

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

- **Afghanistan President Karzai and Pakistan President Zardari meet in New York**

According to reports, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly meeting, Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai met Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari in New York on September 27. The two leaders considered ways to improve bilateral relations and regional situation. Afghan Foreign Minister Zalmay Rasool, Afghan Peace Council Chief, Pakistan Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar, Advisor on Petroleum Dr Asim Hussain and Pakistan's Ambassador to US Sherry Rehman were also present in the meeting.¹

Pakistan

- **Pakistan and China sign document on bilateral military cooperation; President Putin postpones Pakistan visit; President Zardari attends 67th session of the UN General Assembly**

In a significant development, reports noted that Pakistan and China have signed a document for bilateral military cooperation on September 25. According to a press release by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the document was signed during a visit of Chinese delegation led by Deputy Chief of General Staff of People Liberation Army General Ma Xiaotian to Joint Staff Headquarters in Rawalpindi. The delegation met Army chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Chairman General Khalid Shameem Wynne and discussed ongoing cooperation between the armed forces of the two countries. General Xiaotian appreciated the role played by the people and armed forces of Pakistan especially their efforts against terrorism. He reiterated that the cooperation in different fields between the two armed forces will continue with a renewed resolve and commitment towards each other.²

However, in another development, Russian President Vladimir Putin has postponed his maiden trip to Pakistan due to unspecified reasons, according to the foreign ministry. In the first week of October, Putin was to embark on the first-ever state visit to Pakistan by any Russian president. He was also scheduled to attend a quadrilateral summit with leaders from Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. A statement issued by the Foreign Office said the summit, which was planned from October 2-3, 2012, was being rescheduled.³

¹ "Afghan President Karzai meets Zardari", *Dawn*, September 28, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/09/28/afghan-president-karzai-meets-zardari/>

² "Pakistan, China sign mutual military cooperation agreement", *The Express Tribune*, September 25, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/442247/pakistan-china-sign-mutual-military-cooperation-agreement/>

³ "Russian President puts off trip to country", *The Express Tribune*, September 28, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/443699/russian-president-puts-off-trip-to-country/>

In other developments, according to reports, President Asif Ali Zardari arrived in New York on September 24 to attend the 67th session of the General Assembly of United Nations and hold meetings with heads of state and governments to discuss international and regional situation.⁴

Bangladesh

- **Bangladesh welcomes World Bank's decision to re-engage in the Padma bridge; Maitree bus service on Agartala-Dhaka route suspended; DG level border conference of BGB and BSF; PM addressed 67th UNGA; China proposes to invest in four mega infrastructure projects in Bangladesh**

According to reports, Bangladesh government has welcomed the World Bank decision to re-engage in the Padma Bridge financing along with ADB, Jica and IDB on September 23, 2012.⁵

In another development, reports noted that Maitree bus service on Agartala-Dhaka route has been suspended following torching of the Indian bus by a mob in Narsingdi on September 21. The bus service would resume after an investigation and repairing of the old bus, said Tripura Road Transport Corporation (TRTC) Managing Director Rabindra Reang.⁶

Meanwhile, according to reports, a Director General (DG) level border conference of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) began on September 25, 2012 at Pilkhana in Dhaka. The five-day conference ended on September 29 with signing of a Joint Record of Discussion (JRD).⁷

In other developments, according to reports, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called for reforms of the United Nations, World Bank, IMF and other international financial institutions so they could serve the interests of large majorities instead of a privileged few, while addressing the 67th UN General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York, on September 28, 2012.⁸

Reports noted that China has proposed to invest in four mega infrastructure projects, including the \$5 billion deep-sea port and \$700 million multi-lane tunnel under the Karnaphuli river in Chittagong. The government, however, is going slow on the deep-sea port issue, as it finds itself in a fix over whom to pick with three other countries – Japan, India and the US – showing interest in building the port. Acknowledging Bangladesh's dilemma, China has said it is open to building the deep-sea port in partnership with other countries.⁹

⁴ "President arrives in New York to attend General Assembly Session", *Dawn*, September 24, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/09/24/president-arriving-new-york-to-attend-general-assembly-session/>

⁵ "Padma Loan Deal Revival: Govt hails WB", *The Daily Star*, September 24, 2012 <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=250952>.

