

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

- **Three NATO troops killed by gunman in Helmand province**

According to reports, a gunman dressed in Afghan police uniform has killed three NATO troops in the Nahr-e-Saraj district of Helmand province. The gunman was detained later.¹

Pakistan

- **India Pakistan Foreign Ministers talks postponed; Kayani expresses concern over border incursions; China and Pakistan actively cooperating in space technology**

Reports noted that in light of the internal affairs of Pakistan and the upcoming presidential elections in India, talks between the foreign ministers of the two countries have been postponed till an undisclosed date. Talks between the foreign secretaries of the two countries which took place this month were to be succeeded by talks between Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar and her Indian counterpart SM Krishna in Islamabad next month. Further talks will be held between the foreign secretaries of the two countries on July 4-5, 2012 in New Delhi.²

In another development, according to reports, the Pakistani Army chief Kayani has expressed his reservations to ISAF commander Gen John Allen over cross border incursions by militants based in Afghanistan. Gen Allen, the top commander of American and NATO forces in Afghanistan was visiting Pakistan amid heightened tensions between the two countries. The US accuses Pakistan of not acting against militant networks allegedly based on Pakistani soil. The two countries have also been at loggerheads over still-closed NATO supply lines. Pakistan, on the other hand, blames NATO and Afghan forces of failing to act against militant safe havens in Afghanistan, and repeated border violations and attacks by insurgents. The ISAF commander's visit follows a similar cross-border attack by Taliban militants on Sunday, resulting in the deaths of 13 Pakistani soldiers.³

In other developments, according to reports, the spokesperson of China's manned space engineering programme, Wu Ping has confirmed active cooperation between China and Pakistan on space technology. She informed this during a press conference.⁴

¹ "Gunman in Afghan police uniform kills three NATO troops", *BBC*, July 1, 2012 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-18668774>

² "Composite dialogue: India, Pakistan foreign minister's meeting postponed", *The Express Tribune*, June 26, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/399346/composite-dialogue-pakistan-india-talks-postponed/>

³ "Kayani urges ISAF commander to curb border incursions", *Dawn*, June 27, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/06/27/top-us-afghan-general-visits-pakistan-amid-tension/>

⁴ "China, Pakistan cooperating in space tech", *Dawn*, June 25, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/06/25/pakistan-china-cooperating-in-space-tech/>

B. East Asia

China

(June 18-July 1)

- **Chinese military wants to strengthen ties with the United States; China congratulates newly elected Egyptian President Morsi; China-Argentina to improve relations; China Brazil to improves ties; China-Singapore to enhance military contacts; China-Bhutan to establish diplomatic relations; Beijing-New Delhi to improve bilateral relations; Beijing urges Vietnam to correct the maritime law; Need to fight corruption within the Party**

According to reports, Chinese military officials have asserted that they want to improve relations with the US. However they also asserted that there is a need for proper resolution of US surveillance flights near China.⁵

On bilateral front, Hu Jintao congratulated the newly elected Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi.⁶

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao arrived in Argentina on June 23, 2012 to boost bilateral ties.⁷ Meanwhile China and Brazil announced that they are upgrading their bilateral relations to strategic level.⁸

China's Vice President Xi Jinping met with his Singaporean counterpart and called for enhanced military ties between the countries.⁹

In another development, China and Bhutan stated that they should work towards establishing formal diplomatic ties.¹⁰ Beijing has also asserted that China and India should work towards improving their bilateral ties.¹¹

⁵ "Military to strengthen ties with US" *China Daily*, June 27, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-06/27/content_15524507.htm

⁶ "Hu congratulates Morsi on election as Egyptian president" *China Daily*, June 25, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-06/25/content_15522128.htm

⁷ "Wen's Argentina visit to boost bilateral ties" *China Daily*, June 25, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-06/25/content_15520071.htm

⁸ "China, Brazil upgrade ties to strategic level" *China Daily*, June 22, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012wenvisitla/2012-06/22/content_15518325.htm

