

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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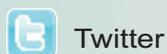
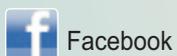
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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Bangladesh

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **President Abdul Hamid visits China; Dhaka summons acting High Commissioner of Pakistan; India-Bangladesh finalise the inter-country transmission line.**

President Abdul Hamid made a five day visit to China to attend the Dialogue on Strengthening Connectivity Partnership, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit. The president was being accompanied by 42 high rank officials.¹ During the visit, President Hamid met his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. The two presidents emphasised further strengthening the economic and other cooperation between the two countries for mutual benefits. President Hamid sought Chinese cooperation in the field of oceanography, training on UN peacekeeping and peace-building operation, enhancing defence production capability of Bangladesh Armed Forces, in strengthening Bangladesh's capacity to address the challenges related to climate change and disaster risk reduction. He invited Xi to visit Bangladesh anytime next year to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and China. Lauding Bangladesh for its economic and social development, the Chinese president gave assurance of continuing its grant and assistance for the development of Bangladesh. He also appreciated Bangladesh's role in various international and regional forums, and said his country would invite 100 young people from Bangladesh to visit China.²

Pakistan's Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan in a statement on November 1 expressed concern over the death sentence to Jamaat-e-Islami chief Motiur Rahman Nizami. Nisar said, "Though what happened in Bangladesh was that country's internal matter, yet Pakistan could not remain divorced from references to 1971 and its aftermath." Terming it "direct interference" in the internal affairs of Bangladesh, Dhaka summoned the acting high commissioner of Pakistan on November 6 to lodge its protest. Dhaka, while conveying its disappointment, asked the government of Pakistan to take serious note of the protest.³

The import of 100 megawatt electricity from Tripura received a boost after officials of Bangladesh and India finalised the inter-country transmission line on November 3. The two countries decided

¹ "President Leaves for China", *The Daily Star*, November 7, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/president-leaves-for-china-49202>.

² "President Urges Increased Access to Chinese Market", *The Daily Star*, November 9, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/president-urges-increased-access-to-chinese-market-49399>.

³ "Pak Diplomat Summoned Over Minister's Comments", *The Daily Star*, November 7, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/pak-diplomat-summoned-over-ministers-comments-49173>.

that an inter-connection line would be drawn from Suryamaninagar power sub-station in Agartala to Comilla in Bangladesh. The electricity will be transported from the 726MW thermal power project at Palatana in Gomati district of the Northeastern Indian state. The decision was taken at a meeting of technical experts from India and Bangladesh in Agartala, the capital of Tripura.⁴

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **Bangladesh-South Korea Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) held in Seoul; Russia urges Bangladesh to import more commodities; Dhaka opens its first resident diplomatic mission in Vienna; Germany to grant €211 million to Bangladesh; foreign exchange reserves rise in October 2014.**

Korea has urged Bangladesh to purchase training and combat aircraft and high-tech defence hardware from the country. Korean First Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Ambassador Cho Taeyong made the call at the second Bangladesh-South Korea Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) in Seoul on November 5. However, there was no response from Bangladesh side regarding the issue. Bangladesh sought Korean support in infrastructural improvement including road and rail connectivity and requested to consider establishing direct air connectivity between Dhaka and Seoul.⁵

Russian ambassador in Dhaka, Alexander Nikolaev, met Finance Minister AMA Muhith on November 2 and urged Bangladesh to import more commodities, particularly wheat, from Russia, as it has abundance of agricultural products. But Muhith said it would be tricky as banking transactions with Russia are problematic. The government will try to find a way out of it. Muhith assured Nikolaev at the meeting that Bangladesh would take some new initiatives to enhance relationship between the two countries, including forming a joint commission.⁶

Dhaka has opened its first-ever resident diplomatic mission in Vienna on November 1. Director General (East Asia and Pacific Wing) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Md Abu Zafar has been appointed as ambassador to Austria.⁷

Bangladesh will get €211 million for bilateral technical and financial cooperation from Germany, according to a statement issued by German embassy in Dhaka. Of the total, €140 million will be earmarked for making energy supply more efficient by improving and establishing transmission lines and substations. Germany pledged the funds during a meeting on development cooperation between the two governments, which concluded in Dhaka on November 3. Wolfram Klein, head of the South Asia division of the German economic cooperation and development ministry, and

⁴ "Bangladesh, India Decide on Power Inter-Connection Line", *The Daily Star*, November 4, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/bangladesh-india-decide-on-power-inter-connection-line-48757>.

⁵ "Korea Offers to Buy Defence Hardware", *The Daily Star*, November 7, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/korea-offers-to-buy-defence-hardware-49200>.

⁶ "Russia Calls for Deeper Trade Links", *The Daily Star*, November 3, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/russia-calls-for-deeper-trade-links-48604>.

⁷ "Dhaka Opens Diplomatic Mission in Vienna", *The Daily Star*, November 3, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/dhaka-opens-diplomatic-mission-in-vienna-48648>.

