

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **Contradictory statement on Kunduz city attack; Kundoz attack manifestation of dangerous drawdown; Pakistan should do what its Leadership Promised; calls on youths to have confidence in National Unity Government; No change in policy on Afghanistan; Afghanistan withdrawal in 2016 is premature as Taliban resurgent.**

The newly appointed leader of the Taliban group Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor has issued a statement following a coordinated attack on Kunduz city. Mullah Mansoor's call to refrain from harming civilians and their properties while ruling out retribution of the government employees and security personnel provided that they abandon all negative thoughts, message of peace and full a credit of the fall of the city to Taliban militants, are some of the important points made in his statement. However, the remarks by Mullah Mansoor comes as the Taliban militants have been blamed in a series of activities aimed at harming the civilians including an attack on a radio station apparently managed by women. The attack on Roshani Radio Television by Taliban militants sparked an outrage after the station was torched following the fall of the city. NAI Organization which supports open media in Afghanistan strongly condemned the attack on the Radio Station, calling it an evil and brutal act. The organization expressed deep concerns regarding the security of the media workers and journalists in the city and called on the government to take all necessary measures to ensure their security.¹

A senior United States Senator John McCain has once again criticized the US force drawdown in Afghanistan. His criticism came after Taliban flooded into Kundoz city, the provincial capital of northern Kundoz province. McCain in a statement said that the Kundoz attack "is the latest manifestation of this dangerous reversal." McCain again opposed to complete drawdown of US forces from Afghanistan. He said that if a complete drawdown happens, the scenario of Iraq could be repeated in Afghanistan. McCain has long opposed the President Obama's policy of completely pulling out its troops from Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the U.S. forces once again joined hands with Afghan security forces in fight against Taliban. The launched airstrikes on Taliban in Kundoz city on Tuesday in order to assist Afghan security forces retake the city. Brian Tribus, spokesman for U.S. forces in Afghanistan confirmed the air strikes.²

¹ "Mullah Mansoor Issues Contradictory Statement On Kunduz City Attack", *Khaama Press* September 28, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/mullah-mansoor-issues-contradictory-statement-on-kunduz-city-attack-1579>

² "Sen. John McCain: Kundoz Attack Latest Manifestation Of Dangerous Drawdown", *Khaama Press*, September 29, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/sen-john-mccain-kundoz-attack-latest-manifestation-of-dangerous-drawdown-3957>

Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah on September 29 said the presence of terrorist sanctuaries and support networks in Pakistan continued to cause trouble inside Afghanistan. Speaking at the 70th United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York, Abdullah said the Haqqani network had been identified as a main culprit and needed to be dismantled as had been Afghanistan demand in the past. "Our demands are legitimate as our people continue to suffer at the hands of terrorist elements who cross into Afghanistan and indiscriminately victimize our citizens. This matter needs can be addressed and facilitated by trusted international partners." As a case in point, he said, over the past 48 hours, hundreds of militants, including foreign fighters, organised attacks in Kunduz province, where heavy fighting was raging. The attacks came a day after more than 10 spectators at a sports match were killed and many more injured in southeastern Paktika province in a bomb attack, Abdullah said.³

Rula Ghani 'Bibi Gul', the First Lady of Afghanistan has called on youths to have confidence in National Unity Government. Rula Ghani said on September 30 that the government has been busy for improvement. "Government was busy for improvement. It is following the outcome. You are the future of Afghanistan. Government wants to build a bright future for you. You can trust the National Unity Government," she said. Rula Ghani advised youths to be united and fulfil responsibility for the reconstruction of the country. Her call comes as thousands of Afghans, most of them youths, are leaving the country every month because of insecurity and lack of work. An envoy of Afghanistan's Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations in Iran said earlier this week that up to 60,000 Afghans are crossing the border only into Iran every month. Mohammad Asif Durzabi said that every day up to 2,000 Afghans are crossing the border which in one month is 60,000. He said that most of these people are trying to reach out to European countries through Iran.⁴

Pledging support to the Afghan government, the United States said it was monitoring the situation in northern Kunduz province. A White House (WH) spokesman told reporters in Washington that at this point the US had no policy announcement to make with regard to America's presence in Afghanistan. "The US continue to monitor efforts by Afghan National Defence and Security Forces to retake Kunduz. The US and coalition forces are providing advisory support and have conducted a limited number of air strikes," Josh Earnest said. He added the US would continue to work closely with President Ashraf Ghani, the Afghan government and its international partners to ensure that Afghan forces had the capabilities and training necessary to preserve the gains that have been made over the last 13 years. "When it comes to policy decisions, I don't have a lot of news to make in this regard, but there are two observations that I have," he said in response to a question.⁵

³ "Pakistan Should Do What Its Leadership Promised: CEO", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, September 30, 2015, at http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=13190

⁴ "First Lady Calls On Youths To Have Confidence in National Unity Government", *Khaama Press*, October 01, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/first-lady-calls-on-youths-to-have-confidence-in-national-unity-government-3970>

⁵ "No Change in Policy on Afghanistan: WH", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, October 3, 2015, at http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=13213

The German government wants to extend its deployment in Afghanistan for one year initially; German newspaper Welt is Sonntag cited high-ranking NATO sources as saying. Although NATO has withdrawn almost all of its combat troops, it still has soldiers stationed in the country to train local forces. Up to about 850 German troops are in Afghanistan on this mission. NATO had planned to withdraw all forces by the end of next year. "At the meeting of the NATO defence ministers in the coming week in Brussels, Berlin will suggest extending the mandate for the Afghanistan deployment by one year," the newspaper cited a NATO source as saying. "Germany does not want to put what has already been achieved in Afghanistan on the line. The final withdrawal, which is planned for 2016, is premature given the Taliban attacks," the source added.⁶

Pakistan

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **CPEC an inspiring model of South-South cooperation; Afghan instability has telling effects on region; China to construct \$2.5 billion Gwadar; All efforts will be made for CPEC's success; Benazir got threatening call from Musharraf, claims Seigel, Even shadow of Daesh not to be allowed: Gen Raheel.**

Terming the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) an "inspiring model" of South-South Cooperation, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said on September 27 that cooperation among developing countries played a significant role in promoting development and prosperity in the region. Addressing a high-level Roundtable on South-South Cooperation (SSC), co-chaired by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Chinese President Xi Jinping, the prime minister said the CPEC would bring huge economic and development benefits not only to Pakistan and China but also the entire region and beyond. He said the project formed an important component of President Xi Jinping's "One Belt, One Road" initiative. "We greatly admire the vision underlying this initiative," he said, adding that this development strategy and framework offered new opportunities for Asia's transformation and prosperity.⁷

The Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), General Raheel Sharif, on September 29 said the perpetual instability in Afghanistan had telling effects on the region. Addressing the participants of Asia Security Conference in Munich, Germany, held to discuss regional peace and security, the army chief stressed on all stakeholders to revive reconciliation, and said despite hurdles, peace and reconciliation were of vital importance for a larger settlement in Afghanistan. According to tweets of Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Asim Bajwa on the social media, the COAS highlighted instability within and without had deeply affected the socio-economic climate in Pakistan. He said the current approaches to restore stability within Pakistan had opened up economic opportunities for the country and the region. He said practical steps were required to manage the Pak-Afghan borders for gainful conclusion of the military operation Zarb-e-Azb. General Raheel said a peaceful

⁶ "Germany: Afghanistan Withdrawal in 2016 is Premature as Taliban Resurgent", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, October 4, 2015, at http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=13224

⁷ "CPEC an Inspiring Model Of South-South Cooperation: PM", *Dawn*, September 28, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1209408/cpec-an-inspiring-model-of-south-south-cooperation-pm>

Afghanistan could open regional connectivity. He said the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) benefits could be shared. He said it was essential for socio-economic development of Pakistan to address the menace of extremism.⁸

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif urged India on September 30 to pledge with Pakistan not to use force or the threat of force under any circumstances. The prime minister used his address to the UN General Assembly to propose four peace measures, which include demilitarising of Kashmir and an unconditional withdrawal of troops from Siachen. "Our peoples need peace to prosper. Peace can be achieved through dialogue, not disengagement," he said. Mr Sharif said the steps he was suggesting in this "new peace initiative" were "the simplest to implement": "One, Pakistan and India formalise and respect the 2003 understanding for a complete ceasefire on the Line of Control in Kashmir." For this purpose, he called for the expansion of the UN Military Observers Group for India and Pakistan to monitor the observance of the ceasefire.⁹

In order to cope with the burgeoning energy crisis, the process to award the contract of \$2.5 billion to China Petroleum Pipeline Bureau (CPPB) for erecting LNG terminal at Gwadar and laying down 711 kilometres long and 42 inches diameter pipeline from Gwadar to Nawabshah will be completed in November this year. Both the components of the project will come on stream in December 2017. To this effect, the technical bid here on September 30 opened as per the tender toeing the spirit of PPRA Rules. "The Chinese state owned company — CPPB — has under the government-to-government arrangement deposited its technical and commercial bids for the \$2.5 billion project, and we have examined and screened all the documents relating to the technical bid. However, the commercial bid will be opened in November once the evaluation of the technical bid gets completed," Mubeen Saulat, Managing Director of Inter-State Gas System (ISGS), told media persons after the technical bid was opened.¹⁰

Chief of Army Staff Gen Raheel Sharif said on October 1 that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project would be a game-changer and usher in an era of prosperity in the region. "We will do everything to make it a success," he said during interactions at the International Institute for Strategic Studies and House of Commons in London, according to tweets by Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations Lt Gen Asim Saleem Bajwa. General Sharif said the success of the Zarb-i-Azb military operation had made discernible effects and it would continue pursuing 'sleeper cells' across Pakistan. "Our environment and context need to be understood," he said. "We want to finish terrorists and their nurseries." The COAS urged the international community to play its role for the regional peace. "Terrorism is a global issue and warrants global response. The funding of all terrorist organisations has to be

⁸ "Afghan Instability Has Telling Effects On Region, Says COAS", *The News*, September 30, 2015, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-39922-Afghan-instability-has-telling-effects-on-region-says-COAS>

⁹ "PM Urges India To Pledge Not To Use Force Under Any Circumstances", *Dawn*, October 1, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1210158/pm-urges-india-to-pledge-not-to-use-force-under-any-circumstances>

¹⁰ "China to Construct \$2.5 Billion Gwadar", *The News*, October 1, 2015, at [http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-39949-China-to-construct-\\$25-billion-Gwadar](http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-39949-China-to-construct-$25-billion-Gwadar)

checked by all," he said. "We are against use of proxies and won't allow it on our soil," the army chief said.¹¹