⁶ "Torching of Bus in Narsingdi:Agartala-Dhaka Maitree service suspended", *The Daily Star*, September 24, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=251002>.

⁷ "BGB-BSF meet begins today", *The Daily Star*, September 25, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=251202>.

⁸ "PM for reforms of UN, WB, IMF", *The Daily Star*, September 29, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=251708>.

⁹ Azad, M Abul Kalam and Tusher, Hasan Jahid, "Deep Sea Port: China offers to build, fund it", *The Daily Star*, September 28, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=251559>.

Sri Lanka

- **Manik farm IDP Camp is closed; Sri Lanka reiterates its solidarity with Palestine**

Reportedly, the last batch of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)s were resettled in their villages on September 24. According to the news report published in Government of Sri Lanka website, over 2,000 people belonging to 617 families were living in refugee camps till 23 September. On September 24, 1,186 people belonged to 361 families left the Manik Farm IDP camp in Vavuniya.¹⁰

Meanwhile, the United Nations said that closure of the Menik Farm camp in Vavuniya is a 'significant sign' of the transition from conflict to sustainable peace in Sri Lanka, but said there are still some people who are unable to return to their homes and a solution urgently needs to be found.¹¹

In another development, according to reports, at the 21st session of the Human Rights Council held in Geneva, Sri Lanka's permanent mission in Geneva said that Sri Lanka remains steadfast in its unequivocal support to the people and the Government of Palestine for their just struggle to achieve the right of statehood, coexisting peacefully alongside Israel. Sri Lanka urged the Government of Israel to lift the blockade placed on Gaza, within the framework of Security Council Resolution 1860, which has a devastating impact on the lives of the ordinary people of Palestine, especially the young. Sri Lanka also voiced its belief that the State of Palestine would soon be able to assume its rightful place among the community of states at the United Nations.¹²

Maldives

- **Vice President Waheed Deen attends 63rd Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China organised by Chinese Embassy in Maldives; President attends the launching of second Climate Vulnerability Monitor hosted by Bangladesh; Secretary General, SAARC meets Vice President**

According to reports, Maldives Vice President Mohamed Waheed Deen has said that he hopes that the existing bilateral relations between Maldives and China would further strengthen in different areas in the years to come. The Vice President made this remark while speaking at the ceremony held at Traders Hotel by the Chinese Embassy to celebrate 63rd Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China.¹³

In another development, President Dr. Mohamed Waheed has noted that "if there is a ground zero for observing and monitoring the impacts of global climate that would be Maldives". The

¹⁰ "Last batch of IDPs to be resettled today", *Sri Lankan Government Website*, September 24, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201209/20120924last_batch_idps_be_resettled.htm

¹¹ "'Significant sign' but still concerned-UN", *The Daily Mirror*, September 25, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/22198-significant-sign-but-still-concerned-un.html>.

¹² "SL remains steadfast in its support to Palestinian people", *The Daily Mirror*, September 26, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/22221-sl-remains-steadfast-in-its-support-to-the-palestinian-people.html>.

¹³ "Vice President has today said that he hopes that the existing bilateral relations between Maldives and China would further strengthen in different areas in the years to come", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, September 30, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=8001>.

President made these remarks on September 26, 2012 at a function hosted by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina, to launch the 2nd Climate Vulnerability Monitor. Bangladesh hosted this event as the current Chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum. The first Climate Vulnerability Monitor was launched under the Maldives chairmanship of the Forum in 2010.¹⁴

In other developments, the Secretary General of SAARC Ahmed Saleem paid a courtesy call on Vice President Mohamed Waheed Deen on September 27, 2012.¹⁵