Mansur Md. Faizullah, additional secretary (Europe wing) of the finance ministry, led the delegations.⁸

Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserves rose to a record high of \$22.31 billion at the end of October 2014 from \$21.84 billion a month ago.⁹

Sri Lanka

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **Indian fishermen protested the death sentence awarded by a Sri Lankan court to five of their compatriots; India snubs the allegations raised by Karuna; Business delegation from New Zealand visits Sri Lanka; UNHCR hails Sri Lanka.**

Around three million fishermen in Tamil Nadu struck work protesting the death sentence awarded by a Sri Lankan court to five of their compatriots on charges of drug smuggling. The fishermen's representatives said, they were demanding the central government to put pressure on the Sri Lankan government to secure the release of the five fishermen.¹⁰ Meanwhile, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj had instructed Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka to hold talks with officials concerned in the island nation to secure the release of the fishermen.¹¹

Indian Government has snubbed the allegations raised by Deputy Minister Vinayagamurthi Muralitharan alias Karuna Amman that the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) had raped Tamil women during the war when they were involved in peacekeeping operations in the North and East. Indian External Affairs Ministry said that the Sri Lankan Government has not formally raised the issue with India. The Indian External Affairs Ministry said that the moment the Sri Lankan Government raises issues the Indian Government will respond.¹²

President Mahinda Rajapaksa, in a meeting with New Zealand's Minister of Primary Industries and Racing Nathan Guy at Temple Trees on November 4, said that New Zealand will be able to make a valuable contribution at the UN Security Council (UNSC) with its commitment to representing small and medium countries. Nathan Guy was in Sri Lanka with a business delegation to further enhance economic cooperation between the two countries. The delegation represented a variety of different sectors, including hospitality, tourism, technology and the dairy industry, among others.¹³

⁸ "Germany Pledges 211 Million to Bangladesh", *The Daily Star*, November 4, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/germany-pledges-211-million-to-bangladesh-48786>.

⁹ "Forex Reserves Hit Record \$22.3b", *The Daily Star*, November 4, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/forex-reserves-hit-record-22-3b-48759>.

¹⁰ "Fishermen Protest over Lankan Verdict", *Colombo Gazette*, November 6, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/06/fishermen-protest-over-lankan-verdict/>.

¹¹ "India Pushing for the Convicts in Lanka", *Colombo Gazette*, November 4, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/04/india-pushing-for-the-convicts-in-lanka/>.

¹² "India Snubs Karuna's IPKF Allegations", *Colombo Gazette*, November 7, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/07/india-snubs-karunas-ipkf-allegations/>.

¹³ "Mahinda Pins Hopes on Kiwis at UNSC", *Colombo Gazette*, November 4, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/04/sri-lanka-pins-hopes-on-kiwis-at-unsc/>.

The UN refugee agency says Sri Lanka successfully managed to address the issue of statelessness by initiating a series of legislative changes. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) noted that starting from 1986 Sri Lanka allowed formerly stateless populations like the Tamils of Indian origin who were brought in the 1800s to work on tea plantations and a small ethnic Chinese population that had been in the country since the 1930s to access citizenship.¹⁴

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **Government hits back at the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Prince Zeid; Prime Minister D.M. Jayaratne visits India**

The Sri Lankan Government hit back at the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, accusing him of using intemperate language to attack and vilify a sovereign member of the United Nations. In a letter to Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, hours after he issued a statement accusing the Government of attempting to sabotage the UN led investigations on Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Ravinatha Aryasinha, said that the actions of Al Hussein would regrettably constrain constructive engagement which the Government of Sri Lanka has consistently sought to pursue.¹⁵

The Sri Lankan Prime Minister D. M. Jayaratne came to India to attend convocation at Manipal University. In his convocation address Prime Minister Jayaratne said that India and Sri Lanka have the longest continuous historical link, and both nations have been culturally and historically very close "up to this day". He also spoke about enhancing Sri Lanka's "unbroken lineage" of friendship with India.¹⁶

Maldives

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **Sushma Swaraj makes transit visit to Maldives; Russian Prosecutor General Yury Chaika visits Maldives; China has provided 200 trash cans to the Maldives; Government submits projected state budget for 2015 to the Parliament**

On November 3, India's Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj reaffirmed that strong commitment would be given for stability, prosperity and security of Maldives by India. In a meeting held with Minister of Foreign Affairs Dunya Maumoon at Hulhule Island Hotel, Minister Sushma extended Victory Day greetings to Minister Dunya and all the citizens of Maldives.¹⁷

¹⁴ "UN Hails Lanka on Ending Statelessness", *Colombo Gazette*, November 4, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/04/un-hails-lanka-on-ending-statelessness/>.

¹⁵ "Government Hits Back at Prince Zeid", *Colombo Gazette*, November 8, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/08/government-hits-back-at-prince-zeid/>.

¹⁶ "PM Wants Strong India Ties To Continue", *Colombo Gazette*, November 9, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/09/pm-wants-strong-india-ties-to-continue/>.

¹⁷ Minister of External Affairs of India: India committed to "security and stability of Maldives", *SunOnline*, November 3, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/25828>.