Finally, after eight years, American journalist Mark Seigel has recorded his statement through video link in which he claimed that on September 25, 2007, in his presence in Washington, Benazir Bhutto had received a telephone call which she later described as a very 'bad call' from Musharraf. Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was in tension after receiving the threatening call from Pervez Musharraf on the occasion. Mark Seigel recorded his statement before the Anti-Terrorist Court (ATC), Rawalpindi, Judge Rai Muhammad Ayub Marth. All arrangements had been made for video conferencing at the Rawalpindi Commissioner's Office, which was declared a part of the court. The judge adjourned further hearing till October 5. The American author was weeping and was in a state of gloom while recording his statement. He said after receiving the threatening call from the military ruler, Benazir Bhutto was trembling in anger. She talked to Musharraf for 15 minutes, he claimed. Seigel recorded his statement from Pakistan's Embassy in Washington DC at around 7:35pm. The embassy premises had been declared an extension of the court as well. Mark Seigel stated that Benazir Bhutto had received Musharraf's threatening call at the office of American Senator Tom Lantos. She also showed him the name of Musharraf on phone screen when he was calling, he claimed. He said the military dictator called Benazir Bhutto three weeks before her arrival in Pakistan.¹²

The Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), General Raheel Sharif, has said that his country would not allow "even a shadow" of the Islamic State (IS) and termed the group a greater threat than al-Qaeda. "As far as Daesh (Islamic State) is concerned, in Pakistan, even a shadow of Daesh would not be allowed," Raheel Sharif said in an address to The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies in London on October 3. In May, the Islamic State militant group claimed the killings of at least 43 members of Ismailis in Karachi. Leaflets backing Daesh jihadists have been seen recently in parts of northwest Pakistan and pro-IS slogans have appeared on walls in several cities. "There are people in Islamabad who want to show their allegiance to Daesh. So it's a very dangerous phenomenon," Raheel Sharif said. The army chief said dealing with the extremist group was set to become an ever greater challenge than the al-Qaeda network behind the 9/11 attacks in the United States. "I feel the future challenge is Daesh. It's a bigger name. Al-Qaeda was a name but Daesh is now a bigger name," Raheel Sharif said.¹³

¹¹ "All Efforts Will Be Made for CPEC's Success, Says Army Chief", *Dawn*, October 2, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1210333/all-efforts-will-be-made-for-cpecs-success-says-army-chief>

¹² "Benazir Got Threatening Call From Musharraf, Claims Seigel", *The News*, October 2, 2015, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-39955-Benazir-got-threatening-call-from-Musharraf-claims-Seigel>

¹³ "Even Shadow Of Daesh Not To Be Allowed: Gen Raheel", *The News*, October 4, 2015, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-39995-Even-shadow-of-Daesh-not-to-be-allowed-Gen-Raheel>

Bangladesh

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **Indian nationals held; Sheikh Hasina co-chairs the summit on UN Peacekeeping; PM seeks more Japanese investment; Hasina receives 'Champions of the Earth' award; PM pledges to do more for gender parity; France and German foreign ministers visit Bangladesh; Bangladesh new chair of LDCs; Claims that ISIS was behind shootings of foreigners.**

Members of Bangladesh Navy arrested 104 more Indian fishermen along with eight trawlers from Fairway Buoy area of the Bay of Bengal near the Sundarbans on September 30 for intruding into the Bangladesh water territory. With this, a total of 165 Indian fishermen were arrested with 13 trawlers from the bay within two days, according to Bangladesh media. On September 29, members of Bangladesh Navy arrested 61 Indian fishermen along with five trawlers from the same area.¹⁴

Asserting that Bangladesh's commitment to UN peacekeeping is strong and steadfast and it stands ready to go further, prime minister Sheikh Hasina has urged all members of the peacekeeping community to work together to ensure peace and security around the world. The prime minister said this at a summit on peacekeeping operation at the UN headquarters on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly on September 28. Sheikh Hasina co-chaired the summit with US president Barack Obama. She said Bangladesh is adopting a national peacekeeping strategy to better respond to the evolving needs of the UN peacekeeping missions on the ground and at policy level.¹⁵

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sought more Japanese investment in the special economic zone allocated for Japan in Bangladesh. The prime minister came up with the request during a bilateral meeting with her Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe at the UN headquarters on the sidelines of the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly on September 28.¹⁶

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received the highest environmental accolade of the United Nations Environmental Programme, 'The Champions of the Earth', award in recognition of Bangladesh's far-reaching initiatives in addressing problems induced by climate change. UNEP executive director Achim Steiner at a gala reception on September 27 handed over the award to Sheikh Hasina appreciating her as an inspirational leader since she showed the necessity to work for environment protection and climate change.¹⁷

Expressing her government's strong political will to move forward with gender equality and women's empowerment, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 27 said Bangladesh is

¹⁴ "104 More Indian Nationals Held In Bay", *New Age Online*, September 30, 2015 at <http://newagebd.net/161814/104-more-indian-nationals-held-in-bay/#sthash.2kIRf3xV.dpbs>.

¹⁵ "Ensure Peace Across World", *New Age Online*, September 30, 2015 at <http://newagebd.net/161739/ensure-peace-across-world/#sthash.YqSavKJG.dpbs>.

¹⁶ "PM Seeks More Japanese Investment", *New Age Online*, September 30, 2015 at <http://newagebd.net/161723/pm-seeks-more-japanese-investment/#sthash.9oYgqCFc.dpbs>.

¹⁷ "Hasina Receives 'Champions of the Earth' Award", *New Age Online*, September 28, 2015 at <http://newagebd.net/161150/hasina-receives-champions-of-the-earth-award/#sthash.NrGdRIRP.dpbs>.

pledge-bound to continue to work for the socioeconomic and political empowerment of the women and higher education for girls. 'Bangladesh would create more opportunities for women and ensure their access to politics, business and government,' she told a high-level meeting of the global leaders on gender equality at the UN headquarters.¹⁸

France and German foreign ministers expressed empathy for the vulnerability of Bangladesh in the face of climate change and hoped the next climate conference, scheduled for November in Paris, would come up with some concrete measures to address the concern. Bangladesh was heavily threatened by the adverse effects of climate change and 'we share their concern,' French foreign minister Laurent Fabius said at a press conference in Dhaka. Reaching on a consensus for arranging \$100 billion each year from 2020 for getting rid of adverse impact of climate change 'is a big challenge' as no study had been done from where the financing would come, said Laurent Fabius, who would chair the Paris conference widely known as the COP21. Fabius and his German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier were on a one day joint official visit in Dhaka on September 21.¹⁹

Bangladesh has been elected the new Chairman of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The new Chairman was ceremonially handed over the responsibility of leading the 49 LDCs at New York on October 1. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam formally took over the role from the Minister of MDGs and SDGs of Benin, the immediate past Chairman of the Group.²⁰

Bangladesh's prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, dismissed claims that the Islamic State was behind the fatal shootings of two foreign citizens, instead suggesting that the killings may have been the work of homegrown militants aligned with her political opponents in the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, or B.N.P. Bangladesh Nationalist Party acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said irresponsible remarks from the government's top level over the murders of two foreigners will not only create obstacles to investigations but also turn it difficult to identify the assailants.²¹

Sri Lanka

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **UNHRC adopts consensus resolution on Sri Lanka; Sri Lanka welcomes Nepal's new Constitution; Sri Lanka and Togo establish diplomatic relations; Sri Lanka sends a CID team to Maldives.**

¹⁸ "PM Pledges to Do More for Gender Parity", *New Age Online*, September 28, 2015 at <http://newagebd.net/161113/pm-pledges-to-do-more-for-gender-parity/#sthash.Atq2ftnJ.dpbs>.

¹⁹ "Climate Vulnerability: France, Germany Express Empathy", *New Age Online*, September 22, 2015 at <http://newagebd.net/160083/climate-vulnerability-france-germany-express-empathy/#sthash.Z3q6RT2Y.dpbs>.

²⁰ "Bangladesh New Chair of LDCs", *The Daily Star*, October 3, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/bangladesh-new-chair-lDCs-151060>.

²¹ "PM's Remarks To Hamper Probe: BNP", *New Age Online*, October 4, 2015 at <http://newagebd.net/163048/pms-remarks-to-hamper-probe-bnp/>.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) at its 30th session in Geneva, through consensus adopted a resolution on Sri Lanka on October 1 on accountability for the alleged human rights violations during war in Sri Lanka. The resolution A/HRC/30/L.29 "Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka" was submitted on September 24 by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, United Kingdom and the United States and backed by Sri Lanka. The adoption of the resolution follows the presentation of the report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) investigation to the Council by the High Commissioner Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein on September 30. The resolution calls for the establishment of a Sri Lankan Judicial Mechanism with a Special Counsel to investigate allegations of violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law. The proposed mechanism will include Special Counsels office, of Commonwealth and other foreign judges, defence lawyers, and authorized prosecutors and investigators. The United States and Britain hailed the adoption of the "historic resolution" on Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council.²²

The Government of Sri Lanka has welcomed the promulgation of the new Constitution of Nepal, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. The Foreign Ministry said that Sri Lanka join hands with the International Community to welcome the promulgation of the new Constitution of Nepal which is a key step in its journey towards national reconciliation, political stability and development.²³

Sri Lanka has established diplomatic relations with the Togolese Republic, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. The Foreign Ministry said that establishing diplomatic relations corresponds to the interests of both states, and will help to consolidate international peace and security and uphold the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. The agreement under the United Nations charter and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic relations was signed at the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in New York between Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera and Prof. Robert Dussey, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration of the government of the Togolese Republic.²⁴

Sri Lanka sent a team of experts to Male to assist investigations into the explosion of the boat carrying Maldives President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom and First Lady Fathimath Ibrahim on September 28. The Sri Lankan team comprising four detectives of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and forensic experts left for Male on October 1. Acting Foreign Minister Dr. Harsha de Silva during a telephone conversation with the Acting Foreign

²² "UNHRC Adopts Consensus Resolution On Sri Lanka To Promote Accountability, Reconciliation And Human Rights", *Colombo Page*, October 1, 2015, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Oct01_1443707816CH.php. "US, UK Hail Adoption Of "Historic Resolution", *Colombo Gazette*, October 1, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/10/01/us-uk-hail-adoption-of-historic-resolution/>.

²³ "Sri Lanka Welcomes Nepal's New Constitution", *Colombo Gazette*, September 28, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/09/28/sri-lanka-welcomes-nepals-new-constitution/>.

