

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

- **US hands over Bagram prison to the Afghan authorities; At least six people dead in a suicide attack near ISAF headquarter in Kabul**

Reports noted that the US military has handed control of a controversial prison Bagram housing more than 3,000 Taliban fighters and terrorism suspects to the Afghan authorities. In a small ceremony, Afghan officials said inmates had been transferred to their authority. The move is part of a deal to transfer all Afghan prisons back to local control ahead of the withdrawal of NATO forces at the end of 2014.

In another development, according to reports, a teenage suicide bomber has killed at least six people near headquarter of the NATO-led international coalition (ISAF) in Kabul. A number of children are among the dead. There were no reports of casualties among ISAF troops.²

Pakistan

- **China assures support to Pakistan; US State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland: Pakistanis have been a big victim of terrorism; Reports: Pakistan has agreed to provide safe passage to the Taliban leaders who are willing to participate in reconciliation talks with the Afghan government**

According to reports, China on September 11, 2012 said, it completely supported Pakistan on all regional and international issues. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao reiterated the stance of his government of supporting Pakistan's sovereignty when he met Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf here on the sidelines of World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting of New Champions 2012. The two leaders reaffirmed their governments' resolve to further strengthen ties in diverse fields particularly trade and defence. Prime Minister Ashraf and the Chinese premier discussed a whole gamut of issues ranging from bilateral ties, defence cooperation, infrastructure development, energy, agriculture and banking.³

In another development, according to reports, the United States has said Pakistanis have been a big victim of terrorism. State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland spoke about United

¹ "Afghanistan: US hands over controversial Bagram jail", *BBC*, September 10, 2012 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19539412>

² "Kabul attack: Bomber kills children near NATO base", *BBC*, September 8, 2012 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19528417>

³ "Chinese premier meets PM Ashraf, assures Pakistan Of Support", *Dawn*, September 11, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/09/11/chinese-premier-meets-pm-ashraf-assures-pakistan-of-support/>

States' strong counterterrorism cooperation with Pakistan, which over the last decade has suffered grievously from retaliatory terrorist bombings. In response to a question, the spokesperson emphasised upon strong bilateral cooperation against terrorism between US and Pakistan.⁴

In other developments, according to reports, Pakistan has agreed to provide safe passage to the Taliban leaders willing to participate in reconciliation talks with the Afghan government, US and diplomatic sources told. Separately, a US State Department spokesman said at a briefing that the Obama administration hopes to stay engaged with the Taliban, including the Haqqani network, even though it has designated the group a foreign terrorist organization.⁵

Bangladesh

- **Bangladesh -Bhutan signs MoU on agricultural cooperation; Meeting between Bangladesh Information Minister and Indian Information and Broadcasting Minister in New Delhi; A twenty member Bangladesh delegation visits India; US 7th Fleet Commander is on week-long visit to Bangladesh**

According to reports, Bangladesh and Bhutan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on agricultural cooperation between the two countries on September 11, 2012. Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury and visiting Bhutanese Agriculture and Forests Minister Lyonpo Pema Gyamtsho signed the MoU at Bangladesh Secretariat on behalf of their respective governments. Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC), Ministry of Agriculture and Forests and the Council for RNR Research of Bhutan (CoRRB) will implement the MoU.⁶

In another development, according to reports, Bangladesh has invited Indian archaeological experts for preservation of the ancestral house of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Tungipara and important historical sites like Mahasthangarh in Bogra and Moynamati in Comilla. After a meeting with Indian Information and Broadcasting Minister Ambika Soni in New Delhi on September 11, Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad told reporters that both sides also agreed to explore the possibility of allowing their TV channels to be watched in each other's territories. Bangladesh Information Minister Azad is now on a four-day official visit to India.⁷

In other developments, reports noted that a delegation of 20 senior officers from the three defence services of Bangladesh, including 10 foreign officers from National Defence College (NDC) are attending a five-day study tour in India from September 15, 2012.⁸

⁴ "Pakistanis are victims of terror, US pledge support : Victoria Nuland", *Dawn*, September 13, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/09/13/us-says-pakistanis-are-victims-of-terror-pledges-counterterrorism-support/>

⁵ "Talks with Afghan Government: Pakistan ready to give safe passage to Taliban ", *Dawn*, September 10, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/09/10/talks-with-afghan-govt-pakistan-ready-to-give-taliban-safe-passage/>

⁶ "Agricultural Cooperation: Dhaka, Thimphu sign MoU", *The Daily Star*, September 12, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=249388>.

⁷ "Preservation of Archaeological Sites: Bangladesh seeks Indian help", *The Daily Star*, September 12, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=249392>

⁸ "20 defence officers to join study tour in India today", *The Daily Star*, September 15, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=249828>.

