to shoot down any enemy missile even at a distance of 5,000 kms, before it can enter the Indian air space. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has already developed a missile that can intercept an incoming aerial threat 2,000 kms away under the Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) System and is now working on the second phase. The 5,000 kms interceptor missile is targeted to be ready by 2016. "It is well on schedule and we are already on initial design and testing stage," DRDO chief V K Saraswat said. "Presently, our missiles are designed to engage targets within 2,000 km range. Later on, we will be making 5,000 km range class of interceptor missiles. That will be Phase-II of the BMD system," he added. Phase-II will have 80 per cent indigenous component. Mr. Saraswat also stressed the indigenous factor and said that "international collaboration is only to accelerate our own development process."¹²⁶

Meanwhile, after rejecting the American fighters out of the \$11 billion MMRCA contract to supply 126 medium multi-role combat aircraft, India seems to be ready for the biggest ever Indo-US defence deal: the \$4.1 billion contract for 10 C-17 Globemaster-III giant strategic airlift aircraft. The Globemaster deal will be a direct government-to-government contract under the American FMS (Foreign Military Sales) programme and will get the final nod from the Cabinet Committee on Security (India) within this month. All outstanding issues connected to costing and offsets under which Boeing will invest 30% of the contract value which is around \$1.23 billion back in

¹²⁴ "Indian Navy thwarts pirate attack; rescues Chinese vessel, crew", *The Times of India*, May 6, 2011, at <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/NEWS/newsrf.php?newsid=14718>

¹²⁵ "Srinagar-Leh national Highway Broadened For T-72 Tank Movement", *Defence News*, May 2, 2011, at <http://www.defencenews.in/defence-news-internal.asp?get=new&id=453>

¹²⁶ "India developing interceptor missile with 5,000 km range", *The Times of India*, May 15, 2011, at <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/NEWS/newsrf.php?newsid=14749>

India have been resolved. The deal will bolster the Indian Air Force which urgently needs to augment its strategic airlift capability to swiftly move combat systems and troops over large national and international distances to counter growing Chinese threats.¹²⁷

International

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **No Downsizing of Chinese Military; Pakistan Army Chief talks tough over unapproved raids**

China's military has dismissed as rumours recent online reports that it plans to downsize its personnel by eight lakhs, saying the current size of the force was "appropriate". A senior officer of the General Staff Headquarters of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) said on Saturday that the recent online rumours about PLA's disarmament was "not true," according to the Chinese Defence Ministry website. There has been speculation on the internet recently that the PLA would reduce the number of its military personnel by 800,000 as a part of its ongoing modernization efforts. "Such rumours are not true," official Xinhua news agency quoted the unnamed officer as saying¹²⁸.

Meanwhile, in a face saving exercise Pakistan's top army commanders have warned the US that they will review their military and intelligence co-operation with Washington if the US carries out operations similar to the 1 May killing of Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden by US Navy SEALs in the northern city of Abbottabad. "The Chief of Army Staff made it very clear that any similar action, violating the sovereignty of Pakistan, will warrant a review on the level of military/intelligence co-operation with the United States," a Pakistan Army statement said after General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani, the Chief of Army Staff, chaired a meeting of the army's top commanders in Rawalpindi on 5 May. An analysis of the statement throws sufficient light on the limitations of the Pakistani State to deal with the US as a sovereign nation¹²⁹.

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **Russian anti-aircraft missile system S-400 Triumph on combat duty; China Military Chief to visit US**

Russia has placed the second regiment on a permanent combat alert for operating its newest Russian anti-aircraft missile system S-400 Triumph. In 2007, the first regiment equipped with the

¹²⁷ "Decks Cleared for Biggest Indo-US Defence Deal", Defence News, May 13, 2011, at <http://www.defencenews.in/defence-news-internal.asp?get=new&id=463>

¹²⁸ "China dismisses rumours to downsize its military", May 08, 2011, at <http://www.brahmand.com/news/China-dismisses-rumours-to-downsize-its-military/6972/1/13.html>