²⁴ "Sri Lanka and Togo Establish Diplomatic Relations", *Colombo Gazette*, September 29, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/09/29/sri-lanka-and-togo-establish-diplomatic-relations/>.

Minister of Maldives Mr. Mohamed Hussain Shareef had expressed Sri Lanka's concern on the explosion and offered assistance.²⁵

Maldives

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **India sends forensic team to Malé; Dunya Maumoon attends the summit on countering Islamic State; Foreign minister addresses the UN Sustainable Development Summit; Ban Ki-moon calls on Maldives to grant clemency to Nasheed; Foreign Minister participates in an informal meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers at the UN; Dunya Maumoon meets with her Italian counterpart; VP reiterates commitment to strengthening relations with Saudi Arabia; National Reserve rises to US\$ 667.4 million.**

At the request of the Maldives Police Service, India has sent a forensic team to the Maldives to assist in the investigation of the explosion on the Presidential launch. President and the First Lady were traveling from Hulhulé to the Capital, Malé after their Hajj Pilgrimage when the explosion that took place on board the Presidential launch. A bodyguard of the President, a presidential aide and the First Lady, Fathimath Ibrahim was injured in the explosion. The three-man forensic team would be working closely with the Maldivian Police providing all the technical assistance required in the investigation of the explosion on the Presidential launch on September 28. The Indian Government has provided similar assistance to the Maldives in the past establishing a forensic lab (FSL) in the Maldives under the India-Maldives Bilateral Assistance Program in 2010. India also supplied forensic equipment to the lab in 2011. Four Agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the United States, nine Saudi officials have joined the team investigating the explosion on board the Presidential launch.²⁶

Minister of Foreign Affairs Dunya Maumoon has on behalf of the Maldivian government attended the summit on countering Islamic State (IS) and violent extremism, on the sidelines of the ongoing 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Some 60 heads of states belonging to the international coalition in the fight against IS and countering violent extremism were present at the summit.²⁷

Minister of Foreign Affairs Dunya Maumoon has said that sustainable development of small island developing states like the Maldives would never be realised unless meaningful progress is made in the fight against climate change. Dunya made this remark in her statement at the UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015 in New York, on 27 September 2015. She also assured Maldives' full commitment to the realisation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets.²⁸

²⁵ "Sri Lanka Sends a CID Team to Maldives to Assist Investigations On President's Boat Explosion", *Colombo Page*, October 4, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Oct04_1443936854CH.php.

²⁶ "Four FBI Agents Join the Investigation Team", *SunOnline*, September 30, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/33247>.

²⁷ "Maldives Attends Leaders' Summit On Countering IS", *SunOnline*, September 30, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/33231>.

²⁸ "Dunya: Sustainable Development Not Possible for Small States, Without Progress in Fight against Climate Change", *SunOnline*, September 28, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/33113>.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has urged Maldives to grant clemency to former President Mohamed Nasheed. This came during a meeting between the Secretary-General and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives Dunya Maumoon on 30 September 2015, on the sidelines of the UN General Debate at the UN Headquarters. According to UN, Ban Ki-moon also encouraged the government to take strong ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and stressed the vital role of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the climate change process, leading up to Paris in December.²⁹

Foreign Minister, Dunya Maumoon has said that the efforts from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) have to move ahead with far greater speed and will. Speaking at an informal meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers at the U.N. General Assembly in New York, Minister Dhunya said that the importance of the organization has grown. She said that the Maldives fully supports the reform of SAARC processes and mechanisms that are underway. The Minister said that she hopes that the host of the new SAARC Environment and Disaster Management Centre will be decided soon.³⁰

Minister of Foreign Affairs Dunya Maumoon has met with her Italian counterpart, Paolo Gentiloni. The meeting took place at the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, on October 1, 2015. The two ministers discussed furthering bilateral cooperation and promoting investment between the two countries, and exchanged views on working closely towards achieving a strong climate agreement in Paris. Permanent Representative of Maldives to the UN Ahmed Sareer, and Joint Secretary Farzana Zahir participated in the meeting.³¹

Vice President Ahmed Adeb has highlighted the friendship between Maldives and Saudi Arabia, and reiterated the Maldives' commitment to a future of sustained and enhanced relations between the two countries. Adeb made this remark while speaking at a reception in Paradise Island Resort on October 1, 2015, to commemorate Saudi Arabia's 85th National Day.³²

The National Reserve of the country rising to US\$ 667.4 million at the end of August. The financial review publicizes by the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) shows the National Reserve rising to US\$ 667.4 million which is a 23 percent increase from last year. The National Reserve was at 692.5 million at the end of July.³³

²⁹ "Ban Ki-moon Calls on Maldives to Grant Clemency to Nasheed", *SunOnline*, October 1, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/33321>.

³⁰ "Dunya: SAARC Has to Move Forward with Greater Speed", *SunOnline*, October 1, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/33275>.

³¹ "Dunya Meets with Foreign Minister of Italy", *SunOnline*, October 2, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/33347#>.

³² "VP Reiterates Commitment To Strengthening Relations with Saudi Arabia", *SunOnline*, October 2, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/33345>.

³³ "National Reserve Rises To 667.4 Million", *SunOnline*, October 4, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/33419>.

B. East Asia

Japan

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attends the 70 session of UNGA in New York; First US-India-Japan ministerial meeting was held in New York; Japan-Australia Foreign Ministers' Meeting; Japan-Bangladesh Summit Meeting; Japan-Iran summit.**

On September 29, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attends the 70 session of UNGA in New York and urged all nations to face the challenges of 21st century together drawing from their individual capabilities. He underscored Japan's contribution in fostering human resources, extending humanitarian assistance and safeguarding women's rights. Furthermore, Japan is set to enhance its assistance for Syrian and Iraqi refugees. Japan is scheduled to offer US\$ 2.5 million in humanitarian assistance for neighbouring states of the EU that are dealing with refugees and migrants, including the Republic of Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Prime Minister Abe further focused on the rule of law and the principles of equality and the importance of building human capacity. Japan International Cooperation Agency since 2004 played a critical role in training of 20,000 personnel of national police force in Congo. He also stressed on Japan's role as the Proactive Contributor to Peace based on the principle of international cooperation. UNSC reforms also featured in his address and stressed that Japan hopes to be a permanent member of the Security Council since it is a peace-loving nation for the 70 years since the end of World War II.³⁴

First US-India-Japan ministerial meeting was held in New York on September 30. The meeting was attended by Secretary of State John Kerry, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Foreign Affairs Minister Fumio Kishida. Until now seven US-India-Japan trilateral meetings were held at director-general level since 2011. This framework has been upgraded to the ministerial level given the importance of maritime security and stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. All three nations focused on peaceful settlement of disputes; freedom of navigation and unhindered lawful commerce in the South China Sea; and humanitarian assistance and regional connectivity.³⁵

The ninth Japan-Australia Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held on September 30 on the sidelines of UNGA session in New York. Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida met his Australian counterpart Julie Bishop discussed Japan-Australia strategic partnership and the significance of trilateral US-Japan-Australia cooperation. In addition, they discussed disarmament and non-proliferation, and security threats originating from North Korea.³⁶

³⁴ Address by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Seventieth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations September 29, 2015 New York, MOFA, September 30, 2015 at http://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/unp_a/page4e_000321.html

³⁵ Inaugural U.S.-India-Japan Trilateral Ministerial Dialogue, MOFA, September 30, 2015 at http://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sw/page4e_000325.html

³⁶ Japan-Australia Foreign Ministers' Meeting, MOFA, October 1, 2015 at http://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/ocn/au/page4e_000329.html

Japan-Bangladesh Summit Meeting was held on September 28 where Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and underscored the 'unshakable' bilateral cooperation. Japan will cooperate with Bangladesh on the 2030 Agenda and stressed on the ¥36th Loan Package as component of the ¥600 billion assistance assured based on the Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt initiative and additionally promote trade and investment between Japan and Bangladesh.³⁷

Japan-Iran summit meeting was held on September 28. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met with President Hassan Rouhani and discussed several issues including the high-level bilateral exchanges, regional security in Middle East, cooperation on environment, culture and prospects of expanding cooperation following the nuclear agreement implementation.³⁸

The Korean Peninsula

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **South Korea-Japan Foreign Minister's meeting held; North Korea-China annual trade fair scheduled in October; North Korea scheduled to celebrate Worker's Party anniversary on October 10; South Korea-US-Japan discuss the possibility of stricter sanction on North in case of provocation; President Park focused on North Korea and unification while addressing UNGA.**

On September 30, South Korea-Japan relations along with regional security issues were discussed during Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se's meeting with Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida on the sidelines of the UNGA session. South Korea stressed on the need to address the comfort women issue for any meaningful progress in the bilateral relations. Both sides also discussed the possible trilateral China-Japan-South Korea meeting in late October or early November and the latest security policy shift in Japan.³⁹

On October 15, four-day North Korea-China annual trade fair is scheduled to begin in Dandong where several Chinese and North Korean corporations are expected to participate. In addition, several Hong Kong, Vietnamese, Mongolian and Thai companies will also participate in the Expo. Besides, China and North Korea plans to launch a border trade zone in Dandong.⁴⁰

On October 10, North Korea is scheduled to celebrate Worker's Party anniversary through a military parade. Earlier there were several reports of long range missile launch being planned on that day but North Korea has yet not notified the International Maritime Organization or the International Civil Aviation Organization of launch. Later it is indicated that North is

³⁷ Japan-Bangladesh Summit Meeting, *MOFA*, September 29, 2015 at http://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sw/bd/page4e_000326.html

³⁸ Prime Minister Abe Holds Summit Meeting with Iranian President, *MOFA*, September 28, 2015 at http://www.mofa.go.jp/me_a/me2/ir/page4e_000328.html

³⁹ Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se Meets with his Japanese Counterpart on the Sidelines of the UN General Assembly, *MOFA*, September 30, 2015 at http://www.mofa.go.kr/ENG/press/pressreleases/index.jsp?menu=m_10_20

⁴⁰ "N. Korea, China to Kick Off Annual Trade Fair on Oct. 15", *The Korea Herald*, October 2, 2015 at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20151002000560>

solely focusing on a grand military parade at an airfield which is expected to showcase new types of weapon such as multiple rocket launchers, unmanned aerial vehicles and stealth very slender vessels, called VSV. Several aircrafts, artillery equipment and missiles are transported to the Mirim Airport in Pyongyang for the parade.⁴¹

Following South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se's meeting with US Secretary of State John Kerry and Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, Reports suggests that UNSC is considering the possibility of stricter sanctions on North Korea to isolate Pyongyang both economically and diplomatically in case North continues its provocations. This is in anticipation of a possible long-range missile launch by Pyongyang during the Worker's Party anniversary.⁴²