According to reports, US 7th Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Escott H Swift arrived in Bangladesh on September 15, 2012 to attend a week-long training exercise of the US Navy and Bangladesh Navy from September 17.⁹

Sri Lanka

- **Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Authority (AEA) orders to send back a consignment of goods contaminated with highly radioactive material arrived on board a vessel from India; Speaker of India's Lok Sabha Meira Kumar meets President Rajapaksa; President meet Pakistani Parliamentary delegation; Chairman of National People's Congress visits Sri Lanka; Delegation from the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights visits Sri Lanka**

According to reports, Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Authority (AEA) has ordered to send back a consignment of goods contaminated with highly radioactive material arrived on board a vessel from India. The consignment, contaminated with a radioactive material has been discovered by the port authorities in a 40-foot container and upon testing it has been found that 125 units of stainless steel and aluminium products, were all contaminated. Radiation tests carried out by the AEA had revealed traces of Cobalt 60, which is a highly radioactive element used in the treatment of cancer. The container is currently placed at a special location under the supervision of the AEA. Chairman, AEA, Dr. R. Wijewardena has said that following the analysis by the Radiation Protection Division of the AEA, the authority has ordered to send the shipment back to India.¹⁰

Reports noted that President Mahinda Rajapaksa met with Speaker of India's Lok Sabha Meira Kumar on September 13 in Colombo. During the meeting, Ms. Kumar suggested that Sri Lanka and India should have greater parliamentary exchanges. The Speaker conveyed her appreciation for the arrangements made by Sri Lankan officials for hosting the 58th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference and thanked for the warm hospitality accorded to the delegations. The Indian Speaker has also met Sri Lankan Minister of External Affairs Prof. G.L. Peiris. Mrs. Kumar was accompanied by accompanied by Prof. P.J. Kurien, Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India, and T.K. Viswanathan, Secretary General, Lok Sabha.¹¹

In another development, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa has met with Pakistani Parliamentary delegation led by Dr. Nafisa Shah, Member of the National Assembly of Pakistan and Chairperson of National Commission for Human Development and said that Sri Lanka would not have eliminated the scourge of terrorism without the help and support of Pakistan.¹²

⁹ "US navy's 7th fleet commander arrives in Dhaka", *The Daily Star*, September 16, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=249981>.

¹⁰ "Sri Lanka to return the radioactive shipment back", *Colombo Page*, September 16, 2012 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Sep16_1347779420CH.php.

¹¹ "India calls for greater parliamentary exchanges with Sri Lanka", *Colombo Page*, September 13, 2012 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Sep13_1347558671CH.php.

¹² "Sri Lanka would not have defeated terrorism without Pakistan's Support - President", *Colombo Page*, September 14, 2012 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Sep14_1347628601CH.php.

In other developments, according to reports, a top legislator of China, chairman of National People's Congress (NPC) Wu Bangguo arrived in Sri Lanka on September 15, 2012 on an invitation extended by Speaker Chamal Rajapaksa.¹³

The delegation from the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) that arrived in Sri Lanka September 14, has been apprised of the post-conflict progress on human rights issues. The team headed by Hanny Megally, Chief, Asia Pacific and Middle East and North African Branch of OHCHR accompanied by Oscar Solers, Human rights officer, Rule of Law and Democracy selection of OHCHR met Sri Lanka's Minister of Economic Development, Basil Rajapaksa at the Ministry of Economic Development upon their arrival.¹⁴

Maldives

- **India's Defence Minister AK Antony visits Maldives; US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert Blake meets President Waheed**

Reports noted that India's Defence Minister A.K. Antony went to Maldives on September 15, 2012 on a three-day visit. On September 16, 2012, he opened 'SENAHIYA,' a Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) hospital, established in Male with Indian assistance. Besides providing the 25-bed hospital with state-of-the-art medical equipment, the government of India has deployed a highly qualified medical team for establishing and running the facility. Maldives Defence Minister Mohamed Nazim thanked India for its assistance to his country in all areas of development and said the enduring friendship between the two countries would improve and expand, irrespective of political changes. The Maldives, he said, would stand by India to ensure the maritime security of the sensitive Indian Ocean Region.¹⁵

In another development, the US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Mr Robert Blake today paid a courtesy call on President Dr Mohamed Waheed on September 11, 2012.¹⁶

B. East Asia

South East Asia

- **Protests against anti-Islam film in Indonesia, Malaysia; Myanmar's exiled government**

¹³ "Top level Chinese legislator arrives in Sri Lanka", *Colombo Page*, September 16, 2012 http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Sep16_1347769670CH.php.

¹⁴ "UN team briefed on Sri Lanka's post-conflict progress on human rights", *Colombo Page*, September 16, 2012 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Sep16_1347738224CH.php.

¹⁵ "A.K. Antony in Maldives on 3-Day Visit", *Outlook*, September 15, 2012 at <http://news.outlookindia.com/items.aspx?artid=775337>.

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¹⁶ "US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs calls on the President", *The president's Office, Republic of Maldives*, September 12, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7906>.

dissolved; Aung San Suu Kyi to visit United States; Exim Bank to open a branch in Myanmar; Kachin rebels urge the government to end fighting

According to reports, about 200 Indonesians showed their protest over an anti-Islam film on September 14, 2012 outside the heavily guarded US Embassy in Jakarta. About two dozen protesters outside the US Embassy in Kuala Lumpur also protested and handed a letter addressed to the American ambassador in Malaysia that expressed their anger over the movie and called for greater respect for religions. Indonesia's government has been working to block access to clips of the controversial film online.¹⁷

Myanmar's exiled government, the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB), has announced that it will dissolve on September 14, 2012 after 22 years of opposition. A statement signed by NCGUB Chief Minister Dr. Sein Win, a cousin of Aung San Suu Kyi, said that the decision follows a discussion by MPs that determined that the move will contribute towards national reconciliation. It would be worth noting that During 22 year in exile, the NCGUB worked together with many opposition groups and ethnic forces such as the Karen National Union (KNU) and urged the international community to put pressure on the former junta to move towards democracy.¹⁸

