

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

August 1-7, 8(1), 2011

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

- **Admiral Mike Mullen: US has been able to control movement of Haqqani network in Afghanistan; Thirty troops of US special forces killed after Chinook Helicopter hit by Taliban rocket in Wardak Province of Afghanistan; Suicide blast kills guards in Northern Afghanistan; Bomb blast kills Kunduz city intelligence official**

Admiral Mike Mullen has stated that United States has been able to control movement of Haqqani network in Afghanistan on his visit to Eastern part of the country. He also reiterated that safe haven for the outfit within Pakistan still posed risk to war on terror. Mullen had in the past accused Pakistani intelligence of having a “longstanding relationship” with Haqqani faction, whom Pakistan sees as a medium to maintain influence in any future settlement in Afghanistan.¹

In a tragic development for the coalition forces in Afghanistan, thirty US troops believed to be mostly Special Forces have been killed when their helicopter was attacked by a Taliban rocket. The Special Forces were from the Navy Seal unit which killed Osama Bin Laden in May this year. The Chinook was shot down in the Wardak Province of Afghanistan while on its way back from a counter insurgency operation. It is reported to be the largest single loss of life in Afghanistan insurgency. Presidents of both the countries have expressed condolences for the victims and their family.²

In another development, a suicide blast in city of Kunduz has killed three guards belonging to a private security company. The incident happened in a building believed to be a guest house for foreigners, when a suicide bomber blew himself up at the entrance. The Taliban have claimed responsibility for the attack.³ While, another bomb blast has killed an intelligence official in city of Kunduz, two days after three guards were killed in a suicide attack. Three children were also wounded in the attack. Violence is at its worst in Afghanistan since US-backed Afghan forces toppled the Taliban government in late 2001.⁴

¹ “US Military Chief cites progress against Haqqanis”, *Dawn*, August 1, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/08/01/us-military-chief-cites-progress-against-haqqanis.html>

² “US Special Forces helicopter downed by Afghanistan”, *BBC*, August 6, 2011 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-14430735>

³ “Afghan suicide blast kills Kunduz guards”, *BBC*, August 2, 2011 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-14368258>

⁴ “Bomb kills North Afghanistan city intelligence official”, *Dawn*, August 4, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/08/04/car-bomb-kills-afghan-provincial-intelligence-chief.html>

Pakistan

- **Reports: The departure of CIA Station Chief in Pakistan would not to affect US-Pakistan ties; Pakistan and US reach at amicable solution over diplomatic travel restrictions; US Ambassador to Pakistan Cameron Munter: Balochistan holds an important place for the US**

Reports noted that the Station chief of US intelligence agency CIA has left Pakistan and is not expected to be back. He is the second CIA agent who is reported to have left the country. He is believed to have headed the CIA team that traced Osama Bin Laden. Media reports quoted US and Pakistani officials as saying that the station chief's exit will lead to improved relations between the ISI and the CIA. It would be worth noting that Pakistan had forced out dozens of CIA officials post Osama Operation stating that CIA was running clandestine intelligence network without sharing any information with the ISI.⁵

In another development, reports noted that the US and Pakistan seemed to have reached a solution over a row that could have severely restricted diplomatic travel on both the parties. The US State Department had hinted that Pakistani diplomats in Washington could be hit with travel restrictions similar to those imposed on American diplomats in Pakistan unless Islamabad lifted its restrictions. Pakistan had issued rules in June this year asking all diplomats including the US to get permission in advance to travel outside Islamabad. US Ambassador Cameron Munter was stopped at Islamabad after failing to produce no objection certificate, following which US reacted.⁶

In other developments, US Ambassador to Pakistan Cameron Munter has said that Balochistan holds an important place for the US. He said this while speaking to the Speaker of Balochistan Assembly Mohammad Aslam Bhutani in Quetta. He said that the US was aware of sufferings of the people of the region and was extending cooperation for issues of health and education. Earlier Ambassador Munter had announced Rs 8.6 million for the construction of two houses in the SoS village in Quetta.⁷

Bangladesh

- **Bhutanese study team visits Bangladesh; Bangladesh government has initiated legal procedures to hand over Anup Chetia; Joint Trade Commission of Bangladesh and Myanmar agreed to increase bilateral trade; ECOSOC rejects the official position of Bangladesh government on the Non-Bangalee People of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs)**

According to Bangladesh Home Minister Shahara Khatun Bangladesh government has initiated

⁵ "CIA Chief's Departure not to harm ties", *Dawn*, August 1, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/08/01/cia-chiefs-departure-not-to-harm-ties.html>

⁶ "Pakistan, US resolve row over diplomats", *Dawn*, August 3, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/08/03/pakistan-us-resolve-row-over-diplomats.html>

⁷ "Balochistan very significant for US, says Munter", *Dawn*, August , 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/08/04/balochistan-very-significant-for-us-says-munter.html>

legal procedures to hand over Anup Chetia, the detained general secretary of United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) to India.⁸

In another development, a four-member Bhutanese study team on electronic government procurement visited Bangladesh on Wednesday to take stock of reforms being implemented in public procurement.⁹

Reports noted that the joint trade commission of Bangladesh and Myanmar agreed to increase bilateral trade by strengthening border transactions. In the fifth meeting of the Joint trade commission in Myanmar's city of Nay Pyi Taw on July 21-22, both countries agreed to increase the ceiling for transaction value to \$50,000 per consignment from \$30,000. The decision came into effect from August 1.¹⁰

In other developments, the general segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) session rejected the official position of Bangladesh government on the non-Bangalee people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), and adopted the report of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.¹¹

Sri Lanka

- **India's PM Dr. Manmohan Singh: India can't afford to restrict economic ties with Sri Lanka; A top level parliamentary delegation visited India; Sri Lanka signs maritime agreements with the Maldives; Malaysian Ambassador in Sri Lanka visited the Matale district; Iranian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs visited Sri Lanka**

Reports noted that Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had told MDMK leader Vaiyapuri Gopalsamy (Vaiko) that India couldn't afford to restrict economic ties with Sri Lanka – as demanded by certain Tamil Nadu's political parties – in order to apply pressure to mitigate the sufferings of Sri Lankan Tamils, as it would only encourage China to displace India as a strategic and trading partner of Sri Lanka.¹² Meanwhile, a top level Parliamentary delegation led by Speaker Chamal Rajapaksa visited India.¹³

In another development, Sri Lanka has signed new Maritime agreements with the Maldives to enable Sri Lankan fishermen to travel to the Arabian Sea via the Maldivian Maritime Territory. During his recent visit to the Maldives Sri Lankan Deputy Minister of External Affairs Neomal

⁸ "Govt to extradite Anup Chetia : Home says legal process underway", *The Daily Star*, August 4, 2011

⁹ "Bhutan team visits e-procurement centre", *The Daily Star*, August 7, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=197567>.