Russian Prosecutor General Yury Chaika arrived in Maldives on November 5 on an invitation of Prosecutor General's Office of Maldives to strengthen relations in the area of prosecution of both countries.¹⁸ The Prosecutor General Yury met President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom at the President's Office on November 6. Discussions were focused on further strengthening the bilateral relations between the Maldives and Russia. Prosecutor General Muhthaz Muhsin, Minister of Foreign Affairs Dunya Maumoon and Minister at the President's Office Mohamed Hussain Shareef participated in the meeting.¹⁹ During Yury's visit both Russia and the Maldives signed an agreement regarding cooperation in criminal matters.²⁰ Yury also requested Maldives to sign its first extradition agreement, following the enforcement of the Extradition Act which is presently in the parliament, with Russia.²¹

The government of China has provided 200 trash cans to the Maldives. In this regard, the agreement was signed by Deputy Minister of Environment Ali Amir and Deputy Ambassador of China to Maldives Liu Jiyang in a ceremony at the Ministry of Environment on November 6. Speaking at the ceremony, Ali Amir noted that the price of the 200 trash cans exceeds MVR 500,000, and thanked the Chinese government. He said that the trash cans would be used for waste management, a serious environmental problem faced by Maldives.²²

The government has submitted the projected state budget for 2015, worth MVR 24,341,906,072, to the parliament on November 4. Presenting the budget at the parliament sitting, Minister of Finance and Treasury Abdulla Jihad said that 65 percent of the budget, or MVR 15.8 billion, has been allocated for recurrent expenses. The ministry has estimated that 26 percent of the budget would be spent on salaries and allowances, 13 percent would be spent on social security and welfare, and 8 percent would be spent on operations.²³

¹⁸ "Russian Prosecutor General arrives in Maldives", *SunOnline*, November 6, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/25868>.

¹⁹ "Russian Prosecutor General Meets with President Yameen", *SunOnline*, November 6, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/25890>.

²⁰ "Russia, Maldives Sign Agreement on Cooperation in Criminal Matters", *SunOnline*, November 6, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/25885>.

²¹ "Maldives Requested to Sign First Extradition Agreement with Russia", *SunOnline*, November 7, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/25908>.

²² "China Gifts 200 Trash Cans to Maldives", *SunOnline*, November 6, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/25889>.

²³ "Projected 2015 State Budget of MVR 24 Billion Submitted to Parliament", *SunOnline*, November 4, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/25840>.

B. East Asia

China

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **China all set to host the APEC Summit; China and Canada call for expanding cooperation; Chinese President Xi Jinping scheduled to attend the G20 Summit in Australia; China calls for increased efforts towards construction of new Silk Road.**

Leaders including US president Barack Obama and Russian president Vladimir Putin have reached Beijing to attend the Asia-Pacific Summit. This will be one of the largest gatherings of world leaders ever hosted by President Xi Jinping. In addition to other leaders, the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott are also in Beijing to attend the Summit.²⁴

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang met with the Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper on November 8. During the meeting Li said that China is keen to increase the level of cooperation with Canada. He also mentioned that China was Canada's second largest trading partner while Canada was China's second largest overseas investment country.²⁵

The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Qin Gang announced on November 7 that the Chinese President Xi Jinping is scheduled to attend the 9th G20 Summit which will be held in Brisbane Australia from November 16 to November 23.²⁶

During the eighth meeting of the Central Leading Group on Financial and Economic Affairs on November 4, the Chinese President stated that China is keen to further develop the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and the Silk Road Economic Belt. During the meeting, he added that, "We will focus on some significant projects and let the construction of 'One Belt and One Road' commence as soon as possible".²⁷

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **Chinese Premier Li Keqiang scheduled to attend the East Asia Leaders's meetings; China and Qatar call for strengthening the bilateral cooperation; China announces the establishment of a new anti-corruption agency.**

The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Qin Gang announced on November 5 that the Chinese

²⁴ "World Leaders Gather in China for APEC Summit" *Aljazeera*, November 10, 2014 at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2014/11/world-leaders-gather-china-apec-summit-2014111014846687432.html>

²⁵ "China, Canada to Boost Cooperation" *China Daily*, November 8, 2014 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-11/08/content_18888439.htm

²⁶ "Chinese President to Attend G20 Summit in Australia" *China Daily*, November 7, 2014 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-11/07/content_18883824.htm

²⁷ "China to Speed up Construction of New Silk Road: Xi" *China Daily*, November 6, 2014 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-11/06/content_18880708.htm

Premier is scheduled to attend a number of leaders' meeting on East Asia cooperation from November 12 to November 14 in Myanmar. The meetings will include the 17th China-ASEAN leaders meeting, the 17th ASEAN-China, Japan and Republic of Korea leaders meeting and also the 9th East Asia Summit.²⁸

The Chinese President met with Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad al-Thani Emir of Qatar on November 3. The latter is on a state visit to China. During the meeting Xi said that, "China is willing to establish a long-term stable energy partnership with Qatar, and boost cooperation and investment in infrastructure, telecommunication and finances as well as joint investment in third countries".²⁹

The Chinese deputy Procurator-General Qiu Xueqiang said that China will be establishing a new anti-graft body which will help in further strengthening the pressure on corrupt officials. China had first established the anti-graft bureau under the Supreme People's Procuratorate in 1995.³⁰

Japan

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **Japanese Prime Minister arrives at Beijing for the APEC Summit hoping for a summit with President Xi, Abe proposes a summit with his South Korean counterpart Park amid growing tension in the bilateral relation.**