¹²⁹ "Pakistan Army chief warns US over unapproved raids", IHS Jane's, 5/6/2011, at <http://www.janes.com/products/janes/defence-security-report.aspx?ID=1065929528&channel=defence>

S-400 system was placed on permanent combat alert in the town of Elektrostal, Moscow. The Russian Defence Ministry also have plans to re-equip all the air defence regiments for operating the S-400 missile complexes by 2020. The system is designed to incapacitate the electronic countermeasures aircraft, radar surveillance and guidance planes, other types of aircraft, tactical and medium-range ballistic missiles, hypersonic objects and other prospective air assault vehicles. The S-400 Triumph system is capable of destroying the aircraft based on Stealth technologies, small-size cruise missiles and combat blocks flying at a speed of up to 4.8 kilometers per second at distances of up to 400 kilometers.¹³⁰

In a significant development, the U.S is looking forward to the Chinese Military Chief's week-long visit to the country to forge a defense dialogue with Beijing despite tensions and mutual distrust. People's Liberation Army (PLA) Chief of General Staff Chen Bingde starts a week-long visit on May 15 to the United States, the first trip to America by the country's top-ranking officer in seven years. Military relations between the nations have been strained and lagged behind diplomatic and trade ties, with Beijing objecting to U.S. arms sales to Taiwan while Washington has voiced concern about China's military buildup. The last U.S. visit by a senior leader from the PLA was in 2009, when Gen. Xu Caihou came to Washington and toured military bases. Chen's visit comes after the United States said on May 11 that it wanted to set guidelines with Beijing on the use of space, voicing worries that the Asian power is increasingly able to destroy or jam satellites.¹³¹

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **Two more arrested in Moulana Showkat Shah's killing; Encounters occurred in Poonch; Ceasefire violated by Pakistan troops; Two Hizbul Mujahideen militants held by Police; Poonch operations end but five militants escape**

Reports noted that during investigation into the assassination of Jamiat-Ahl-e-Hadith (JAH) President Moulana Showkat Shah, police have arrested two more persons. Police sources have hinted that they are expecting another major arrest in connection with the case.¹³²

¹³⁰ "Russia placed its anti-aircraft missile on combat duty", Brahmand.com, May 16, 201, at: <http://www.brahmand.com/news/Russia-placed-its-anti-aircraft-missile-on-combat-duty/7032/1/13.html>

¹³¹ "U.S. Rolls Out Red Carpet for China Military Chief", Agence France-Presse, 14 May 201, at <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=6502345&c=AME&s=TOP>

¹³² "2 More Arrested", Greater Kashmir, May 1, 2011 at <http://greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/May/2-2-more-arrested-59.asp>

In another development, in Poonch district forces zeroed in on two militants held up in a house. Forces and police laid cordon around the house before dawn in Mankot-Nar area of Poonch. While in another operation troops and the Special Operation Group (SOG) of Police launched a cordon and search operation to track down a group of three militants in Bafliaz Dogra area of Poonch district.¹³³

According to reports, Indian Army claimed that the Pakistani troops fired rocket propelled grenades and opened fire from Medium Machine Guns (MMGs) and small arms on Indian posts along the Line of Control in Poonch district.¹³⁴ Meanwhile, two militants of Hizbul Mujahideen were arrested by police, CRPF's 45th Battalion and soldiers of Army's 29 RR at Andergam Pattan in Baramulla.¹³⁵

In other developments, at least five militants, held up in Mendhar and Surankote tehsils of the frontier district, managed to give a slip to the forces. In another operation, soldiers and the personnel of Special Operation Group (SOG) of police launched a cordon and search operation to track down a group of three militants in Bafliaz Dorga area of Poonch district. Three militants were believed to be trapped. Despite massive searches, which concluded there was no trace of the militants. It is believed that the militants may have managed to escape under the cover of darkness and thick forest area.¹³⁶

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **An open fire by the force personnel left a student hurt; Gunfight left soldier dead; Army waiting for Omar's response on AFSPA; One BSF personnel shot dead; Bomb blast near Northern Command Headquarters; Panchayat candidate shot; Police held 5 Hizb militants**