¹⁰ Ullah Mirdha, Refayet, "Bangladesh, Myanmar agree to increase trade", *The Daily Star*, August 3, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=196943>.

¹¹ "Indigenous People: UN rejects govt's view", *The Daily Star*, August 1, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=196646>.

¹² "Sanctions will drive Lanka further into Chinese hands: Singh", *The Daily Mirror*, August 4, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/front-page-news/52115.html>.

¹³ "Speaker, other top officials on visit to India", *The Daily Mirror*, August 1, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/51767.html>.

Perera secured this agreement as well as others related to Maldives-Sri Lanka cooperation. The new agreement assures safe passage to the Arabian Sea if the authorities are informed in advance of a Sri Lankan vessel approaching Maldivian waters.¹⁴

Malaysian Ambassador in Sri Lanka Jaffer Husein visited the Matale district to look into the standard of life of the Malay community in the district. At present about 200 Malay families live in several areas of the district. He met the representatives of the Malay community and discussed on the issues affecting them.¹⁵

In other developments, Iranian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Seyyed Amir Mansour Borghai visited Sri Lanka to inaugurate the Kattankudy Housing Project for the tsunami victims gifted by the Government of Iran. Mr. Borghai met Prime Minister D.M. Jayaratne, Economic Affairs Minister Basil Rajapaksa and Commerce and Industries Minister Rizath Bathiutheen during the visit.¹⁶

Maldives

- **President Mohamed Nasheed visits Seychelles; Special envoy of the Maldivian President extends a letter of invitation of the 17th SAARC Summit to the Nepal's PM; Ferry service between Colombo- Malé to be commenced between both countries**

President Mohamed Nasheed went to Seychelles on an official trip on August 3. President Nasheed met with the President and the Vice President of Seychelles and other Government officials, and attended the opening ceremony of the Indian Ocean Island Games during this trip.¹⁷ Memorandum of Understanding on Fisheries Cooperation between the Government of Republic of Maldives and the Government of Republic of Seychelles, and the Protocol between the Government of Republic of Maldives and the Government of Republic of Seychelles on Cooperation to Combat Piracy and other Maritime Security Threats, were signed between the Maldivian and the Seychellois governments during the visit.¹⁸

Reports noted that Special Envoy of the Maldivian President Ibrahim Hussain Zaki arrived in Kathmandu on August 7 to extend a letter of invitation of the 17th SAARC Summit to the Nepali Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal.¹⁹

¹⁴ "Maritime deals sealed with Male", *The Daily Mirror*, August 6, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/52327.html>.

¹⁵ "Malaysian Ambassador visits Matale", *The Daily Mirror*, August 2, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/provincial-news/51869.html>.

¹⁶ "Iranian Govt. hands over houses to 70 families", *The Daily Mirror*, August 1, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/51760.html>.

¹⁷ "The President Departs for Seychelles", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, August 3, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5749>.

¹⁸ "President Nasheed Meets Seychellois President", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, August 5, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5758>.

¹⁹ "Maldivian President's Special Envoy in Nepal to extend SAARC summit invitation", *Haveeru*, August 7, 2011 at <http://www.haveeru.com.mv/english/details/37573>.

In other developments, the Sri Lankan and Maldivian governments are making arrangements to commence a passenger ferry service between Colombo- Malé, as part of a joint campaign to boost economic cooperation and tourism between both countries.²⁰

B. East Asia

China

- **China, Russia discuss military cooperation; China's Foreign Minister to discuss developing ties with Poland; Japan under fire for 'China threat theory', Chinese military vows to enhance cooperation with Laos, China calls for bigger UN role on Libyan crisis**

Chinese army's General Staff Chen Bingde discussed military cooperation with the Russian defence minister Antoli Serdyukov. Chinese asserted that the existing bi-lateral relations were good and they were making considerable progress as well.²¹

On the other hand Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi met with the Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Foreign Minister Radek Sikorskion. Yang asserted that the Chinese side will like to increase economic exchanges, mutual investment and also imports from Poland.²²

On the regional front China has expressed a very strong opposition to the latest Japanese Defence white paper stating that the motive has been to exaggerate the China threst theory.²³

Meanwhile the PLA has stated that it is willing to strengthen cooperation with Lao People's Army. This will be undertaken especially in the field of military construction and national defence.²⁴

In other development, according to reports, Beijing has said that it will like the United Nations to play a bigger and important role in ending tensions in Libya.²⁵

²⁰ "Negotiations Underway to Commence Colombo- Malé Passenger Ferry Service, *Haveeru*, August 7, 2011 at <http://www.haveeru.com.mv/english/details/37568>.

²¹ "China, Russia discuss military cooperation" *China Daily*, August 5, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-08/05/content_13053704.htm

²² "China's FM to discuss developing ties with Poland" *China Daily*, August 5, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-08/05/content_13061393.htm

²³ "Japan under fire for 'China threat theory'" *China Daily*, August 5, 2011, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-08/05/content_13053774.htm

²⁴ "Chinese military vows to enhance cooperation with Laos" *China Daily*, August 2, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-08/02/content_13029730.htm

²⁵ "China calls for bigger UN role on Libyan crisis" *China Daily*, August 2, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-08/02/content_13036774.htm

Japan

- **Japan's new defence white paper attracts strong reaction from China; Kan pledges to reduce dependence on nuclear energy; Japan's aged nuclear reactors might be decommissioned, says Industry Minister**

China has voiced strong opposition to Japan's new Defense white paper approved by the Cabinet on August 2, as the paper expresses its concern over China's "assertive" approach in dealing with its Asian neighbours over issues of conflicting interests. Beijing however alleges that Tokyo, while trying to play up a "China threat theory" is trying to achieve its own ulterior motives. China's defence ministry stated that China believes in peaceful development and strictly follows the policy of building friendship with its neighbours.²⁶ The white paper also mentions about China's rapid military buildup, the secretiveness of its defence budget. Beijing responded by stating that China is strengthening its national defence systems and armed forces solely for the purposes of safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity and to ensure smooth socio-economic development.²⁷

In another development, on the occasion of the 66th anniversary of the Hiroshima atomic bombing held recently, Japanese Prime Minister Kan Naoto once again pledged to work towards the reduction of the country's reliance on nuclear energy. He further stated that it was Japan's historical responsibility to make the future generation aware of the horrors of nuclear weapons.²⁸

In other developments, Japan's industry minister Banri Kaieda recently stated that to deal with the increasing doubts over the safety of the nuclear reactors in Japan, the government has decided to conduct stress tests on them. He further affirmed that if such tests conclude that aged nuclear reactors have problems, they might be decommissioned.²⁹

South Korea

- **South Korea opposes Japan's territorial claims over Dokdo islands**

South Korea has strongly objected to Japan's territorial claims over Dokdo islands, a pair of South Korean-administered islets. In its recently released defence white paper, Japan repeated its claim over those islets. The South Korean foreign ministry summoned Nouritsu Kanehara, a diplomatic minister in at the Japanese embassy, as well as Hiroshi Kimura, a military attaché at the Japanese embassy to protest against Japan's latest claim.

