

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

May 28-June 03, 6(1), 2012

Editor: Sanjeev Kumar Shrivastav

Contributors

Anwasha Roy Chaudhuri

Gulbin Sultana

Pranamita Baruah

Rahul Mishra

Gunajn Singh

Rajorshi Roy

Princy Marine George

Prashnat Pradhan

Amit Kumar

Shristi Pukhrem

Keerthi Kumar

Afghanistan, Pakistan

Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh

Japan, South Korea

South East Asia

China

Central Asia & Russia

Iran, Israel, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon

Yemen

Defence Review

Internal Security Review

UN Review

Review Adviser: S. Kalyanaraman

Follow IDSA



Facebook



Twitter



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
STUDIES & ANALYSES

1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg, New Delhi-110010

Telephone: 91-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191 Website: www.idsa.in; Email: twir@idsa.in

CONTENTS

In This Issue	Page
I. COUNTRY REVIEWS	
A. South Asia	2-5
B. East Asia	6-9
C. Central Asia & Russia	9-12
D. West Asia	12-14
II. DEFENCE REVIEW	15-16
III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW	16-18
IV. UN REVIEW	18-19

I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

- **At least 14 people killed in clashes in Eastern Afghanistan; Insurgents target Bamiyan province**

According to reports, a suicide truck bomber attacked a US-run base on June 1, 2012, sparking clashes that killed at least 14 people in eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistani border. NATO's US-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said none of its personnel was killed in the attack in Khost province, a Taliban flashpoint that borders Pakistan. The Taliban militia has claimed responsibility for the attack.¹

In another development, reports noted that insurgents have stepped up attacks in the area thought to be Afghanistan's safest, the rugged central province of Bamiyan, moving into the region in a bid to undermine security ahead of the end-2014 exit from the country of most foreign combat troops. Around 20 Taliban fighters from neighboring Baghlan province have crossed into Bamiyan and launched attacks in several districts, Bamiyan Police Chief General Juma Guldi Yardem said on May 29, 2012.²

Pakistan

- **Pakistan successfully test-fired a short-range surface-to-surface multi-tube missile; India-Pakistan hold oil talks; Pakistan successfully test-fired Hatf-VIII cruise missile; Pakistan Finance Minister Dr Abdul Hafeez Sheikh on presented the budget to the Parliament for the upcoming fiscal year 2012-13**

According to reports, Pakistan has successfully test-fired an indigenously developed short-range surface-to-surface multi-tube missile on May 29, 2012. The Hatf IX (NASR) has a range of 60 kilometres and can carry nuclear warheads with high accuracy and possesses shoot and scoot attributes.³

In another development, according to reports, India and Pakistan opened talks on May 29, 2012 on Pakistan importing oil from its eastern neighbour in a bid to ease a crippling energy crisis. The talks were held by senior civil servants from both countries' petroleum ministries Islamabad. Meanwhile, India has offered to export petroleum products to Pakistan to help it overcome an

¹ "Attack on US base kills 14 in Afghanistan: NATO, *Dawn*, June 1, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/06/01/suicide-attack-kills-seven-afghans-at-natobase-official/>

² "Afghan insurgents target safest province Bamiyan", *Dawn*, May 29, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/05/29/afghan-insurgents-target-safest-province-bamiyan/>

³ "Pakistan test fires nuclear capable short range missile", *Dawn*, May 29, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/05/29/pakistan-test-fires-nuclear-capable-short-range-missile/>

energy crisis which cripples the country's industry and leaves millions of people suffering during the hot summers and chilly winters. "India has surplus petroleum products and wants to export it to Pakistan. If we can save some money by buying it from India, we will buy it from them," a senior official at Pakistan's petroleum and natural resources ministry said.⁴

In another missile test, Pakistan on May 31, 2012, successfully tested the indigenously developed Hatf-VIII cruise missile. The nuclear-capable missile, with a range of over 350 kilometres, enables Pakistan to achieve strategic standoff capability on land and at sea. The cruise missile with stealth capabilities is a low altitude, terrain hugging missile with high maneuverability and can deliver nuclear and conventional warheads with complete accuracy.⁵

In other developments, according to reports, amid much uproar from the opposition benches, Finance Minister Dr Abdul Hafeez Sheikh on presented the budget to the Parliament for the upcoming fiscal year 2012-13 on June 01, 2012. The minister said gross federal revenues have been estimated at Rs. 3,234 billion during 2012-13 as compared to Rs. 2,732 billion budgeted for 2011-12, reflecting an increase of 18.3 per cent. Dr Hafeez Sheikh told the parliament that the government has set an inflation target of 9.5 per cent, fiscal deficit of 4.7 per cent, national development outlay of Rs 873 billion with a federal Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) of Rs 360 billion, and a revenue target of Rs 2504 billion.⁶

Bangladesh

- **UK's foreign office minister for South Asia visited Dhaka; PM Sheikh Hasina left for Doha; Qatar proposes to invest its currency worth of \$1.8 billion in the Bangladesh Bank; Third Indo-Bangla Trade Fair 2012 begins; Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister invites Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to invest in northeast India; Foreign Minister Dipu Moni visits Singapore to attend the 11th Shangri-La Dialogue**

According to reports, Alistair Burt, UK's foreign office minister for South Asia arrived in Dhaka for three days on May 28, 2012 on his first official visit to Bangladesh. The aim of his visit is to reinforce the strong bilateral relationship and interests shared by the two countries, including supporting democracy, strong people-to-people links, development, trade and investment and climate change.⁷

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left for Doha on May 28, 2012 for a two-day official visit to Qatar to attend the three-day 9th US-Islamic World forum.⁸ Prime Minister Hasina and

⁴ "India-Pakistan kicks off oil talks", *Dawn*, May 29, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/05/29/india-pakistan-kick-off-oil-talks/>

⁵ "Pakistan test fires nuclear capable cruise missile", *Dawn*, May 31, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/05/31/pakistan-test-fires-hatf-viii-nuclear-capable-cruise-missile/>

⁶ "Govt unveils budget in NA amid opposition uproar", *Dawn*, June 1, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/06/01/federal-cabinet-meets-over-budget-proposals/>

⁷ "UK minister arrives in capital today", *The Daily Star*, May 28, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=236020>.

