

# Maldives

Unholy Alliances Against Democracy



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**South Asia Conflict Monitor (SACM)** aims to provide in depth analyses, country briefs, brief sketches of important players and a timeline of major events on issues relating to armed conflicts, insurgencies and terrorism. It also aims to cover government's strategies on conflict resolution and related policies to tackle these risks and crises.

The Monitor (SACM) is a monthly bulletin designed to provide quality information and actionable intelligence for the policy and research communities, the media, business houses, law enforcement agencies and general reader by filtering relevant open source information and intelligence gathered from the ground contacts and sources

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## Maldives: Unholy Alliances Against Democracy

As the September 07 (2013) presidential elections are getting closer in Maldives, three out of four presidential candidates and their political parties have been trying to woo the security agencies and indulge in religion based campaigning. These issues have dominated in the campaigning of the two candidates - Ibrahim Gasim of the Jumhoree Party (JP) and Mohamed Waheed of the Gaumee Ithihaad Party (GIP). Instead of focusing on the socio-economic issues, these two parties have been trying to win the first round of the general elections by dividing the society between Islamic and anti-Islamic forces. They have projected former president Mohamed Nasheed of the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) as anti-Islamic.

Maldives is a Sunni Muslim dominated Islamic country with a population of 330,000. For some political parties, the future lies in Islam dominated campaigning. In fact, some pre-poll alliances came up by with the support of religious conservative parties despite serious ideological differences. The Adhaalath Party (AP), a religious conservative party that clamours for total implementation of Sharia law, joined the Jumhooree Alliance (JA) in July after Mohamed Waheed of the GIP branded the AP as a fundamentalist party during his visit to Sri Lanka. Second, under the influence of AP and the Dhivehi Quamee Party (DQP), another religious conservative party, Gasim Ibrahim has promised to promote and protect Islam in Maldives by enacting special laws and opening up of new institutions. The JA in fact has vowed to fight against anti-Islamic forces by focusing its attention towards the liberal party MDP. In fact, during the campaigning, the JA declared its “Religion and Nationalism Policy”, – a set of objectives focusing on strengthening Islamic faith and national identity in the Maldives. Further, on August 08, 2013, speaking at the ceremony held at Arabiyya School to launch the Islamic and national policies of the JA, presidential candidate Gasim Ibrahim said “some people have been trying to change the hearts of the people by instilling in them wrong ideologies. This is a matter of great concern and the people should be aware of these plots to sell the nation.” The JP proudly claims that it announced a religious policy and that its popularity has increased.

Third, the incumbent President Mohamed Waheed and presidential candidate of the Jamboree Alliance candidate Gasim Ibrahim attended the official Eid prayer in Male, where the Imam conducting the Eid prayer, Sheikh Ahmed Sameer Ibrahim, said some people have been working to destroy the Islamic unity of Maldives. He urged people to remain vigilant and to unwaveringly hold on to the Islamic faith. Last but not the least, during the campaigning, top leaders of both JP and GIP criticised Nasheed for working against the tenets of Islam. The deputy president of

the Adhaalath Party, Mauroof Hussein said Christian missionaries, who were deported earlier, were brought to Maldives during former president Mohamed Nasheed's regime.

### Registered Maldivian parties as on March 12, 2013 and political agenda

S.L.	Party Name	Candidate	Profession	Coalition Partners	Major issues
1.	Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP)	Mohamed Nasheed	Politician/Activist	--	secularism, economic reforms, social welfare, freedom, support from women
2.	Jumhoree Party (JP) 'Jumhoree Alliance'	Gasim Ibrahim	Businessman	Adhaalath Party, Dhivehi Qaume Party (DQP)-religious conservatives	promote Islam, tax reforms, support to security agencies
3.	Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM)	Abdulla Yameen	Businessman	--	focus area youth and economy, law & order, women's issues
4.	Gaume Ithihaad Party (GIP) 'Forward with the Nation' coalition	Mohamed Waheed Hassan Manik	Politician	Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP)	pro-security agencies policy, social security, education, police, Islamic principles, pro-China