²⁶ "China voices opposition to Japan's new defense white paper", *Mainichi Shimbun*, August 4, 2011, at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/08/04/20110804p2g00m0dm022000c.html>

²⁷ "China warns Japan over defense white paper", *Asahi Shimbun*, August 5, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201108040303.html>

²⁸ "Kan commits to reducing reliance on nuclear power at Hiroshima memorial", *Mainichi Shimbun*, August 6, 2011, at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/08/06/20110806p2g00m0dm025000c.html>

²⁹ "Japan likely to decommission aged nuclear reactors after stress tests", *Mainichi Shimbun*, August 6, 2011, at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/08/06/20110806p2g00m0dm016000c.html>

While demanding that the Japanese defence ministry immediately retract the fresh claim, South Korea stated that future-oriented development of their bilateral military relations would be affected if Japan did not relinquish its claim over Dokdo.³⁰

North Korea

- **North Korea becomes the chair of the Conference on Disarmament for the first time**

Reports noted that North Korea has become the chair of the Conference of Disarmament for the first time in history. Being considered as one of the major proliferators of nuclear weapons, its ascension of the multilateral disarmament forum have attracted fierce criticism from many member countries of the CD as well as human rights groups.³¹

C. Central Asia & Russia

Central Asia

- **Kyrgyzstan seeks Indian assistance for its presidential elections to be held on October 30, 2011; Kazakh health minister sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for corruption; Kazakhstan aims at large-scale privatization in the coming five years; Railway tariffs to be unified by Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus by 2013; Kazakhstan unveils plans for extending diplomatic missions in three stages; Tajik Foreign Minister Hamrokhon Zarifi in Ashgabat for talks; Tajikistan faces food crisis and hike in food prices**

The Kyrgyz officials led by Kyrgyz Deputy Foreign Minister Nurlan Aitmurzaev, were on a two-day state visit to India from August 4-5 and discussed potential cooperation with India in the approaching Kyrgyz presidential elections and in training technical workers.³² Aitmurzaev held high-level talks with India's Secretary in the External Affairs Ministry and discussed expanding transportation links with India. He held a separate meeting with Indian Chief Election Commissioner Mr. S.Y. Quraishi. The Indian delegation led by Mr. Sanjay Singh, Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs comprehensively reviewed with Mr. Aitmurzaev the current status of bilateral relations including their political, economic, defence and cultural dimensions; discussed important regional and global issues including the situation in Afghanistan; and consulted regarding the issue of transport connectivity between India and Central Asia. The Kyrgyz side expressed interest in enhancing the training of Kyrgyz experts under India's ITEC

³⁰ "South Koreans protests Japan's fresh claim to disputed islets", *Mainichi Shimbun*, August 2, 2011, at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/08/02/20110802p2g00m0dm023000c.html>

³¹ "N. Korea makes debut as disarmament chair, draws flak", *Asahi Shimbun*, August 6, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201108050283.html>

³² "Kyrgyzstan requests Indian assistance with elections", *Central Asia Newswire*, August 05, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kyrgyzstan/Kyrgyzstan-requests-Indian-assistance-with-elections/viewstory.aspx?id=4588>

program and in increasing technical cooperation in the conduct of elections. The two sides agreed to continue regular consultations on areas of mutual interest.³³

Last week, the former Kazakh Health Minister Zhaqsylyq Doskaliyev was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for corruption, to be served in a high-security jail. He was found guilty of receiving a bribe of nine apartments from a construction company while serving as the rector of the Astana Medical Institute.³⁴

In another development, the Kazakh Economic Development and Trade Minister Kairat Kelimbetov was reported as saying that, "the main slogan of economic policies in Kazakhstan for the next five years will be large-scale privatization". According to Kelimbetov the privatization will occur in two stages – first the launching of the "People's IPO" in which private citizens for the first time will be able to buy shares of major state-operated companies and the second expected to begin in 2015, will bring in foreign investors to the Kazakh economy.³⁵

According to reports, the website of Kazakhstan Prime Minister Karim Massimov stated that Kazakhstan will expand the number of countries in which it posts an embassy by 11. It presently has representation in 27 countries. As per the plan unveiled during the cabinet meeting on 29 July, the new embassies will be opened in three stages – in 2012 Kazakhstan will open new diplomatic outposts in Indonesia, Brazil and Finland; In 2013, it will extend its diplomatic outposts to include South Africa, Sweden and Vietnam; and in 2014 Kazakhstan aims to open five new embassies in Slovakia, Iraq, Kenya, Morocco and Mexico.³⁶

Reports noted that Tajik Foreign Minister Hamrokhon, last week, met with high-ranking Turkmen government officials to increase cooperation in fuel and transportation issues, among other sectors. Zarifi met with Turkmen Deputy Prime Minister Baymyratom Hodzhamammedovym and Turkmen Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov as part of his talks in his three days in the Turkmen capital Ashgabat.³⁷ Talks were held on construction of railways

³³ "Foreign Office Consultations between India and Kyrgyzstan", *Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Press Release*, August 05, 2011 at <http://www.mea.gov.in/myprint.php?id=530217930&d=07&sz=c&m=&y=&pg=&flg=&searchdata1=>

³⁴ "Former Kazakh health minister sentenced to 7 years for corruption", *Central Asia Newswire*, August 05, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Former-Kazakh-health-minister-sentenced-to-7-years-for-corruption/viewstory.aspx?id=4586>

³⁵ "Kazakhstan to see five years of large-scale privatization, minister says", *Central Asia Newswire*, August 04, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/kazakhstan/Kazakhstan-to-see-five-years-of-large-scale-privatization-minister-says/viewstory.aspx?id=4577>

³⁶ "Foreign ministry to expand Kazakh diplomatic presence by 2014", *Central Asia Newswire*, August 04, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/kazakhstan/Foreign-ministry-to-expand-Kazakh-diplomatic-presence-by-2014/viewstory.aspx?id=4576>