Meanwhile, reports noted that Aung San Suu Kyi, is set to embark on a visit to the United States, highlighted by awards and meetings with senior U.S. government leaders and the Burmese community. It comes as Myanmar's President Thein Sein is also to travel to the United States. In her first trip to the United States in two decades, Myanmar's opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, will be given awards for her long struggle for political reform in Myanmar and will meet with U.S. President Barack Obama. Besides the Congressional Gold Medal award, Aung San Suu Kyi will also receive awards from the Asia Society and the Atlantic Council Global Citizen Award. During her visit she will give public addresses at the University of Louisville, Kentucky, as well as visiting Yale and Harvard universities. She will also be meeting with Burmese communities in the United States.¹⁹

According to reports, the Exim Bank is exploring options to set up a branch in Myanmar. The bank has signed a memorandum of understanding for extending a line of credit of \$500 million to that country. It has been reported that there was a likelihood of setting up a branch in Myanmar. At present, the Exim Bank has 10 branches in the country and seven abroad.²⁰

In other developments, according to reports, Kachin rebels of Myanmar have urged the military to end operations in their war-wracked state to bolster contact between the sides, a Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) spokesman said on September 15, 2012. It would be worth

¹⁷ "Indonesia breaks out in protest against anti-islam film", *First Post*, September 14, 2012, <http://www.firstpost.com/world/indonesia-breaks-out-in-protests-against-anti-islam-film-456039.html>

¹⁸ "Burmese exile govt dissolves after 22 years", *The Irrawaddy*, September 14, 2012, <http://www.irrawaddy.org/archives/14042>

¹⁹ "Burma's Suu Kyi prepares for Us visit", *Voice of America*, September 15, 2012, http://www.voanews.com/content/burma_suu_kyi_prepars_for_us_visit/1508727.html

²⁰ "Exim bank may open branch in Myanmar", *Hindu Business Line*, September 16, 2012, <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/banking/article3904074.ece>

noting that several rounds of talks to resolve the conflict in the country's far north have been overshadowed by ongoing battles and relations between the sides are threadbare. Tens of thousands of people have fled the fighting since June last year when a 17-year ceasefire between the government and rebels collapsed, with an estimated 5,000 seeking refuge in neighbouring China.²¹

Japan

- **Japanese government signs purchase contract for three of the five Senanku Islands; China makes largest-ever intrusion into the waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands**

The Japanese government, on September 11, signed the purchase contract for the three of the five Senkaku islands with their private owner. The government took this step to ensure their stable management over the long-term and enhance Japanese control over them. The government reportedly spent 2.05 billion yen for that purchase. China, who claims sovereignty over those islands, reacted strongly to this move and sent marine surveillance ships to waters near the Senakus.²² However, just ahead of the purchase, on the sidelines of the APEC Summit held in Vladivostok recently, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda and Chinese President Hu Jintao met each other on September 9 and both called for a calm response to the countries' territorial dispute.²³

Recently, six Chinese surveillance ships entered Japanese territorial waters surrounding the Senakau islands in the East China Sea region. The Japanese Coast guard claimed that it was by far the largest intrusion by China. This act seemed to be largely a retaliatory measure from Beijing against the nationalization of the three Senkaku islands by the Japanese government recently. However, while reacting sharply to the Chinese act, Chief Cabinet Secretary of Japan Osamu Fujimura declared that it was 'strongly regrettable'.²⁴

South Korea

- **South Korea and Japan to cooperate in developing a future-oriented bilateral relationship; South Korea to spend 2.7 trillion won over the next five years to secure tactical weapons to counter North Korean threat**

During the recent meeting between South Korean President Lee Myung-bak and his Japanese counterpart Yoshihiko Noda on the sidelines of the two-day long APEC meeting recently, both the countries agreed to cooperate in developing a future-oriented relationship between them.

²¹ "Kachin rebels urge Myanmar to end fighting", *The News*, September 16, 2012, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-1-132273-Kachin-rebels-urge-Myanmar-to-end-fighting>

²² "Govt signs deal to buy 3 Senkaku islets/2 billion yen to be paid from reserve fund", *The Yomiuri Daily*, September 12, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120911004319.htm>

²³ "Noda, HU chat on APEC fringe/15-minute talks 1st top-level contact since Senkaku issue flared up", *The Yomiuri Daily*, September 11, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120910003439.htm>

²⁴ "6 China ships enter Senkakus/JCG: Large-scale intrusion into waters near islets 'unprecedented'", *The Yomiuri Daily*, September 15, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120914004435.htm>

²⁵ "Noda, Lee agree on bilateral cooperation", *The Yomiuri Daily*, September 11, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120910003630.htm>

This is a significant development considering that the bilateral relationship between the two neighbouring states is at present largely strained due to their ongoing dispute over the Takeshima islands (Dokdo in South Korea).²⁵

In order to deal with North Korea's nuclear and artillery attacks, the South Korean Defense Ministry has recently decided to use 2.7 trillion won (US\$2.3 billion) over the next five years in procuring tactical weapons.²⁶