B. Russia

Russia

- **Russia and Venezuela set up joint venture to develop Orinoco Oil Belt; Russia has proposed to hold Iran-Six meeting in October; Luxembourg Prime Minister to discuss bilateral ties with President Putin in Moscow; Private capital helps develop new firearms in Russia; Russia to lower oil export duties for new deposits in Eastern Siberia; Russia-China trade stands at about US\$ 50 billion in the first six months of the year 2012; A new unit of a nuclear power plant has become operational in Russia; Russia's foreign debt stands at US\$ 41 billion in August 2012; Moscow to continue to facilitate resumption of Palestine-Israel talks; Russia expresses hope of signing a visa cancellation agreement with the EU at 2013 December summit; Russia hopes NATO will ask for UN for permission to train Afghan military; CIS heads of states to meet in Yalta to discuss the ratification of the free trade zone agreement in the region among other things; Russia tests a 'future soldier uniform'; Soccer World Cup to coast Russia 600 billion roubles**

According to reports, Rosneft and Venezuela's Corporation Venecolana del Petroleo (CVP) have signed an agreement to establish a joint venture to develop the Carabobo-2 block in the Orinoco Oil Belt. Rosneft has a stake of 40% in the joint venture. The reserves of the Carabobo-2 block reach 6.5 billion tonnes of oil.¹⁶

In another development, according to reports, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov has said that Russia proposes to hold a meeting between Iran and the 'sextet' of international mediators at the level of political directors in October; even though he did not specify the negotiations' possible venue.¹⁷

¹⁴ "Maldives is the ground zero for observing and monitoring the impact of changing global climate" - President Waheed", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, September 27, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7987>.

¹⁵ "SAARC Secretary General calls on the Vice President", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, September 27, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7986>.

¹⁶ "Russia, Venezuela set up joint venture to develop Orinoco Oil Belt", ITAR-TASS, September 28, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/531534.html>

¹⁷ "Moscow proposes to hold Iran-Six meeting in October", ITAR-TASS, September 28, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/532180.html>

Reports noted that Russian President Vladimir Putin will meet with Prime Minister of Luxembourg Jean-Claude Juncker in the Kremlin with talks expected to focus on economic issues including the Eurozone crisis. Luxembourg is in the trio of the major investors into the Russian economy. The volume of capital investment reached 36.7 billion U.S. dollars by the end of June 2012.¹⁸

Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin has said that private capital in the defence industry has helped make a breakthrough in the development and production of firearms. These include development of a new pistol and two new sniper rifles.¹⁹

Energy Minister Alexander Novak has said that Russia will bring down, by two times, oil export duties for discovery and developing new deposits in East Siberia.²⁰

Reports noted that China continues to be Russia's biggest trading partner with total bilateral trade being US\$ 49.8 billion in the first six months of the year 2012. The Netherlands came second with trade valued at US\$ 49.3 billion while that with Germany was also US\$ 49.3 billion. During the same period Russia's total foreign trade amounted to 475.5 billion U.S. dollars.²¹

According to reports, one more unit of Kalinin NPP, in the town of Udomlya of the Tver Region, has become operational in Russia; taking the total nuclear power units operating in the country's ten nuclear power plants to 33.²²

Russia's state foreign debt was estimated at US\$ 41 billion as of September 1, 2012.²³

According to reports, after a meeting with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said that Russia will continue to facilitate a resumption of Palestinian-Israeli talks.²⁴

Russia has expressed hope that an agreement on visa cancellation with the European Union will be signed at the December 2013 summit.²⁵

¹⁸ "Russian president, Luxembourg prime minister to meet in Kremlin", ITAR-TASS, September 25, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/528394.html>

¹⁹ "Private capital helps make breakthrough in firearms production - Rogozin", ITAR-TASS, September 24, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/528294.html>

²⁰ "Russia to lower oil export duties for E Siberian new deposits", ITAR-TASS, September 24, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/528077.html>

²¹ "China - Russia's leading trade partner with mutual trade at about \$50 bln in Jan-Jul", ITAR-TASS, September 25, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/529278.html>

²² "Russia receives one more operating power unit", ITAR-TASS, September 25, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/529224.html>

²³ "Russia's state foreign debt decreased by \$6 mln in Aug to over \$41 bln as of Sept 1", ITAR-TASS, September 25, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/529222.html>

²⁴ "Moscow to continue to facilitate resumption of Palestine-Israel talks", ITAR-TASS, September 26, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/530348.html>

²⁵ "Russia hopes for signing visa cancellation agt with EU at 2013 December summit", September 27, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/531228.html>

Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko has said that Russia expects NATO will file a request with the UN Security Council for permission to continue training the servicemen of Afghanistan's Security Forces. Russia has serious questions about the future parameters of Western military presence in Afghanistan.²⁶

The CIS heads of states will meet in Yalta to discuss among other things the ratification of the free trade zone agreement in the region. For Russia, Belarus and Ukraine it will become effective on September 20 of this year. Armenia has completed ratification procedures, and the agreement will take effect for it on October 17. The other signatories – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Tajikistan – are expected to ratify it by the end of the year.²⁷

In other developments, according to reports, Russia has successfully tested a 'future soldier's uniform' intended to be used for its armed forces. Ratnik ("Warrior") comprises more than 40 components, including firearms, body armor, optic, communication and navigation devices, life support and power supply systems and even knee and elbow pads and can be used by regular infantry, rocket launcher operators, machine gunners, drivers and scouts. Development and implementation are expected to be finished by 2015.²⁸

Meanwhile, reports noted that the FIFA World Football Cup in 2018 will cost Russia about 600 billion roubles with the costs expected to be equally shared by the state and the private sector. A total of 11 cities will host the matches.²⁹

C. West Asia

Syria

- **Syrian delegation holds official meetings at UN headquarters; UN commission to investigate war crimes in Syria**

Reports noted that Syria's Deputy Prime Minister Walid Al-Moallem headed the Syrian delegation to the UN for the 67th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York last week. Al-Moallem held talks with Iranian Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Salehi, on bilateral relations, and consultations on supporting the UN mission headed by special envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi. Al-Moallem also met the Russian foreign minister; Russia has stressed its support for Syria through the current crisis.³⁰

²⁶ "Russia hopes NATO to ask UN for permission to train Afghan military", ITAR-TASS, September 29, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/532583.html>

²⁷ "Medvedev arrives in Yalta to attend meeting of Council of CIS Heads of State", ITAR-TASS, September 27, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/531413.html>

²⁸ "Russia Tests 'Future Soldier' Uniform", RIA Novosti, September 29, 2012, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20120929/176302172.html

²⁹ "2018 FIFA World Football Cup to cost Russia about 600 bln roubles – RF sports minister", ITAR-TASS, September 30, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/533106.html>

³⁰ "Al-Moallem Resumes Meetings in New York", Syrian Arab News Agency, September 29, 2012, at <http://sana.sy/eng/22/2012/09/29/444196.htm>

Meanwhile, following a meeting between the Russian and Iraqi foreign ministers on the sidelines of the UNGA session, both sides have reiterated their rejection of foreign interference in the Syrian conflict and the need for a political solution to the crisis.³¹

Separately, the Saudi Arabian deputy foreign minister, in his address to the UNGA, said that inaction by the Security Council on the Syrian issue had given President Bashar Al-Assad the “green light” to attack his own people.³² Saudi Arabia is one of four regional powers that have formed a quartet to attempt to resolve the Syrian issue. The other three members, Egypt, Iran and Turkey, met on the sidelines of the UNGA to discuss the conflict.³³

In other developments, according to reports, a United Nations commission is set to investigate war crimes committed in Syria over the course of the 18-month old conflict in the country. The probe was initiated by a resolution in the UN Human Rights Council a year ago, in which China, Russia and Cuba abstained from the vote. The commission has been gathering evidence against suspected individuals and military units that have committed human rights abuses during the Syrian conflict, has documented massacres and has so far interviewed more than 1,100 victims, refugees and defectors. The commission has been denied access to Syria. Syria rejected the Council’s resolution last year calling it “highly politicised and selective”.³⁴

Lebanon

● **Lebanese President Michel Sleiman: Dissociation policy has protected Lebanon**

According to reports, Lebanese President Michel Sleiman has said that the country’s policy of dissociation from conflicts in neighbouring countries has helped Lebanon avoid repercussions. Sleiman made the remarks following meetings with EU officials on the Syrian crisis. He said that violence would not help resolve the conflict in Syria, and stressed the need for an end to Syrian shelling of Lebanese border areas. Sleiman has pointed out that the dissociation policy does not apply to Lebanon’s positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or the humanitarian situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.³⁵