⁹ "Xi calls on closer China-Singapore military exchanges" *China Daily*, June 21, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-06/21/content_15517680.htm

¹⁰ "China, Bhutan ready to forge diplomatic ties" *China Daily*, June 22, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-06/22/content_15517896.htm

¹¹ "Wen calls for mutual trust with India" *China Daily*, June 21, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-06/21/content_15517778.htm

In other developments, according to reports, China's top legislature, the National People's Congress (NPC), urged Vietnam to correct an erroneous maritime law passed by it.¹² While, Wang Yang, Party Secretary of the Guangdong province has noted that there needs to be sustained efforts to fight corruption and maintain the nature of the Communist Party.¹³

Japan

(June 18-24)

- **Japanese Diet passes bill to set up a new nuclear agency; Japan to provide six billion dollars in ODA over next three years from 2013 to help developing countries**

Reports noted that Japanese Diet has recently passed a bill to set up by September this year a new independent regulatory commission namely the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency, comprising of five nuclear experts to ensure nuclear plant safety. The new agency will be separated from industry ministry and combined with the Nuclear Energy Safety Commission of the Cabinet Office. The new Commission will be responsible to create within 10 months of its establishment, to create safety standards for the nuclear plants in Japan. The commission is authorized to make decisions requiring technical expertise in case of any emergency in nuclear plants, which will limit Prime Minister's authority to issue instructions to the commission.¹⁴

In another development, Japan has recently pledged to offer a total of 6 billion dollars in ODA over three years from fiscal 2013. This aid will be primarily aimed at helping the developing countries in establishing measures to minimize damage during natural disasters and introducing renewable energy.¹⁵

(June 25- July 1)

- **Japan inks a defence deal with the US on F-35 fighter jets**

According to reports, Japan has recently inked a deal with the US Defence Department to purchase four F-35 fighter jets. Each of the planes is to cost 10.2 billion yen. They will be introduced as next-generation mainstay fighter jets for the Japanese Air Self Defense Force (ASDF) in fiscal 2016.¹⁶

¹² "China urges Vietnam to correct erroneous maritime law" *China Daily*, June 22, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-06/22/content_15518679.htm

¹³ "Efforts needed to fight corruption: Wang" *China Daily*, June 28, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-06/28/content_15533392.htm

¹⁴ "Diet passes bill on new nuclear agency", *Yomiuri Daily*, June 22, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120621004052.htm>

¹⁵ "Japan pledges 6 billion dollars in ODA over next three years", *Yomiuri daily*, June 22, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120621005563.htm>

¹⁶ "Govt inks deal with US to buy 4 F-35 fighter jets", *Yomiuri Daily*, June 30, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120629005816.htm>

South Korea

(June 18-24)

- **US and South Korea conducted largest ever live-fire drill to mark 62nd anniversary of the Korean War**

According to reports, the US and South Korea recently conducted their largest live-fire drill to mark the 62nd anniversary of the Korean War. The one-day drill involved 2000 troops from both countries, F-15 K combat fighter planes, Apache attack helicopters and tanks.¹⁷ According to South Korean Defence Ministry, the drill was intended to warn North Korea against aggression by showing South Korea and the US combat readiness.¹⁸

(June 25- July 1)

- **South Korea postpones signing of the GSMIA with Japan; South Korean President hopeful about the prospects of the proposed South Korea-Colombia FTA**

According to reports, the General Security of Military Information Agreement that was to be signed between Japan and South Korea on June 29, 2012, could not be inked due to Seoul's decision to postpone it. Although the cabinet approved plans to sign the agreement, it created great concerns recently within the political arena of South Korea. The GSMIA, if implemented, would allow the two countries to share information on various issues, including those regarding search and rescue missions as well as North Korea-related intelligence.¹⁹