C. Central Asia & Russia

Central Asia

- **Kazakhstan signs a rare earths and mining deal with South Korea; Tajikistan to receive US\$ 100 million from the Asian Development Bank in order to rebuild roads leading to Uzbekistan; Uzbekistan begins regular gas shipments to China; World Bank approves a US\$40 million loan to Uzbekistan for agriculture development; Asian Development Bank to provide a US\$ 55 million modernization aid to Kyrgyzstan's Toktogul hydropower plant; Russia's military delegation discusses the future of its Tajikistan military bases with Tajik counterparts; Vietnam indicates its desire in joining the Customs Union; China to provide a grant of US\$ 1.6 million to Kyrgyzstan in order to develop its agriculture sector; Turkmenistan cancels a contract with an Iranian firm to build the Turkmen leg of the 550 mile US\$696 million Kazakh-Turkmen-Iranian railway on the basis of 'economic reasons'**

According to reports, Kazakhstan has signed a number of economic deals as part of South Korean President Lee Myung-Bak's state visit to Astana. Amongst the major deals include the one on rare earth minerals and the decision to build a petrochemical complex in the Caspian city of Atyrau and exploration of mineral resources in Kazakhstan. Bilateral trade stood at US\$ 900 million in 2011.²⁷

Reports noted that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has allotted US\$100 million to Tajikistan to rebuild roads leading to neighbouring Uzbekistan. The road is part of the CAREC (Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation) project to strengthen transportation networks in the area. With the funds, road safety will be improved, drainage structures will be fixed, and community development will grow. Uzbek-Tajik relations have been tense for the past few months, as Uzbekistan has intensified its opposition to Tajikistan's construction of the controversial Rogun Dam by holding up trains heading to Tajikistan. As a result, Tajikistan says valuable food supplies have been delayed, threatening to create famine in its vulnerable south.²⁸

According to reports, Uzbekistan has begun shipping gas to China on a regular basis. During the

²⁶ "2.7 tln won set aside to counter North's nuclear, artillery threats", The Korea Herald, September 11, 2012, at <http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20120911001429>

²⁷ "Kazakhstan signs rare earths, mining deals with Korea", Universal Newswires, September 13, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12794>

²⁸ "Tajikistan garners \$100M from ADB to rebuild road to Uzbekistan", Universal Newswires, September 13, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12801s>

meeting between Uzbek President Islam Karimov and Chinese Vice Premier Hui Liangyu close to 30 deals worth more than \$5.3 billion were signed. Trade turnover between the two countries grew over 44 percent to reach \$1.5 billion.²⁹

The World Bank has approved a US\$40 million loan to the Uzbek government to assist farmers in increasing productivity in the country's agricultural sector. Agriculture accounts for over 40 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and the loan is part of the Second Rural Enterprise Support Project of International Development Association (IDA) funds.³⁰

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has agreed to finance Kyrgyzstan's Toktogul reservoir modernization project with \$55 million in grants and loans. The hydropower plant provides a critical amount of power to the country's grids, as it provides 1200 MW of electricity and the project is expected to be complete by 2017.³¹

In other developments, according to reports, Russian Deputy Defence Minister Anatoly Antonov was in Dushanbe on September 12 for talks with Tajik officials on the future of Russia's military bases in Tajikistan. Dushanbe and Moscow have been conducting negotiations over a possible prolongation of Russia's 201st Motorized Rifle Division's deployment in Tajikistan beyond 2014. With approximately 7,500 troops, Russia's 201st Division uses three Tajik bases, located near Dushanbe and in the southern cities of Kulob and Qurghon-Teppa. There are close to 7,500 Russian troops in the country.³²

Vietnam's Head of state as part of his state visit to Kazakhstan has declared that Vietnam remains committed to joining the tripartite Customs Union comprising of Kazakhstan, Belarus and Russia.³³

China has agreed to assist Kyrgyzstan's agricultural sector with a grant of 10 million Yuan (US\$1.6 million) in order to develop its agriculture sector.³⁴

The Turkmen government has cancelled a contract with an Iranian construction firm to build the Turkmen leg of 550 mile (US\$696 million) Kazakh-Turkmen-Iranian railway on the basis of 'economic reasons'. Turkmenistan firms are expected to take over the construction.³⁵

²⁹ "Uzbekistan begins regular gas shipments to China", Universal Newswires, September 13, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12795>

³⁰ "World Bank approves \$40M loan to Uzbekistan for agriculture", Universal Newswires, September 12, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12789>

³¹ "Toktogul hydropower plant gets \$55M in ADB aid for modernization", Universal Newswires, September 13, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12798>

³² "Russian Military Delegation Discusses Future Of Tajik Bases", Radio Free Europe, September 12, 2012, <http://www.rferl.org/content/russian-military-delegation-discusses-future-of-tajik-bases/24706021.html>

³³ "Vietnam continues push for customs union inclusion", Universal Newswires, September 10, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12772>

³⁴ "China to assist Kyrgyz agriculture with grant", Universal Newswires, September 10, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kyrgyzstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12777>

³⁵ "Turkmenistan pulls Iranian contract for railway", Universal Newswires, September 10, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/turkmenistan/viewstory.aspx?id=12775>