⁸ "PM flies to Qatar today", *The Daily Star*, May 29, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=236165>.

her Qatari counterpart met on the sidelines of the US-Islamic World Forum held at Ritz Carlton Hotel in Doha and discussed a number of bilateral issues, including financing for Padma bridge project and construction of a new international airport in Bangladesh. Hasina and Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani also discussed upgrading the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport and constructing a 1,000-megawatt power plant in the country.⁹

Reports noted that Qatar has proposed to invest its currency worth of \$1.8 billion in the Bangladesh Bank.¹⁰

According to reports, the third Indo-Bangla Trade Fair 2012 began at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka on May 31, 2012. India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IBCCI) organised the event that is supported by the Indian high commission in Bangladesh and sponsored by the State Bank of India to strengthen the business relations between the two countries.¹¹

Reports noted that Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Nabam Tuki invited Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to invest in hydropower generation and tourism sectors in the prospective areas of northeast India. Chief Minister Tuki extended this invitation at the inaugural session of the Indo-Bangla Trade Fair in Dhaka. Bangladesh Finance Minister AMA Muhith, who was the chief guest at the function, however, did not give any clear indication when his government would allow Bangladeshi investment abroad.¹²

In other developments, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni went to Singapore to attend the 11th IISS Asia Security Summit known as the Shangri-La Dialogue. On the sideline of the dialogue, she held bilateral talk with Singapore Defence Minister Dr Ng Eng Hen. Expressing satisfaction over the current state of defence cooperation, both the ministers stressed the increased exchange of experts in different fields for the benefit of the two countries. The two ministers called for increasing cooperation in the field of security and counter-terrorism and emphasised on the incremental engagement to catch the untapped potentials. They also discussed wider security issues regarding situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan as well as democratic reforms taking place in Myanmar, according to a release of the foreign ministry.¹³

Sri Lanka

- **India extends ban on LTTE by another two years; Negotiation with the IMF for another US\$500 million Security Arrangement**

Reports noted that the Indian Government extended the ban on LTTE by another two years

⁹ "Hasina, Qatar PM talk funding of Padma bridge", *The Daily Star*, May 31, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=236408>.

¹⁰ Byron, Rejaul Karim, "Qatar plans to park \$1.8b in BB", *The Daily Star*, May 29, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=236146>.

¹¹ "Indo-Bangla trade fair begins", *The Daily Star*, June 1, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=236496>.

¹² "Arunachal Pradesh seeks investment from Bangladesh", *The Daily Star*, June 1, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=236497>.

¹³ "Meeting with Singapore Minister: Dipu talks on security issues", *The Daily Star*, June 2, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=236686>.

following intelligence reports that remnants of the Sri Lankan Tamil terror outfit were trying to re-group in Tamil Nadu. According to a notification issued by the Union Home Ministry, even though LTTE has been “decimated in Sri Lanka, recent reports reveal that remnant LTTE cadres and leaders are regrouping in Tamil Nadu”. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam has been banned since 1992 under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.¹⁴

In another development, Sri Lanka’s International Monetary Cooperation Minister Sarath Amunugama said on May 30, 2012 that on completion of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Standby Arrangement (SBA) of US\$2.6 billion in June, Sri Lanka will start negotiations with the IMF for another US\$500 million Security Arrangement (SA).¹⁵

Maldives

- **Rio+20 countdown begins in Maldives; President Waheed invited to the 16th NAM summit to be held in Tehran; Former President Nasheed attends meeting of the International Democrat Union (IDU) in Wellington**

Reports noted that in the run up to Rio+20, the Maldives Government has unveiled a series of events to highlight the major summit on sustainable development. The Government has announced a number of events which focus on the seven themes of Rio; jobs, energy, cities, food, water, oceans and disasters.¹⁶

In another development, President Dr Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran has invited President Dr Mohamed Waheed to the 16th Non Aligned Movement Summit, to be held in Tehran from August 30-31, 2012. The letter of invitation was presented to President Waheed by a Special Envoy from the Iranian President, Iranian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Asia and Pacific, Dr Seyyed Abbas Araghchi.¹⁷

In other developments, according to reports, former President Mohamed Nasheed has arrived back in the Maldives after attending a meeting of the International Democrat Union (IDU) in Wellington, New Zealand. According to a statement from the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), during the meeting Nasheed explained the political situation in the Maldives and how the deadlock could be resolved. Nasheed also had meetings with Minister of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand Murray McCully.¹⁸

¹⁴ “India extends ban on LTTE”, *The Daily Mirror*, June 1, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/19098-india-extends-ban-on-ltte.html>.

¹⁵ “SL seeks another US\$500mn from IMF”, *The Daily Mirror*, May 31, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/19045-sl-to-negotiate-for-another-us500-million-from-imf.html>

¹⁶ “Maldives Government Launches Countdown to Rio+20”, *The president’s Office, Republic of Maldives*, June 1, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dclid=7483>.

¹⁷ “Iranian President invites President Waheed to the 16th NAM Summit”, *The President’s Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 30, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dclid=7475>.