On November 9, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe arrived at Beijing to participate in the APEC Summit. This raised a lot of expectation regarding the possibility of a Japan-China summit for the first time since Abe assumed office in 2012. Just before his departure from Tokyo, Abe insisted that both China and Japan, in the interest of ensuring peace and stability in the region, should go back to the original point of the strategic relationship of mutual benefit to develop relations.³¹

On November 6, amidst the continued tension between Japan and South Korea, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe renewed his call for a bilateral summit with his South Korean counterpart Park Geun hye. He insisted that both the countries should exchange dialogue at various levels. The political leaders should also come forward for such talks without preconditions. During the recent private bilateral cooperative committees between the two countries, the South Korean side conveyed President Park's message insisting that the two countries are important partners. However, there was no mention regarding the prospect of a bilateral summit between the two leaders in the near future.³²

²⁸ "Chinese Premier to Attend East Asia Leaders' Meetings, Visit Myanmar" *China Daily*, November 5, 2014 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2014-11/05/content_18872995.htm

²⁹ "China, Qatar Pledge to Set up Strategic Partnership" *China Daily*, November 3, 2014 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-11/03/content_18860201.htm

³⁰ "China to Set up New Anti-Corruption Agency" *China Daily*, November 3, 2014 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-11/03/content_18856454.htm

³¹ "Abe in Beijing for APEC with an Eye on Japan-China Summit", *Mainichi Daily*, November 9, 2014, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20141109p2g00m0in001000c.html>. Accessed on November 11, 2014.

³² "Abe Renews Call for Summit with Park Amid No Sign of Progress.", *The Korea Herald*, November 6, 2014, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20141106000741>. Accessed on November 8, 2014.

South Korea

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **South Korea and China hold talks to discuss N. Korean nuclear threat; Seoul and Shanghai sign MoU to deepen bilateral cooperation.**

On November 7, the Foreign Ministers of South Korea and China held talks in Beijing in order to discuss the bilateral relationship as well as the security threat posed by North Korea's nuclear weapon programme. The talks took place just ahead of the upcoming APEC summit where Chinese President Xi Jinping was to hold a bilateral summit with his South Korean counterpart Park Geun-hye. During the meeting between the two ministers, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated that the two countries, as friendly neighbours, maintain close communication and cooperation and both are satisfied with the current state of the bilateral ties.³³

On November 4, Seoul and Shanghai signed a MoU in order to deepen bilateral cooperation. It was signed by Seoul Mayor Park Won-soon and his Shanghai counterpart Yang Xiong in Beijing. The MoU calls for cooperation in six fields: economy and trade, urban planning, urban traffic, culture and arts, tourism and human resource development. While Seoul has been actively engaged with Beijing since 1993 under a sister city agreement, this is the first time Seoul has signed a cooperation deal with Shanghai.³⁴

C. Russia

Russia

(November 3-9, 2014)

- I **Elections have taken place in Ukraine's separatists controlled Luhansk and Donetsk regions; Luhansk republic hopes for broad economic cooperation with Russia; EU, US and Ukraine refuse to recognise elections in the Donbass region; Russia 'respects' elections in eastern Ukraine; Kiev to suspend payment of social benefits to separatists held areas; Ukraine's President rules out the possibility of granting state status to Russian language; Russia to dispatch a humanitarian convoy to eastern Ukraine; Ukraine to scrap the special status and amnesty provisions for Donbass region; the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) expresses concern at the intensification of shelling in eastern Ukraine; Gazprom receives US\$ 1.45 billion in gas payment from Ukraine; Russia will not participate**

³³ "Korea, China Hold Talks on Summit", *The Korea Herald*, November 7, 2014, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20141107000769>

³⁴ "Seoul, Shanghai Ink MOU to Boost Cooperation", *The Korea Herald*, November 4, 2014, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20141104001045>

in preparations for the 4th Nuclear Security Summit; US ambassador to Russia hopes for cooperation with Moscow to fight Islamic State.

The separatists in Ukraine's Luhansk and Donetsk region have conducted elections for the post of head of the Republics and the People's Assembly with voter turnout being in excess of 60 per cent. According to the results, Igor Plotnitsky and Alexander Zakharchenko have won the elections in these self-proclaimed republics.³⁵

Luhansk's newly elected head Igor Plotnitsky has said that the republic is ready to wait for the recognition of its independence by Russia and hopes for broad economic cooperation with it. He also warned of the conflict with Ukraine aggravating in the near future.³⁶

The EU, US and Ukraine have refused to recognise the elections that have taken place in the separatists controlled Donbass (Donetsk and Luhansk) region and have termed them 'illegal and illegitimate'. The EU has urged all parties to fully implement the Minsk Protocol and called for 'securing the Ukrainian-Russian border with permanent monitoring under the OSCE verification'.³⁷

Russia's Foreign Ministry has said that Moscow 'respects' the elections that have taken place in Ukraine's separatists controlled region of Donbass. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had declared that elections are 'important from the point of view of legitimization of power'.³⁸

Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk has declared that Kiev will suspend payments of social benefits to residents of the Donbass region, but will not follow through on an earlier threat to cut off gas supplies to the area. The funds will be disbursed once Ukraine regained control of these territories.³⁹