Russia

- **Nord Stream second line to be commissioned on October 8; Construction of South Stream Serbian segment to begin in December 2012; Russia's Deputy Prime Minister proposes to create a space exploration base on the Moon; Two South Korean destroyers to visit Pacific Fleet base in Vladivostok; Russia's Deputy Prime Minister: A new arms race could be in the pipeline if Republican candidate Romney wins the US presidential elections; Membership in Customs Union can give Ukraine cheaper Russian gas; Russia's internal debt decreases 29 bln roubles in August 2012; Moldovan Prime Minister is in Russia to hold official talks; Putin expresses his concern over the European Union's investigation of Gazprom's monopolistic practices in the EU zone; Medvedev invites Moldova to apply for membership of the Customs Union; Russia criticizes European Parliament's resolution which expressed concern over the deteriorating climate for the development of civil society in Russia**

According to reports, President Putin has declared that the second line of the Nord Stream gas pipeline will be commissioned by October 8, 2012.³⁶ He also announced that the construction of the Serbian segment of the South Stream gas pipeline will begin in December 2012.³⁷

Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin has proposed to create a space exploration base on the Moon. This initiative can become a super task for Russia's space programme and give a stimulus to the development of science and industry in the country.³⁸

According to reports, two destroyers of South Korean Navy will call at Russia's Pacific Fleet base in Vladivostok for a business visit. The base is also expected to host American and Japanese naval ships in the month of September and will take part in anti-piracy exercises.³⁹

Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich does not rule a new arms race with the United States if Mitt Romney wins the upcoming presidential elections in America.⁴⁰

Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich has said that accession to the Customs Union could allow Ukraine to buy Russian natural gas at a lower price. Customs Union partners get certain price advantages by being associated with the Union.⁴¹

³⁶ "Nord Stream second line to be commissioned on Oct 8", ITAR-TASS, September 11, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/517747.html>

³⁷ "Construction of South Stream Serbian segment to begin in Dec 2012", ITAR-TASS, September 11, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/517682.html>

³⁸ "Rogozin initiates creation of lunar base", ITAR-TASS, September 11, 2012 <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/516940.html>

³⁹ "Two South Korean destroyers to visit Pacific Fleet base in Vladivostok", ITAR-TASS, September 16, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/521285.html>

⁴⁰ "New arms race with US possible if Romney wins elections, Russian Deputy Prime Minister said", ITAR-TASS, September 15, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/521225.html>

⁴¹ "Membership in Customs Union can give Ukraine cheaper Russian gas", ITAR-TASS, September 15, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/521116.html>

Russia's internal debt, including state guarantees, decreased by 79,926 billion roubles in August 2012 to 4.427 trillion roubles while the internal state debt has increased by 236,899 billion roubles since the start of 2012.⁴²

The Moldovan President has held official meetings with President Putin in Moscow wherein the two Presidents discussed Russia-Moldova cooperation in the political, trade-and-economic, cultural-and-humanitarian fields as well as Moldova's interaction with the European Union.⁴³

President Vladimir Putin has expressed his concern over the European Commission's investigation of Gazprom's monopolistic practises in Europe and hoped that it will be settled soon. At the same time, he has declared that Russia is prepared to seek other gas markets.⁴⁴

In other developments, according to reports, Prime Minister Medvedev has encouraged Moldova to apply for membership of the Customs union and promised to actively consider its case in the 3 member Union.⁴⁵

Reports noted that the Russian Foreign Ministry has criticized a recent European Parliament's resolution, which expressed concern over the deteriorating climate for the development of civil society in Russia, as biased and called it an attempt to interfere in the country's internal affairs.⁴⁶

D. West Asia

Kuwait

- **Protesters demand democratic reforms**

According to reports, more than 3,000 Kuwaitis have protested in front of the parliament on September 10, 2012 demanding the election of a prime minister from outside the ruling al-Sabah family. The protest was also against a government move to amend the electoral law and was attended by 21 lawmakers from the opposition-majority parliament which was elected in February before being dissolved months later. A former MP Khaled Shakheer said, "Our problem is with the members of the family who must be kept away from ministerial positions. There must be a law that organises the work of the ruling family." The protest was called by Nahj an umbrella group of Islamist and independent opposition and youth activists who have called for activating

⁴² "Russia's internal debt decreases by RUB 29 bln in August 2012", ITAR-TASS, September 10, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/516606.html>

⁴³ "Moldova PM to travel to Russia Monday for working visit", ITAR-TASS, September 10, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/515854.html>

⁴⁴ "Putin hopes European Commission claims to Gazprom will be settled", ITAR-TASS, September 11, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/517773.html>

⁴⁵ "Medvedev Invites Moldova to Apply for Customs Union", RIA Novosti, September 11, 2012, <http://en.rian.ru/business/20120911/175900687.html>

⁴⁶ "Russia Blasts European Criticism over Human Rights", September 14, 2012, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20120914/175957374.html>

the constitutional monarchy concept in Kuwait. A prominent Islamist MP Walid al-Tabtabaie also stated that, the al-Sabah family can “be the emirs but the ministers will be from among us.”⁴⁷

Yemen

- **Angry protestors stormed USA embassy in Sana’a**

According to reports, three protesters have been killed and 30 others were injured when thousands of angry protesters stormed the USA embassy in Sana’a on September 13, 2012 in protest against the offensive film on Prophet Mohammed. The security forces reportedly did not engage the demonstrators, thus, allowing them to easily exceed the security barrier and enter the embassy gates. The demonstrators then started throwing stones at the building and burned tires and three cars. Meanwhile, Yemeni President Abdo Rabo Mansor Hadi has apologized to U.S. President Barack Obama for storming the U.S. embassy and ordered to form a committee to investigate the incident.⁴⁸