According to reports, in the Kupawara district, a student was injured when force personnel opened fire at him though officials said that student was wounded in an accidental fire. According to the locals force personnel fired upon Ishfaq Ahmad Ganai, a class 12th student.¹³⁷ In another incident, a soldier was killed when militants opened fire on a search party in the frontier district of Kupwara. Militants opened fire at the soldiers near Dursa holab.¹³⁸

¹³³ "Encounters in Poonch", *Greater Kashmir*, May 7, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/May/8/encounters-in-poonch-30.asp>

¹³⁴ "Pakistan troops violate ceasefire", *Greater Kashmir*, May 5, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/May/6/jammu.asp>

¹³⁵ "2 HM militants held: Police", *Greater Kashmir*, May 2, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/May/3/2-hm-militants-held-police-35.asp>

¹³⁶ "Poonch operations end, 5 militants escape", *Greater Kashmir*, May 8, 2011 at <http://greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/May/9/poonch-operations-end-5-militants-escape-31.asp>

¹³⁷ "Student injured in gunfight", *Greater Kashmir*, May 13, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/ShowStoryLatest.asp?NewsID=2243>

¹³⁸ "Soldiers killed in gunfight", *Greater Kashmir*, May 13, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/ShowStoryLatest.asp?NewsID=2242>

Reports noted that Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is still yet to give a response on the recommendation given by the Army on the applicability of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA).¹³⁹

In an exchange of fire with Pakistani troops in Jammu sector along the International Border a paramilitary BSF man was killed. The patrolling party of BSF along the international border in Budhwar area of Suchelgarh was fired by Pakistani snipers.¹⁴⁰ While, a car bomb blast happened near Northern Command headquarters in Udhampur and arrested a government official for assisting Lashkar-e-Toiba militant to execute the task.¹⁴¹

In other developments, unidentified gunmen in Sopore town of North Kashmir's Baramulla district shot at a Sarpanch candidate who got injured in it. The pistol borne gunmen fled the scene after shooting Chopan from very close range.¹⁴² While, five Hizbul Mujahideen militants who were allegedly involved in a series of grenade attacks on forces and recruiting school boys for militant activities in Pattan area were arrested by armed forces. The militants were arrested during an investigation into gunshots heard in Pattan.¹⁴³

North East India

(May 2-8, 2011)

- **Arunachal CM Dorjee Khandu dead; Arunachal's new CM Gamlin takes over; NDFB militants arrested; Stone crushers targeted by Manipur militants; ULFA (anti-talks) hits out at Mrinal Hazarika; Peace accord implemented in Tripura**

In a tragic development, five days of speculations hanging precariously on a thin veil of hope faded away with confirmation that the missing chopper carrying Chief Minister Dorjee Khandu and four others had actually crashed in the rugged terrains of Keyla, near Luguthang in Tawang. Union DONER Minister Bijoy Krishna Handique confirmed identification of the body first by an Anchal Samiti Member Thupten from Keyla village of Khandu's Mukto constituency.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ "Omar yet to respond on AFSPA: Army", *Greater Kashmir*, May 14, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/May/15/omar-yet-to-respond-on-afspa-army-63.asp>

¹⁴⁰ "BSF man killed", *Greater Kashmir*, May 14, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/May/15/bsf-man-killed-47.asp>

¹⁴¹ "Car bomb blast near Northern Command hqrs", *Greater Kashmir*, May 11, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/may/12/car-bomb-blast-near-northern-command-hqrs-59.asp>

¹⁴² "Panchayat candidate shot", *Greater Kashmir*, May 10, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/May/11/panchayat-candidate-shot-29.asp>

¹⁴³ "5 Hizb militants held: Police", *Greater Kashmir*, May 10, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/May/11/5-hizb-militants-held-police-53.asp>

¹⁴⁴ "A glorious chapter comes to an end", *The Sentinel*, May 4, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/arunachal/story.php?sec=2&subsec=7&id=73769&dtP=2011-05-05&ppr=1#73769>