³⁷ "Tajik FM meets with Turkmen leadership over fuel, transport", *Central Asia Newswire*, August 05, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Tajik-FM-meets-with-Turkmen-leadership-over-fuel-transport/viewstory.aspx?id=4589>

and roads, construction of transmission lines, interconnection of energy networks and transit countries in the region, air route between Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, increase trade of Turkmen gas to Tajikistan and finally on further cooperation in the construction sector.³⁸

In other developments, according to Tajikistan's Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) sources, prices of food in Tajikistan have risen between 5% and 10 % since last week. MEDT specialists blamed the rising prices of Russian fuel and the unstable domestic production of food as possible reasons for the sudden climb in Tajik foodstuffs. Tajikistan is also highly susceptible to international prices of food as it imports up to 60 percent of its food supply.³⁹ A recent report by World Food Program (WFP) stated that Tajikistan faces the greatest threat of food insecurity in the region. Transportation issues and protracted political tensions between Tajikistan and neighboring states are mostly to blame for the food insecurity, according to the WFP report called "A Regional Review of Wheat Markets and Food Security in Central Asia, with a focus on Afghanistan and Tajikistan."⁴⁰

Russia

- **Russian Central Bank sees no threat from US ratings cut; Russian stocks fall to lowest level since May; Russia's inflation stood at 9% in July on the background of a drop in food prices; Russia on course for WTO entry by this year; Britain to welcome Gazprom's investment; Russia's relaxation to Syrian military assault on Hama; Russia-US prepare new military cooperation deals; Russian army to receive 120 Iskander tactical missile systems; Medvedev has taken credit for the South Ossetia war; Russian minister calls for curbs on internet; Petrnoneft discovers oil field in Russia; Medvedev criticizes slow removal of barriers as an impediment to Russia's progress; Russia has produced a record 10.26 billion bpd oil in July; Russia announces new privatization programme; Big protests have been seen across Russia on account of high oil prices; UN Sea Mining decision opens new opportunities for Russia.**

The deputy chairman at Bank Rossii Sergey Shvetsov has said that Standard & Poor's downgrade of the U.S.'s AAA credit rating will not affect the stability of the Russian economy or lead to a change in its foreign currency reserves in the short-term.⁴¹ However, reports noted that Russia's benchmark stock market fell to its lowest levels since late May, tracking a global sell-off driven by concerns over economic growth and debt problems.

³⁸ "Tajik FM meets with Turkmen leadership over fuel, transport", *Central Asia Newswire*, August 05, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Tajik-FM-meets-with-Turkmen-leadership-over-fuel-transport/viewstory.aspx?id=4589>

³⁹ "Tajik food prices increase 5-10% in the past week", *Central Asia Newswire*, August 04, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Tajikistan/Tajik-food-prices-increase-5-10-in-the-past-week/viewstory.aspx?id=4580>

⁴⁰ "Tajikistan faces food insecurity risk, WFP says", *Central Asia Newswire*, August 02, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Tajikistan/Tajikistan-faces-food-insecurity-risk-WFP-says/viewstory.aspx?id=4562>

⁴¹ "Russia central bank sees no threat from US cut", *Bloomberg*, August 6, 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-08-06/russia-central-bank-sees-no-threat-from-u-s-cut-ria-reports.html>

Meanwhile, Russian inflation slowed more than economists expected in July as prices for fresh fruits and vegetables declined. According to the Federal Statistics Service consumer prices advanced 9 percent from a year earlier last month, down from 9.4 percent in June. Food-price inflation may slow in the second half thanks to a favourable harvest and stabilizing food prices globally. The central bank will probably continue to focus on the headline inflation number when considering monetary policy decisions.⁴²

Russia's President Medvedev has said that Russia's chances of joining the World Trade Organisation this year are high but its accession still faces political obstacles from Georgia. He accused Georgia, which has threatened to veto Russia's accession in a dispute over customs controls, of using the WTO entry process to revive political problems but said Russia would not get involved in "immoral" barter to secure its accession. Mr. Medvedev urged Tbilisi to show wisdom and said relations between the two countries, which fought a brief war in 2008, could improve if it did so.⁴³

Britain will welcome interest in the country's energy industry by Russian natural gas producer OAO Gazprom. UK's energy minister Charles Hendry said that U.K. won't try to stop Gazprom from investing in British power stations. He said that Britain is seeking energy investment from around the world and it would see it beneficial if Gazprom invests or partners other companies in the industry.⁴⁴

In another development, in response to Syria's brutal crackdown in the city of Hama, Russian President Medvedev has said that "(Assad) needs to urgently carry out reforms, reconcile with the opposition, restore peace and set up a modern state," ... "If he fails to do this, he will face a sad fate." Medvedev made these remarks in an interview with Russia's Ekho Moskvy radio, Russia Today television and Georgia's PIK-TV.⁴⁵

According to reports, Russia's deputy chief of the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation has said that Russia and the United States plan to sign more military cooperation deals. "We plan to sign more deals with the United States very soon, and plan to extend [cooperation] beyond helicopter deals," Vyacheslav Dzirkaln said, adding that the two countries are in search of other mutually beneficial areas of military cooperation. This May, the United States signed a \$367.5 million contract with Russia to buy 21 Mi-17V5 military transport helicopters for the Afghan army.⁴⁶

⁴² "Russian inflation slowed to 9% in July as food prices dropped", *Bloomberg*, August 5, 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-08-05/russian-inflation-slowed-to-9-in-july-as-food-prices-dropped.html>

⁴³ "Russia on course for WTO entry this year", *Reuters*, August 4, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/04/wto-russia-medvedev-idUSLDE7730SM20110804>

⁴⁴ "Britain to welcome Russia's Gazprom investment, Times reports", *Bloomberg*, August 7, 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-08-07/britain-to-welcome-russia-s-gazprom-investment-times-reports.html>

⁴⁵ "Reaction to Syrian military assault on Hama", *Reuters*, August 4, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/04/us-syria-reaction-idUSTRE77353B20110804>

⁴⁶ "Russia, US prepare new military cooperation deals", *RIA Novosti*, August 4, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110804/165556166.html

Reports noted that the Russian Defense Ministry is planning to buy up to 120 Iskander-M tactical missile systems. The Iskander-M system (NATO reporting name SS-26 Stone) is a mobile theater missile system equipped with two solid-propellant single-stage 9M723K1 guided missiles with “quasi-ballistic” capability. The missiles have a range of 400 km (250 miles) and can reportedly carry conventional and nuclear warheads.⁴⁷