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

- **Indian Air Force planning to induct 20 more Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer (AJT) aircraft from the British BAE Systems; India, Maldives to step up cooperation in defence and security**

According to reports, the Indian Air Force is planning to induct 20 more Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer (AJT) aircraft from the British BAE Systems for its aerobatic team Surya Kiran which has been grounded since last year. The Surya Kiran team, which was using the Kiran Mk II aircraft, had to be grounded last year due to requirement of its planes for training Air Force cadets. BAE Systems said in a release on September 14, 2012, “BAE Systems has received a Request for Proposal (RFP) from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for a potential order to supply products and services for the manufacture of 20 Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer (AJT) aircraft. The aircraft, to be built by HAL in Bangalore, will fulfill the Indian Air Force’s requirement for its prestigious aerobatic team.” The HAL carries out the license production of the British-origin aircraft for the IAF at its facilities in Bangalore. With this order, the number of Hawks on order by the IAF would be 143. India had first signed a deal for 66 Hawks in 2004 and then about two years back, placed an order for 57 more of which 17 would be used by the Navy for its training purposes. Commenting on the development, BAE MD International Guy Griffiths said, “This is a tremendous opportunity to build on the success of Hawk in India.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ “Kuwaitis rally for democratic reforms”, *Al Jazeera*, September 11, 2012, at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/09/20129111174999675.html>

⁴⁸ “Yemen angry protestors stormed the U.S. embassy in Sana’a”, *Yemen Observer*, September 16, 2012, at <http://www.yobserver.com/front-page/10022270.html>

⁴⁹ “IAF to buy for 20 more Hawk AJTs for aerobatics,” *The Times of India*, September 14, 2012, at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-09-14/india/33843597_1_hawk-ajts-surya-kiran-kiran-mk-ii

In another development, reports noted that India and Maldives on September 16, 2012 agreed on a slew of measures to step up their cooperation in defence and security related issues. They also agreed to work closely towards stability in the region and ensure maritime security in Indian Ocean. At a high level meeting between Defence Minister A K Antony and his Maldivian counterpart, Col (Retd) Mohamed Nazim, in Male, the two sides decided to 'maintain close cooperation in unitedly fighting against challenges of terrorists and non- state actors'. Antony's three day visit to Maldives comes in the backdrop of China renewing its efforts to expand its footprint in the strategically located archipelago. Maldives Defence Minister Mohamed Nazim stated, "Maldives will stand side - by- side with India to ensure that maritime security of Indian Ocean is ensured; that the stability in the region is maintained; and above all, that the threats that our two countries face, particularly from terrorist groups and other non-state actors are eliminated."

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International

- **U.S. military has no major plans to bolster its forces in the Middle East; Iran warns of retaliation if attacked**

According to reports, the U.S. military has no major plans to bolster its forces in the Middle East despite a week of violent protests targeting diplomatic outposts, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said on September 16. With a substantial force already deployed in the region coupled with two U.S. Marine counter-terrorism teams sent to Libya and Yemen, the military has the ability to respond as necessary to protect American diplomats, Panetta told reporters before arriving in Tokyo on an Asian tour. "We do have a major presence in the region," he noted. "Having said that, we've enhanced that with FAST (Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team) teams and others so that if they are requested, they can respond more quickly" Panetta added.⁵¹

In another development, according to reports, the head of Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guards on September 16 warned of retaliation against the Gulf's strategic Strait of Hormuz, U.S. bases in the Middle East and Israel if his country was to be attacked. Gen. Mohammad Ali Jafari, speaking in a very rare news conference in Tehran, also said that he believed Iran would abandon the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty should it be targeted for military action. The warnings underlined the high tensions surrounding Iran and its disputed nuclear program, which Israel has threatened that it could seek to disrupt with air strikes, with or without U.S. help.⁵²

⁵⁰ "India, Maldives to step up defence ties," The Times of India, September 16, 2012, at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-Maldives-to-step-up-defence-ties/articleshow/16422222.cms>

⁵¹ "No Plans To Bolster U.S. Forces In Mideast: Panetta," Defence News, September 16, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120916/DEFREG02/309160003/No-Plans-Bolster-U-S-Forces-Mideast-Panetta?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

⁵² "Iran Says Will Hit Hormuz, U.S. Bases, Israel If Attacked," Defence News, September 16, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120916/DEFREG03/309160005/Iran-Says-Will-Hit-Hormuz-U-S-Bases-Israel-Attacked?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **National Conference (NC) Sarpanch killed in Pattan area of Baramulla district; Jammu and Kashmir to witness reduction in Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) presence; Chief Minister Omar Abdullah chairs the state cabinet meeting at Machil, the remotest village in hilly district of Kupwara; Ex-militants rehabilitation quietly conceived by MHA; Vice President Hamid Ansari visits Valley; Suspect in Kandahar hijack arrested**

According to reports, suspected militants shot dead a Sarpanch of ruling National Conference (NC) in Pattan area of Baramulla district on September 10. Ghulam Muhammad Yattoo, Sarpanch of Palhallan village was shot dead after he came out of a local mosque. According to a senior police officer, initial investigations revealed that the attackers were two. After the incident, contingents of Army and Special Operations Group (SOG) of Kashmir police cordoned off the area.⁵³