*\*Parties are ranked according to their support base reported in media. The political parties' bill, ratified on March 12, stated that parties require 10,000 members for registration.*

Immediately after the election date was announced, parties engaged in negotiations for pre-poll alliances. Some alliances are in fact targeting the MDP. Out of four presidential candidates, two candidates so far emerged as strong contenders for the MDP. The alliances were formed with the support of religious parties against Nasheed's secular views. Another alliance was formed to defeat Nasheed by seeking help of security forces. The current President Waheed wanted to take advantage of the enmity between the MDP and the security forces after the February 2012 coup. Addressing the Maldivian National Defence Force on July 04, President Waheed urged them to stay firm in Islamic principles and maintain rule of law. On August 15, President Waheed announced the restart of a project to construct 300 flats for MNDF officers. He also earlier handed over 50 flats to police (officers). President Waheed in fact urged especially the police to support any changes in organisational structure and functions. He said that to appease the police forces against MDP's policy of bringing necessary changes in the police organisation and functions. One media report indicated that "since President Waheed's government came to power, more than 1000 police officers have been promoted, while 110 officers were hired."

Similarly, Gasim Ibrahim of GIP said that if his party was voted to power then he would "never give any opportunity for those who attack law enforcement officers to attack them". He praised the services provided by the law enforcement officers for their role in protecting national interest and maintaining a peaceful environment was a significant role.

### **Jamiyyatul Salaf (JS): The Islamists of the Archipelago**

Of late, Maldives has witnessed a steady emergence of Islamist organizations, both radical and reformist. The most prominent among them is the Jamiyyatul Salaf (JS), a religious group which propagates an ultra-conservative strain of Islam and boasts of its Wahhabi/Salafi lineage. While promoting a radical form of Islam, the JS promotes intolerance towards other religions, especially Christianity. Many of its members are known to have been educated in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. As part of its campaign to raise Islamic awareness and promote the values of Islam, the group regularly invites Islamic preachers and scholars to Maldives in conjunction with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. The JS is also actively engaged in moral policing; in 2008, it declared music to be *haram* (forbidden) and forced a school library in Malé to close because it contained books on Christianity.

More recently, the JS's misogynist views came to forefront when it argued for child marriage, declaring that a child becomes an adult at puberty (including girls as young as 10) and flogging as punishment. The JS vehemently criticized President Mohamed Waheed when he asked for a review of the conviction of a minor girl who was sentenced to flogging. JS President Sheikh Abdulla bin Mohamed Ibrahim in support of the flogging sentence said that 'no one can contest divine law and that if it is criticized, the whole Islamic Ummah (Nation) will stand against that.' In November 2011, JS activists demonstrated against the UN Human Rights chief Navi Pillay's comments on flogging and the country's discriminatory constitutional provisions. Pillay said while addressing Maldivian parliament, that 'flogging of women for the conviction of extra-marital sex is one of the most inhuman and degrading forms of violence against women.' The JS then received some political support in its anti-UN campaign, especially from political parties including Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP) and Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM).

The JS also recommended Saudi-style beheadings and use of firing squads over lethal injections for a convicted murderer in accordance with the Islamic principle of Qiyas (based on the principle of equal retaliation).

It is not clear, whether JS have linkages with regional extremist organizations in terms of ideological, material support, or funding. However, its main target group in Maldivian society is Muslim youths who have been indoctrinated in more intolerant Islamic ideals.

The JS is headed by Sheikh Abdulla bin Mohamed Ibrahim. The other senior and influential member is Ali Rameez.