South Korean President Park Geun-hye stressed on several issues including North Korean security challenge, Korean unification and Saemaeul rural development program in her UNGA address in New York. The speculation around a possible long-range missile launch by North during the Worker's Party celebration created further trust deficit which led President Park to underscore that any such provocation will hurt the inter-Korea agreement. While interacting with several research organizations in the US, President Park stressed on the security threats originating from North Korea and South Korean initiative for unification of the Peninsula which President Park believes to be the fundamental solution to North's nuclear weapons, human rights performance and provocations.⁴³

C. Central Asia

Kazakhstan

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **Kazakhstan President calls for a bigger Eurasian integration project; Kazakh National Bank currency interventions exceed US\$ 1 billion in two weeks; Astana exploring the option of privatising its oil refineries; Kazakhstan exploring shale cooperation prospects with China; Nazarbayev discusses nuclear non-proliferation and Ukraine with Obama; Kazakh citizen jailed for being a member of the banned Tablighi Jamaat group.**

Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev, in his speech at the UN delivered on September 28, has emphasized on the importance of the idea of a bigger Eurasia that will unite the Eurasian Economic Union, Silk Road Economic Belt and European Union.⁴⁴

⁴¹ "N. Korea Set For Military Parade For Party Anniversary, Instead Of Missile Launch", *Yonhap News Agency*, October 2, 2015 at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20151002000556>

⁴² "U.N. Security Council Begins Studying Stronger Sanctions on N. Korea: FM Yun", *The Korea Herald*, September 30, 2015 at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150930000150>

⁴³ "Park Winds Up U.N. Diplomacy Focused on N. Korea, Unification, 'Saemaeul Movement'," *Yonhap News Agency*, September 29, 2015 at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150929000250>

⁴⁴ "Kazakhstan President Speaks For A Bigger Eurasia Integration Project", *The Times of Central Asia*, September 28, 2015 at <http://www.timesca.com/news/15801-kazakhstan-president-speaks-for-a-bigger-eurasia-integration-project>

The National Bank of Kazakhstan has continued with the policy of foreign currency intervention on the Kazakhstan Stock Exchange. It is estimated that the interventions have exceeded US\$ 1 billion in the last two weeks. The bank was forced to intervene when the *Tenge* fell to 300 to 1 US\$. The interventions have stabilised the currency which is now trading at 270.9 Tenges to 1 US\$. The devaluation is being linked to the crisis in Russia and the low oil and gas prices.⁴⁵

The Deputy Chairman of Kazakhstan's national oil and gas company Kaz Munay Gas, Daniyar Berlibayev has said that the country's three large oil refineries –Atyrau, Pavlodar and Shymkent - may be privatized in the future. He added that privatisation will 'improve the situation and make private business more active there'. He also dwelled on Kazakhstan cutting down its oil production to 79 million tons in 2015 from 83 million tons that it produced in 2014.⁴⁶

Kazakhstan's First Deputy Energy Minister Uzakbai Karabalin has said that exploration of the country's shale oil potential is among the aspects of cooperation with China as part of the framework of Silk Road Economic Belt programme. He added that Astana has suggested to Beijing to relocate part of oil and gas equipment production from China to Kazakhstan.⁴⁷

Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev and his US counterpart Barack Obama have discussed nuclear non-proliferation and the conflict in Ukraine during a meeting held on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly on September 29. President Nazarbayev also voiced his support for a swift resolution to the Ukrainian conflict through a "full implementation" of a cease-fire agreement reached in Minsk in February 2015.⁴⁸

A court in Kazakhstan's central city of Temirtau has sentenced a local resident to three years in jail for being a member of the Tablighi Jamaat group. The Jamaat is banned in the country. Islamic groups have been under increased scrutiny from the Kazakh authorities since a suspected Islamist militant carried out the country's first-ever suicide bombing in the northwestern city of Aqtobe in 2011.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ "Kazakh National Bank Currency Interventions Exceed \$1 Billion In Two Weeks", *The Times of Central Asia*, October 2, 2015 at <http://www.timesca.com/news/15817-kazakh-national-bank-currency-interventions-exceed-1-billion-in-two-weeks>

⁴⁶ "Kazakhstan May Privatize Its Oil Refineries", *The Times of Central Asia*, October 1, 2015 at <http://www.timesca.com/news/15813-kazakhstan-may-privatize-its-oil-refineries>

⁴⁷ "Kazakhstan Wants To Cooperate With China In Shale Oil Exploration", *The Times of Central Asia*, September 30, 2015 at <http://www.timesca.com/news/15811-kazakhstan-wants-to-cooperate-with-china-in-shale-oil-exploration>

⁴⁸ "Obama, Nazarbayev Discuss Nuclear Non-Proliferation, Ukraine", *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, September 30, 2015 at <http://www.rferl.org/content/obama-nazabayev-discuss-nuclear-nonproliferation-ukraine/27278409.html>

⁴⁹ "Kazakh Jailed For Membership In Banned Islamic Group", *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, September 30, 2015 at <http://www.rferl.org/content/kazakh-jailed-membership-islamic-group-tablighi-jamaat/27278985.html>

Kyrgyzstan

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **Head of SCO observation mission says that ‘parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan were clear and transparent’; Kyrgyz and US Foreign Ministers discuss bilateral cooperation; Kyrgyz government allots land for construction of gas pipeline "Chon-Alai-China"; New Silk Road fund to boost relations between Kyrgyzstan and China; Japan builds a bridge across the Kok-Art river; Large Chinese companies tapping into Kyrgyzstan market; Russian-Kyrgyz Development Fund approves 7 new projects.**

Deputy Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the head of the SCO Observer Mission Sabyr Imandosov has said that parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan were clear and transparent.⁵⁰

Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Erlan Abdyldayev has met with US Secretary of State John Kerry during the sideline of the 70th session of the UN General Assembly in New York. Abdyldayev noted the importance of boosting economic cooperation between the two countries while Mr. Kerry noted the US desire to have a strong relationship with Kyrgyzstan despite the existing problems in bilateral relations. He also praised the progress in the ‘democratic development of Kyrgyzstan’.⁵¹

The Kyrgyz government has allotted land for the construction of gas pipeline "Chon-Alai-China." The project involves construction of the fourth gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to China with a capacity of 30 billion cubic meters per year. It will traverse 215 kilometres in Kyrgyzstan.⁵²

Kyrgyzstan’s Deputy Prime Minister Valery Dill has said that the New Silk Road international fund will act as a bridge between countries of the region. He stated that the ‘main task of the Fund is to boost cultural, humanitarian, trade, and economic relations between Kyrgyzstan and China, as well as other countries along the Silk Road.’ Initially, the Fund will focus on projects such as the construction of a historical and tourist complex in the village of Ak-Beshim and creation of an agricultural innovation park in the Chui province in northern Kyrgyzstan.⁵³

Japan has built a motor-traffic bridge across Kok-Art river at the 564th km of the Bishkek-Osh road in the Jalal-Abad province of southern Kyrgyzstan. The project - worth US\$ 11.96 million

⁵⁰ "Head of SCO Observation Mission: "Parliamentary Elections In Kyrgyzstan Were Clear And Transparent", *Kabar*, October 5, 2015 at <http://www.kabar.kg/eng/society/full/14059>

⁵¹ "Kyrgyz Foreign Minister and US Secretary of State Discuss Bilateral Cooperation", *Kabar*, October 3, 2015 at <http://www.kabar.kg/eng/politics/full/14039>

⁵² "Kyrgyzstan Allotted Land For Construction Of Gas Pipeline "Chon-Alai-China"", *Kabar*, September 27, 2015 at <http://www.kabar.kg/eng/regions/full/14013>

⁵³ "New Silk Road Fund To Boost Relations between Kyrgyzstan and China", *The Times of Central Asia*, September 25, 2015 at <http://www.timesca.com/news/15793-new-silk-road-fund-to-boost-relations-between-kyrgyzstan-and-china>

- was the second bridge built by Japan as part of a grant. The first bridge was built in the Chui province in northern Kyrgyzstan.⁵⁴

A Kyrgyz-Chinese business forum was organised in Bishkek on September 25. The Chinese delegation comprised of 50 companies from transport, communications, oil and gas, alternative energy, pharmacology and food production sectors. Kyrgyzstan's Deputy Prime Minister Valery Dill invited Chinese companies to form joint ventures and invest in the domestic banking and insurance sectors. Bilateral trade stood at US\$ 1.2 billion in 2014.⁵⁵

The Russian-Kyrgyz Development Fund (RKDF) has approved 7 projects totalling 75 million soms under the program of financing small and medium-sized businesses. The loans will be used to modernize the recipient enterprises, including the purchase of equipment, construction and improvement of production premises. The fund was set by Russia to offset the entry of Kyrgyzstan into the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). It has an authorized capital of US\$ 500 million.⁵⁶

Uzbekistan

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **Uzbekistan bans children from mosques during Eid Al-Adha festival; Chechen, Tajik, Uzbek group pledges loyalty to Al-Qaeda's Syrian wing; Anti-terror drills take place in Tashkent; Uzbekistan becomes free from high enriched uranium following shipment of fuel to Russia.**

Uzbekistan's government has banned people under the age of 18 from attending regular Friday Prayers or special prayer services at mosques across the country, including the Eid al-Adha celebrations that mark the end of the hajj. The order, issued by Uzbekistan's Education Ministry on September 23, warns parents they will face a fine of about \$750 -- equal to 15 months' salary at the country's minimum wage -- if their children are caught by the authorities inside a mosque during prayer services. It also warns imams at mosques not to allow anyone under the age of 18 into prayer services.⁵⁷

A group of around 1,500 Chechen, Uzbek, and Tajik fighters in Syria has pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda's Syria wing Nusra Front. Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar (Muhajireen Brigade) made the pledge in a statement distributed by supporters online. The pledge is a boost for Nusra Front against its rival Islamic State. Nusra Front's leader had earlier said in June that

⁵⁴ "Japan Helps Improve Kyrgyzstan's Transport Infrastructure", *The Times of Central Asia*, September 22, 2015 at <http://www.timesca.com/news/15778-japan-helps-improve-kyrgyzstan-s-transport-infrastructure>

⁵⁵ "Large Chinese Companies Tapping Into Kyrgyzstan Market", *The Times of Central Asia*, September 28, 2015 at <http://www.timesca.com/news/15803-large-chinese-companies-tapping-into-kyrgyzstan-market>