¹⁸ “Former president returns from meeting of International Democrat Union in New Zealand”, *Minivan News*, May 31, 2012 at <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief>

B. East Asia

South East Asia

- **Anti government protestors disrupted normal life in Thailand; Aung San Suu Kyi visits Thailand; Defence Ministers of Cambodia and China meet; U.S.- Indonesia conduct naval exercise; minister; Myanmar has abandoned nuclear research; The U.S. defence secretary visits Vietnam**

According to reports, on June 1, 2012, anti-government protestors brought Thailand's parliament to a halt, surrounding the complex and forcing the speaker to postpone debate on a bill that could clear the way for the return of a prime minister ousted in a coup six years ago. About 2,500 yellow-shirted protestors of the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), a royalist middle-class movement instrumental in bringing down two governments, blocked cars from entering the compound and forced some members to climb through side entrances to attend the session. The protestors say the reconciliation bill amounts to an amnesty for former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who in September 2006 was ousted in a military coup and later fled the country.¹⁹

In another development, on June 2, 2012, thousands of Myanmar refugees gathered to meet democracy champion Aung San Suu Kyi at Mae La camp on the Thai side of the border. The refugees, mostly ethnic minorities dressed in traditional costume, cheered and waved placards as Ms. Suu Kyi arrived at the camp 50 kilometres north of Mae Sot. According to the media reports, Ms. Suu Kyi toured the camp and held talks with leaders but was not allowed by Thai administrators to deliver a speech to the refugees.²⁰

According to the media reports, on May 28, 2012, the Cambodian Defence Minister Tea Banh met with Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie ahead of an ASEAN defence ministers meeting. It is said that the meeting would discuss strengthening military cooperation between the two countries.²¹

The U.S. and Indonesia began an annual naval exercise on May 29, 2012 when a U.S. Navy Task Group and Marine landing force arrived in the port city of Surabaya, Indonesia. The exercise is part of the 18th annual Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT), a series of annual bilateral naval exercises the U.S. holds with countries in Southeast Asia.²²

In a speech delivered at Shangri-La Security forum in Singapore, the defence minister of Myanmar claimed that the country has abandoned research into nuclear power generation. The new

¹⁹ 'Protesters bring Thailand's parliament to a halt', *Chicago Tribune*, June 1, 2012, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-thailand-politicsbre8500ny-20120601,0,2115564.story>

²⁰ 'Suu Kyi visits Myanmar refugees in Thailand', *The Hindu*, June 2, 2012, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article3482792.ece>

²¹ 'Cambodia, China defense ministers meet ahead of ASEAN talks', *The Cambodia Herald*, May 28, 2012, <http://www.thecambodiaherald.com/cambodia/detail/1?page=11&token=ZWNjZTNkMjI3MGZiNzBIYTUzNDM4YWE0NzUzZDFh>

²² 'Indonesian, U.S. navies hold joint annual drill', *China.org*, May 30, 2012, http://www.china.org.cn/world/2012-05/30/content_25518220.htm

government had “already given up all activities on nuclear issues”, Lt Gen Hla Min told the Shangri-La Dialogue security forum. In 2010, a defecting Burmese soldier and mechanical engineer accused his country of starting work on a nuclear-weapons programme. Hla Min also insisted that the country had never pursued nuclear weapons.²³

In other developments, the U.S. Defence Secretary Leon Panetta began his Vietnam visit on June 3, 2012. The visit to Vietnam is widely seen as Washington’s intent to aid allies in the Asia-Pacific region and develop and enforce maritime rights in the South China Sea. He also paid a visit to the Cam Ranh Bay, the strategic deep water port that was a U.S. base during the Vietnam War.²⁴

China

(May 21-June 3, 2012)

- **Beijing says that increased US forces in Asia-Pacific inappropriate; Increasing military capabilities is in tune with Chinese needs; Yuan-yen direct trading is a win-win situation; Cambodia-China sign military cooperation deal; Beijing objects Dalai Lama meeting with Austrian Chancellor; China launched telecommunication satellite; China-Spain agree to enhance cooperation**

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said that “deliberately highlighting the military and security agenda, deploying more military forces and strengthening military alliances in the Asia-Pacific region are inappropriate”.²⁵ However, it further stated that the growing military power of China is in accordance with its economic and social development and defence requirements.²⁶

Reports noted that direct trading between Chinese yuan and Japanese yen began on June 1, 2012.²⁷

According to reports, the deputy chief of the general staff of the PLA urged the international community to make joint efforts to formulate rules in the cyber space arena.²⁸

China and Cambodia signed a military cooperation agreement in Phnom Penh.²⁹

²³ ‘Burma ‘has given up nuclear power research- Minister’, *BBC News*, June 2, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-18309879>

²⁴ ‘Panetta sends message to China on Vietnam visit’, *Yahoo News*, June 3, 2012, <http://news.yahoo.com/panetta-sends-message-china-vietnam-visit-165721537.html>

²⁵ “China says more U.S. forces in Asia-Pacific inappropriate” *Xinhua*, June 4, 2012 at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-06/04/c_131630586.htm

²⁶ “Rising military power is in line with China’s defense needs: FM spokesman” *Xinhua*, June 4, 2012 at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-06/04/c_131630570.htm

²⁷ “Yuan-yen direct trading is a win-win game for China, Japan” *Xinhua*, June 2, 2012 at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-06/02/c_131627370.htm

²⁸ “Chinese general calls for international cyber space rules” *Xinhua*, May 28, 2012 at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-05/28/c_131616070.htm

²⁹ “Cambodian, Chinese defense ministers ink military cooperation pact” *Xinhua*, May 28, 2012 at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-05/28/c_131615180.htm

Meanwhile Beijing voiced its strong discontent over a meeting between the Dalai Lama and the Austrian Chancellor.³⁰

In another development, China successfully launched a telecommunications satellite from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center.³¹

In other developments, China and Spain agreed to expand their bilateral cooperation in trade and renewable energy.³²

Japan

- **Japanese Defense Ministry calls for deployment of destroyers closer to North Korea; Two Japanese military vessels visit Philippines on goodwill visit; The second batch of Japanese GSDF leaves for South Sudan to participate in UNPKO; Japan plans to open its embassy in Bhutan by 2014**

According to reports, Japanese Defense Ministry is currently planning to deploy destroyers closer to North Korea to improve its detectability of a North Korean rocket launch in the future. The decision was taken in the wake of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's failure to gather information on North Korean rocket launch in April this year. The Ministry also calls for MSDF Destroyers equipped with the Aegis air defense system to use information from US early warning satellites and enhance cooperation with US Aegis-equipped frigates.³³