Veteran Congress leader Jarbom Gamlin has taken over from where Dorjee Khandu left. He was sworn in as the 6th Chief Minister of the State by Governor Gen J J Singh at Raj Bhavan in a simple ceremony. Gamlin was holding the Power (Electrical), Tourism and Parliamentary Affairs portfolios under the Khandu government. He was also the government spokesperson.¹⁴⁵

Reports noted that two suspected NDFB militants were arrested in Golaghat district by the police. Acting on a tip-off, the duos were held from Padumpathar under Merapani police station area while they were on way to Uriamghat to purchase arms. The arrested militants have been identified as Lokendra Daimary and Champak Basumatary.¹⁴⁶

According to reports, militants in Manipur are now targeting stone crushers who work as daily labourers in the state. A large number of stone crushers troubled by frequent extortion demands by militant outfits staged a sit in protest along the National Highway-39.¹⁴⁷

In another development, reacting pro-talk ULFA leader Mrinal Hazarika's statement questioning the moral of ULFA 'commander-in-chief' Paresh Baruah, ULFA's publicity in-charge Arunudoi Duhatia said in an e-mail that Hazarika might assassinate Paresh Baruah's character before the media but he could never erode the high revolutionary morale of Baruah. He conveyed that Hazarika was acting at the diktat of the intelligence wing of "colonial India."¹⁴⁸

In other developments, official sources claimed that all the conditions of the peace accord with the outlawed National Liberation Front of Tripura, Nayan Basi group (NLFT-NB) signed in 2004 have been fulfilled. Over 8,075 militants of various outfits surrendered to the Tripura Government from 1993.¹⁴⁹

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **Formal talks with ULFA likely to begin in June; Bru refugees return; Chidambaram to visit Mizoram; Former KNLF cadre alleged KNO/KNA of sheltering non SoO outfits; Delhi police nabs top KCP (MC leader from Bangalore)**

Reports noted that with the Congress retaining power in Assam, the nascent peace process in the State has received a fresh boost and formal talks between the government and the ULFA are likely to begin in June. A senior ULFA leader said that the formal talks between the ULFA and the

¹⁴⁵ "Gamlin takes over as new CM", *The Sentinel*, May 5, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/aranachal/story.php?sec=2&subsec=7&id=73898&dtP=2011-05-06&ppr=1#73898>

¹⁴⁶ "Two NDFB militants arrested", *The Sentinel*, May 7, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/mainnews/story.php?sec=1&subsec=0&id=74127&dtP=2011-05-08&ppr=1#74127>

¹⁴⁷ "Manipur militants target stone crushers", *The Sentinel*, May 7, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/northeast/story.php?sec=2&subsec=9&id=74155&dtP=2011-05-08&ppr=1#74155>

¹⁴⁸ "ULFA (anti-talks) hits out at Mrinal Hazarika", *The Sentinel*, May 3, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/mainnews/story.php?sec=1&subsec=0&id=73665&dtP=2011-05-04&ppr=1#73665>

¹⁴⁹ "NLFT-NB peace accord implemented in Tripura", *The Sentinel*, May 2, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/northeast/story.php?sec=2&subsec=9&id=73606&dtP=2011-05-03&ppr=1#73606>

government will begin in the first week of June. At present, the ULFA is studying the Sanmilita Jatiya Abhibartan (SJA) proposals with regard to the peace talks. The Centre is also arranging a meeting between a top leader of the pro-talk faction of the ULFA and the outfit's general secretary Anup Chetia, currently lodged in a jail in Bangladesh, ostensibly to get his consent for the dialogue.¹⁵⁰

According to official reports, at least 3,341 Bru refugees belonging to 643 families have returned to Mizoram from relief camps in Tripura since November last year. Meanwhile, Union Home Minister P Chidambaram is scheduled to visit Mizoram on May 18 to oversee progress of the repatriation process. During his earlier visit to Mizoram last year Chidambaram had urged Bru leaders to ensure that all the refugees return to Mizoram before the end of the year and his ministry later announced that all the six relief camps in North Tripura would be closed by March 2011 and all the facilities provided to them including free ration would be withdrawn simultaneously.¹⁵¹

In another development, a former cadre of the Kuki National Liberation Front (Kuki People's Army) who defected to the United Kuki Liberation Front today has alleged that KNO/KNA a signatory party of the Suspension of Operation with the government has been sheltering the KNLF which is not a signatory party of the SoO. The former KNLF has also alleged that KNLF has been working against the unity of the Kuki community.¹⁵²

In other developments, a self-styled commander-in-chief of banned Manipuri outfit Kangleipak Communist Party (MC) was arrested from Bangalore by a Delhi Police team. Nangthanbam Anand alias Malengamba (36) was apprehended from Bangalore on 5th May following investigations into the seizure of 200 kg ephedrine worth Rs two crore from an alleged KCP (MC) militant on 1st April.