⁵⁶ "7 Projects Get Funding from Russian-Kyrgyz Development Fund", *The Times of Central Asia*, October 5, 2015 at <http://www.timesca.com/news/15828-7-projects-get-funding-from-russian-kyrgyz-development-fund>

⁵⁷ "Uzbekistan Bans Children From Mosques On Eid Al-Adha Festival", *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, September 25, 2015 at <http://www.rferl.org/content/uzbekistan-bans-children-from-mosques-for-eid/27268142.html>

the group had around 30 per cent foreign fighters, including Europeans, Asians, Russians, and Chechens.⁵⁸

Planned anti-terrorism drills have taken place in Shayhantaur district of Tashkent city on October 2, 2015.⁵⁹

Uzbekistan has shipped its entire high enriched uranium (HEU) to the Mayak reprocessing facility in the Russian Federation. This is part of the Tri-partite (IAEA-USA-Russia) Initiative that aims to eliminate the threat of HEU in several countries of the post-Soviet space.⁶⁰

Tajikistan

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **Tajik Islamic Party declared a terrorist organization; UN human rights office voices concern over Tajikistan's ban on Islamic party; Iran considering freshwater import from Tajikistan.**

Tajikistan's Supreme Court has, on September 29, ruled that the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) is a terrorist organization and banned its activities in the country. The court's decision also forces the closure of the party's Najot (Salvation) newspaper and bans the distribution of any video, audio, or printed materials related to the party's activities. The Tajik Prosecutor-General's Office had earlier accused the IRPT leadership of involvement in a deadly mutiny earlier this month that was led by former Deputy Interior Minister Abduhalim Nazarzoda.⁶¹

The United Nations has, on October 2, voiced concern over the recent ban on the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), and the arrest and detention of more than a dozen of its members since early September. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) called on the Tajik authorities to ensure that any measures taken in the fight against 'terrorism' or 'extremism' are fully in line with international human rights law, with full respect for the rights to freedom of religion, opinion, expression, peaceful assembly, and association, participation in public affairs, and the principle of non-discrimination.⁶²

The chairman of the Energy Commission in Iran's Parliament, Ali Marvi has that Tehran is considering freshwater import from neighbouring countries, including Tajikistan to meet

⁵⁸ "Chechen, Tajik, Uzbek Group Vows Loyalty To Al-Qaeda's Syrian Wing", *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, September 25, 2015 at <http://www.rferl.org/content/chechen-tajik-uzbek-group-vows-loyalty-to-al-qaeda-syrian-wing-nusra-front/27267088.html>

⁵⁹ "Antiterrorism Drills Take Place in Tashkent", *Uz Daily*, October 2, 2015 at <http://www.uzdaily.com/articles-id-33781.htm>

⁶⁰ "Uzbekistan Becomes HEU-Free Following Shipment Of Fuel To Russia", *Uz Daily*, September 28, 2015 at <http://www.uzdaily.com/articles-id-33737.htm>

⁶¹ "Court Rules Tajik Islamic Party Is Terrorist Organization, Bans Its Activity", *The Times of Central Asia*, September 30, 2015 at <http://www.timesca.com/news/15809-court-rules-tajik-islamic-party-is-terrorist-organization-bans-its-activities>

⁶² "UN Human Rights Office Voices Concern After Tajikistan Bans Islamic Party", *The Times of Central Asia*, October 3, 2015 at <http://www.timesca.com/news/15822-un-human-rights-office-voices-concern-after-tajikistan-bans-islamic-party>

growing water shortages. In 2011, the Presidents of Iran and Tajikistan had signed a memorandum aimed at speeding up cooperation in the water and energy spheres.⁶³

D. West Asia

Iran

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **Nazmi Gur: Erdogan responsible for attacks on Turkey; Rouhani says he is ready to talk to anyone to secure Syria, Iraq and Yemen.**

Nazmi Gur, an MP from the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), says the Turkish people consider President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) as "responsible for recent violence and conflicts" in Turkey. Some analysts argue that Erdogan provoked a war against the Kurdish People's Party (PKK) in order to fuel nationalistic sentiments in favour of AKP in the snap elections on October 1 after his party failed to secure a majority in general election in June.⁶⁴

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said that he is ready to negotiate with anybody and any country and visit anywhere if it helps prevent more bloodshed in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. "If I deem it necessary that security will be established in Syria, Iraq or Yemen, and that the people of these countries will be relieved, I would visit anywhere if necessary and talk to anyone if necessary, but it will be conditioned on this point that I be sure that it will protect the lives and security of these countries," Rouhani told reporters upon his arrival in Tehran from New York.⁶⁵

Iraq and Syria

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **Secretary General Ban Ki- Moon's support for reforms in Iraq; Abadi and Obama discuss ways to strengthen US support for Iraq. Abadi meets with Russian President Putin to discuss the risks of ISIS Chechen fighters; Shabaan: The West has always been mistaken towards Syria; Obama prepared to work with Putin to broker Syria transition.**

The Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon has expressed full support to initiate Abadi's reforms in Iraq. This came during a meeting between Ban Ki-moon and Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi in New York. A statement by the Information Office of Abadi said that "the Secretary-General of the United Nations has renewed his support for Iraq in all

⁶³ "Iran Considering Freshwater Import From Tajikistan", *The Times of Central Asia*, October 1, 2015 at <http://www.timesca.com/news/15815-iran-considering-freshwater-import-from-tajikistan>

⁶⁴ "Nazmi Gur: Erdogan Responsible For Conflicts in Turkey", *Tehran Times*, September 28, 2015 at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=249680. Accessed October 19, 2015

⁶⁵ "I am Ready to Talk to Anybody to Secure Syria, Iraq and Yemen: Rouhani", *Tehran Times*, September 30, 2015 at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=249750. Accessed on October 19, 2015

fields." The statement indicated that "the two sides discussed during the meeting the political, security and economic conditions, as well as the United Nations programs in Iraq."⁶⁶

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi in a meeting with US President Barack Obama in New York discussed ways to strengthen US support for Iraq in the areas of armament and the economy, as well as strengthening the role of the international coalition in the fight against ISIS. Bilateral relations were also discussed along with ways to enhance it.

President Putin and Iraqi Prime Minister Abadi discussed the dangers of Chechen fighters who have joined the ISIS, presenting a threat to both Russian and Iraq. They also discussed the bilateral relations between the two countries along with war on ISIS and Russian arming of Iraq.⁶⁷

Presidential Political and Media Advisor Dr. Bouthaina Shaaban stressed that the West has always been mistaken towards Syria, adding it is time Western countries reconsidered their positions. Shaaban said in an interview with *BBC News* and reported by *SANA*, that ISIS is not the only terrorist organization in Syria, but also Jabhat al-Nusra which is designated a terrorist organization by the UN Security Council. Shaaban explained that in light of arming and funding large numbers of terrorists coming from more than 80 countries to Syria, it was normal for the Syrian government to ask the Russian government for help in combating terrorism. Shaaban stressed that the West does not care about civilians and if they truly do, they would have listened to what the Syrian government said since 2011 when the terrorists began to destroy schools and hospitals and to kill the Syrian people.⁶⁸

Although Russia's airstrikes in support of the Syrian military provoked widespread condemnation from the United States and its coalition allies, there may also be traction for a new phase of UN-brokered talks on a political transition in Syria. US President Barack Obama warned on October 2 that Russia's actions could lead Moscow into a "quagmire" in Syria, and that indiscriminate attacks on "moderate" armed groups opposed to both the Islamic State (IS) and the Syrian government are a "recipe for disaster."⁶⁹

⁶⁶ "United Nations Renews Its Support for Abadi Reforms", *Iraqi News*, October 1, 2015, at <http://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/united-nations-renews-support-abadis-reforms/>. Accessed on October 15, 2015

⁶⁷ "Abadi and Obama Discuss Ways To Strengthen US Support for Iraq", *Iraqi News*, September 30, 2015, at <http://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/abadi-obama-discuss-ways-strengthen-us-support-iraq/>. Accessed on October 15, 2015 and "Abadi and Putin Discuss the Risk of ISIS Chechen Fighters, Russians Arming Iraq", *Iraqi News*, September 29, 2015 at <http://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/abadi-putin-discuss-risk-isis-chechen-fighters-russian-arming-iraq/>. Accessed on October 15, 2015.

⁶⁸ "Shabaan: The West has Always Been Mistaken towards Syria", *The Syria Times*, October 3, 2015 at <http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/news/local/19906-shaaban-the-west-has-always-been-mistaken-towards-syria>. Accessed on October 19, 2015

⁶⁹ "Obama Prepared to Work with Putin to Broker Syria Transition", *Al Monitor*, October 4, 2015, at <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/10/syria-transition-obama-russia-iran-egypt-counterterrorism.html>. Accessed on October 15, 2015

Israel and Palestine

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **Terrorist admits Hamas has a key role to in training terrorists in Syria; Factions: Abbas insists on 'monopolising' Palestinian decision.**

A Palestinian-Jordanian terrorist affiliated to the Muslim brotherhood, has confessed that Hamas has played a key role in supporting terrorist groups fighting the Syrian Arab army units and it has sought to build up a base for the brotherhood group in Syria. In an interview with the Syrian Television channel last night, the terrorist Beshar Yousef Ali al-Janodi admitted that he participated in terrorist acts and in training terrorist groups in the Palestinian refugees camps and in other areas in Syria.⁷⁰

Palestinian factions played down Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas's speech at the UN General Assembly which he delivered, Palestinian *Al-Resalah* newspaper said. Hussein Mansour, member of the central committee of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, said that Abbas's speech "fell far too short of Palestinian hopes." Hamas official Yahya Musa also said that Abbas' threats to end the Oslo protocol were old and that he cannot commit to them.⁷¹

The Gulf

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **Bahrain submits formal complaint against Iran to UN; Shia-Sunni divide driven by politics: Qatar; Qatar says Putin's Syria plan ignores root cause of crisis; Saudi Arabia demanded an end to the Russian airstrikes in Syria.**

Bahrain has presented a formal complaint against Iran to the United Nations Secretary General for its blatant violations and its continued unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the foreign ministry said. The complaint was presented by Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmad Al Khalifa during a meeting with Ban Ki-moon, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. Iran has chosen the path of escalation in an attempt to exert control over its neighbours by continuing to interfere in their internal affairs, the exploitation of extremist groups, the provision of safe haven to fugitives, the opening of training camps for terrorist groups, and the smuggling arms and explosives, Shaikh Khalid said.⁷²