In another development, according to reports, during his recent three-day long visit to Colombia, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak hoped that the proposed FTA between the countries would increase the bilateral trade five times than the current level in the next five years. Both the countries launched the talks on the FTA in 2009 and it is at the final stage of negotiation. Lee's Colombia visit however has been considered significant as it is the first visit by a South Korean President to Colombia which allied with the South during the 1950-53 Korean War.²⁰

¹⁷ "South Korea, US to hold largest-ever live-fire drill to mark 62nd anniversary of war", Mainichi Daily, June 18, 2012, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120618p2g00m0in028000c.html>

¹⁸ "Huge US, South Korean war games called warning to North Korea", Mainichi Daily, June 23, 2012, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120623p2g00m0in006000c.html>

¹⁹ "Seoul puts off signing military deal with Japan", Korea Herald, June 29, 2012, at <http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20120629000948>

²⁰ "Lee expects S. Korea-Colombia trade to jump five fold under FTA", Korea Herald, June 25, 2012, at <http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20120625000178>

C. West Asia

Iran

- **Iran, Afghanistan discuss pipeline construction; Karbala highway to link Iran, Iraq, Syria; Iran to reconsider ties with S. Korea if oil import suspended; Iran cutting off dependency on foreign oil firms; China stresses unacceptability of unilateral sanctions**

According to reports, Iran and Afghanistan have finalized an agreement to swap oil products through a 25 km pipeline. The pipeline will transfer petroleum products between the two countries and will connect two new oil depots that have been launched in the border regions of Iran and Afghanistan. Private sector participation is likely in the pipeline construction.²¹

In another development, Iran has announced that the Karbala highway will be operational by March 2013. The highway will link Tehran with Iraq, Syria and other countries in the Mediterranean region through Iran's Khosrawi border.²²

In other developments, according to reports, Iran's Oil Minister has said that Iran would reconsider relations with South Korea if it completely cut its import of crude oil from Iran. A day before European Union sanctions were to take effect, Rostam Qasemi has said that oil importing countries will have to "pay the price" of sanctions against Iran.²³ Qasemi has also announced that Iran is rapidly replacing foreign oil contractors with domestic ones to cut off dependency on foreigners in its oil industry.²⁴

Separately, China has responded to the US decision to exempt it from sanctions over imports of Iranian oil by stressing its opposition to unilaterally imposed sanctions depending on domestic laws. A Foreign Ministry spokesman said that China finds it even less acceptable when such sanctions are imposed on a third country.²⁵

Syria

- **Russia warns against Syrian regime to avoid full-scale war; Turkey consults with NATO over downed plane; Syrian army defectors claim FSA controls 60 per cent of Syrian territory; Russia urges strengthening of UN observer mission in Syria; China reiterates support for political resolution to crisis**

According to reports, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov has warned against attempts to impose schemes for regime change in Syria, and against unilateral support for the Syrian opposition. He said that these would push Syria into a full-scale war with dire consequences for

²¹ "Iran, Afghanistan mull pipeline to swap oil products – official", *Mehr news agency*, June 24, 2012

²² "Iran's highway to link it with Iraq, Syria, Mediterranean region – TV", *Islamic Republic of Iran News Network*, June 26, 2012

²³ "Iran to reconsider ties with South Korea if oil import suspended – minister", *Tabnak news website*, June 28, 2012

²⁴ "Iran rapidly cutting off dependency on foreign oil firms – minister", *Islamic Republic News Agency*, June 29, 2012

²⁵ "China responds to exemption from US sanctions over Iran oil imports", *Xinhua news agency*, June 29, 2012

Syria and the region. Russia and China have advocated settlement of the Syrian conflict through establishment of dialogue between all groups of Syrian society.²⁶