President Petro Poroshenko has ruled out the possibility of granting state status to the Russian language in Ukraine. He declared that only Ukrainian language will have a special status in the country.⁴⁰

Russia's Emergencies Minister Vladimir Puchkov has said that his Ministry will dispatch a humanitarian convoy to eastern Ukraine. This will be the seventh Russian truck convoy for the region.⁴¹

³⁵ "Igor Plotnitsky Officially Takes Office as Head Of Self-Proclaimed Luhansk Republic", *Itar-Tass*, November 4, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/758033>

³⁶ "Luhansk Republic Hopes for Broad Economic Cooperation with Russia - Republic's Leader", *Itar-Tass*, November 3, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/757970>

³⁷ "EU Council does not Recognize Elections in Donetsk, Luhansk Republics", *Itar-Tass*, November 6, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/758232>

³⁸ "Russia Doesn't Recognize But Respects Elections in Luhansk, Donetsk Republics - Official", *Itar-Tass*, November 7, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/758569>

³⁹ "Ukraine to Stop Benefits to Rebel-Held Areas", *The Wall Street Journal*, November 3, 2014, at <http://online.wsj.com/articles/ukraine-to-stop-benefits-to-rebel-held-areas-1415195655>

⁴⁰ "Only Ukrainian can have Special State Status - Poroshenko", *Itar-Tass*, November 7, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/758661>

⁴¹ "Russia to Dispatch Another Humanitarian Convoy to Eastern Ukraine", *Itar-Tass*, November 6, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/758268>

Ukraine's parliament speaker Oleksandr Turchynov has declared that the newly elected legislature will look to cancel the special status of the Donbass region and the amnesty provisions granted to the separatists. The authorities in Donbass region have hit back saying any such move will endanger the September Minsk peace process.⁴²

The OSCE has expressed concern at the increase in shelling and fighting between Ukrainian government forces and separatists of the Donbass region.⁴³

Gazprom has received US\$ 1.45 billion from Ukraine's Naftogaz. This will partially pay off Ukrainian debt for Russian gas that had been supplied to Kiev earlier this year. This payment comes against the backdrop of a gas agreement signed between Russia, Ukraine and the EU.⁴⁴

Russia's Foreign Ministry has said that Moscow will not participate in preparations for the 4th Nuclear Security Summit.⁴⁵

The US Ambassador to Russia Jonh Tefft has expressed hope that Washington will maintain cooperation with Russia in the fight against the Islamic State (IS) terrorist organization.⁴⁶

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **CSTO suspends dialogue with NATO; Iran likely to become an observer at CSTO Parliamentary Assembly; Moldova and EU sign MoU on a 410 million euro financial aid; Putin and Shinzo Abe discuss situation in Ukraine and prospects for peace treaty; President Putin declares that strengthening ties with China is a top priority for Russia; State Duma supports tax privileges for gas to be supplied to China via Power of Siberia pipeline; Russia's gas supplies to China can be higher than supplies to Europe in the mid term; Inflation to touch 8.5 per cent in Russia in 2014; Patriarch Kirill says that Russian world values unite different people of historical Rus.**

Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) has decided to suspend dialogue with NATO due to the 'unconstructive and very often openly hostile initiatives by the EU and NATO towards Russia and the CSTO'. Secretary-General Bordyuzha declared that the organisation will follow a policy of further expansion of cooperation with OSCE, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, China, Iran and countries of Latin America and Caribbean.⁴⁷

⁴² "Ukraine to Prioritize Scrapping Laws on Eastern Regions' Special Status, Amnesty", *Itar-Tass*, November 7, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/758511>

⁴³ "Donetsk Shelling, Fighting by Ukrainian Authorities Violate Minsk and Geneva Agreements", *Itar-Tass*, November 6, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/758428>

⁴⁴ "Russia's Gazprom Confirms Receiving \$1.45 Billion in Gas Payment from Ukraine", *Itar-Tass*, November 5, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/economy/758074>

⁴⁵ "Russia Upholds Decision not to Participate in Preparations for 4th Nuclear Security Summit", *Itar-Tass*, November 5, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/758220>

⁴⁶ "US Ambassador Hopes for Cooperation with Russia to fight Islamic State", *Itar-Tass*, November 5, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/758211>

⁴⁷ "Post-Soviet Security Bloc Suspends Dialogue with NATO", *Itar-Tass*, November 6, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/758296>

Russia's State Duma Speaker Sergey Naryshkin has said that Iran and a number of countries are likely to become observers at the CSTO Parliamentary Assembly in the near future.⁴⁸

Moldova and the European Union have signed a memorandum of mutual understanding and assistance for the years 2014 to 2017 that will bring 410 million euro financial aid to the republic. The two sides have also signed an agreement on developing a free trade programme worth 30 million euros.⁴⁹

The situation in Ukraine, work on a peace treaty between Russia and Japan and prospects for Russian President's visit to Japan were the focus of talks, held in Beijing, between President Vladimir Putin and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.⁵⁰

In the run up to his visit to China where he will take part in the APEC Summit, President Putin has declared that strengthening ties with Beijing is a foreign policy priority of Russia. He stated that the bilateral relations have 'reached the highest level of comprehensive equitable trust-based partnership and strategic interaction in their entire history.'⁵¹