³¹ “Russia, Iraq Stress Rejection of Foreign Interference in Syria’s Affairs”, Syrian Arab News Agency, September 30, 2012, at <http://sana.sy/eng/22/2012/09/30/444363.htm>

³² “Saudi Arabia say U.N. inaction gives Assad ‘green light’”, The Daily Star, September 29, 2012, at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Sep-29/189593-saudi-arabia-say-un-inaction-gives-assad-green-light.ashx#axzz282nhawMz>

³³ “Quartet meets in New York to discuss Syria”, The Daily Star, September 28, 2012, at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Sep-28/189469-quartet-meets-in-new-york-to-discuss-syria.ashx#axzz282nhawMz>

³⁴ “Del Ponte joins U.N. war crimes inquiry on Syria”, The Daily Star, September 30, 2012, at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Sep-30/189718-del-ponte-joins-un-war-crimes-inquiry-on-syria.ashx#axzz282nhawMz>

³⁵ “Sleiman: Dissociation policy has protected Lebanon”, The Daily Star, September 28, 2012, at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2012/Sep-28/189510-sleiman-dissociation-policy-has-protected-lebanon.ashx#axzz282nhawMz>

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

- **Western Air Command gets boost with the induction of SU-30 MKI; Army Chief acknowledges shortage of officers**

Reports noted that SU-30 MKI aircraft was inducted into Western Air Command on September 25, 2012, in a formal ceremony at Air Force Station Halwara, which is one of the oldest frontline Airbases of the IAF. Air Marshal Arup Raha AVSM VM AOC-in-C Western Air Command IAF was the chief guest for the induction ceremony. Halwara, due to its strategic location was actively involved in both 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars. The 220 Squadron at Halwara known as 'Desert Tigers' flew the MiG-23 aircraft till 2005. The Squadron's strength will grow leap and bounds with the induction of SU-30 MKI. The SU-30 MKI is a frontline all-weather air-dominance fighter with multi-role capability, which can undertake varied air combat and ground attack missions.³⁶

In another development, according to reports, the issue of shortage of officers in the Indian army has been a long one. Now the Army Chief, General Bikram Singh himself has said that there is a shortfall of about 10,500 officers. According to official figures, the shortage is around 10,500 in the Army, 1,400 in the Navy and 1,100 in the Air Force. Union Defence Minister A. K. Antony has said the shortage is "partly attributable to accretions from time to time, tough selection procedures and difficult service conditions coupled with perceived high degree of risk involved in recruitment and training." However, according to the minister various measures like; increase in tenure of Short Service Commission (SSC) officers from 10 years to 14 years, increasing promotional avenues for officers by implementing the A.V. Singh Committee recommendations on restructuring of officers' cadre of the Indian Army and implementing the suggestions of the Sixth Pay Commission report, have been taken to address the issue, which has been plaguing the force for several years, resulting in poor management at the unit level. On its part the Army has been holding programmes in several colleges and universities to motivate the youth to join the army. In this connection General Singh said, "The youngsters feel motivated to join but their motivation level goes down when they discuss the Army as a career option with their parents. We intend to reach out to parents. Risks are everywhere but in the armed forces these are managed well."³⁷

International

- **NATO's Deputy Secretary General: "Not much progress" has been made with Russia on the issue of missile defence cooperation; Panetta hopeful about F-35 Joint Strike Fighters deal with Lockheed Martin**

According to reports, NATO's Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Alexander Vershbow has said that "not much progress" has been made with Russia on the issue of missile defence

³⁶ "Induction Ceremony: SU 30 MKI at Air Force Station Halwara," Press information Bureau, September 25, 2012, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=87963>

³⁷ "Army faces shortage of officers," The Hindu, September 30, 2012, at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/army-faces-shortage-of-officers/article3949355.ece>

cooperation. Notwithstanding his reservations about Russian views on the issue, he said, “We will continue to seek closer cooperation with Russia.” However, he warned that, “irrespective of progress, we will push ahead with missile defense capability as planned.” The plan envisages providing full protection across the whole of Europe in another decade.³⁸