Meanwhile, according to reports, Turkey officials last week met with NATO officials to discuss the downing of a Turkish military jet by Syria earlier that week. Turkey has claimed that the jet was shot down by Syria in international airspace.²⁷ Wreckage of the plane was located later last week in the Mediterranean Sea; no reports have emerged about the fate of the two pilots.²⁸ Reports suggest that the plane entered Syrian territorial waters but was hit when it was in international airspace. Turkey maintains that Syria's actions are contrary to the rules of engagement in international aviation and that it did not provide any warning by radio to the Turkish reconnaissance jet.²⁹

Al Jazeera has reported that officers who have defected from the Syrian Army have said that the army has been suffering from exhaustion over the past 16 months and has lost control over around 60 per cent of the Syrian territory, to the benefit of the Free Syrian Army (FSA). A Staff Brigadier who was among the defectors said that the army lacks adequate services and is suffering from physical and psychological exhaustion. He also said that the increased use of planes and artillery by the army in recent months is an indication that it has lost control of substantial amount of territory.³⁰

In other developments, according to reports, amidst continued escalation in violence, Russia has said that it would support the strengthening of the mandate of the UN observers' mission in Syria, since it can play a useful role through "monitoring, exposing violations of ceasefire and through other mechanisms that are traditionally at the disposal of UN peacekeeping missions."³¹ The observer mission was suspended two weeks ago following increased violence in areas in which the mission was operating. China has also reasserted its support for a political resolution to the crisis; Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi has said that political dialogue is the only way to resolve the crisis, and called on the Syrian government and opposition to implement Kofi Annan's six-point proposal.³² Jiechi was speaking at a meeting of the Action Group on Syria summoned by the UN-Arab League Special Envoy Kofi Annan in Geneva on June 30.

Jordan

● Jordan steps up border security to prevent "infiltration" from Syria

According to reports, Jordanian authorities have adopted new measures to control the entry and exit of travellers across the Jordanian-Syrian border, following an increase in the influx of Syrian

²⁶ "Russia warns against Syria regime change to avoid "full-scale civil war"", Interfax news agency, June 24, 2012

²⁷ "Turkey requests consultation with NATO over downed plane – agency", Anatolia news agency, June 24, 2012

²⁸ "Turkish daily reports wreckage of downed plane located", Hurriyet website, June 24, 2012

²⁹ "Turkish reaction to downed plane said to be long-term diplomatic, but tough", Milliyet website, June 24, 2012

³⁰ "Syria army defectors say control 60 percent of country's territory - pan-Arab TV", Al-Jazeera TV, June 25, 2012

³¹ "Russia urges strengthening UN observers mandate in Syria", Interfax news agency, June 27, 2012

³² "Chinese foreign minister makes four-point proposal to resolve Syrian crisis", Xinhua news agency, June 30, 2012

refuges into the country. According to relief agencies, the number of Syrians in Jordan has passed 140,000, as officials work to expand overcrowded transit facilities.³³ Government sources say that the new measures have been taken to prevent attempts at infiltration and smuggling of people and goods across the border.³⁴

Israel/Palestine

- **Israel asked to cooperate with neighbours to ensure peace; Palestinian National Authority urges international intervention; Israeli MPs criticise government over protest clashes; Ulpana outpost relocation ends peacefully**

According to reports, Israeli President Shimon Peres has requested Russia to exert pressure on Iran over its nuclear programme. Peres was speaking following discussions with Russian President Vladimir Putin on June 25, 2012. Putin has responded saying that given the rapidly changing situation in the region and the world, it is necessary to find forms of cooperation between countries to ensure peace and calm and facilitate progressive development.³⁵ He also said that Russia finds unacceptable the use of principles of mutual destruction in the practice of international relations.³⁶

In another development, the Palestinian National Authority's Council of Ministers has urged international intervention in the continued Israeli raids and incursions in the Gaza Strip. The cabinet denounced recent acts such as setting of fire to Palestinian agricultural land by settlers; threats by Israeli forces to demolish tents and houses in Hebron; and burning of a mosque in the Jaba village in Jerusalem, and has said that continuation of attacks on civilians, property and holy sites by settlers requires immediate international intervention.³⁷