The politicisation of state agencies by rival parties has become a major concern for the MDP. Former president Mohamed Nasheed emphasised concerns about police influencing the September presidential elections while speaking at an MDP campaign rally in July. He said Police Commissioner Abdulla Riyaz had given instructions police officers to forcibly enter polling stations on the pretext of maintaining law and order. Instead of antagonising the security forces, in August, Nasheed asked his cadres to become friendly with police because police still could play a decisive role in the election results. Two days after his statement, media reports indicated that the Police Integrity Commission (PIC) had confirmed that it was investigating a tweet

posted by the Police Commissioner about a letter he claimed to have been sent, urging the police to “say no” to former President Mohamed Nasheed on September 07, just as they had on February 07 – an event the author described as a “jihad”. Earlier, in July, the same Commissioner expressed concerns over a leaked proposal allegedly devised by the MDP to reform the country’s security forces and posted an interview on the police service website that the organisation would refuse to follow any orders [from elected representatives including the President] deemed unconstitutional, indirectly hinting towards Nasheed in case he is elected as President.

Meanwhile, in a press statement released on August 25 on the MDP website, the party alleged that officials in the government (police) were threatening senior party functionaries in a bid to obstruct the party’s presidential campaign, ahead of the upcoming presidential elections. The police had summoned President Mohamed Nasheed’s former Special Envoy, Ibrahim Hussain Zaki, for questioning without any reason. Earlier, the police summoned MDP MP Ali Waheed’s family as part of an investigation into a corruption case and the prosecutor general filed charges against three MDP members –MPs Hamid Abdul Ghafoor, Abdulla Jabir, and former Press Secretary Mohamed Zuhair – regarding illegally possession of alcohol in November 2012. Ali Waheed is reportedly targeted because he had defected from the Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP) to the MDP earlier. The MDP’s apprehension appears pertinent given the steps being taken by state agencies just two weeks before the presidential elections and enmity between present police chief and Nasheed since the 2012 coup.

The MDP has been the target of other political parties because of its popularity. Its popularity was reflected in March 2013, when the Parliament passed a new law over registration of political parties and the MDP presented itself as having the highest number of party members. Second, its popularity came to the fore again while a large number of people joined street protests against the police’s attempt to arrest MDP chief Nasheed. Third, the MDP secured a large number of seats in the first women committee elections in July this year. The MDP’s rivals grew more insecure once Nasheed undertook a successful second visit to India in the end of July 2013. There has been some apprehension from other political parties over using of Indian electoral officials in the Maldivian elections. This issue could create a problem if some parties lose the primary round. The PPM (Progressive Party of Maldives) has already raised questions over the voters’ registration list from the Election Commission. The party has already hinted that it might create problems (unrest) post elections.

Despite competition between all these four candidates, three other political parties and their respective candidates have been targeting Nasheed as an anti-Islam and corrupt leader in their election campaigning. The JP and MDP may seek maximum vote followed by FN (Forward with the Nation coalition) through such a campaign. In that case, there are possibilities of an alliance between JA and FN to stop MDP from coming to power after the first round of elections. Therefore, the PPM may not do very well in the first round. In that situation, the PPM may allege role of foreign forces for its poor performances. The PPM and JP delegations had already met the election commission chairperson Fuwad Thowfeek on August 08 this year, apprising him about their fears that foreign IT workers (from India) would be given access to information related to the scheduled elections. They had questioned the possibility of holding free and fair elections if foreigners could access the electoral database and other systems. Moreover, the appeasing of security agencies by the political parties and their dependence on security agencies for retaining or gaining power may affect the democratic process in Maldives.

Even if the JP wins the elections, the JA may not continue with it, given ideological differences between JP and its allies. While the JP believes in tourism related business, its allies are against alcohol and believe in religious conservatism. Alcohol plays a major role in Gasim's business. In February 2010, the Adhaalath Party had organised a joint press conference with civil society groups against the sale or use of alcohol on inhabited islands. After the polls, there could be differences of views between the JA allies on social and religious issues.

### Ansar-al Aseer: Jihadi 'Jail Breakers' of Pakistan



Two strikingly similar events brought Ansar-al Aseer (Supporters of the Prisoner), a specialized-hybrid front for Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to the limelight. Call it audacious or daring, Ansar-al Aseer militants stormed two high security prisons in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and freed hundreds of prisoners including deadly militants.