⁷⁰ "Terrorist Admits Hamas Has a Key Role to in Training Terrorists in Syria", *The Syria Times*, October 2, 2015 at <http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/news/local/19885-terrorist-admits-hamas-has-key-role-in-training-terrorist-groups-in-syria>. Accessed on October 19, 2015

⁷¹ "Factions: Abbas Insists On 'Monopolising' Palestinian Decision", *Palestine Chronicles*, October 1, 2015 at <http://www.palestinechronicle.com/factions-abbas-insists-on-monopolising-palestinian-decision/>. Accessed on October 15, 2015

⁷² "Bahrain Submits Formal Complaint against Iran to UN", *Gulf News*, October 2, 2015 at <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/bahrain-submits-formal-complaint-against-iran-to-un-1.1594058>. Accessed on October 19, 2015

Qatar's Emir Shaikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani dismissed the existence of a Sunni-Shiite conflict in the region, insisting the current standoff is mainly a division driven by political interests and fuelled by social forces. He added that difference due to the interests of political and social forces that foment internal sect-centric prejudices. The disputes could be solved through dialogue and initially agreeing on the rules governing the relationship between Iran and the Gulf states on the basis of non-interference in internal affairs of Iran and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, he added.⁷³

Qatar's foreign minister said there was general international agreement with Russia on its call to fight Daesh (the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), but cautioned that it failed to tackle the root cause of the crisis in Syria, which was President Bashar Al Assad. Khalid Al Attiyah also said it was time for Gulf Arab states and Iran to hold "serious dialogue" and discuss all issues to normalise ties.⁷⁴

Saudi Arabia, a leading foe of President Bashar Al Assad, demanded his ally Russia to end its raids on Syria, saying the strikes had caused civilian casualties while failing to target the hardline Daesh militants Moscow says it opposes. In remarks at the United Nations in New York, a senior Saudi diplomat suggested both Russia and Al Assad's other main ally Iran could not claim to fight Daesh "terrorism" at the same time as supporting the "terrorism" of the Syrian authorities.⁷⁵

E. The United State of America

National

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **President Obama urges Congress to promptly approve a bill to fund the government; In 2015, nearly 300 mass shootings took place in the US; Federal investigators recovers a total of 13 weapons possessed by the lone gunman; Oregon college shooter spared a student and gave message to the "lucky one" to deliver to authorities; Mass shooting revived the politically-polarizing issue of gun violence in the United States; House Speaker Boehner's resignation shows deep divisions within the Republican Party.**

President Barack Obama is urging Congress to promptly approve a bill to fund the government so as to avoid hurting the economy at a time when global growth is slowing. President Obama, speaking on October 2 to reporters at the White House, said he would not sign any more "shortsighted" measures that cover brief periods and leave disputes over major

⁷³ "Shia- Sunni Divide 'Driven By Politics'- Qatar", *Gulf News*, September 29, 2015 at <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/qatar/sunni-shiite-divide-driven-by-politics-qatar-1.1591905>. Accessed on October 19, 2015

⁷⁴ "Qatar Says Putin's Syria Plan Ignores Root Cause Of Crisis", *Gulf Times*, September 29, 2015 at <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/qatar/qatar-says-putin-s-syria-plan-ignores-root-cause-of-crisis-1.1591902>. Accessed on October 19, 2015

⁷⁵ "Saudi Arabia Demands Russia Ends Syria Raid", *Gulf News*, October 1, 2015 at <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/saudi-arabia-demands-russia-end-syria-raids-criticises-iran-1.1593459>. Accessed on October 19, 2015

issues unresolved. He spoke just days after signing a temporary measure worked out between the Republican majority and Obama's Democratic Party allies in Congress. That measure expires December 11. Previous political squabbles have cut off government funding, and the last such battle in 2013 forced much of the government to shut down temporarily.⁷⁶

It was reported that so far in the year 2015, there have been nearly 300 mass shootings, more than one per day involving four or more people. The latest U.S. mass shooting that claimed the lives of 10 people at a community college in Oregon highlights the increasing level of gun violence across the country. It prompted President Barack Obama to again call for strengthening gun control laws in an effort to decrease mass violence. President Obama said after meeting with reporters at the White House on October 1 following news of the latest shooting that the routine nature of mass shooting in America will continue unless the country's politics change.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, Federal investigators have recovered a total of 13 weapons possessed by the lone gunman who went on a shooting rampage at a community college in rural southern Oregon, including six firearms recovered at the school and seven at the gunman's apartment. The weapons recovered at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon, included five pistols and a rifle.⁷⁸

According to the mother of a student who witnessed the rampage, the 26-year-old killer, Christopher Sean Harper-Mercer who gunned down classmates at an Oregon college spared a student and gave the "lucky one" something to deliver to authorities. Others weren't as fortunate. Parents of students in the classroom said the gunman shot one after saying she could save her life by begging. Others were killed after being told to crawl across the floor. Shooter Christopher Sean later killed himself as officers arrived, Douglas County Sheriff John Hanlin said on October 3.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, the shooting which left 10 people dead has revived the politically-polarizing issue of gun violence in the United States and what, if anything, should be done about it. An outpouring of shock and grief in Oregon comes months after a deadly mass shooting at a South Carolina church and nearly three years after a bloodbath at a Connecticut elementary school. In each case, tragedy spurs fierce debate on Capitol Hill. But legislation aimed at curbing America's firearms mortality rate, the highest among developed nations, has been stymied for years.⁸⁰

Last week, after the House Speaker John Boehner announced that he will resign at the end of October, the deep divisions within the Republican Party are on full display. Couple Boehner's impending departure with the rise of political outsiders in the Republican presidential race

⁷⁶ "President Takes Tougher Budget Stance", *VOA News*, October 02, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/obama-takes-tougher-stand-budget-fight/2989450.html>

⁷⁷ Simkins, Chris, "Stats: Nearly 300 Mass US Shootings This Year", *VOA News*, October 02, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/united-states-mass-shootings/2989301.html>

⁷⁸ "Oregon Gunman Had at Least 13 Weapons", *VOA News*, October 02, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/obama-decries-oregon-shooting/2988568.html>

⁷⁹ "Survivor: Gunman Spared 'Lucky One' to Give Police Message", *Associated Press*, October 4, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/survivors-say-gunman-spared-lucky-one-to-give-police-message/2991084.html>

⁸⁰ Bowman, Michael, "Oregon Mass Shooting Rekindles Debate on Gun Violence", *VOA News*, October 04, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/oregon-mass-shooting-rekindles-debate-on-gun-control/2991076.html>

and it's clear that the divide between establishment Republicans and grassroots conservatives is very much alive and could become a distraction for the party as it approaches the 2016 presidential election. Boehner's departure is not likely to change the dynamics in Congress where conservatives often push Republican leaders to be more aggressive in opposing President Obama and his Democratic allies. Some experts, however, are concerned that the party split could hurt Republicans in next year's election.⁸¹

International: Asia

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **General Campbell says Afghan military called for the airstrike against Taliban fighters; Defence Secretary Carter pledged a full and transparent investigation of the U.S. airstrike at the Afghan hospital; US and Russia discuss different ways to address the conflict in Syria; Syrian rebel groups gearing up for a longer, bloodier battle to oust President Assad; President Assad says whole Middle East would be destroyed if Russia's aerial bombardment of militants does not succeed; Russia's move to deepen its involvement in the Syrian conflict has a long-term strategy: Analysts; TPP negotiators continued haggling over rules for trade in drugs, cars and dairy products; Russia-linked hackers tried to trick Clinton into infecting her computer systems; Nimitz-class USS Ronald Reagan has docked at its new home in Japan.**

The top U.S. general in Afghanistan, John Campbell, told reporters the Afghan military called for the airstrike against Taliban fighters in the area. Campbell said, "The Afghan forces called in for fire to support them because they were under direct fire". He said that the U.S. forces are in Kunduz advising Afghan forces, but earlier reports that U.S. forces there were taking fire from the Taliban were inaccurate. However, Doctors Without Borders has issued a statement saying: "The reality is the U.S. dropped those bombs... The U.S. military remains responsible for the targets it hits... There can be no justification for this horrible attack." It was "a war crime." The strike killed 22, including hospital staff and children.⁸² Earlier on October 4, the U.S. Defence Secretary Ash Carter pledged a full and transparent investigation of the U.S. airstrike at the hospital in northern Afghanistan. That bombing triggered a firestorm of criticism from aid groups, including the international medical charity Doctors Without Borders, which operated the medical facility in Kunduz.⁸³

On September 30, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov discussed a number of different ways to address the conflict in Syria during their talks at the United Nations — and came up with some ideas. Kerry said, "Several options were agreed to be further discussed. I need to take those back to Washington, to the president and our team". He added that Lavrov also would discuss the options with Russian President

⁸¹ Malone, Jim, "Political Divide a Threat to Republican Hopes", *VOA News*, September 30, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/political-divide-a-threat-to-republican-hopes/2985900.html>

⁸² Babb, Carla, "US Commander: Afghans Requested Strike That Hit Hospital", *VOA News*, October 05, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-offers-condolences-promises-full-investigation-into-afghan-hospital-attack/2991680.html>

⁸³ "DOD Vows 'Full and Transparent' Probe of US Airstrike at Afghan Hospital", *VOA News*, October 04, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/doctors-without-borders-withdraws-from-kunduz/2990761.html>

Vladimir Putin. Lavrov said, "We all want Syria democratic, united, secular," "but we have some differences on the details on how to get there."⁸⁴

In the meantime, rebel groups in Syria are gearing up for a longer, bloodier battle to oust Syrian President Bashar al-Assad because of Russian airstrikes that they say have been designed to drive them back. For the second day in a row, fighters aligned with the Free Syrian Army claimed Russian airstrikes targeted their positions in Homs, al-Za'farana and Idlib, as well as those of other rebel groups.⁸⁵ On October 4, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said that the whole Middle East would be destroyed if Russia's aerial bombardment of militants opposed to his regime does not succeed. President Assad told Iranian state television that "The alliance between Russia, Syria, Iraq and Iran must succeed or else the whole region will be destroyed". But he added that "the chances of success for this coalition are great and not insignificant."⁸⁶ Christopher Kozak, analysts studying the crisis at the Institute for the Study of War, said that Russia's move to deepen its involvement in the Syrian conflict may have more to do with a long-term strategy of widening its influence than its stated goal of helping the Assad regime fight militants.⁸⁷