Reports noted that on the directions of Union Ministry of Home Affairs, there would be a gradual withdrawal of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) from the Valley and Jammu regions while the J&K police cops would serve as the replacement. In the coming fortnight or so, the CRPF officials said they are withdrawing one battalion from Srinagar. A senior police officer said that CRPF would be replaced by the Indian Reserve Police (IRP) of J&K Police and there is a proposal of immediate raising of some more IRP battalions in near future. It would be worth noting that presently, 52 CRPF battalions are operating in Kashmir valley. Amongst them, 25 battalions are operating in Srinagar district while 27 battalions are deployed in other districts of north, south and central Kashmir.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, according to reports, as a part of his decentralization policy and commitment to take government at the doorsteps of people, Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah on September 12 chaired the state cabinet meeting at Machil, the remotest village in hilly district of Kupwara in Northern Kashmir. According to an official handout, holding of cabinet meeting in remote areas is aimed at ascertaining the problems confronting people in these areas and taking first hand appraisal of development needs. This also provides opportunity to the Cabinet Ministers and top brass in the Administration to interact with people and have personal assessment of the problems and requirements in these areas.⁵⁵

Reports noted that Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has asked the state Government to facilitate the rehabilitation and integration of former militants in Jammu and Kashmir, detailing

⁵³ "Sarpanch killed at Palhallan", *Greater Kashmir*, September 10, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Sep/11/sarpanch-killed-at-palhallan-33.asp>

⁵⁴ "CRPF to reduce its footprints in Jammu&Kashmir", *Greater Kashmir*, September 11, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Sep/12/crpf-to-reduce-its-footprints-in-jammu-kashmir-48.asp>

⁵⁵ "Reaching out to people guiding principle for government: Omar", *Greater Kashmir*, September 12, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Sep/13/reaching-out-to-people-guiding-principle-for-government-omar-40.asp>

out the steps needed to be taken in this direction. The development comes in the wake of reports that several former militants have rejoined militant ranks. The MHA communication to J&K Government outlines that the project has been targeted for rehabilitation of 1700 surrendered militants and their families during the initial phase of two years. MHA has asked the state Government to handle the program with utmost care to avoid it being dubbed as exclusively for surrendered militants and instead project it as development intervention for violence affected.⁵⁶

According to reports, Vice-President of India, Muhammad Hamid Ansari arrived in Srinagar on September 14 for a five-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir. The Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had one on one meeting with the visiting dignitary on September 14 evening at Raj Bhawan.

Matters relating to the development of Jammu and Kashmir came up for discussion in the meeting. Present political scenario and achievements on restoration of peace and tranquility were also discussed in the meeting. This is Ansari's first visit to Kashmir since his re-election as Vice-President last month.⁵⁷

In other developments, Police on September 13 claimed to have arrested a top militant commander Mehraj-ud-Din Dand, wanted for his involvement in the 1999 hijacking of flight IC-814 to Kandahar. According to police Dand was picked up from an undisclosed location on the Jammu-Srinagar highway. Inspector General of Police (Jammu zone) Dilbag Singh said Mehraj-ud-Din was arrested on September 12 night after police got inputs that he was on his way from Nepal to the Kashmir Valley.⁵⁸

North East India

- **Security tightened in Assam; Dhubri still under tension; Stir against foreigners to be intensified by All Assam Students Union (AASU); Ultras arrested in Arunachal Pradesh; Kuki militants arrested in Assam; Inmates missing in relief camps; Manipur undergoes Panchayat polls; National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) leader surrendered; Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) militant killed**

According to reports, Assam Police have intensified security arrangements after intelligence inputs that the anti-dialogue faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) led by Paresh Baruah alias Paresh Asom might try to attack police and security forces in the State. The developments assume significance as the outfit had triggered two blasts in less than a week's time - in Paltan Bazar area of Guwahati and at Doomdooma area in Tinsukia district in which one security personnel was killed and twenty five others injured. The intelligence wing had alerted the police after intercepting some messages between the ULFA commander-in-chief to ranks and files of the outfit.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ "MHA conceives quiet rehabilitation of ex-militants", *Greater Kashmir*, September 13, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Sep/14/mha-conceives-quiet-rehabilitation-of-ex-militants-50.asp>

⁵⁷ "Vice-President arrives in Valley", *Greater Kashmir*, September 14, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Sep/15/vice-president-arrives-in-valley-71.asp>

⁵⁸ "Kandahar hijack suspect arrested", *Greater Kashmir*, September 13, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Sep/14/-kandahar-hijack-suspect-arrested-52.asp>

⁵⁹ "High security in Assam after ULFA messages intercepted", *The Assam Tribune*, September 11, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep1112/at045>

In another development, according to reports, some elements are trying to create communal tension in Dhubri district by spreading rumours even as additional forces have been rushed to the district to bring the situation under control. Efforts are on by the police and security forces to nab the culprits involved in such rumour mongering. The situation in Dhubri district was tense as a large number of people displaced in the ethnic clashes in Kokrajhar and Chirang shifted to the district and a theft in a temple sparked off tension. Senior police officers are camping in Dhubri to monitor the situation.⁶⁰