- On April 15, 2012, TTP militants armed with sophisticated weapons stormed the Central Prison at Bannu and had freed 384 inmates in a pre dawn assault. The plan was to free Adnan Rasheed who was on a death row for plotting to assassinate former President General Pervez Musharraf. TTP's spokesman Ehsanullah Ehsan had claimed responsibility for the attack then.
- In a similar fashion, on July 29, 2013, Taliban militants struck at Dera Ismail Khan Prison and freed around 253 prisoners, including 45 top terrorists. TTP again claimed responsibilities for the strike and managed to free four senior Taliban commanders Shaikh Abdul Hakim, Abdur Rasheed, Haji Ilyas and Mamoor, among others.

Who are these new breed of Jihadi jail breakers who are helping Taliban and Al Qaeda? The latest attack on the prison of DI Khan was masterminded by Adnan Rasheed, a former Jaish-e Muhammad militant and now closely associated with TTP's new front Ansar-al Aseer. This specialized Taliban unit came into existence sometime in February this year when TTP and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) leadership agreed to establish a strike force to release Jihadi prisoners across Pakistan and support prisoners families. The formation of Ansar-al Aseer was made public through a video featuring Adnan Rasheed himself along with Yassin Chouka, with a German-Moroccan origin, affiliated with Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Al Mujhaid Abdul Hakeem, a Russian IMU operative. [See almost 26 minute video of Ansar Al Aseer here < [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A86sRvyIn\\_M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A86sRvyIn_M)>]

Adnan Rasheed a resident of Chhota-Lahore area of Swabi district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa now heads Ansar al Aseer. Rasheed has a brief stint in Pakistan Air Force (PAF) as technician, but got arrested in 2004 in connection with an assassination plot against then President Pervez Musharraf. Rasheed was associated with Al Qaeda and Harkat ul Jihad-Islami (HuJI) linked Amjad Farooqi and possibly indoctrinated in HuJI and Jaish-e Muhammad (JeM) training camps. According to media reports, Adnan Rasheed claimed to have involved with a secret extremist group within the Pakistan Air Force known as Idaratul Pakistan (Institution of Pakistan).

The propaganda video message threatened Pakistani officials and also criticized the global Muslim Ummah for not doing anything to further the release of (Islamic) prisoners. "Our beloved brothers and sisters have had to live in captivity, [...] when they spit, they spit blood. Yet this 1.5 billion-strong Ummah is doing nothing about it."

It is unclear that Ansar-al Aseer's motivations to go beyond Pakistan for now. However, considering its international compositions, objectives and strong links with Al Qaeda and Taliban, there is a considerable chance that they would venture out to other region, including India's Jammu and Kashmir (India) or Dhaka (Bangladesh) to secure freedom for the imprisoned Islamic militants.



## COUNTRY ROUND UP

### BHUTAN

The newly elected government in Bhutan was busy in generating funds for the 11th Plan and managing the economic crisis due to poor performance of the Indian Rupee against the US dollar. Immediately after the formation of the Tobgay government an Indian official delegation, which included



the National Security Advisor, undertook a visit to Thimpu. During the visit, the delegation discussed with the Tobgay government about subsidies on petroleum products, Indian's support to the 11th Plan and security issues. Earlier, just following the Bodh Gaya bomb blasts in Bihar (July 07, 2013) and citing one media report about the National Democratic Front of Bodoland's (NDFB) presence in Bhutan, the Indian government had discussed the presence of terrorist outfits on Bhutanese soil. In response, the Bhutanese government in August had assured India that there are no militants on Bhutanese territory. Moreover, acting on an intelligence input that some militant groups based in the Northeast have been trying to set up bases in Nepal and Bhutan and the LeT and IM are using the porous border as an alternative route for infiltration, India created 23 new border posts – five along the Nepal and 18 the Bhutan border – and deployed additional troops along its frontiers with Nepal and Bhutan.

Meanwhile, the 21st round of boundary talks between Bhutan and China were held in Thimpu. The Chinese delegation was headed by vice foreign minister Liu Zhenrin. The 21st round of boundary talks was a part of the ongoing process of discussion, which had been held in the two capitals alternately since 1984. Moreover, it has been a standard practice of China that whenever a new government comes to power in China's outer periphery, China sends delegations to ensure that anti-China activists are not allowed from that country and it should adhere to 'one China policy'.