As per news reports, top trade officials of 12 Pacific Rim nations continued haggling over rules for trade in drugs, cars and dairy products this week as they try to work out the final details of a complex deal that could cover about 40 percent of the global economy. The discussions were slated to end earlier this week, but correspondent Doug Palmer of Politico said no agreement had been announced by early October 3. The issues include Washington's push to extend patent protection on a promising new class of drugs for longer than other nations want. Other disputes include dairy exporter New Zealand's push for greater access to Canada's dairy market, and squabbles between the United States and Japan over auto industry trade.⁸⁸

As per newly released emails show that Russia-linked hackers tried at least five times to trick Hillary Rodham Clinton into infecting her computer systems while she was secretary of state. It was unclear whether she was fooled into clicking on any attachments to expose her account. Clinton received the virus-riddled emails, disguised as speeding tickets from New York, over four hours early on the morning of August 3, 2011. Security researchers who analysed the malicious software in September 2011 said that infected computers would transmit

⁸⁴ Dockins, Pamela, "Kerry, Lavrov Discuss Options on Syrian Conflict", *VOA News*, September 30, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-european-powers-react-to-russian-strikes-in-syria/2986273.html>

⁸⁵ Seldin, Jeff, "Syria's Rebels, Regime Allies Gear Up for Fight", *VOA News*, October 01, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/syria-rebels-regime-allies-gear-up-for-fight/2988412.html>

⁸⁶ Bredemeier, Ken, "Syria's Assad: Middle East Would Collapse if Russian Airstrikes Fail", *VOA News*, October 04, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/assad-says-middle-east-would-collapse-if-russian-airstrikes-fail/2991112.html>

⁸⁷ Dockins, Pamela, "Analysts: Russia Has Ambitions Beyond Helping Assad", *VOA News*, October 01, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/lavrov-says-russia-targeting-only-terrorists-syria/2987603.html>

⁸⁸ "Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Talks Grind On", *VOA News*, October 03, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/trans-pacific-partnership-talks-grind-on/2990705.html>

information from victims to at least three server computers overseas, including one in Russia. That doesn't necessarily mean Russian intelligence or citizens were responsible.⁸⁹

Nimitz-class *USS Ronald Reagan*, one of the most advanced U.S. aircraft carriers has docked at its new home in Japan - the latest sign of deepening military ties between Washington and Tokyo. The nuclear-powered *USS Ronald Reagan* was welcomed by Japanese foreign ministry officials as it arrived in the port of Yokosuka on October 1, one day ahead of schedule. In a statement, Japan's foreign ministry said, it will "contribute to the security of Japan and the maintenance of peace and security of the region." At a ceremony, U.S. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus said the substance and symbolism of the carrier's presence "cannot be overstated."⁹⁰

India-US Relations

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **India is now buying more defence equipment from the US; Modi's US visit has strengthened bilateral relations and opened up new avenues of co-operation: Gabbard.**

The *Bloomberg* reported that India is now buying more defence equipment from the US. This growing military purchase comes at a time when the China's military assertiveness is increasing in Asia. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with President Obama on September 28 also highlighted the converging strategic interests between the two nations, which had strained relations during the Cold War, it reported. In 2014, India was the second-biggest buyer of U.S. arms behind Saudi Arabia, up from almost nothing five years ago. It reported that the most recent India's purchase from the US came last week, when India's cabinet approved a \$3 billion deal for Boeing Co. military helicopters. The 22 Apache attack choppers and 15 Chinook cargo choppers comprised the biggest defence contract since Modi came to power.⁹¹

Tulsi Gabbard, the US Democratic Congresswoman from Hawaii, said that India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi's just concluded US visit has strengthened India-US relations and opened up new avenues of co-operation. Gabbard said, "There are many different areas and sectors where the US and India's growing friendship will cover mutually beneficial ground. Prime Minister Modi's second visit to the US has allowed us to continue to strengthen those bonds and explore new opportunities for us to work together". Gabbard is the first ever Hindu Congresswoman elected to the US House of Representatives. She was among the top

⁸⁹ "Clinton Private Account Targeted in Russia-linked Email Scam", *Associated Press*, October 02, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/ap-clinton-email-russia-linked-scam/2988840.html>

⁹⁰ "USS Ronald Reagan Arrives in Japan", *VOA News*, October 01, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/uss-ronald-reagan-arrives-in-japan/2986901.html>

⁹¹ Pearson, Natalie Obiko and Bipindra, Nc., "India Surges to Second-Biggest U.S. Weapons Buyer", *Bloomberg*, September 28, 2015 at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-09-27/india-surges-to-second-biggest-u-s-weapons-buyer-as-china-rises>

American lawmakers to have met Modi and attended his address to the community at SAP Center in San Jose, California.⁹²

II. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEWS

Jammu & Kashmir

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **J&K lifts internet ban after 82 hours; Security forces bust militant hideout in Kishtwar district; NIA arrests two more suspects in BSF convoy terror attack case; Two Jaish-e-Mohammad militants killed in Tral encounter.**

The 82-hour blanket ban on Internet services in Jammu and Kashmir, which was placed on September 25, was fully lifted on September 28. However, the police has warned that “misuse” of data services and messaging services like WhatsApp and SMS (to stoke communal tension in the state) would invite legal action. The unprecedented move by the state government during the Muslim festival of Id-ul-Zuha, evoked widespread condemnation across J&K and beyond.⁹³

Security forces comprising troops of Delta Forces and state police busted a militant hideout at Jangalwar in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir on September 28 and claimed to have recovered a large cache of arms and ammunitions including two AK 47 rifles, hand grenades and seven Under Barrel Launcher grenades. The hideout was believed to be of an alleged Hizb militant Mushtaq Ahmed Butt alias Mussa who used to operate in the region before being killed by the security forces in 2011.⁹⁴

In connection with the terror attack on a BSF convoy on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway in Udhampur early August this year, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has apprehended two more people, including the driver and conductor of the truck in which Pakistani Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists, Mohammad Naveed and Nomen, had travelled from Valley to Narsu nullah. With this, the number of accused arrested in connection with 2015 Udhampur terror attack has risen to five as three others are already in judicial custody. They include Naveed, Showkat Ahmed and Khurshid.⁹⁵

⁹² “PM Narendra Modi’s Visit Strengthened Indo-US Bonds: Tulsi Gabbard”, *The Economic Times*, September 30, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/pm-narendra-modis-visit-strengthened-indo-us-bonds-tulsi-gabbard/articleshow/49164902.cms?prtpage=1>

⁹³ Jameel, Yusuf, “J&K Lifts Internet Ban After 82 Hours”, *The Asian Age*, September 28, 2015 at <http://www.asianage.com/india/jk-lifts-internet-ban-after-82-hours-617>

⁹⁴ “Militant Hideout Busted in J&K”, *The Hindu*, September 29, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/militant-hideout-busted-in-jk/article7699707.ece>

⁹⁵ Sharma, Arun, “J&K: NIA Arrests Two More Suspects in BSF Convoy Terror Attack Case”, *The Indian Express*, September 30, 2015 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/jk-nia-arrests-two-more-suspects-in-bsf-convoy-terror-attack-case/>

Two militants of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit were killed and an Army soldier was injured in an encounter in Hari village in Tral of Pulwama district of Jammu & Kashmir on October 4. The slain militants were identified as Adil Pathan and Burmi of JeM, said SP Awantipora, Irshad Ahmad.⁹⁶

Northeast India

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **Manipur seeks interlocutor for Kuki talks; Security forces gunned down two militants in Assam; Four DHNA militants held in Nagaland; Maoist leaders arrested in Assam.**

With a view to establish permanent peace in the hills, Manipur Government has decided to request the Centre to appoint an interlocutor to speed up tripartite peace talks with militant groups Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and United People's Front (UPF). The hill areas have been rocked by violence and nine persons were killed following the passage of three government bills to protect the indigenous people of Manipur on August 31.⁹⁷

Two militants were gunned down in an early morning encounter on September 28 between a group of unidentified militants from Garo Hills and a joint team of Army and Assam police. The encounter took place near Chalibhui village under Mankachar Police Station in Assam. The team later recovered one AK 56 gun, one hand grenade, one .32 pistol besides other items from the spot. The identities of slain militants are yet to be identified, said HK Nath, SP South Salmara.⁹⁸

Four militants of Dima Hasao National Army (DHNA), including the outfit's self-styled commander-in-chief and the deputy C-in C, were arrested by security forces from Peren district in Nagaland while they had gone there to procure arms. One person held captive by the rebels was also rescued during the operations. Assam Rifles PRO based in Kohima said that the militants had gone to Nagaland to establish contact with the NSCN (K) to procure arms. The security forces also unearthed three caches of arms and ammunition from the hideout in the forest near Langokro, which comprises several assault rifles, ammunition, radio set walkie-talkies, detonators, combat dresses, and incriminating documents including a bunch of extortion notes, informed the PRO.⁹⁹

A team of Golaghat police led by the additional SP, recently arrested three top Maoist leaders at Dergaon in Golaghat district of Assam. The accused were identified as Aditya Bora, native of Dibrugarh, Uttam Hazarika and Binanda Bora, both native of Khokondaguri, Dergaon.

⁹⁶ "2 Jaish-e-Mohammad Militants Killed, 1 Army Soldier Hurt in J&K Encounter", *The Times of India*, October 4, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/2-Jaish-e-Mohammad-militants-killed-1-Army-soldier-hurt-in-JK-encounter/articleshow/49216731.cms?>

⁹⁷ "Manipur Seeks Interlocutor For Kuki Talks", *The Assam Tribune*, September 28, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep2815/oth053>

⁹⁸ "2 Militants Killed", *The Assam Tribune*, September 29, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep2915/oth057>

⁹⁹ Kashyap, Samudra Gupta, "Four Assam Militants Held In Nagaland", *The Indian Express*, October 2, 2015 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/four-assam-militants-held-in-nagaland/>

Earlier, Aditya Bora was arrested in Chhattisgarh. The police also seized a 9mm pistol and 12 live bullets from them.¹⁰⁰

Left-wing Extremism

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **Maoists surrender in Bastar; CPI (Maoist) admits to loss to the movement; Telangana: Hundreds arrested for protesting Maoists' killings; CRPF targets 'informer' network to fight Naxals.**

Twenty-four Maoists surrendered before Kondagaon district police in Bastar region of Chhattisgarh on September 28, said a statement issued by Bastar police. "All 24 surrendered Maoists are residents of different districts of Chhattisgarh and were attracted by the State's surrender policy. The discrimination and exploitation of local Chhattisgarh cadre by senior Telugu leaders in the Maoist party propelled them to leave the path of violence and join the mainstream", noted the statement. Seven out of 24 ultras carried a reward of Rs.1 lakh each on their heads.¹⁰¹