Meanwhile, two Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (MSDF) vessels arrived in Manila recently on a four-day good will visit. The training squadron, consisting of JS Kashima and JS Matsuyuki had more than 500 crew members and officers. However Tokyo has ruled out the possibility of any connection between the squadron's visit and Philippines current row with China over territories in the South China Sea region.³⁴

Reports noted that a 23-member team constituting a part of the second batch of Japanese Ground Self Defense Force (GSDF) recently left for South Sudan to participate in the UN Peace keeping Operations there. On their arrival, the first batch of GSDF which reached the African country between January and March this year would return home. The second batch reportedly will consist of total 330 members and be basically be involved in engineering works, such as road construction in South Sudan's capital Juba.³⁵

³⁰ "China expresses objection to Austrian Chancellor-Dalai meeting" *Xinhua*, May 26, 2012 at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-05/26/c_131612882.htm

³¹ "China launches telecommunication satellite" *Xinhua*, May 27, 2012 at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-05/27/c_123195386.htm

³² "China, Spain agree to deepen cooperation in trade, green energy" *Xinhua*, May 25, 2012 at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-05/25/c_123193501.htm

³³ "Defense Ministry plans to deploy destroyers closer to N. Korea", *Mainichi Daily*, May 30, 2012, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120530p2g00m0dm128000c.html>

³⁴ "Japanese Military vessels visit Philippines", *Mainichi Daily*, May 29, 2012, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120529p2g00m0dm091000c.html>

³⁵ "Japan's 2nd GSDF batch leaves for peacekeeping mission in S. Sudan", *Mainichi Daily*, June 2, 2012, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120602p2g00m0dm017000c.html>

In other developments, according to reports, Japan is currently planning to open its embassy in Bhutan possibly by 2014. As of now, only three countries-India, Bangladesh and Kuwait-have embassies in Bhutan. During Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk's visit to Tokyo in November 2011, the King requested Japan to open an Embassy in Bhutan. Japanese Foreign Ministry is of the view that by opening an Embassy in Bhutan, Japan will not only able to help the country with economic assistance but also can effectively counter Chinese influence in the region.³⁶

South Korea

- **South Korea, Japan and the US to promote cooperation to deter further North Korean provocations**

Reports noted that during a recent meeting held in Singapore among top defense officials from South Korea, Japan and the US on the sidelines of the 11th Asia Security Summit, the three countries agreed to expand their trilateral defence cooperation to deal with further provocations from North Korea. They also decided to reinforce collaboration for regional peace and stability and strengthen cooperation on issues like humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, maritime security, protection of freedom of navigation and non-proliferation.³⁷

C. Central Asia & Russia

Central Asia

- **Tajikistan President arrives Beijing for a five day state visit; Iran and Tajikistan ink five pacts ranging from transportation to health; Kazakhstan and Russian Presidents hold top level meeting in Astana; Kyrgyzstan pays a part of its gas debt to Kazakhstan; Kazakhstan to open an international nuclear fuel bank in 2013**

According to reports, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon has arrived in Beijing for the start of his five-day official visit for talks with top-level Chinese officials on trade, finance, energy, and telecommunications. He will also participate in the SCO heads of the meetings scheduled to be held on June 7.³⁸

In another development, Tajikistan and Iran wrapped up their ninth joint economic commission meeting by inking five pacts to expand ties in areas ranging from power to health. Iran will assist Tajikistan in setting up a 2 million ton cement production facility. The two sides have discussed plans to expand output at their joint tractor factory in Dushanbe, explore hydrocarbons and build oil processing facilities, as well as construct small hydropower plants in Tajikistan. Iran has

³⁶ "Japan to open embassy in Bhutan, possibly in 2014", *Mainichi Daily*, June 2, 2012, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120602p2g00m0dm030000c.html>

³⁷ "S. Korea, US, Japan agree to expand cooperation to deter N. Korean provocations", *Korea Herald*, June 3, 2012, at <http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20120603000008>

³⁸ "Tajik leader arrives in Beijing for five-day state visit", *Central Asia Newswire*, June 1, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12123>

expressed its willingness to import up to 1 billion cubic meters of water from Tajikistan. Tajikistan is the only country in Central Asia which has a Persian language culture.³⁹

Meanwhile, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev held talks with Kazakhstan's top leaders during a visit to the Kazakh capital, his first foreign trip since his appointment to the country's premiership. Russia is Kazakhstan's primary trade partner. The growing trade between the two countries reached \$23.9 billion last year. Kazakh exports to Russia were worth \$7.7 billion in that period, while imports from Russia totalled \$16.2 billion.⁴⁰

Reports noted that Kyrgyzstan has paid \$2.5 million toward its outstanding gas bill to Kazakhstan. It has natural gas debt of \$31.2 million to Kazakhstan and the arrears go back to 2003.⁴¹

In other developments, according to reports, the chairman of Kazakhstan's Atomic Energy Agency, Timur Zhantikin has said that Kazakhstan will have an international nuclear fuel bank in 2013, potentially putting it on the front line of the international non-proliferation effort. Kazakhstan has identified the Ulba Metallurgic plant in Oskemen as the potential site. The Ulba Metallurgic plant, which has been producing dry fuel for nuclear power stations for 50 years, would have the capacity to hold up to 60 tons of gasified low-enriched uranium.⁴²

Russia

- **Russia, France agree to exert political diplomatic efforts to resolve Syrian issue; Putin has said that Russia will insist on legal guarantees that the proposed missile defence system will not be used against it; Rosatom ready to help Iran to build another reactor at Bushehr; Russia expects the US to take a more objective approach to human rights; Russia's unemployment rate close to 6% in April 2012; Russia-EU summit meeting will take place during 3-4th June 2012 in St. Petersburg; Russia, New Zealand to ink agreement on free trade in agrarian sector; Russia signs contracts for five upgraded Borei class submarines; U.S.-Russian 3-Year multi-entry Visa Bill to go to Duma**