It would be a difficult task for the new government in Bhutan to maintain a balance between India and China, with the former trying to consolidate its presence in the south of the Himalayas. The ongoing protests for a separate Gorkha state in Darjeeling and other groups in the region may affect Bhutan's economy and transit facilities through Indian territory.

### Major Events

**Aug 11:** The National Assembly Speaker Jigme Zangpo accepted resignation of former prime minister and Druk Phuensum Tshogpa president, Jigmi Y Thinley. Thinley submitted his resignation on July 31 (Business Standard, August 12, 2013).

**August 13:** Bhutanese Home ministry officials reassured India that there was no possibility of militants setting up bases inside the Bhutanese territory again. The statement was in response to some Indian media reports that the Northeast India based militant National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) was trying to re-establish its bases inside the country with the help of militant outfits based in Nepal (Kuensel, August 13, 2013).

**August 18:** After the Bodh Gaya bomb blasts in Bihar (India) on July 07, 2013, India has created 23 new border posts-five along the Nepal and 18 on the Bhutan border-and deployed additional troops along its frontiers with Nepal and Bhutan in order to effectively check entry of criminals and curb smuggling of arms (IBN Live, August 18, 2013).

**August 22:** The 21st round of boundary talks between Bhutan and China were held in Thimphu. The Chinese delegation was headed by vice foreign minister Liu Zhenrin. On August 10, 2012 the representatives of the two nations at the talks decided on a joint field survey to establish reference points and names of the disputed areas, which constitute the pastoral lands of Doklam, Charithang, Sinchulumpa and Dramana. The 21st round of boundary talks was a part of the ongoing process of discussion, which has been held in the two capitals alternately since 1984. (Kuensel, August 23, 2013).

### BANGLADESH

The anti-government movement to appoint a non-party caretaker government for the general elections continued. The Awami League (AL), the ruling party, remained adamant on its position of not forming a caretaker government despite frequent protests by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)-led opposition parties. Many persons were injured in the clashes between members of the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party over the issue. Meanwhile, the international community, especially China, appealed to both the parties to resolve the political deadlock through dialogue, which rarely happens from China's side. The atmosphere became further tense while the High Court declared illegal the registration of Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) with the Election Commission. The JeI responded to the Court verdict by organising violent protests across the country. It also declared 48 hours *Hartal* from August 12 as protest to the judgment. The protests continued till August 18. Police registered cases against around 185 activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir, on charges of attack on the police on August 18. The police and the JeI's student wing, Islamic Chhatra Shibir, again clashed in Shalikha upazila of Magura. The



incident happened while police raided a mosque at Sandra where a group of Jamaat-Shibir men were holding a clandestine meeting.

Before the country recovered from the August 18 incident, the JeI undertook a brisk procession in Dhaka protesting “the recent crackdown on Muslim Brotherhood members in Egypt”. During the protest, the Shibir men blasted a homemade crude bomb.

Since the tenure of Parliament (Jatiyo Sansad) will come to an end soon, the opposition parties along with its religious conservative partners may carry out more protests and rallies against the AL government. The opposition party will try to project the AL as anti-Islamic to bring religious conservative groups into its fold and mobilise them against the government. Since the AL is branded as pro-India, the BNP may not mind seeking support from China since it has recently taken some interest in Bangladeshi politics.

#### Major Events

**August 01:** A three-member panel of the High Court declared illegal the registration of Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) with the Election Commission. The judgment was made after accepting a writ petition that challenged the legality of Jamaat-e-Islami’s registration as a political party. Meanwhile, the JeI organised violent protest against the judgement. The JeI also declared a 48 hours Hartal from August 12 to protest against the judgement. (Daily Star, August 01, 2013).

**August 01:** Security forces arrested three suspected Hizbut Tahrir (HT) activists from Dhanmondi area of Dhaka. The government banned HT in October, 2009 (New Age, August 01, 2013).