Russia's State Duma has supported the proposal of extending tax privileges for gas to be pumped to China via the Sila Sibiri (Power of Siberia) gas pipelines.⁵²

Gazprom's CEO Alexei Miller has said that gas supplies from Russia to China in the 'mid-term' may be higher than supplies to Europe. He said that the two countries have signed a memorandum on supplies of natural gas from Russia to China along the Western Route. The Western Route will imply that gas is supplied to China from the West Siberia that are typically used to supply the European markets.⁵³

Minister of Economic Development Alexey Ulyukayev has said that annual inflation rate in Russia is expected to be at least 8.5 per cent in 2014.⁵⁴

Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia has said that the Russian world and its values unite different people of historical Rus regardless political preferences and state borders.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ "Iran, Other States Might Become Observers at CSTO Parliamentary Assembly - Naryshkin", *Itar-Tass*, November 6, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/758407>

⁴⁹ "Moldova, EU Sign Memorandum Implying Financial Aid of up to 410 mln Euro", *Itar-Tass*, November 6, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/economy/758448>

⁵⁰ "Putin, Shinzo Abe Discuss Situation in Ukraine and Prospects for Peace Treaty", *Itar-Tass*, November 9, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/758788>

⁵¹ "Putin: Strengthening Ties with China Top Priority for Russia", *Itar-Tass*, November 7, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/758535>

⁵² "State Duma Support Tax Privileges for Gas to Be Supplied to China via Sila Sibiri Pipeline", *Itar-Tass*, November 6, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/758246>

⁵³ "Russian Gas Supplies to China May Be Bigger Than Gas Supplies to Europe - Gazprom CEO", *Itar-Tass*, November 9, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/economy/758775>

⁵⁴ "Russia's Inflation in 2014 May Be at Least 8.5% - Minister", *Itar-Tass*, November 8, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/economy/758728>

⁵⁵ "Russian World Values Unite Different Peoples of Historical Rus — Patriarch Kirill", *Itar-Tass*, November 3, 2014, at <http://en.itar-tass.com/non-political/757964>

D. Iran, Iraq and the Gulf

Iran

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **President Obama sends secret letter to Iran; Iran and US meet in Oman as nuclear deadline looms**

Reports have revealed that US President Barak Obama has sent a secret letter to Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khameni stating shared interests in fighting the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and urging for a nuclear agreement. The conversations do not include the joint military cooperation between the two countries to combat the ISIS advance. Republican senators like John Mc-Cain have been very critical of the Obama's secret letter move of cozying up with a country which has always supported militias like Hezbollah and Hamas.⁵⁶

US Secretary of State John Kerry met Javad Zarif in Oman seeking to resolve the key disputes on agreement as the deadline looms on November 24. But President Obama has warned that there might be no agreement. There's still a big gap. He said that "We may not be able to get there".⁵⁷

Iraq

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **US targets ISIS leadership in Iraq; UK to increase support for Iraqi government to fight against ISIS; ISIS sees Turkey as its ally.**

The US airstrikes targeted the ISIS leaders meeting near the town of Qaim in Anbar province in which large a number of militants are believed to have been killed including two governors. Reports surfaced that the caliph Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi has been either severely wounded or killed but there has been no official confirmation by the US government.⁵⁸ Later on, the ISIS confirmed about the Baghdadi's injury and asked followers to pray for his speedy recovery.⁵⁹

Britain has raised serious concerns about the looming threats of ISIS to the region as well as the country itself. In this regards, it has decided to increase support for the US led effort to help Iraqi

⁵⁶ "U.S. Opens Channels with Iran over ISIS", *CNN News*, November 7, 2014, at <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/11/06/politics/obama-iran-isis-letter>. Accessed on November 14, 2014

⁵⁷ "US and Iran Meet in Bid to Reach Nuclear Deal", *Aljazeera*, November 10, 2014, at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/11/us-iran-meet-bid-reach-nuclear-deal-2014119223847825201.html>. Accessed on November 14, 2014

⁵⁸ "U.S. Airstrikes in Iraq Target ISIS Leaders", *The New York Times*, November 8, 2014, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/09/world/middleeast/us-airstrikes-in-iraq-target-isis-leaders.html>. Accessed on November 14, 2014

⁵⁹ "ISIS Confirms Baghdadi's Injury", *Iraqi News*, November 9, 2014, at <http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/isil-confirms-baghdadi-s-injury-2014-11-10>. Accessed on November 14, 2014

army fighting ISIS. The UK had already committed dozens of military officials for training the Kurdish peshmerga forces.⁶⁰

A former member of ISIS, Sherko Omer, has revealed that the terrorist organization has been helped by the Turkish military in allowing them to go inside the country and reinforce the fight against the Kurds. Until October 2014, Turkey had blocked Kurdish fighters from crossing the border into Syria to aid their Syrian counterparts in defending the border town of Kobane. The ISIS militant Omer said to *Newsweek* that "The Kurds were the common enemy for both ISIS and Turkey. Also, ISIS had to be a Turkish ally because only through Turkey they were able to deploy ISIS fighters to northern parts of the Kurdish cities and towns in Syria."⁶¹

Syria

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **The US military attacked targets linked to the Khorasan terrorist group for the second time; Hezbollah chief Nasrallah says his party had the upper hand against Islamists in Syria; UN envoy discusses plan to freeze Syria conflict**