Reports noted that the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and twenty organizations representing different ethnic groups of the State will intensify their movement for implementation of the Assam Accord and the statewide movements will culminate with a rally in Guwahati. AASU general secretary Tapan Kumar Gogoi said that after completion of the process of bringing out rallies all over the State, members of the AASU and 26 organizations would visit New Delhi to meet the Prime Minister and Union Home Minister to apprise them of the feelings of the people of Assam. After the meeting with the Prime Minister and Home Minister, a mass rally will be held in Guwahati.⁶¹

According to reports, security forces have arrested five underground members, including three cadres of the United Peoples' Democratic Front (UPDF), in separate operations from Lohit district in Arunachal. Meanwhile, Army personnel in a joint operation with Arunachal and Assam Police arrested a hardcore ULFA cadre Rongmon Gogoi from Wingseng Nongtaw village under Namsai circle in Lohit district.⁶²

In a another development, reports noted that four militants of the United Kukigram Defence Army (UKDA) were arrested in Assam's Karbi Anglong early on September 13 and arms and ammunition seized from their possession. The UKDA was formed in 1996 with the objective of defending the Kuki community in Assam, particularly in Karbi Anglong district, from attacks by other militant outfits. It would be worth noting that the UKDA's basic demand was setting up of a regional council comprising the Kuki-dominated areas of the Sisghason hill in Karbi Anglong district.⁶³

According to reports, a vanishing act by about 500 inmates of the relief camps in Bodoland Territorial Autonomous District (BTAD) areas has puzzled the Central agencies, with fresh efforts under way to verify the antecedents of victims of recent clashes. It has come to notice that at least 500 people living in relief camps fled Assam after authorities started checking their identity documents and land records before allowing them to be rehabilitated. Currently, an estimated two lakh affected people were living in around 215 relief camps in Assam.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ "Tension prevails in Dhubri", *The Assam Tribune*, September 10, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep1112/at06>

⁶¹ "AASU to intensify stir against aliens", *The Assam Tribune*, September 11, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep1212/at05>

⁶² "5 ultras nabbed in Arunachal", *The Assam Tribune*, September 11, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep1212/oth07>

⁶³ "4 Kuki militants nabbed with arms in Assam", *The Assam Tribune*, September 13, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep1312/at046>

⁶⁴ "500 inmates vanish from relief camps", *The Assam Tribune*, September 12, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep1312/at05>

Reports noted that the Panchayat polls in Manipur passed off amidst a general strike called in the Sadar Hills area and foothill Tangkhul villages against the inclusion of some villages in the Panchayat on September 13.⁶⁵

In other developments, according to reports, militant leader Bipul Debbarma, blamed for the abduction of six employees of a construction firm in Mizoram in March, on September 15 surrendered to security forces with his wife. The Bangladesh-trained leader of the separatist National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) gave himself up to the Border Security Force (BSF) with an AK rifle and electronic devices.⁶⁶ While, a senior Garo militant leader of the banned GNLA was killed in an encounter with SWAT commandos and CoBRA unit of CRPF in Durama Hills jungles in Garo Hills on September 14.⁶⁷

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **UN Security Council condemns series of attacks on embassies, terrorist attacks in Yemen and Iraq; UNSC extends mandate of UN peace building mission in Sierra Leone**

The UN Security Council condemned the recent series of violent attacks against embassies and consular premises of the Member states. All authorities were called on to protect diplomatic and consular property and personnel.⁶⁸ On a separate occasion, condemning the attacks against the US Consulate in Benghazi, the Council underlined the need to bring the perpetrators of such acts to justice.⁶⁹

In another development, the terrorist attack in Yemen's capital city, Sana'a was condemned by the UN Security Council members.⁷⁰ Separately, the UNSC also strongly condemned the wave of terrorist attacks across Iraq.⁷¹ While expressing its deep condolences and sympathy to the victims of attacks in both the countries, the Council reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

⁶⁵ "Panchayat polls end in Manipur", *The Assam Tribune*, September 13, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep1412/oth06>

⁶⁶ "Tripura militant leader surrenders", *The Assam Tribune*, September 15, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep1512/at048>

⁶⁷ "Garo militant killed in encounter, arms recovered", *The Assam Tribune*, September 14, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep1512/oth05>

⁶⁸ "Security Council condemns violent attacks against diplomatic premises", *UN News Centre*, September 15, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42899&Cr=attack&Cr1=security#.UFazj7JDwg0>

⁶⁹ "Ban, Security Council condemn 'in strongest terms' attack on US consulate in Libya", *UN News Centre*, September 12, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42867&Cr=libya&Cr1=#.UFazsLJDwg0>

⁷⁰ "Security Council strongly condemns 'heinous' terrorist attack in Yemen", *UN News Centre*, September 13, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42883&Cr=yemen&Cr1=#.UFazmbJDwg0>

⁷¹ "Security Council condemns latest wave of deadly attacks in Iraq", *UN News Centre*, September 11, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp//story.asp?NewsID=42855&Cr=iraq&Cr1=#.UFcHHbJDwg0>

In other developments, the United Nations Security Council extended the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone until the end of March 2013. It also called on all actors to ensure that elections scheduled for November this year are held in a peaceful, inclusive and credible manner.⁷²

⁷² "Security Council extends UN presence in Sierra Leone, calls for credible elections", *UN News Centre*, September 12, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42863&Cr=sierra+leone&Cr1=#.UFcHNLJDwg0>