**August 03:** Media reports indicated that law and order worsened in Dhaka and elsewhere with crimes such as killing, extortion and mugging increasing before Eid. According to Dhaka Metropolitan Police at least 25 people were killed in the city in July. The figure in June was 16. During the same period, at least 15 people were kidnapped in July and 12 in June. (New Age, August 03, 2013).

**August 03:** 10 persons were injured in a clash between the supporters of the Awami League and those of the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, at Puthia in Rajshahi (New Age, August 03, 2013).

**August 13:** Around 40 people including 14 police personnel were injured in clashes between pro-hartal activists and law enforcers in Meherpur as Jamaat-e-Islami observed a 48-hour countrywide hartal (shutdown) (Daily Star, August 13, 2013).

**August 18:** Three policemen and a journalist were injured as activists of Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) and its student wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir, launched an attack on security forces in Chittagong city. The JeI led a procession protesting a High Court order that cancelled Jamaat’s registration with the Election Commission on August 1 (Daily Star, August 18, 2013).

**August 19:** Opposition leader Khaleda Zia urged the government to bring a bill to restore the provision of caretaker government in the next parliament session to oversee the 10th general election (Daily Star, August 19, 2013).

**August 19:** Police registered cases against about 185 activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir, on charges of attacking the police at Badurtala of Chittagong city on August 18 (Daily Star, August 19, 2013).

**August 20:** The activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir, led a brisk procession in Dhaka protesting “the recent crackdown on Muslim Brotherhood members in Egypt”. The Shibir men also hurled a homemade crude bomb during the demonstration (Daily Star, August 20, 2013).

**August 21:** Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina cautioned people about resurgence of militants urging them to remain alert so that the incidents like the August 21 grenade attack do not recur in the country. She said “People have to remain cautious about the militants, Jamaat-e-Islami and Hefajat-e Islam” (Daily Star, August 21, 2013).

**August 24:** The Intelligence Branch of the police arrested nine members of the Ansarullah Bangla Team, a militant group, from different parts of Dhaka and its adjoining areas. Three laptops, two computers, one video camera, a large number of books on jihad, arms training manual, magazines on the organisation, 25 compact disks (CDs) and nine modems were also seized from their possession. A Dhaka court placed the arrested militants on a five-day remand in a case filed under the anti-terrorism Act (Daily Star, August 25, 2013).

**August 26:** The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) said it would not accept the president or the Speaker as interim head of government. BNP has been agitating for a non-party government, not for an all-party government, to hold the general elections (Daily Star, August 26, 2013).

**August 26:** At least 15 Islamic parties closely affiliated to Jamaat-e-Islam (JeI) and Hefajat-e-Islam (HeI) planned to form a new political alliance to participate in the forthcoming parliamentary elections. The meeting was held under the auspices “Islami Dal Samuha” (IDS: Alliance of Islamic Parties) at the headquarters of the Bangladesh Khelafat Andolon (BKA) in Dhaka. The alliance is looking to highlight its demands, including the establishment of an Islamic state and ousting the ruling Awami League government. Zafrullah Khan, secretary general of BKA, the member secretary of the Islami Dal Samuha, and IDS Convener Shah Ahmadullah Asraf, were present at the meeting (Daily Star, August 27, 2013).

**August 27:** Awami League, Chittagong branch leaders vowed to resist Jamaat-e-Islami and Hefajat-e-Islam (HeI) and their violent activities. (Daily Star, August 27)

**August 28:** Security forces arrested over 20 female members of Islami Chhatra Sangstha, the female student wing of JeI and recovered increment documents and extremist literatures (New Age, August 28).