Three years after the brief South Ossetian war, the personal animosity of the Russian leadership toward Georgian leader Mikheil Saakashvili remains the biggest obstacle in relations between the two countries, according to President Dmitry Medvedev. In his first interview with Georgian media since the 2008 conflict, Medvedev stressed repeatedly that it was he, not his political patron Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who made the crucial decision to go to war with Georgia over the maverick region of South Ossetia. Tbilisi’s demand that it control customs offices on Russia’s border with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, to which Russia will not concede, is the biggest stumbling block to Russia’s entry into the World Trade Organization. Medvedev said Russia would not make concessions on this issue to win accession to the WTO, which the country has been seeking since 1993.⁴⁸

In another development, Russia’s interior minister called for limits on the Internet to prevent a slide in traditional cultural values among young people, raising fears of controls over the vibrant Russian-language web.⁴⁹

Russia pumped 10.26 million barrels per day of crude oil in July, matching a post-Soviet high recorded in May and retaining the title of top producer as its closest rival, Saudi Arabia, rapidly closes the gap. Natural gas output stood at 48.40 billion cubic metres, down from 50.67 bcm in June, a fall of 7.6 percent on a daily basis.⁵⁰

According to reports, the Russian government has unveiled plans to expand privatization of the largest state companies by 2017. The government will retain only a golden share, Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov’s secretariat announced. A golden share is a nominal share retained by the government body responsible for the privatization of state enterprises. The government considers 2017 an expedient deadline for the total privatization (golden share aside) of the following companies’ authorized capital – shipping company Sovcomflot, Sheremetyevo International Airport, the federal grid company INTER RAO UES, VTB Bank, United Grain Company, and the energy companies RusHydro and Rosneft (starting in 2012 for the latter two).⁵¹

⁴⁷ “Russian army to receive 120 Iskander tactical missile systems”, *RIA Novosti*, August 2, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110802/165508090.html

⁴⁸ “Medvedev takes credit for South Ossetia War”, *The Moscow Times*, August 8, 2011, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/medvedev-takes-credit-for-south-ossetian-war/441715.html>

⁴⁹ Guy, Faulconbridge, “Russian minister calls for limits on the internet”, *Reuters*, August 2, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/02/russia-internet-idUSLDE7710HQ20110802>

⁵⁰ Astakhova, O, “Russia July oil output 10.26 mln bpd, matches record”, *Reuters*, August 2, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/02/russia-energy-idUSMOS00772620110802>

⁵¹ “Russian government announces new privatizations”, *RIA Novosti*, August 5, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/papers/20110805/165581259.html>

Reports noted that protests against high fuel prices were held in 18 Russian cities, including at Moscow's Bolotnaya Square and Leningradskoye Shosse. The organizers demanded that the government cut prices or they will disrupt the upcoming elections.⁵²

In other developments, a UN decision allowing Russia to prospect for precious metals on the Atlantic seabed opens new frontiers for the country's mineral extraction businesses. Under a 15-year agreement to be signed later this year, Russia will have rights to explore several sites covering a 10,000-square-kilometer area midway between Africa and South America. Experts believe that the area could contain an estimated 50 million to 70 million tons of gold and copper ore.⁵³

D. West Asia

Iran

- **190 Parliamentarians supported the charter of principlism and agreed to back 15-member unity committee; Nomination of top IRGC commander for oil minister a set back for west**

Reports noted that 190 lawmakers of Iran issued a statement supporting the charter of principlism and advising principlist groups to throw their weight behind the recently formed principlists' unity committee. The 15-member principlists' unity committee, made up of representatives of various principlist groups and parties in a bid to create unity among principlists. The committee is supposed to work within the framework of the charter of principlism, which was introduced by the Combatant Clergy Association and the Society of Seminary Teachers of Qom in January. The parliamentarians said "We advise all principlist groups to avoid claiming their share, farsightedly support the mechanism, and not impede establishment of principlists' unity."⁵⁴

In another development, Brigadier General Ramezan Sharif of the IRGC has said that lawmakers voted in favour of Rostam Qasemi, the commander of IRGC's Khatamol Anbia base, a nominee for the post of oil minister, was a major blow to the West's attacks on the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps. Out of the 245 MPs present for the Majlis session, 216 lawmakers voted in favor of Rostam Qasemi's appointment as oil minister, 22 voted against, and 7 abstained. The West was trying to stop Qasemi from becoming oil minister through making baseless allegations, arguing that the IRGC is dominating Iran's politics and economy and it is seeking to even dominate the government.⁵⁵

⁵² "Protests against high fuel prices throughout Russia", *RIA Novosti*, August 5, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/papers/20110805/165581259.html>

⁵³ "Sea mining decision heralds new era", *The Moscow Times*, August 8, 2011, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/sea-mining-decision-heralds-new-era/441705.html>

⁵⁴ "190 MPs urge principlist groups to back unity committee," *Tehran Times*, August 2, 2011, at <http://www.tehrantimes.com/index.php/politics/991-190-mps-urge-principlist-groups-to-back-unity-committee->

⁵⁵ 'Election of IRGC official to top of Oil Ministry a blow to West,' August 4, 2011, *Tehran Times*, at <http://www.tehrantimes.com/index.php/politics/1070-election-of-irgc-official-to-top-of-oil-ministry-a-blow-to-west->

Iraq

- **A car bomb wounded 23 people outside a Christian church; Officials from Iraq and Iran hold talk on 1980s war compensation**

According to Iraqi Police, in a car bomb explosion outside a Christian church wounded 23 people. However, security forces found and disabled vehicles packed with explosives outside two other parishes in northern Iraq. The bombing and the two averted attacks in the northern city of Kirkuk signal continued violence against Iraqi Christians, nearly 1 million of whom have fled since the war began in 2003. 'The terrorists want to make us flee Iraq, but they will fail,' said the Rev. Haithem Akram, the priest of one of the churches that was targeted. It would be worth noting that violence against Christians stepped up late last year, climaxing in the October 31 siege of a Catholic cathedral in downtown Baghdad that left 68 dead and scored wounded when Al Qaeda suicide bombers held worshippers hostage for hours before detonating their explosives belts. Since then, the Vatican and the US Congress have pleaded for Iraq's government to do more to protect Christians in Iraq.⁵⁶

In another development, Iranian Ambassador to Iraq Hassan Danaiifar held talks with Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister Labeed Majeed Abbawi in Baghdad and discussed war reparations. According to the statement issued by the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, in the meeting both sides discussed Iranian officials' remarks on the payment of reparations to Iran in compensation for the damages inflicted on Iran during the Saddam Hussein regime's 1980s war against the Islamic Republic.⁵⁷

Syria

- **India supports reforms in Syria, rejects foreign intervention in Syrian affairs; Smuggling operation foiled by security authorities in Syria**