According to reports, President Putin has said that Russia and France have agreed to push for a political and diplomatic solution to resolve the Syrian crisis. Putin noted that it was imperative that steps be taken in order to prevent a rerun of the Libyan scenario and the possibility of a civil war in Syria.⁴³

In another development, President Putin has said that Russia needs "legally binding military-

³⁹ "Iran to build cement production factory in Tajikistan", Central Asia Newswire, June 1, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12129>

⁴⁰ "Russia's Medvedev holds top-level talks in Kazakhstan", Central Asia Newswire, May 29, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12106>

⁴¹ "KyrgyzGas pays \$2.5M of gas debt to Kazakhstan", Central Asia Newswire, May 22, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kyrgyzstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12055>

⁴² "Kazakhstan To Open International Nuclear Fuel Bank Next Year", Radio Free Europe, May 30, 2012, <http://www.rferl.org/content/kazakhstan-to-open-international-nuclear-fuel-bank-next-year/24598105.html>

⁴³ "Russia, France, agree to exert political diplomatic efforts to resolve Syrian issue - Putin", ITAR-TASS, June 2, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/436620.html>

technological guarantees" that the European missile defence will not be directed against its national security.⁴⁴

According to reports, the Russian nuclear power corporation Rosatom is ready to help Iran to build one more power unit at the Bushehr nuclear power plant, if it is economically profitable and politically expedient.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Ministry's Commissioner for Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law Konstantin Dolgov has said that Russia hopes that the United States will take a more objective and balanced approach to human rights. He felt that the US has overlooked the large-scale work being done by the Russian leadership in the context of improving the political and judicial systems, overhauling law enforcement bodies and penitentiaries, and fighting corruption and as far as human rights problems are concerned, no country is immune against them.⁴⁶

Reports noted that the total number of unemployed people in Russia counted under the standards of the International Labour Organisations (ILO) amounted to 4.4 million people as of the end of April 2012.⁴⁷

According to reports, Russian President Vladimir Putin and the European Union leaders will meet at the 29th Russia-EU summit in St. Petersburg on June 3-4, 2012. These talks take place once every six months. Amongst the issues slated to be discussed include bilateral cooperation, international situation including developments in North Africa, Middle East, Syria, Libya, Iran and Korea, and the global financial crisis. The European Union is Russia's biggest trade and economic partner. In 2011, the trade turnover topped the 2008 pre-crisis level amounting to approximately 394 billion dollars. Russia is the European Union's third trading partner after the United States and China.⁴⁸

Reports noted that Russia and New Zealand intend to conclude an agreement on free trade in the agrarian sector within the framework of preparations for the APEC-2012 summit.⁴⁹

According to reports, the Russian Defence Ministry has signed contracts with Sevmash and Rubin for five Project 955A upgraded Borei A submarines. The submarines are armed with Bulava ICBMs and are 170 metres long, 13.5 metres wide, have a collapse depth of 450 metres and have a crew of 107 sailors.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ "Russia needs legal guarantees missile defense harmless to its interests - Putin", ITAR-TASS, June 2, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/436616.html>

⁴⁵ "Rosatom ready to help Iran to build another reactor at Bushehr", ITAR-TASS, May 29, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/432808.html>

⁴⁶ "Moscow hopes US to take more objective approach to human rights - FM", ITAR-TASS, May 28, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/432411.html>

⁴⁷ "Russia's unemployment rate nears 6% in April 2012 - statistics", ITAR-TASS, May 28, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/432384.html>

⁴⁸ "Putin, EU leaders to meet at summit on June 3 and 4", ITAR-TASS, June 3, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/436982.html>

⁴⁹ "Russia, New Zealand to ink agreement on free trade in agrarian sector", ITAR-TASS, May 31, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/435304.html>

⁵⁰ "Contracts for 5 upgraded Borei submarines signed", ITAR-TASS, May 28, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/432446.html>

In other developments, reports noted that Russia has finalized a much-touted visa agreement with the United States which stipulates that successful applicants from both countries would automatically get three-year multi-entry visas. This would also do away with the cumbersome requirement of a written invitation. However, the plan has to be ratified by both the houses of Russia's legislature and there are indications that it will be ratified before the US presidential elections in November.⁵¹

D. West Asia

Iran

- **India, Iran discuss bilateral, regional, international issues; Iran creates software to remove "Flame" virus**

According to reports, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi, following a meeting with Indian External Affairs Minister SM Krishna in New Delhi on May 31, has said that Iran will continue to be a reliable partner for India particularly for energy security. Krishna also stressed the importance of Iran as a neighbour and a crucial trade partner for India, especially to meet its domestic demand for crude oil.⁵² In a separate meeting with National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon, the officials discussed opportunities to strengthen bilateral cooperation and other regional and international issues of significance.⁵³ Salehi had visited India to extend an invitation to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to attend the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Tehran in August this year.

In other developments, according to reports, the head of Iran's Information Technology Organisation, Ali Hakim Javadi, has said that Iranian experts have produced an anti-virus software that can spot and remove the newly detected computer virus named "Flame". The software was created by the MAHER center, Iran's national computer emergency response team. Javadi has said that the virus is more destructive than Stuxnet.⁵⁴

Israel/Palestine

- **Israeli Deputy Prime Minister: Use of "Flame" virus justified**

According to reports, the Israeli Deputy Prime Minister has said that the threat from the Iranian nuclear programme justifies the use of all means to halt it, including a sophisticated computer virus called "Flame" that has reportedly infiltrated hundreds of computers at sensitive Iranian sites over the past few years.⁵⁵ Moshe Ya'alon's statement has been taken as an indication that

⁵¹ "U.S.-Russian 3-Year Multientry Visa Bill to Go to Duma", The Moscow Times, May 31, 2012, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/us-russian-3-year-multientry-visa-bill-to-go-to-duma/459596.html>

⁵² "Indian foreign minister: Iran a crucial trade partner of India", Islamic Republic News Agency, May 31, 2012

⁵³ "India, Iran discuss bilateral, regional, international issues", Islamic Republic News Agency, May 31, 2012

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ "Use of "Flame" virus to halt Iranian nuclear programme - Israel", IDF Radio, May 29, 2012

Israel was involved in creating the virus to sabotage Iran's nuclear activities.⁵⁶ The Russian computer security firm Kaspersky that is reported to have discovered the virus has called this the most complex cyber attack so far worldwide.