## INDIA

India was engaged in managing both external and internal security challenges emanating from firing at the India-Pakistan border, communal violence, and demand for separate states in the south and north-eastern region and attacks by left wing extremists/Maoists on security forces. Indian security forces, including the Indian Army, were busy preventing infiltration of militants into Jammu and Kashmir. During that time the Army was also tackling provocative firing across the border by the Pakistan Army. Both the armies accused each other of violating the ceasefire. Despite several rounds of negotiations between senior army officials and also at the diplomatic level to bring normalcy at the LOC, the cross firing continued. The issue dominated the debate during the Monsoon session of Parliament in India. In a reply to the House, defence minister A. K. Antony said 26 Indian soldiers were killed in attacks by the Pakistan Army along the border in the last three years. He said nine and five Indian soldiers were killed in 2010 and 2011 respectively. Though only three soldiers were killed in 2012, the casualties stood at nine by August 2013.



At the same time, the army and paramilitary forces neutralised some well orchestrated attack plans by the militant groups. In one such incident that took place on August 30, 2013, five militants were killed in an encounter with security forces in Ganderbal district of Kashmir. Again on August 28, 2013, a joint team of Rashtriya Rifles and police personnel carried out an overnight search operation in the dense Deolmarg forest in the upper reaches of the Pir Panjal range in the district and busted a militant hideout. An unspecified number of arms and ammunition were recovered. The militants also tried to take advantage of communal riots in Kishtwar town of Jammu province around the time of the Eid prayers. The members of the two communities clashed with each other when Muslims were on their way to the Eidgah to participate in the congregational Eid prayers.

During this period, the Maoists attacked Indian railways in retaliation to the killing of their cadres by the suspected state sponsored rival factions in Jharkhand. The Maoists had enforced a day-long strike and blew up a railway track in the Gaya district of Bihar. The Maoists took advantage of Andhra Pradesh Police's engagements in the anti- Telangana movement in that state. The movement had affected the business and transportation system in the state. In Maoist retaliatory action four personnel of the Border Security Force (BSF) were killed and three others were injured in a landmine blast in Koraput district of south Odisha on August 27, 2013 by

Andhra Pradesh based Maoists. According to government sources, around 117 people died in 285 incidents of Maoist violence between May and July 2013.

Meanwhile, in Northeast India, a series of attacks by militant groups took place on Independence day and thereafter. Six militant outfits- ULFA(I), Coordination Committee (CorCom) of six Manipur groups, Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council, Kamatapur Liberation Organisation, National Democratic Front of Bodoland and the National Liberation Front of Twipra- had called a general strike and for a boycott of the Independence Day celebrations. One person was injured in grenade attacks by suspected militants of the NDFB (Songbijit) faction at two places, the G D Road bus stand and near the Bodoland Territorial Council, in Assam's Kokrajhar district on August 15, 2013.

Taking advantage of the government's decision to form a separate Telangana state, the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) reactivated its movement for a separate Gorkhaland in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. The movement has held the region hostage for the last 15 days. Around 808 supporters of the movement were arrested in the month of August. Apart from Darjeeling, three bandhs were called by the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), the United Peoples' Democratic Forum (UPDF) and the All Koch Rajbongshi Students' Union (AKRSU) to press for Bodoland and Kamtapur and Karbi Anglong state on the lines of Telangana.

The demands for separate states may bring more unrest in India in the near future. The Maoists and Northeast based insurgent groups may take advantage of that. Given the presence of a large number of insurgent groups in Manipur, the state may witness some violence. Recently, some groups in Manipur threatened to launch agitations in Manipur to protect the boundary of the State.

### Major Events

**August 01:** Two CPI-Maoist cadres were killed in a gun battle with rival faction Trititya Prastuti Committee (IPC) in the Chatra district of Jharkhand (Zee News, August 01, 2013).

**August 03:** Retaliating to killing of their cadres in Jharkhand, the Maoists enforce a day-long strike and blow up a railway track in the Gaya district of Bihar (DNA India, August 03, 2013).

**August 04:** Police said 19 splinter groups of the Maoists have formed organised crime syndicate in Jharkhand worth Rs 50 crore by extorting money from industries and construction companies (Times of India, August 04, 2013).

**August 04:** An ASSOCHAM industry survey pointed out that the Telangana agitation would take a toll on investments in Hyderabad, especially in the information technology sector. The city is the largest destination for foreign direct investment with cumulative foreign direct investment of \$8.6 billion between 2000 and 2013 (Business Standard, August 04, 2013).