Anand was allegedly involved in the throwing of bombs into Imphal Raj Bhavan in 2008.¹⁵³

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

(May 9-15, 2011)

- **India ratifies conventions on transnational crimes and corruption; India takes up issues on**

¹⁵⁰ "Formal ULFA talks in June", *The Sentinel*, May 15, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/mainnews/story.php?sec=1&subsec=0&id=74981&dtP=2011-05-16&ppr=1#74981>

¹⁵¹ "3,341 Bru refugees return, Chidambaram to visit Mizoram", *The Sentinel*, May 15, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/northeast/story.php?sec=2&subsec=9&id=75008&dtP=2011-05-16&ppr=1#75008>

¹⁵² "Former KNLF cadre alleged KNO/KNA of sheltering non SoO outfits", *Imphal Free Press*, May 11, 2011 at <http://ifp.co.in/imphal-free-press-full-story.php?newsid=16902>

¹⁵³ "Delhi police nabs top KCP (MC leader from Bangalore)", *Imphal Free Press*, May 10, 2011 at <http://ifp.co.in/imphal-free-press-full-story.php?newsid=16881>

terrorism in UNSC; UN Security Council members express concern about situation in Abyei; Council members concerned over instability in Somalia

India ratified a UN convention against transnational organized crimes and its three protocols, including one on preventing human trafficking. The convention is the main international instrument in the fight against transnational organized crime.¹⁵⁴ The country also ratified the UN convention against corruption under which member countries bound by the convention render mutual legal assistance towards prosecution of offenders as well as in tracing, freezing and confiscating the proceeds of corruption.¹⁵⁵

Meanwhile, the chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), Hardeep Singh Puri of India, addressing the Security Council said that major issues were considered by the committee in its discussions and workshops and they included the control of cash couriers and abuse of the non-profit sector for terrorist financing.¹⁵⁶

Security Council members expressed deep concern about the situation in the disputed Abyei area of Sudan and urged the two sides to reach an agreement on the area's status as soon as possible. The 15-member Council also condemned the introduction by the northern and southern sides of armed forces into Abyei which is a direct violation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the war. The Council also stressed the need to reduce tensions to resolve the dispute over Abyei peacefully through negotiation and the assistance of the African Union's High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP).¹⁵⁷

In other developments, the Security Council reiterated its grave concern over continuing instability in Somalia and stressed the need for a comprehensive strategy to establish peace and stability in the Horn of Africa country through a consultative process to create broad-based institutions. The Council through a presidential statement "expressed concern at the discord between the TFIs (Transitional Federal Institutions) and its impact on the political process and the security situation."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ "India ratifies UN convention against transnational crime", *IBN Live*, May 13, 2011 at <http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/india-ratifies-un-convention-against-transnational-crime/682178.html>

¹⁵⁵ "India ratifies U.N. Convention against Corruption", *The Hindu*, May 14, 2011 at <http://www.hindu.com/2011/05/14/stories/2011051459051700.htm>

¹⁵⁶ "Security Council briefed by committees on terrorism and nuclear non-proliferation", *UN News Centre*, May 16, 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38403&Cr=Al-Qaida&Cr1=>

¹⁵⁷ "Security Council issues warning over recent deadly violence in Sudan's Abyei area", *UN News Centre*, May 11, 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38349&Cr=sudan&Cr1=>

¹⁵⁸ "Security Council voices concern over high-level discord in Somalia", *UN News Centre*, May 11, 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38346&Cr=somalia&Cr1=>