According to reports, Meretz party MKs have criticised Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government for stifling the right to protest following clashes between police and social justice demonstrators. Meretz leader Zehava Gal-On has said that Israel has become a police state in which the government uses the police as a political weapon to silence criticism.³⁸

In other developments, the first stage of the evacuation of the Ulpana outpost in the West Bank has been completed peacefully, the Jerusalem Post has reported. Fifteen families from the outpost have relocated to housing in Bet El in the West Bank; another 18 families were relocated later in the week. The residents agreed to peacefully leave their homes in an agreement reached with the government. They have sought assurances from the government that it would build 300 new homes in Bet El and that the state would no longer support the demolition of Jewish homes in the West Bank.³⁹

³³ "Number of Syrians in Jordan "tops 140,000" - relief agencies", Jordan Times website, June 24, 2012

³⁴ "Jordan said steps up security on border with Syria to prevent "infiltration", Al-Arab al-Yawm, June 23, 2012

³⁵ "Israel asks Russia to exert pressure on Iran, told to work with neighbours", Interfax news agency, June 25, 2012

³⁶ "Mutual destruction has no place in foreign relations, Putin says in Israel", RIA Novosti news agency, June 25, 2012

³⁷ "Palestinian cabinet urges international intervention over Israeli "escalation"", Palestinian news agency Wafa website, June 19, 2012

³⁸ "Israeli MPs criticize PM over protest clashes", The Jerusalem Post website, June 25, 2012

³⁹ "First stage of Israel's Ulpana outpost relocation ends "peacefully"", The Jerusalem Post website, June 26, 2012

D. Africa

- **Rebels attack French Uranium plant in Central African republic; US expands military aid and intelligence to Africa; Cairo court sentences ex-minister over Israel gas deal; UN Security Council endorses regional strategy to combat LRA threat; Egypt seizes weapons smuggled from Libya; IDB to finance \$1 bn for Egyptian energy and food imports; Nearly 47 killed in tribal clashes in Libya**

According to army and French diplomatic sources, rebels have attacked and looted a uranium plant operated by the French nuclear company Areva near a uranium mine in the southeast of the Central African Republic. No Areva employees were killed or wounded in the attack but one villager was killed by the gang near the Bakouma mine. These armed men were believed to be members of the Chadian rebel group Popular Front for Recovery (FPR) led by 'General' Baba Ladde.⁴⁰

In another development, the Head of U.S. Africa Command, Gen. Carter Ham, said that the U.S. is expanding efforts to provide intelligence, training and also forces to African nations to help counter terrorist activities in the region. On Libya, Ham said that the U.S. is seeking a partnership with Libya as the nation takes steps to set up its own government.⁴¹

According to reports, the Cairo criminal court sentenced a former Mubarak-era oil minister Sameh Fahmi and a businessman Hussein Salem for 15 years each in prison for selling Israel natural gas below market value, thus undermining the interests of Egypt. Five former high ranking officials from the oil and gas authority received jail sentences ranging from three to 10 years on similar charges.⁴²

In another development, the UN Security Council endorsed the regional strategy developed by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) to tackle the threat posed by the Ugandan rebel group Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The strategy focuses on five key strategic objectives to address the threat from the LRA, which has been causing troubles in South Sudan, the Central African Republic (CAR) and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), in addition to Uganda. The Security Council also called for the necessary support to ensure that it is carried out successfully.⁴³

⁴⁰ Christian Panika (2012), "C. Africa gunmen attack French uranium plant: army", *AFP*, June 25, 2012, at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gZoNJS5eQxs8a02xwkcvU3oOjaTw?docId=CNG.292e8fa616194a78a6da50c91b6f34fa.2d1>

⁴¹ "US expanding military aid and intel to Africa, top commander says", *Fox News*, June 25, 2012, at <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/06/25/us-expanding-military-aid-and-intel-to-africa-top-commander-says/>