During his meeting with Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Fayssal Mikdad, Indian Minister of External Affairs S. M. Krishna appreciated the comprehensive reform programme led by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and hoped that Syria would overcome the crisis and return to normalcy. Krishna also hailed his country's good relations with Syria, underlining that the democratic process is very important, and expressed confidence that it would succeed under the leadership of President al-Assad. Further, he reiterated India's firm stance of non-interference in the internal affairs of any country, particularly Syria.⁵⁸

In another development, reports noted that Security and Customs' authorities in Syria foiled a huge smuggling operation that sought to bring nearly 2 million narcotic Captagon tablets, of

⁵⁶ "23 wounded in church attack in north Iraq," *Khaleej Times*, August 2, 2011, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle09.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/August/middleeast_August41.xml§ion=middleeast

⁵⁷ "Iranian, Iraqi officials hold talks on war reparations: report," *Tehran Times*, August 3, 2011, at <http://www.tehrantimes.com/index.php/politics/1072-iranian-iraqi-officials-hold-talks-on-war-reparations-report>

⁵⁸ "India Supports Reforms in Syria, Rejects any Foreign Intervention in Syria's Internal Affairs", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, August 2, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/22/2011/08/02/361754.htm>

300 KG weight, to Syria through the Jordanian-Syrian borders. The security members also confiscated a number of guns and the car which transported them.⁵⁹

Libya

- **Venezuela receives Gadhafi's envoy in Caracas; Rebels' post-Al Qathafi blueprint for Libya Released**

According to reports, Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez has that the Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi has sent an envoy to Caracas carrying a letter addressed to him, without revealing the contents of the message. Further, Chavez issued a statement formally condemning NATO's "illegal bombing" of Libyan state television in Tripoli, in which three people were killed and 15 wounded. He described it as a "barbaric act" against journalism and the news media.⁶⁰

In another development, a rebel blueprint for a post-Al Gadhafi Libya, prepared by the National Transitional Council (NTC) with help from Western powers, was released. It would retain much of the current regime's infrastructure in the hope of averting an Iraq-style descent into chaos. Further, the report concedes that they have little chance of toppling the Libyan leader, but that internal divisions will force him out.⁶¹

Egypt

- **Hosni Mubarak's trial begins in Cairo; Terrorism Risk Index places Egypt in high risk category**

During the trial that started in Cairo, former President Hosni Mubarak denied the charges of murder and corruption against him and his sons Alaa and Gamal. Later, the trial was adjourned until August 15. Former interior minister Habib Al Adly and six of his deputies, all of who were associated with the case, were also tried in the court. Separately, the Muslim Brotherhood, which was banned under Mubarak and formed the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) after his ouster, hailed the trial as "a real victory for the will of the people."⁶²

In another incident, according to the 2011 Terrorism Risk Index, prepared by the UK-based risk analysis group Maplecroft, the risk of terrorism in Egypt is significantly higher in 2011 compared to the previous year. In the report, which covered the period from April 2010 to March 2011, Egypt moved from a "Medium Risk" country to a "High Risk" country with regard to its level of

⁵⁹ "Smuggling Operation of Two Million Captagon Tablets Foiled by Authorities", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, August 8, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2011/08/08/362791.htm>

⁶⁰ "Qadhafi writes to Venezuela's Chavez", *The Jordan Times*, August 2, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=40058>

⁶¹ "Rebels' Post-Al Qathafi Blueprint for Libya Revealed", *The Tripoli Post*, August 8, 2011, at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=6596>

⁶² "Egypt's Mubarak on trial for murder", *The Jordan Times*, August 4, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=40121>

terrorist threat. Converting the index into numbers, Egypt's terrorism index rating currently worsened from 6.27 to 3.62. This is attributed to the events unfolded following the overthrow of its president Hosni Mubarak.⁶³

Israel

- **Israel PM promises reforms after massive protests; Government approves 900 East Jerusalem housing units**

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised reforms in an attempt to ease growing anger over the cost of living after a large number of Israelis took part in nationwide protests. Speaking before a weekly Cabinet meeting, Netanyahu acknowledged the demand of people for cheaper housing, education and healthcare. He also said that he appointed economist Manuel Trachtenberg, the head of Israel's National Council for Higher Education, to form a team for dialogue with the protest groups. However, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said that while people's grievances were genuine, they could not all be addressed.⁶⁴

Separately, according to the interior ministry spokesperson Efrat Orbach, the Israeli government has given final approval for the construction of 900 new settler housing units in the East Jerusalem settlement neighbourhood of Jabal Abu Ghneim, known to Israelis as Har Homa. The approval marks the final planning stage for the project that was fiercely criticized by the Palestinians and the international community.⁶⁵

Palestine

- **Jordan and Palestine discuss Palestinian situation**

During a meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, King Abdullah of Jordan reiterated Jordan's full support for the Palestinian National Authority in its efforts to realise the aspirations and rights of the Palestinian people to statehood and freedom. The King also underlined that the solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict must address all final status issues to arrive at a comprehensive peace that restores the rights of all Palestinians and defuses tension in the region.⁶⁶

⁶³ Borkan, Brett (2011), "Risk of terrorism in Egypt up significantly since 2010: study", *The Daily News Egypt*, August 5, 2011, at <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/egypt/risk-of-terrorism-in-egypt-up-significantly-since-2010-study.html>

⁶⁴ "Israel PM promises change after massive protests", *The Jordan Times*, August 8, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=40214>

⁶⁵ "Israeli gov't approves 900 E. Jerusalem housing units", *The Jordan Times*, August 5, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=40145>

⁶⁶ "King, Abbas discuss Palestinian UN bid", *The Jordan Times*, August 8, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=40218>

E. Africa

Somalia

- **Al-Shabaab insurgents withdrew from Mogadishu**

According to reports, the al-Qaeda affiliated al-Shabaab insurgents vacated several key positions in Mogadishu that were later taken over by government troops. Deputy army commander Gen Abdikarim Yusuf Aden confirmed the fundamentalist group's pull-out, adding that it had been as a result of military pressure from government forces and its allies, including the AU peacekeepers. On the development, Sharif Sheikh Ahmed commented that "Mogadishu has been fully liberated from the enemy, and the rest of the country will soon be liberated too".⁶⁷

South Africa

- **South Africa lends R2.4-billion loan to Swaziland**

Reports noted that Swaziland received R2.4 billion loan from neighbouring South Africa. King Mswati III, Africa's last absolute monarch, made this announcement as the country is facing the problem of running out of antiretroviral drugs and having public schools close down amid a fiscal crisis that has seen the government nearly run out of cash. Separately, Swazi activists called on Pretoria to make any bailout conditional on democratic reforms in the kingdom, where political parties have been banned since 1973.⁶⁸