The US hit five targets related to the Notorious Khorasan Group, including several vehicles and buildings, near the border with Turkey. It is the second time US strikes have targeted Khorasan, whom it accuses of planning attacks on the US and Europe. It says that the group is made up of veteran fighters from the Afghanistan and Pakistan region who have embedded within al-Qaeda's Syria branch, the al-Nusra Front.⁶²

Hezbollah chief Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah, addressing a crowd of tens of thousands commemorating Ashoura in Beirut's southern suburbs, said that his party had upper hand on militants in Syria and also warned Israel that it is ready for any conflict on the Southern border. He defended the Hezbollah's intervention in Syria. Nasrallah also said that his party was proud to fight alongside the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad, saying the Syrians "are the original fighters, we are an addition."⁶³

In an interview with *UN Radio*, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura said, "The war in Syria must be 'frozen locally' on the ground so that the growing threat posed by

⁶⁰ "U.K. to Increase Support to Iraqi Forces Fighting Islamic State by Nicholas Winning", *The Wall Street Journal*, November 5, 2014, at <http://online.wsj.com/articles/u-k-to-increase-support-to-iraqi-forces-fighting-islamic-state-1415209329>. Accessed on November 14, 2014

⁶¹ "ISIS Sees Turkey as Its Ally: Former Islamic State Member Reveals Turkish Army Cooperation by Barney Guiton", *Newsweek*, November 7, 2014, at <http://www.newsweek.com/isis-and-turkey-cooperate-destroy-kurds-former-isis-member-reveals-turkish-282920>. Accessed on November 14, 2014

⁶² "Syria Conflict: Khorasan Group Targeted by US Air Strikes", *BBC News*, November 6, 2014, at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-29940096>. Accessed on November 14, 2014

⁶³ "Nasrallah: Hezbollah achieving 'great victory' in Syria", *The Daily Star*, Beirut, November 4, 2014, at <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Nov-04/276471-nasrallah-says-hezbollah-rockets-can-reach-all-of-israel.ashx#axzz3J2Tw3Nbi>. Accessed on November 14, 2014

the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) may be fully confronted". The new plan includes freezing the fighting in the war beleaguered areas like Aleppo so that aid could reach the populations.⁶⁴

Egypt

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **Egypt plans to ban military related news; Egypt Militant Group Pledges Allegiance to Islamic State; Gulf states, Egypt 'may set up anti-Islamist force**

Egypt's government is considering a draft law that would outlaw coverage of military activity without prior approval from senior military officials. According to a leaked version of the legislation, the proposed law would ban "the disclosure or display of any news or information or statistics or data or documents relating to the armed forces or its formation or movements or equipment or work or plans". The army is the strongest institution in the Egypt and Human Rights groups denounced the proposed law as the latest of many moves aimed at extending military control over the country and ending the freedoms gained after Egypt's 2011 uprising.⁶⁵

Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, a jihadi organization based in the Sinai Peninsula that has carried out several attacks targeting Egyptian security forces, pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group. The announcement pledging loyalty to Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi came in an audio speech posted on the Egyptian militant group's official Twitter account and a militant website.⁶⁶

Egypt and its three gulf allies are planning to set up an anti-islamist force to intervene around the Middle East. The *Associated Press* (AP) cited some senior official from Egypt stating that Yemen and Libya may be a theatre for the intervention and this force is aimed to exhibit the power to the rival Iran.⁶⁷

Yemen

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **Yemeni Shia rebels join new cabinet; al-Motowakal of the liberal Union of Popular Forces party was assassinated**

The politicians of Shia rebel movement have been inducted in the new cabinet headed by Prime

⁶⁴ "Syria: UN Envoy Proposes New Plan to 'Freeze' Conflict, Promote Political Solution", *UN News Centre*, November 3, 2014, at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49241#.VGXfMzSUcXc>. Accessed on November 14, 2014

⁶⁵ "Egypt Mulls Military News Ban by Patrick Kingsley", *The Guardian*, November 7, 2014 at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/07/egypt-military-news-ban>. Accessed on November 14, 2014

⁶⁶ "Egypt Militant Group Pledges Allegiance to Islamic State", *The Wall Street Journal*, November 10, 2014 at <http://online.wsj.com/articles/egypt-militant-group-ansar-beit-al-maqdis-pledges-allegiance-to-islamic-state-1415603325>. Accessed on November 14, 2014

⁶⁷ "Gulf States, Egypt 'May Set up Anti-Islamist Force", *Gulf News*, Dubai, November 4, 2014, at <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/gulf-states-egypt-may-set-up-anti-islamist-force-1.1407883>. Accessed on November 14, 2014

Minister designate Khalid Bahah. Rebel leaders say they would withdraw from the positions in Sana. The move came as the UN imposed sanctions on Yemen's former president and two leading Houthis.⁶⁸

Mohamed Abdelmalik al-Motowakal of the liberal Union of Popular Forces party was shot dead by unidentified gunmen. He was a key negotiator between the Yemeni government and the Shia rebels.