In a letter intercepted by the police, CPI (Maoist) Central Committee spokesperson Abhay has admitted that about 100 Maoists were killed in a year. The letter, written in Gondi language for the ground-level militia members, was issued on the occasion of the 11th anniversary of the outfit in September. The letter also hinted at preparing the hilly terrain of Odisha as an alternative base to the present headquarters of Abujmad.¹⁰²

Hundreds of activists from Left parties and other mass organisations across Telangana were arrested on September 30 to halt their march to the state assembly to protest killing of two Maoists- Shruthi and Vidyasagar- by police in Warangal district on September 16. Terming it as a "fake encounter", 370 organisations, including 10 left parties and the groups which fought for separate Telangana state, have come together under the banner of TDF to condemn the killings. It is demanding probe by a sitting judge. However, Police denied permission to the march on the ground that Maoists may participate in it and indulge in violence.¹⁰³

In a major shift from its earlier approach of sending troops in large numbers inside the jungle for combing operations, the Central Reserve Police Force is now targeting the 'informer' network of Maoists in villages, an exercise which is bearing fruits for the force. The strategy, 'intelligence based tactical operations' deployed against the informers, has resulted in a decline in violence and casualties on the CRPF's side and looting of their arms/ammunitions

¹⁰⁰ "Top Maoist Leaders Held", *The Assam Tribune*, October 4, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=oct0415/state055>

¹⁰¹ Dahat, Pavan, "24 Maoists Surrender in Bastar", *The Hindu*, September 28, 2015 at [du.com/news/national/other-states/24-maoists-surrender-in-bastar/article7698983.ece](http://www.duh.com/news/national/other-states/24-maoists-surrender-in-bastar/article7698983.ece)

¹⁰² Deshpande, Vivek, "Maoist Leader's Letter To Cadre: '100 Maoists Killed In A Year... Very Big Loss To Movement'", *The Indian Express*, September 29, 2015 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/maoist-leaders-letter-to-cadre-100-maoists-killed-in-a-year-very-big-loss-to-movement/>

¹⁰³ "Telangana: Hundreds Arrested For Protesting Maoists' Killings", *Hindustan Times*, September 30, 2015 at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/telangana-police-arrest-protesters-to-halt-march-to-assembly/story-R6g71eLoiGyCck9Kp4ul11.html>

has come down drastically this year. Asserting that the Naxal problem may be solved in the next few years if operations and development of the region continue hand in hand, an officer said that now "only 500-600 hardcore Naxals are present in Chhattisgarh". In desperation, CRPF officials said, the Naxals are now targeting the jungle tracks as well where CRPF and other state security personnel walk. Meanwhile, CRPF has also written to ministry of home affairs to bring in a mechanism to have bar-coding for arms/ammunitions and chemicals used for explosives, so that they can be traced back to the place they have been smuggled from. "This will help in stopping pilferage of explosives to Naxal areas," said the officer.¹⁰⁴

III. UNITED NATIONS REVIEWS

India and the UN

(September 28-October 4, 2015)

- **Dalits want mention in SDGs; India announces its INDCs; Nepal raises 'blockade' at UNGA; UN Peacekeeping to get 850 more troops from India; India supports Sri Lanka's desire to have domestic investigation of war crimes; Pakistan 'internationalises' Kashmir, India says end terror.**

Dalit groups, including members of parliament from Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh have protested the non-inclusion of caste (work and descent) based discrimination specifically in Goal 10 on inclusive development of the SDG document. Paul Divakar, Chairperson of the Asia Dalit Rights Forum said this was a critical lapse. They have said India is wary of recognising this dimension of discrimination.¹⁰⁵

In preparation for the Conference of Parties (COP) 21 in Paris, the PM has urged all Union ministries and Public Sector Undertakings to bring out booklets, brochures and short videos of the green initiatives taken by them.¹⁰⁶ On the sidelines of General Assembly meetings, the PM met with Barack Obama, as well as leaders of France and Britain and conveyed to them India's sincerity towards the climate change treaty without capping its emissions.¹⁰⁷ On October 1, 2015, India announced the much-awaited climate action plan. It has pledged to increase clean energy a 40 per cent part of its total energy consumption and reduce the

¹⁰⁴ "CRPF Targets 'Informer' Network To Fight Naxals", *The Economic Times*, October 3, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/crpf-targets-informer-network-to-fight-naxals/articleshow/49204012.cms?prtpage=1>

¹⁰⁵ "Sustainable Development Summit: No Caste in SDGs, Dalits Want UN to Rectify 'Critical Lapse'", September 28, 2015, at <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/americas/sustainable-development-summit-no-caste-in-sdgs-dalits-want-un-to-rectify-critical-lapse/>

¹⁰⁶ "Ahead of Climate Talks, India to Get 'Progress Cards' Ready", September 28, 2015, at <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/Ahead-of-Climate-Talks-India-to-Get-Progress-Cards-Ready/2015/09/28/article3050873.ece>

¹⁰⁷ "India's Modi Expresses Support for Climate-Change Agreement", *The Wall Street Journal*, September 28, 2015, at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/indias-modi-expresses-support-for-climate-change-agreement-1443460252>

intensity of its emissions by approximately 35 per cent of the 2005 level by 2030. It also aims to increase the carbon sink by creating a capacity of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon di oxide equivalent of tree cover by 2030.¹⁰⁸ "India has also linked several of government's flagship programmes like the Smart Cities Mission, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Swachh Bharat Mission, National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY), National Mission for Clean Ganga, Make in India policy, Soil Health Card scheme, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana and many others to climate objectives."¹⁰⁹ To achieve these targets, India needs finances to the tune of \$2.5 trillion.¹¹⁰

Legal experts from Nepal have alleged that the unofficial blockade of Nepal by India in the context of the adoption of the new Constitution is preventing goods from third countries to flow in Nepal is a violation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982, which protects the rights of landlocked countries to have access to the sea and places obligations on transit countries to facilitate such access. It also violates Provisions of World Trade Organization, Nepal-India Transit Treaty and Agreement on South Asia Free Trade Area Agreement (SAFTA).¹¹¹ Deputy Prime Minister Prakash Man Singh, who led the Nepali delegation to the UN General Assembly raised this as an issue of LLDCs and discussed the issue with the Secretary General.¹¹²

30,000 more troops will partner with the US to strengthen the capacity of peacekeeping troops. The US president hosted a meeting of 50 troop contributing countries to get additional commitments from them.¹¹³ India will contribute an additional battalion of 850 more troops for peacekeeping. It will also provide peacekeeping enablers.¹¹⁴ In a departure from its long-held policy, India has also agreed to join with the US to train peacekeeping troops of the African Union.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁸ "India Submits Its Climate Action Plan, Asks Rich Nations To Cooperate In Achieving Its Goal", *The Times of India*, October 2, 2015, at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/pollution/India-submits-its-climate-action-plan-asks-rich-nations-to-cooperate-in-achieving-its-goal/articleshow/49189501.cms>

¹⁰⁹ "India Promises To Cut Greenhouse Gas Emissions Intensity by 2030", *The Indian Express*, October 2, 2015, at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/will-cut-greenhouse-gas-emissions-to-a-third-by-2030-india-promises/>

¹¹⁰ "Clean Cost:\$2.5 Trillion", *The Telegraph*, October 3, 2015, at http://www.telegraphindia.com/1151003/jsp/frontpage/story_45972.jsp#.VhCzUeyqqko

¹¹¹ "India's Act 'Breaches' Int'l Conventions, Agreements", September 28, 2015, at <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-09-28/indias-act-breaches-intl-conventions-agreements.html>

¹¹² "Nepal Turns To United Nations Over 'Obstruction' Of Trade Point with India", *The Indian Express*, October 4, 2015, at <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/nepal-turns-to-united-nations-over-obstruction-of-trade-point-with-india/>

¹¹³ "United Nations Peacekeeping Gets Pledges of More Troops", *The Wall Street Journal*, September 28, 2015, at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/united-nations-peacekeeping-gets-pledges-of-more-troops-1443483801>

¹¹⁴ "Success of Peacekeeping Depends Not On Weapons But on UN's Moral Force: PM Modi", *The Indian Express*, September 29, 2015, at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/success-of-peacekeeping-depends-not-on-weapons-but-on-uns-moral-force-pm-modi/>. For the full state of the PM see, "Statement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the UN Summit on Peace Operations", *The Hindu*, September 29, 2015, at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/resources/statement-by-prime-minister-narendra-modi-at-the-un-summit-on-peace-operations/article7699430.ece>

¹¹⁵ "Raja-Mandala: Picking Up The Tab For Peace", *The Indian Express*, September 29, 2015, at <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/raja-mandala-picking-up-the-tab-for-peace/>

In a vote crucial for Sri Lanka, India has decided to support the US-Lankan resolution on non-inclusion of foreign judges in the trial of war crimes committed in the war against the LTTE in the UN Human Rights Council. India said its position was based on the fact that the new government in Sri Lanka has done well to address the issues of Tamil minorities. India also argued for respecting Sri Lankan sovereignty in the process of seeking justice.¹¹⁶

In her speech at the 70th General Assembly, Minister for External Affairs, Sushma Swaraj said Pakistan must end terrorism and talks between the two countries can commence.¹¹⁷ In a reply to Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif raising the issue of occupation of 'Kashmir' and proposing a four-point formula for its implementation, a First Secretary of the Indian Mission said it was lamentable that Pakistan had done so when the actual 'occupier' is Pakistan. Explaining the ceasefire violations by Pakistan, he said that ceasefire violations often occur to divert attention from terrorist movement across the border.¹¹⁸ Pakistan has also submitted dossiers to the Secretary General which it claims gives evidence of India instigating violence in Baluchistan, Karachi and the tribal areas of Pakistan.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ "India To Support Sri Lanka in UN", *The Economic Times*, September 30, 2015, at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/india-to-support-sri-lanka-in-un/articleshow/49161350.cms>

¹¹⁷ "Addressing UN Assembly, India Says Pakistan Must Eschew Terrorism Before Talks Can Begin", October 1, 2015, at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=52104#.Vg97Duyqqko>

¹¹⁸ "India's Reply To Pakistan at UNGA: 'J&K is Under Foreign Occupation... the Occupier In Question is Pakistan'", *The Indian Express*, October 2, 2015, at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/full-text-indias-reply-to-pakistan-at-the-united-nation-general-assembly/>

¹¹⁹ "Pakistan Gives UN Files Claiming That India Foments Violence", *The Sunday Herald*, October 2, 2015, at <http://www.sunherald.com/2015/10/02/6445326/pakistan-gives-un-files-claiming.html>