⁴² "Egypt ex-minister jailed for 15 years over Israel gas deal", *The Times of India*, June 28, 2012, at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-06-28/middle-east/32456111_1_israel-natural-gas-hussein-salem-egypt-s-sinai-peninsula

⁴³ "Central Africa: Security Council Endorses UN Regional Strategy to Combat LRA Threat", *All Africa*, June 29, 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201206300140.html>

According to reports, Egypt's interior minister Gen. Mohammed Ibrahim said that the Egyptian security forces have seized large number of weapons, including rockets and automatic machine guns near the Mediterranean resort city of Marsa Matrouh. These weapons were smuggled into the country from neighbouring Libyan city of Sirte and allegedly bound for the Gaza Strip. Among the munitions confiscated were 138 grad rockets and some 7,000 rounds of ammunition, the "biggest" bust in the history of the Interior Ministry according to Ibrahim.⁴⁴

Reports noted that the Egyptian government has signed an agreement with the Saudi-based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) that will provide \$1 billion to finance energy and food imports. The agreement with the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation, part of the IDB, was signed in Cairo by Waleed Abdul Mohsen al-Wohaib, chief executive of the institution, and Egypt's international cooperation minister, Faiza Abu el-Naga. The finance was part of a previously announced agreement to provide Egypt with \$2.5 billion.⁴⁵

In other developments, according to reports, renewed tribal clashes in the Libyan city of Kufra have claimed at least 47 lives and left more than 100 others wounded in three days. Women and children were among more than half of the injured, with majority of them hurt by mortar fire. Toubou tribal leader Hussein Sake blamed the outbreak of violence on rival Zwai tribesmen and their allies, who he said include the Libya Shield brigade, This brigade is a force deployed by the interim Libyan government to act as a buffer between the conflicting camps.⁴⁶

II. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Dastgeer Sahab shrine gutted in Srinagar; Kashmir shuts in mourning; Normalcy returns in the valley; Militant killed and a soldier injured in an encounter**

In a tragic development, according to reports, the revered two centuries old shrine of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (RA) popularly known as Gaus-ul-Azam Dastgeer Sahab (RA) was gutted in a mysterious fire incident on early June 25, 2012 morning in Khanyar area of old Srinagar, plunging the Valleyites into anguish and grief. Soon after this incident, the authorities deployed police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) on almost all roads of Srinagar to thwart any attempt of protests. Police and CRPF were witnessed carrying out frisking of bikers at many places in Srinagar.

⁴⁴ "Egypt seizes weapons smuggled from Libya", *Y Net News*, June 29, 2012, at <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4249141,00.html>

⁴⁵ "Egypt signs \$1 bln finance for food, energy", *Money Control*, July 1, 2012, at http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/wire-news/egypt-signs-361-bln-finance-for-food-energy_724842.html

⁴⁶ Dominique Soguel (2012), "South Libya clashes 'kill 47' in three days", *AFP*, July 1, 2012, at http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jTAH_316wKXoDX0bpTR_uNZ-ggmQ?docId=CNG.c91772083f0e08ad2fbc893999aa0a54.5d1

Life in Srinagar's commercial hub Lal Chowk was also affected due to partial shutdown to mourn the fire incident. The traffic was also thick on the roads in Lal Chowk and commuters were seen uncomfortable. Despite heavy deployment of forces, clashes broke out between angry people and police resulting at various places across the valley resulting in injuries to scores of persons including some cops.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, reports noted that life across Kashmir valley came to a grinding halt on June 26, 2012, as people observed a complete shutdown to mourn the gutting of shrine of Peer Dastgeer Sahab (RA) at Khanyar. Undeclared curfew was imposed in old city here to thwart protest demonstrations. The strike was called by several separatist groups, including both factions of Hurriyat Conference and Grand Mufti of Jammu and Kashmir Mufti Bashir-ud-din, who has also appealed people to assemble at Dastgeer Sahab Shrine.⁴⁸