The Gulf

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **Saudi Arabia toughens on Jihadist groups; Saudi Arabia nervous over Houthi victories; Most of British want Qatar to be stripped of World Cup host over terror links.**

A statement issued by the grand mufti of Saudi Arabia on August 19 warned against the danger of the Islamic State (IS) and al-Qaeda. It is part of an escalating Saudi stance against jihadist groups in the region, and comes on the heels of its classification of IS and Jabhat al-Nusra as terrorist groups in March.⁶⁹ But critics have said that Saudi is just relying on verbal rhetoric rather than clamping down on them.

The Houthis have expanded far beyond their traditional stronghold in the north of Yemen around Saada near the Saudi border to gain control of much of northern Yemen.⁷⁰ Moreover they have been inducted in the newly formed Yemeni cabinet.

Almost three-quarters of the British public want Qatar stripped of the World Cup unless it cracks down on terror financiers operating from the Gulf State. The Gulf nation is at spotlight over its failure to prevent financiers, some with alleged connections to the country's ruling elite, operating in its midst.⁷¹

⁶⁸ "Yemen Houthi Shia Rebels Join New Cabinet", *BBC News*, November 7, 2014 at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29962739>. Accessed on November 14, 2014

⁶⁹ "Saudi Arabia Toughens Stance on Jihadist Groups", *Almonitor*, November 7, 2014, at <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/08/saudi-opposition-salafist-jihadist-groups.html>. Accessed on November 14, 2014

⁷⁰ Houthi victories in Yemen make Saudi Arabia nervous by Bruce Riedel, *Almonitor*, 15/10/2014 <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/10/houthi-yemen-victory-saudi-arabia-nightmare-iran.html>, Accessed on November 14, 2014

⁷¹ "Qatar must Lose World Cup over Terror Links", *The Telegraph*, November 9, 2014, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/11218555/Qatar-must-lose-World-Cup-over-terror-links.html>. Accessed on November 14, 2014

II. DEFENCE REVIEWS

National

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **Torpedo Recovery Vessel of Indian Navy sinks off the coast of Visakhapatnam; Indian Air Force presses into action four of the newly acquired IAF MI-17 V5 helicopters at Visakhapatnam in forest fire fighting operations.**

A Torpedo Recovery Vessel of Indian Navy (A 72) sunk off the coast of Visakhapatnam on November 6. The vessel was on a routine mission to recover practice torpedoes fired by fleet ships during a routine exercise. However, it was during this exercise that the vessel experienced flooding in one of its compartments. At the time of the incident, there were 28 personnel on board. One sailor has lost his life during the rescue operation and four personnel are reported missing. Twenty three personnel have been rescued safely by the Search and Rescue (SAR) ships dispatched to the area. This ship was built by Goa Shipyard Limited in 1983 and has served the Indian Navy for the last forty one years.⁷²

As part of its commitment towards Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Operations in support of the nation, the Indian Air Force has pressed into action four of the newly acquired IAF MI-17 V5 helicopters at Visakhapatnam using the Forest Fire Fighting Equipment, euphemistically called "The Bambi Bucket" having a capacity of 3500 ltrs of water each. A total of 1, 00,000 ltrs of water was used to douse the fire and a total of 42 shuttles were carried out by these helicopters. The forest fire is now under control.⁷³

International

(November 3-9, 2014)

- **F-35 fighter jet makes its first landing aboard an aircraft carrier; Saudi Arabia and France seal an agreement for the delivery of \$3 billion worth of French weapons to the Lebanese army.**

Reports say that, the US military's F-35 fighter jet has made its first landing aboard an aircraft carrier. It is considered to be a milestone for the new hi-tech warplane. The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter is the most expensive weapons programme in US history and has been plagued by technical glitches and cost overruns, but the Pentagon termed the landing at sea a crucial step forward. The test flight had the Joint Strike Fighter successfully touching down on the USS Nimitz off the coast of San Diego, with the pilot guiding the plane so its tail hook snagged on the ship's arresting

⁷² "Torpedo Recovery Vessel (A 72) Sinks off Visakhapatnam Coast," *PIB*, November 6, 2014, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=111142>.

⁷³ "Forest Fire Fighting Operations by IAF MI-17 V5 in Visakhapatnam," *PIB*, November 7, 2014, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=111170>.

wires. There are three variants of the plane, a standard model, a second one designed for short-landing and vertical take-off and the third – the F-35C – outfitted to operate from aircraft carriers.⁷⁴

Meanwhile, according to reports, Saudi Arabia and France sealed an agreement on November 4 for the former to finance the delivery of \$3 billion worth of French weapons to the Lebanese army, which has come under mounting jihadist attack. The deal is a major boost to the Lebanese army's ability to tackle terrorism at a time when the former French colony is under mounting threat of terrorism. The deal comes as the poorly equipped Lebanese army battles jihadists, including militants of the Islamic State group.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ "F-35 Makes 'Landmark' Aircraft Carrier Landing," *Defense News*, November 3, 2014, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20141103/DEFREG02/311030023/F-35-Makes-Landmark-Aircraft-Carrier-Landing>.

⁷⁵ "Saudi, France Seal \$3B Weapons Deal for Lebanon Army," *Defense News*, November 4, 2014, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20141104/DEFREG04/311040031/Saudi-France-Seal-3B-Weapons-Deal-Lebanon-Army>.