In another development, according to reports, U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has taken a more measured view of the ongoing negotiations between the Pentagon and Lockheed Martin for a batch of F-35 Joint Strike Fighters. Panetta said, “These are difficult negotiations, as they always are when you’re dealing with the amount of money and the complexity that’s involved with the Joint Strike Fighter.” Still, he believes the two sides will be able to lock in a deal for the jets. Panetta also threw his support behind the F-35 program. “We’ll get through this,” Panetta noted.³⁹

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Panchayat representatives quit in fear; President on a three day visit to valley; Hurriyat Conference calls for shutdown in protest to President’s visit; Jammu and Kashmir State legislature autumn session to begin on October 1; Militants and soldier killed in a gunfight in Kupwara**

According to reports, about 80 Sarpanchs and Panchs resigned in north Kashmir’s Baramulla district on September 24 in the wake of killing of a Deputy Sarpanch by unidentified gunmen in Wagoora area of this district on September 23. The Panchayat representatives have tendered their resignation from different areas especially Wagoora block before Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Block Development Officer Wagoora and other officials besides issuing advertisements through newspapers. A vernacular daily of Srinagar received 54 resignations from Panchayat members to be published in the newspaper.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee arrived on September 26 on a three-day maiden visit to Kashmir valley amid tight security. The President attended the convocation at Kashmir University.⁴¹

³⁸ “NATO Official: Slow Progress on Missile Defense Cooperation with Russia,” Defence News, September 27, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120927/DEFREG02/309270004/NATO-Official-Slow-Progress-Missile-Defense-Cooperation-Russia?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

³⁹ “Panetta Downplays Conflict With Lockheed Over F-35 Buy,” Defence News, September 27, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120927/DEFREG02/309270006/Panetta-Downplays-Conflict-Lockheed-Over-F-35-Buy?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

⁴⁰ “Scared Panchayat representatives quit in dozens”, *Greater Kashmir*, September 24, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Sep/25/scared-panchayat-representatives-quit-in-dozens-47.asp>

⁴¹ “President arriving today on 3-Day visit”, *Greater Kashmir*, September 25, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Sep/26/president-arriving-today-on-3-day-visit-62.asp>

However, according to reports, normal life was paralyzed in Kashmir due to a separatist-sponsored strike to protest President Pranab Mukherjee's visit to the valley. The shutdown call was given by Hurriyat Conference (G) chairman Syed Ali Geelani and supported by United Jihad Council (UJC) chairman Syed Salahudin, lawyers and students. Shops and other business establishments, schools, colleges across the valley reportedly remained closed.⁴²

Reports noted that the autumn session of the legislature beginning October 1 is expected to be stormy, as the opposition is all set to corner the coalition government especially National Conference over empowerment and security of Panchayat representatives in the state. With killing of Sarpanchs and Panchs triggering an intense debate over their empowerment beyond the political landscape of Jammu and Kashmir, the opposition parties have chalked out separate strategies to take on coalition government over the issues linked with devolution of powers to grassroots representatives.⁴³

In other developments, according to reports, two unidentified militants and a soldier were killed while an Army officer of elite Para-regiment was injured in an ongoing encounter that started September 24 evening in Handwara Tehsil of district Kupwara.⁴⁴

North East India

- **One person killed in a blast in Dima Hasao District, Assam; Blast in Manipur; Large number of districts in Assam hit by floods; Blockade in Assam-Mizoram highway; Huge number of rebels surrender in Manipur; Centre extends ceasefire with National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) (P) faction; Another blast in Manipur leaves Assam Rifles (AR) personnel and civilian dead**

According to reports, one person was killed as a bomb went off at Umrangsho in Assam's Dima Hasao district on September 25, hours after an explosion in Sivsagar town. The killed man is yet to be identified and investigations are on to find out which militant outfit he worked for.⁴⁵ In another development, security forces in Manipur had another close shave on September 24 when rebels of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) triggered a powerful improvised explosive device (IED) blast. There was no occurrence of injury but a vehicle carrying the security forces was partly damaged by the splinters of the IED.⁴⁶

Reports noted that the overall flood situation in the State has worsened further with nearly 14 lakh people in 1,972 villages under 63 revenue circles of 16 districts reeling under flood. In Tinsukia district, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and

⁴² "Kashmir shuts in protest", *Greater Kashmir*, September 27, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Sep/28/kashmir-shuts-in-protest-34.asp>