Sudan

- **Chinese foreign minister Yang Jiechi: North and South Sudan "will lose the peace equation" by not cooperating on the joint and controversial issues**

The Chinese foreign minister Yang Jiechi arrived in Khartoum on a two-day visit that also includes a trip to South Sudan's capital of Juba as China is concerned about preserving stability in South Sudan for the sake of preserving its multi-billion dollar investments particularly in the oil sector. According to reports, the Jiechi said that that North and South Sudan "will lose the peace equation" by not cooperating on the joint and controversial issues.⁶⁹

South Sudan

- **Rebels lay down arms and offer to join South Sudan army**

According to reports, South Sudan Rebel leader Peter Gadet has agreed to an unconditional

⁶⁷ "Rebels withdraw from Mogadishu as famine continues", *Mail and Guardian*, August 6, 2011, at <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-08-06-rebels-withdraw-from-mogadishu-as-famine-continues/>

⁶⁸ "Thanks, neighbour: SA lends Swaziland R2.4-billion", *Mail and Guardian*, August 3, 2011, at <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-08-03-thanks-neighbour-sa-lends-swaziland-r24bn/>

⁶⁹ "China FM warns North & South Sudan against losing "peace equation", *Sudan Tribune*, August 7, 2011, at <http://www.sudantribune.com/China-FM-warns-North-South-Sudan,39770>

ceasefire and talks on merging its troops with the South Sudan army. Gatkouth added that the decision was taken after mounting pressure from international community, and the call of the South Sudanese people that the government is serious about reconciliation. He said that the rebel group, which is based in South Sudan's oil-producing Unity state, numbers "roughly 10 000 men". Responding to the announcement, army spokesperson Philip Aguer welcomed the ceasefire.⁷⁰

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

- **Russia delivers 11 MiG fighter jets to India to equip Admiral Gorshkov; Defence Minister AK Antony: The construction of India's first indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC) at Cochin is expected to be completed by December this year**

Reports noted that Russia has dispatched 11 MiG fighter jets to India to equip the aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov for the Indian Navy scheduled to be delivered next year. "We have already delivered 11. Five more will be delivered by the end of the year," head of the MiG Corporation Sergei Korotkov said on Wednesday. Russia signed a contract in 2004 to supply 16 MiG-29K/KUB jets as part of its agreement to modernise the aircraft carrier. The refurbishment contract was initially valued at 974 million dollars and stipulated the delivery of the carrier in 2008. But the price of modernising the ship, which will have the name Vikramaditya in the Indian Navy, later grew to \$1.5 billion while deadlines extended by several years. In March 2010, the countries signed an additional \$1.5 billion deal for 29 more MiG fighter jets. Delivery of the second batch of jets as well as the carrier will start in 2012, according to the contract.⁷¹

Meanwhile, the construction of India's first indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC) at Cochin is expected to be completed in December this year, after which the warship will be launched, Defence Minister AK Antony said on Tuesday, in a written reply to questions in the Lok Sabha, which said the Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) had completed 75 percent of the hull work on the IAC, which is also known as the Air Defence Ship. "Regarding the Air Defence Ship being constructed at CSL, 75 percent of hull work has been completed and is expected to be launched in December 2011, after which further works will be undertaken prior to commissioning," Antony said.⁷²

⁷⁰ "Rebels lay down arms, offer to join South Sudan army", *Mail and Guardian*, August 3, 2011, at <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-08-03-rebels-lay-down-arms-offer-to-join-south-sudan-army/>

⁷¹ "Russia delivers 11 MiG jets to India: official", *Bharat Rakshak*, August 3, 2011, at <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/NEWS/newsrfr.php?newsid=14992>

⁷² "Indigenous aircraft carrier launch this Dec", *Defence News*, August 06, 2011, at <http://www.defencenews.in/defence-news-internal.asp?get=new&id=616>

International

- **Top Turkish commanders resign to protest the arrest of colleagues on coup charges; US and Vietnam have signed their first military-to-military co-operation agreement since Vietnam war**

In a significant development, four top Turkish commanders including the Chief of the General Staff, General Isik Kosaner, Navy Forces Commander Admiral Esref Ugur Yigit, Land Forces Commander General Erdal Ceylanoglu and Air Forces Commander General Hasan Aksay resigned on 29 July in protest at the arrest of more than 250 serving and retired officers charged with planning to overthrow the government. The government responded by appointing General Necdet Ozel as acting Chief of the General Staff and the new Land Forces Commander. Gen Kosaner, who was due to retire in two years, released a farewell address to the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) in which he claimed the proceedings against the 250 military officers were not based on concrete evidence and were causing worry, anger and resentment among army staff.⁷³

Meanwhile, in a historic development, Vietnam and the United States have signed their first military-to-military co-operation agreement since the end of the Vietnam War and the normalisation of diplomatic relations. The statement of intent (SOI) between the US Department of Defense (DoD) and the Vietnamese Ministry of National Defence outlines how the countries will interact in matters of military medicine, according to the US Navy (USN) Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. The signing ceremony follows a landmark meeting in October 2010 between former US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and his Vietnamese counterpart Phung Quang Thanh, in which the two agreed to more formalised military-to-military co-operation. Vietnam has been among the most vocal protesters in south and East Asia to China's recent claims to wide areas of territory, mineral and fishing rights in the South China Sea and recently US Naval ships were welcomed by former foe Vietnam for joint training, despite China's irritation.⁷⁴

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Protests were staged during complete shut down in Sopore, Baramulla and Bandipora towns; Militant killed in Handwara; LeT militant arrested; Protests during encounter at Pulwama; Militants killed in Kupwara, Kishtwar; Protests and clashes occurs in many towns; 2 cops held**

Reports noted that in the course of complete shutdown in Sopore, Baramulla and Bandipora

⁷³ "Senior Turkish commanders resign", *Janes*, August 8, 2011, at <http://www.janes.com/products/janes/defence-security-report.aspx?ID=1065930176&channel=defence>

⁷⁴ "US and Vietnamese medics join forces to heal old wounds", *Janes*, August 8, 2011 at <http://www.janes.com/products/janes/defence-security-report.aspx?ID=1065930172>

towns, protests were staged in several parts of north and south Kashmir against the killing of a Sopore youth in police custody. Authorities imposed severe restrictions in the entire town by deploying thousands of paramilitary CRPF men and police personnel at every nook and corner. People staged protests in Bandipora and pelted stones on the force personnel throughout the day.⁷⁵

According to police, a militant has been killed in an encounter at Handwara in north Kashmir's Kupwara district. Acting on specific information about the presence of armed militants in Butshugni Kawnar Jungle area falling in the jurisdiction of police station Handwara, police and 21 RR unit of the Army laid a siege of the area during which the advance party was fired upon resulting to retaliation triggering an encounter.⁷⁶