Syria

- **Syrian Foreign Ministry denies government role in Houla killings; Free Syrian Army blames government; UNSC resolution condemns Houla attacks; Russia sees Syrian diplomats' expulsion as "counterproductive"; Russia to limited to political support to Syria and will not provide economic support**

According to reports, the Syrian Foreign Ministry has denied that government forces were responsible for the massacre of more than 100 people, including women and children, in the village of Houla on May 25, 2012. The spokesman extended condolences and condemned the "ease" with which Syrian government forces have been accused by foreign governments and media outlets. Separate government statements accused "foreign-funded armed terrorist groups" for the Houla events and attacks in other parts of the country.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, a Syrian Foreign Ministry statement stressed that the government is determined to find those responsible; it also added that the Syrian Army carried out its duty and defended innocent civilians during clashes with terrorist groups. The Ministry has stated that initial intelligence pointed to the killings being premeditated and that those killed were targeted for being supporters of the Syrian government. The government has set up a committee to investigate the Houla incident.⁵⁸ However, the state-run Syrian news agency reported that "al-Qaidah-linked terrorist groups" had committed the massacres in two separate towns in the Homs province.⁵⁹ The opposition Free Syrian Army has stated it holds the government responsible for the killings.⁶⁰

Reports noted that UN-Arab League special envoy to Syria Kofi Annan has expressed his shock at the incidents in Houla. Annan has urged the Syrian government to signal that it is serious in resolving this crisis peacefully and requested implementation of the six-point plan. The Security Council has requested a UN investigation of the attacks.⁶¹ Forty-one member countries of the UN Human Rights Council, including India, voted for a resolution strongly condemning the Houla incident. Indian Permanent Representative to the UN Hardeep Puri said that the incident underscored the importance of complete cessation of violence. The resolution has requested the UNHRC Commission of Inquiry to investigate the killings.⁶²

Meanwhile, according to reports, following the expulsion of Syrian ambassadors and diplomats from several countries after the May 25 Houla killings, Russia has said that it sees this as

⁵⁶ "Iran produces software to remove Flame virus", Press TV website, May 30, 2012

⁵⁷ "Syrian foreign ministry denies government forces behind Al-Hawlah "massacre"", Syrian TV satellite service, May 27, 2012

⁵⁸ "Syrian letter to UN details Friday massacre by "terror groups"", SANA news agency, May 28, 2012

⁵⁹ ""Al-Qa'idah-linked" group reportedly commits fresh massacres in Syria", SANA news agency, May 26, 2012

⁶⁰ "Free Syrian Army commander slams Al-Hawlah "massacre", holds regime responsible", Al-Jazeera TV, May 27, 2012

⁶¹ "UN envoy to Syria Annan "shocked" by Houla massacre", SANA news agency, May 28, 2012

⁶² "India votes for UN resolution condemning Syria massacre", The Hindu, June 2, 2012

“counterproductive”, as this has led to the closing of diplomatic channels through which the international community could exchange opinion and exercise its influence on the Syrian government. The Foreign Ministry spokesman also stated that Russia continues to maintain intensive contacts not only with the Syrian government but also with various opposition groups.⁶³

A Russian newspaper report has stated that Moscow has decided to limit itself to political support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, and will not provide economic support. The report followed a session of the Russian-Syrian intergovernmental commission held on May 25, during which the Syrian Finance Minister presented a host of proposals to further economic cooperation between the two countries.⁶⁴

Lebanon

- **Annan warns Lebanon of Syria fallout**

Reports noted that UN-Arab League special envoy to Syria Kofi Annan has warned Lebanese leaders of instability should Syria slide into a civil war. Annan has also warned of the negative consequences of the failure of UN efforts to end the 15-month old crisis in Syria. Lebanon has seen several incidents of sectarian and political tensions in the northern regions and in Beirut that have been directly linked to the crisis in Syria. Annan’s six-point peace plan, which includes a cease-fire that should have taken effect on April 12, has not been implemented yet by the Syrian government. Activists say more than 13,000 people have been killed in Syria during the past year.⁶⁵

Yemen

- **Clashes between al Qaeda and security forces continue**

According to reports, at least six people were killed in a clash between the security forces and al Qaeda in the Abyan province in Southern Yemen as troops were moving closer to the al-Qaeda stronghold of Jaar on May 27, 2012. A military official has informed that five al-Qaeda militants and one civilian was killed in the incident. He also informed that the dead al Qaeda operative was a mid-level commander of the network known as Abdul Rahman al-Musallami.⁶⁶

In another incident, four tribal fighters were reportedly killed in a suicide bombing by al Qaeda in Abyan province on June 4, 2012, according to the Yemeni Defence Ministry. The clash took place at Um Sorra in the Lawder district, where, “Two militants detonated their bomb car at a checkpoint of the tribal fighters amid precise checking process in this area. The fighters at the checkpoint wanted to check the car, but the militants refused and exploded their car immediately”.⁶⁷

⁶³ “Russia says Syrian ambassadors’ expulsion counterproductive in peace settlement”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, May 30, 2012

⁶⁴ “Russia to take tough, pragmatic line on economic cooperation with Syria – paper”, Kommersant, May 25, 2012