⁴³ "Autumn session of legislature begins today", *Greater Kashmir*, September 30, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Oct/1/autumn-session-of-legislature-begins-today-56.asp>

⁴⁴ "2 militants, soldier killed in gunfight", *Greater Kashmir*, September 25, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Sep/26/2-militants-soldier-killed-in-gunfight-56.asp>

⁴⁵ "One killed in Dima Hasao blast", *The Assam Tribune*, September 25, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep2512/at045>

⁴⁶ "Blast in Manipur, three held", *The Assam Tribune*, September 25, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep2512/at048>

Army have been pressed into service to assist the civil administration in rescue and relief operations. In Sonitpur and Kamrup district, NDRF personnel are deployed to assist the civil administrations in rescue and relief operations.⁴⁷

According to reports, a number of NGOs and local parties on September 26 began an indefinite blockade of the national highway connecting Silchar of southern Assam with Mizoram to protest against alleged harassment of non-Mizos, leaving commuters stranded on either side. It would be worth noting that the NH-306 (formerly NH 54) is the only surface communication link between land-locked Mizoram and the rest of India. The road blockade was called by All Barak Youth Students' Association (ABYSA) in association with some local non-political parties, and a number of clubs and social organisations. The agitators put up the blockade at Lailapur near the Assam-Mizoram border, 450 km west of Assam's main city of Guwahati. A huge number of vehicles and passengers were stranded on either side of the blockade.⁴⁸

However, reports noted that more than 110 rebels belonging to various outlawed outfits surrendered their arms to Manipur Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh in a ceremony on September 26. In Manipur, there are more than 20 rebel outfits with demands ranging from secession to greater autonomy. The rebels also surrendered a huge cache of weapons which included AK-47 rifles, carbines and pistols. The chief minister lauded the bold step taken by the rebels and said that peace and crime-free atmosphere would catalyse growth and development in Manipur. He also applauded the important role played by Assam Rifles in encouraging misguided youth to join the mainstream. The Assam Rifles spokesperson said the families of the surrendered rebels appreciated the role played by the paramilitary force in facilitating the surrender.⁴⁹

In another development, reports noted that the ceasefire with the NDFB (P) faction has been extended by another three months. The current term of ceasefire expires on September 30. General Secretary of NDFB (P) Gobinda Basumatary said that the decision to further extend the ceasefire was taken at a tripartite meeting on September 24 with the Home Ministry and State Government officials. Interestingly, the ceasefire period has been further reduced from six months to three, as against the earlier practice of extending such pacts for 12 months.⁵⁰

In other developments, according to reports, three persons, including two Assam Rifles personnel and a civilian, were killed, and six others including four Assam Rifles Jawans and two civilian women sustained injuries in a bomb blast that took place in Manipur's Chandel district bordering Myanmar on September 28. The incident took place near Kwatha Khunou junction along Imphal-Moreh road about 100 km south of Imphal, when suspected militants exploded a powerful Improvised Explosive Device (IED). Though the Assam Rifles suspects the hand of CorCom

⁴⁷ "Floods hit 14 lakh people in 16 dists", *The Assam Tribune*, September 24, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep2512/at05>

⁴⁸ "Assam-Mizoram highway blocked, many stranded", *The Assam Tribune*, September 26, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep2612/at0145>

⁴⁹ "Rebels from banned outfit surrender in Manipur", *The Assam Tribune*, September 26, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep2612/at01451>

⁵⁰ "Centre extends truce with NDFB (P)", *The Assam Tribune*, September 27, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep2812/state07>

(Coordination Committee of seven major militant groups) in incident, no militant group has claimed responsibility till the filing of the report.⁵¹

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **67th General Assembly Session: India calls on G-77 to adopt growth promoting policies; India calls for immediate phasing out of unilateral sanctions against Myanmar; India: Peaceful settlement of disputes key to international peace and security; Russia supports India's bid to UNSC; India supports cooperation to prevent terrorists from acquiring WMDs; India to host UN conference on biodiversity; UN Security Council commends progress made by Sudan and South Sudan; UNSC calls on all parties in Yemen to actively participate in the democratic process**