Meanwhile, Army claimed that it arrested a top militant of Lashkar-e-Toiba from Jammu. The arrested militant was identified as Mushtaq Ahmed alias Mustafa alias Master.⁷⁷

Reports noted that five militants were killed in three encounters in Kupwara and Kishtwar districts. Soldiers of 15 Rashtriya Rifles noted some suspicious movement in Esmali forests in Keran area, near the Line of Control, in Kupwara district and asked the militants to surrender. However, they opened fire on the troops, who retaliated, triggering a gunbattle leaving two militants dead. Two Lashkar-i-Toiba militants were gunned down by commanders during a fierce encounter in Keshwan area of Kishtwar district.⁷⁸ In another development, six civilians including a Panch and nine police personnel were injured when people protested after a local militant was trapped by government forces. The militant was later killed after a fierce gunbattle following which angry protesters torched a police vehicle.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, clashes broke out in old city between protesters and police against the curbs on the movement of Hurriyat (M) Chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, even as the government put all the top separatist leaders under house detention. Protests were witnessed in north and south Kashmir as Hurriyat Conference (G) Chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani had called for peaceful protests against the custodial death of a youth in Sopore. As the participants in the rally started marching and chanting pro-freedom slogans, police and CRPF men who were already deployed in the area swung into action. They fired numerous tear gas canisters and cane charged protesters. In retaliation, protesters divided themselves into batches and started hurling stones on the forces.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ "Shutdown, restrictions in Sopore", *Greater Kashmir*, August 1, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Aug/2/shutdown-restrictions-in-sopore-105.asp>

⁷⁶ "Militant in Handwara", *Greater Kashmir*, August 3, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Aug/4/militant-killed-in-handwara-104.asp>

⁷⁷ "LeT militant held: Army", *Greater Kashmir*, August 3, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Aug/4/let-militant-held-army-34.asp>

⁷⁸ "5 militants killed in Kupwara, Kishtwar", *Greater Kashmir*, August 4, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Aug/5/5-militants-killed-in-kupwara-kishtwar-80.asp>

⁷⁹ "Protests during encounter at Pulwama", *Greater Kashmir*, August 4, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Aug/5/protests-during-encounter-at-pulwama-82.asp>

⁸⁰ "Protests, clashes in old city, Sopore, Islamabad", *Greater Kashmir*, August 5, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Aug/6/protests-clashes-in-old-city-sopore-islamabad-87.asp>

In other development, with protests continuing across the Valley against the custodial killing of Nazim Rashid Shalla of Sopore, police detained two cops in connection with the case. The arrests came hours after Hurriyat Conference (G) Chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani called for continued protests till the arrest of the cops involved in the killing.⁸¹

North East India

- **Five killed in bomb blast in Imphal; Rebels surrender in Meghalaya; A 12-hour State-wide bandh called in Manipur in protest against the blast; ULFA team heads for New Delhi for talks with Centre; Village headman killed in West Garo Hills**

According to reports, a powerful bomb exploded at the busy Sangakpham Bazar at Imphal in Manipur claiming five lives including two girls, besides injuring 10 others. The blast took place 15 hours after a bomb explosion rocked the Singjamei locality in Imphal West district without any casualty. The bomb was suspected to have been fitted to a two-wheeler at the busy Sangakpham Bazar under Heingang Police station under Imphal East district. Militants' hands are suspected behind the blast.⁸²

However, four rebels of Meghalaya's Liberation Achik Elite Force surrendered before the authorities. The rebels were on the run due to the ongoing combing operations against rebel groups in Garo Hills region, and finally they surrendered.⁸³

Meanwhile, a 12-hour State-wide bandh was called by All Manipur Students Union (AMSU) protesting blast at Sangakpham Market in Imphal which claimed five lives. AMSU president Thokchom Suresh, announcing this at a press conference here, called upon the State Government to take strong action against the culprits. Manipur Chief Minister O Ibobi accused the NSCN-IM of involvement in blast.⁸⁴

In another development, top leaders of the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) led by chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa left for New Delhi to open the first formal round of talks with the central government. The peace talks between ULFA and the union home ministry officials will begin in the Indian capital amid hopes of bringing the curtains down on one of northeast India's longest running and violent insurgencies. The government side is expected to be represented by union Home Secretary R.K. Singh, New Delhi's chief peace interlocutor P.C. Haldar, and senior ministry officials.⁸⁵

⁸¹ "2 cops held", *Greater Kashmir*, August 6, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Aug/7/2-cops-held-54.asp>

⁸² "Five killed in Manipur blast", *The Assam Tribune*, August 1, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug0211/oth05>

⁸³ "Four rebels surrender in Meghalaya", *The Assam Tribune*, August 3, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug0311/at044>

⁸⁴ "Manipur bandh today in protest against blast", *The Assam Tribune*, August 2, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug0311/oth05>

⁸⁵ "ULFA team heads for Delhi to hold talks with Centre", *The Assam Tribune*, August 4, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug0411/at013>

In other development, suspected militants belonging to the Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) and the anti-talks faction of the NDFB and ULFA shot dead a senior village chief (Nokma) at Jeldupara village near Selsella in West Garo Hills. The militants had earlier served a demand note on the village chief but the prime reason for his killing appears to be over the sale of a large plot of land to the Chairman of another Garo outfit A'chik National Volunteers Council (ANVC), which triggered the outburst.⁸⁶

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **UN Security Council expresses grief at the deaths of UN peacekeepers in Sudan; Use of force by Syrian authorities condemned by the UNSC**

The Security Council members expressed grief at the deaths of four UN peacekeepers who were killed in a landmine explosion in the Abyei area of Sudan. Seven other peacekeepers were injured in the explosion. The Council also expressed its full support for the work of UN Interim Security Force for Abyei and urged parties to the fighting to cooperate with the mission.⁸⁷

In other developments, the Security Council condemned human rights violation and use of force by the Syrian authorities and regretted the death of civilians during mass protests in the country. The Council also called upon the Syrian authorities to immediately cease the use of force and to respond to the humanitarian needs of people affected by the violence.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ "Village headman shot dead", *The Assam Tribune*, August 4, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug0511/oth07>

⁸⁷ "Security Council voices sadness after deaths of four peacekeepers in Sudan", *UN News Centre*, August 3, 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39227&Cr=Abyei&Cr1=>

⁸⁸ "Syria: Security Council condemns rights abuses and use of force against civilians", *UN News Centre*, August 3, 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39229&Cr=Syria&Cr1=>