⁶⁵ “Annan warns Lebanese leaders of Syria fallout”, The Daily Star, June 1, 2012

⁶⁶ “Six killed as Yemeni troops advance on Qaeda bastion”, *Asharq Al Awsat*, May 28, 2012, at <http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=29783>

⁶⁷ Four Killed in Militant Suicide Bombing in Yemen, *Yemen Post*, June 4, 2012, at <http://yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=3&SubID=5500&MainCat=3>

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

- **Indigenously-developed surface-to-air 'Akash' missiles of Air Force successfully test fired; Indian Navy creates new post to harness space-based military capabilities**

According to reports, India on June 1, 2012, successfully test fired its two indigenously-developed surface-to-air 'Akash' missiles of Air Force version with a strike range of 25 km from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur. Integrated Test Range (ITR) Director M V K V Prasad said, "Two Air Force version Akash missiles were test-fired from the ITR in quick succession. Both the trials were successful and met all the mission objectives." The anti-aircraft missiles, with a strike range of 25 km and capable of carrying warhead of 60 kgs, were test fired from a mobile launcher at launch complex-III of the ITR. This test-fire came after similar trials conducted from the same test range on May 24, 26 and 28 this year. The DRDO has developed both the Air Force and Army versions of the Akash missile.⁶⁸

In another development, reports noted that the Indian Navy has created a new post of assistant chief of naval staff (communications, space and network-centric operations) with an eye on the future in which space-based military capabilities will play a critical role in all conflicts. Rear Admiral Kishan K Pandey has taken over as the first ACNS (CSNCO) at Navy HQs. The move also comes ahead of the planned launch of India's first military satellite, a naval communications and surveillance satellite, this year. For nearly five years, Rear Admiral Pandey, a communications and electronic warfare specialist, has been spearheading various prestigious projects at the Directorate of Naval Signals related with building the critical network-centric capabilities.⁶⁹

International

- **U.S. Defense Department hopes to gain greater access for Navy ships in Vietnam; Pak Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar seeks US apology to open Pakistan supply routes in Afghanistan**

According to reports, the U.S. Defense Department hopes to gain greater access for Navy ships into a key port in Cam Ranh Bay as the Pentagon looks to broaden its military partnership with Vietnam. US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said during a June 3 visit to the dry cargo ship Richard Byrd, that U.S. naval ship access into Cam Ranh Bay "is a key component of this relationship and we see a tremendous potential here for the future." Panetta is the highest-ranking U.S. government official to visit Cam Ranh Bay since the Vietnam War. President Lyndon Johnson visited Cam Ranh Bay in 1966. Access to Vietnamese ports is just one component of an expanding military relationship between Washington and Hanoi. Last year, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding, and the United States is looking to "expand that relationship"

⁶⁸ "Air Force version of 'Akash' missiles successfully test-fired," PTI, June 1, 2012, at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-06-01/india/31958037_1_neutralising-aerial-targets-mobile-launcher-akash

⁶⁹ "Navy creates new post to harness space-based capabilities," TNN June 3, 2012, at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-06-03/india/32005182_1_network-centric-indian-navy-communications-technology

in a number of key areas, Panetta noted. The MoU focuses on high-level exchanges, maritime activities, search and rescue, peacekeeping operations and humanitarian aid and disaster relief. “[W]e want to work with Vietnam on critical maritime issues, including code of conduct, focusing on the South China Sea and also working to improve freedom of navigation in our oceans,” Panetta added.⁷⁰

In another development, according to reports, Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar said in an interview published on June 4, 2012 that the United States should apologize for an air raid that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers if it wants Pakistan to reopen key supply routes into Afghanistan. A U.S. apology is “something which should have been forthcoming the day this incident happened, and what a partnership not only demands, but requires,” she said.⁷¹

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Shutdown in Shopian; Union Home Minister seeks debate on interlocutors’ report; CRPF Patrol attacked by gunmen in Srinagar**

According to reports, despite no call given by any organization on the anniversary of alleged double-murder and rape of Asiya Jan and Neelofar, a complete strike was observed in Shopian town on 29 May, 2012. All shops and business establishments remained closed while transport was also off the roads. It would be worth noting that Asiya Jan and Neelofar were found dead in Rambiaranallah, near police and forces camp, in 2009 after they had left home for their orchards. The incident triggered massive protests across the valley during which several youth were killed in forces and police firing.⁷²

In another development, according to reports, seeking an informed debate on the Jammu and Kashmir interlocutors report, Home Minister P Chidambaram said the Government will take a view on it including the recommendation on setting up of a Constitutional Committee at a later stage. The Government has not taken a view, the Union Minister told his monthly press conference to a question whether the Government will accept the interlocutors’ recommendations for setting up a Constitutional Committee to review all the Central Acts and Articles of the Constitution extended to the state. The Home Minister said the interlocutors have offered to act as resource persons to facilitate the debate.⁷³

⁷⁰ “Pentagon Looks to Expand Military Relationship with Vietnam,” June 3, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120603/DEFREG02/306030002/Pentagon-Looks-Expand-Military-Relationship-Vietnam?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

⁷¹ “U.S. Apology Needed To Open Pakistan Supply Routes: FM,” June 4, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120604/DEFREG03/306040012/U-S-Apology-Needed-Open-Pakistan-Supply-Routes-FM?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

⁷² “Spontaneous shutdown in Shopian”, *Greater Kashmir*, May 29, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/May/30/spontaneous-shutdown-in-shopian-85.asp>

⁷³ “Chidambaram seeks debate on interlocutors’ report”, *Greater Kashmir*, May 31, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jun/1/chidambaram-seeks-debate-on-interlocutors-report-67.asp>

In other developments, reports noted that at least seven CRPF personnel were wounded when some gunmen opened fire on them in old city, Srinagar. Sources said motorcycle borne gunmen opened fire on CRPF vehicle of 82 Battalion near JLNH Hospital (Victor Crossing) in Khanyar area of the old city. The injured CRPF men were hospitalized while the militants managed to escape after the attack.⁷⁴