However, reports noted that after five days of complete shutdown and curfew in old Srinagar following the gutting of the shrine of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (RA) at Khanyar, life returned to normal in Kashmir valley. Shops, other businesses, educational institutions and public transport started normally in the morning as authorities lifted curfew from six police stations of Srinagar. The roads and markets of Srinagar and other parts of the Valley bustled with activity as private and public transport plied after five days.⁴⁹

In other developments, according to reports, an unidentified militant was killed and a soldier was injured in an encounter in Handwara area of Kupwara district in North Kashmir. On specific information about the presence of militants in Boban forest in Zachaldara, an operation was launched by 21 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) and Special Operation Group (SOG) of J&K police during the intervening night.⁵⁰

North East India

- **Government may allow pro-talk ULFA to meet Anup Chetia; Assam flood situation remains grim; Many issues discussed during talks with Pro-talk group of ULFA ; Two militants held in Assam**

According to reports, a group of senior leaders of the pro-talk faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) have applied for passports and the Government of India is likely to facilitate the visit of one of them to Bangladesh to meet the ULFA general secretary Anup Chetia. The issue of sending one leader of the pro-talk faction of the ULFA to Bangladesh to have talks with Anup

⁴⁷ "Historic Dastgeer Sahab (RA) shrine gutted", *Greater Kashmir*, June 25, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jun/26/historic-dastgeer-sahab-ra-shrine-gutted-65.asp>

⁴⁸ "Kashmir shuts in mourning", *Greater Kashmir*, June 26, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jun/27/kashmir-shuts-in-mourning-69.asp>

⁴⁹ "Normalcy returns", *Greater Kashmir*, June 30, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jul/1/normalcy-returns-51.asp>

⁵⁰ "Militant killed, soldier injured in Zachaldara encounter", *Greater Kashmir*, July 1, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jul/1/militant-killed-soldier-injured-in-zachaldara-encounter-37.asp>

Chetia would be discussed in the next round of meeting with the outfit scheduled for June 29, 2012.⁵¹

In another development, reports noted that the overall flood situation in the State worsened further with the Brahmaputra and several of its tributaries flowing above the danger marks at various places. Besides, the mighty river and several of its tributaries are maintaining a rising trend. In the Barak Valley too, the Katakhal is flowing above the danger mark while the Barak and the Kushiya are maintaining a rising trend. Meanwhile, the State Disaster Management Authority has stated in its flood bulletin that so far 3, 83, 792 people in 17 districts of the State have been affected by the floods this year and in all ten persons have lost their lives due to the floods.⁵²

According to reports, the Pro-talk group of ULFA has flagged the problem of illegal influx from Bangladesh calling for constitutional safeguard mechanism for the indigenous people. A six-member delegation of pro-talk leaders led by Chairman, Arabinda Rajkhowa held over 90-minutes discussion with Union Home Secretary, R K Singh on June 29, 2012. The tripartite talks was also attended by officials of the State Government, besides interlocutor PC Haldar and Joint Secretary (North-East), Shambhu Singh. Assam Government was represented by State Home Secretary. They discussed about problems of Assam and illegal migration and its different aspects like development of infrastructure and the flood problem.⁵³

In other developments, according to reports, the Indian Army has arrested two militants in Assam on June 30, 2012. While one of them was from the All Adivasi National Liberation Army (AANLA), the other was a member of the Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam (MULTA).⁵⁴

⁵¹ "Govt may allow pro-talk ULFA to meet Chetia", *The Assam Tribune*, June 25, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun2612/at08>

⁵² "State flood situation grim", *The Assam Tribune*, June 26, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun2712/at05>

⁵³ "Pro-talk ULFA raises influx, identity crisis issues", *The Assam Tribune*, June 29, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun3012/at07>

⁵⁴ "Two militants held in Assam", *The Assam Tribune*, July 1, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul0112/at043>