On the sidelines of the General Assembly session, India called on the G-77 countries to adopt growth promoting policies to boost demand and create jobs. India said that unemployment, food and energy concerns remain high which has undermined the coping capacity of developing nations to shocks and vulnerabilities. India also called on the G-77 to take the lead in implementation of the Rio agenda and making poverty eradication and meeting the MDGs a key goal for the post-2015 development agenda.⁵²

Meanwhile, at the meeting of the 'Group of Friends' of the UN chief on Myanmar, India called for immediate phasing out of unilateral sanctions against Myanmar and also stressed on international support to the country's new civilian government. Foreign Secretary, Ranjan Mathai speaking on the occasion said that India remains committed to extending all possible assistance and support to the process of national reconciliation.⁵³

At the UN high-level meeting on the 'Rule of law at the National and International levels', India said that peaceful settlement of disputes was key to the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of rule of law. It also added that unauthorised intervention in the internal affairs of any nation should be avoided.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, during a meeting of the BRICS foreign ministers, Russia reiterated its support to India for its bid for permanent seat in the UN Security Council. In a meeting of the G4 countries,

⁵¹ "2 AR jawans, civilian killed in Manipur blast", *The Assam Tribune*, September 28, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep2912/oth05>

⁵² "G-77 group must undertake growth promoting policies: India", *Deccan Herald*, September 30, 2012 at <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/282070/g-77-group-must-undertake.html>

⁵³ "India calls for immediate phasing out of sanctions against Myanmar", *The Economic Times*, September 29, 2012 at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-09-29/news/34163868_1_yangoon-thura-shwe-mann-myanmar-parliament

⁵⁴ "Avoid 'intervention' in internal affairs: India at UN", *Hindustan Times*, September 25, 2012 at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/Americas/Avoid-intervention-in-internal-affairs-India-at-UN/Article1-935240.aspx>

India, Brazil, Germany and Japan took stock of the progress made on UNSC reforms and the nations 'decided to unanimously inject greater political momentum and work together to give an impetus to the reform process'.⁵⁵

Separately, speaking in a high-level meeting on 'Countering Nuclear Terrorism' on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Hardeep Singh Puri said that the country supports enhancing international cooperation through the UN, IAEA and Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. India also called on the international community to unite to eliminate the risks of terrorists and non-state actors acquiring access to sensitive materials and technologies.⁵⁶

In other developments, the UN conference on biodiversity scheduled to begin on 1st of October will witness 2000 delegates from more than 150 countries who will discuss and adopt further decisions to contribute to ensure the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology.⁵⁷

According to reports, the agreements reached by the leaders of Sudan and South Sudan last week was lauded by the UN Security Council as a 'major breakthrough' for peace. The Council congratulated the leaders and negotiators of both sides for demonstrating courageous leadership. The Council also urged the Sudanese government and the SPLM-N to engage in direct talks to implement a cessation of hostilities.⁵⁸

While commending the progress made in democratic transition by Yemen, the Council called on all parties to continue to honour the timetable for achieving key milestones along the path. The 15-member body also called on all the stakeholders to participate actively and constructively in the process.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ "Russia backs India's bid for UNSC permanent seat", *Hindustan Times*, September 27, 2012 at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/Americas/Russia-backs-India-s-bid-for-UNSC-permanent-seat/Article1-936388.aspx>

⁵⁶ "India calls for united action against terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction", *The Economic Times*, September 29, 2012 at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-09-29/news/34163835_1_nuclear-security-wmds-hardeep-singh-puri

⁵⁷ "UN conference on biodiversity begins Monday", *Zeenews.com*, September 29, 2012 at http://zeenews.india.com/news/eco-news/un-conference-on-biodiversity-begins-monday_802723.html

⁵⁸ "Security Council welcomes Sudan-South Sudan pacts as 'breakthrough' for peace", *UN News Centre*, September 28, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43126&Cr=sudan&Cr1=#.UGl3Epi7LNY>

⁵⁹ "Security Council calls on Yemenis to ensure transition milestones are met on time", *UN News Centre*, September 28, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43128&Cr=yemen&Cr1=#.UGl3Eji7LNY>