North East India

- **Tripura farmers released by National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT); North-East Students' Organization to stage united stir on June 7; Bodo militant faction warns against stage shootout; New Youth policy to stem North-East militancy; Maoist trying to expand bases in North-East**

According to reports, a crackdown by Bangladesh security forces has forced a separatist outfit to release three farmers kidnapped 23 days ago from Tripura and taken across the border. According to a police spokesman, militant of the outlawed National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) have released the three tribal farmers on 29 May, 2012 at Bhagirath Para along the India-Bangladesh border in northern Tripura. The farmers reached a nearby camp of Tripura State Rifles. It would be worth noting that four tribal farmers were kidnapped by heavily-armed militants of the banned NLFT on May 7 while they were working in their field at Gandachara, around 185 km from here. One of the farmers had escaped the day he was kidnapped. The militants had taken the hostages to Bangladesh through the unfenced border.⁷⁵

In another development, according to reports, the North East Students' Organization (NESO) announced a united agitation across the North East region pressing for immediate solution to its long-standing demands, which include granting of special constitutional status and a separate time zone for the region. The other demands include repeal of AFSPA, safety and security of the NE students pursuing higher education in other parts of India, besides setting up of a Special Education Commission to address the grievances of the students. It also reiterated its demand for a Central law to protect the NE students from harassment, especially those living in metros.⁷⁶

Meanwhile, reports noted that a Bodo militant faction in Assam on May 31, 2012 warned the authorities against staged shootouts in the name of anti-insurgency operations. Reacting to the killing of one Simul Boro in Kamrup district on May 30, 2012 the faction of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) led by its jailed chairman Ranjan Daimary said the outfit would kill 20 people against killing of one innocent Bodo youth by the security forces. Assistant information and publicity secretary of the organisation B. Samijing informed this in an emailed statement to media.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ "Gunmen attack CRPF patrol, 7 hurt", *Greater Kashmir*, May 30, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/May/31/gunmen-attack-crpf-patrol-7-hurt-85.asp>

⁷⁵ "Tripura farmers released by banned outfit", *The Assam Tribune*, May 30, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may3012/at014>

⁷⁶ "NESO to stage united stir on June 7", *The Assam Tribune*, May 30, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may3112/at07>

⁷⁷ "Bodo militant faction warns against stage shootouts", *The Assam Tribune*, June 1, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun0112/at043>

According to reports, in a fresh initiative to lure away youths from joining militancy, the new National Youth Policy 2012 proposes to frame an action plan to tackle the menace particularly in conflict-affected areas of North-East. The exposure draft released on May 31, 2012 by Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, Ajay Maken proposes to revise the target age group of youths from the existing 13-35 years to 16-30 years. In a first, Youth Development Index (YDI) is proposed to be incorporated as part of the policy to serve as the baseline and ready reckoner for evaluation. The new Youth Policy divides the target groups into six categories including the Youth at Risk and Violent Conflicts. The Ministry has proposed to hold consultations with various stakeholders. As part of the regional consultations, the discussion on the youth policy would be held at NEHU University in Shillong in the third week of July this year.⁷⁸

In other developments, according to reports, the head of the Maoist rebels for the Eastern zone, Prosanto Ghosh alias Kishan Da has been taking personal interest in the expansion of the bases of the rebels in the North East region of the country and it was Ghosh, who entrusted Indranil Chanda with the responsibility of setting up bases in Assam and to maintain links with Manipur based outfit People's Liberation Army (PLA). Some important facts regarding the expansion plan of the Maoists in the North East came to light during the questioning of Indranil Chanda, who was made in charge of the Maoist rebels in Assam. Indranil was arrested in Kolkata by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) with the help of the Special Task Force (STF) of West Bengal police and he is now in the custody of the NIA. According to sources during questioning, Indranil admitted that he was given the responsibility of setting up of the bases of the Maoist rebels in Assam by Prosanto Ghosh and he made several trips to Guwahati and other parts of Assam. However, he claimed not having visited Sadiya in Tinsukia district, where the Maoist rebels now have strong base.⁷⁹

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **India votes for UNHRC resolution condemning Syrian killings; India calls for increase in financial support to UN Women dealing with women's empowerment**

Reports noted that India was among the 42 countries that voted for a resolution in the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) which strongly condemned the El-Houleh incident that killed over a hundred civilians in Syria. India's representative, H S Puri condemned the incident and stressed the need for all parties involved to abjure violence. India also urged all sides to comply with their obligations under the Annan Plan.⁸⁰ Meanwhile, in New Delhi, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, in a meeting with Iran's Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Salehi reiterated India's stance on the issue and called for immediate ceasefire in Syria.⁸¹

⁷⁸ "New youth policy to stem NE militancy", *The Assam Tribune*, May 31, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun0112/oth06>

⁷⁹ "Maoists trying to expand bases in NE", *The Assam Tribune*, June 3, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun0412/at07>

⁸⁰ "India joins 41 nations in condemning Syria killings", *The Hindu*, June 02, 2012 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article3480783.ece>

⁸¹ "PM Manmohan Singh calls for immediate ceasefire in Syria", *The Times of India*, June 02, 2012 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-06-02/india/31983025_1_bashar-al-assad-upcoming-nam-summit-ali-akbar-salehi

In another development, India has called on the international community to increase its financial support to UN Women dealing with women's empowerment. India's Permanent Representative to the UN H S Puri said that work on gender equality and empowerment of women continues to remain "chronically underfunded". India has promised a contribution of five million dollars towards the body out of which two million dollars has already been contributed. To make the body more dynamic, decentralized, cohesive and well-connected, India has extended its support to improve the organizational structure of UN Women.⁸²

⁸² "Increase financial support to UN body: India", *The Indian Express*, May 30, 2012 at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/increase-financial-support-to-un-body-india/955622/0>