**August 06:** Five Indian soldiers were killed in an ambush by around 20 heavily-armed terrorists and Pakistani troops on Army patrol along the Line of Control in the Poonch sector of Jammu and Kashmir (Times of India, August 06, 2013).

**August 6:** Three bandhs called by the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), the United Peoples' Democratic Forum (UPDF) and the All Koch Rajbongshi Students' Union (AKRSU) to press for Bodoland and Kamtapur and Karbi Anglong states on the lines of Telangana affected normal life in lower Assam for the second day (Hindu, August 06, 2013).

**August 07:** The Minister of state for home affairs RPN Singh told the Rajya Sabha (upper house of Parliament) that the recent Maoist attacks could be successful due to security forces' failure to adhere to basic policing tactics. Around 117 people died in 285 incidents of Maoist violence in India in just three months — May to July 2013. Chhattisgarh witnessed the highest number with 47 casualties. (Economic Times, August 07, 2013).

**August 07:** 32 'Gorkhaland Personnel' (GLP) were arrested in the Darjeeling hills as the indefinite strike by the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) demanding a separate Gorkhaland state on the lines of Telangana, entered the fifth day (India Today, August 07, 2013).

**August 08:** A Gorkha Janmukti Morcha supporter attempted self immolation in Darjeeling for a separate Gorkhaland state as the indefinite strike called by the party entered the sixth day. Earlier, one GJM supporter had set himself alight at the Dambar chowk on July 30 and died of his burns at a hospital in Siliguri on August 03 (The Hindu, August 08, 2013).

**August 08:** The Jharkhand state police have identified 264 People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI) rebels through a survey conducted by its intelligence officers as part of its PLFI Action Plan. Last year, PLFI rebels perpetrated 40% of all Left Wing Extremist (LWE)-related violence in Jharkhand while CPI (Maoist) rebels perpetrated 44% (Times of India, August 08, 2013).

**August 08:** The Andhra Pradesh government extended the ban on CPI (Maoist) and its front organisations for a period of one year from August 17, 2013. The government had declared the outfit unlawful in 2005 for one year and has been extending the ban every year since then (Outlook India, August 08, 2013).

**August 09:** Authorities have imposed curfew and called out the Army to assist the police and civil administration after communal riots broke out in Kishtwar town of Jammu province around the timing of the Eid prayers. The members of the two communities clashed with each other when Muslims were on their way to the Eidgah to participate in the congregational Eid prayers (The Hindu, August 09, 2013).

**August 09:** The Joint Action Committee for Autonomous States (JACAS) has demanded tripartite talks with the organisations engaged in the movement for an autonomous state of Karbi Anglong under Article 244A of the Indian Constitution. The Action Committee has fixed August 14 as the deadline for the purpose. Failure of the government to hold talks on the issue on or before August 14 may lead to "more mass uprising through democratic

means” (Assam Tribune, August 09, 2013).

**August 12:** Fourteen Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJM) supporters were arrested as the indefinite bandh called by GJM to demand a separate state entered the tenth day in Darjeeling hills of West Bengal disrupting normal life (Zee News, August 12, 2013).

**August 10:** Six militant outfits- ULFA(I), Coordination Committee (CorCom) of six Manipur groups, Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council, Kamatapur Liberation Organisation, National Democratic Front of Boroland and National Liberation Front of Twipra-of the North East have called a general strike and boycott of the Independence Day (Assam Tribune, August 10, 2013).

**August 13:** Three Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF) personnel and a Maoist were killed in an encounter between the Maoists and security personnel in Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh (NDTV, August 13, 2013).

**August 13:** The Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) relaxed the indefinite bandh to demand Gorkhaland in the Darjeeling hills for four days from Independence day. However, its president Bimal Gurung said that the 'agitation' would be continued from August 19 (Zee News, August 13, 2013).

**August 16:** A new committee formed in Darjeeling called for a fresh five-day agitation from August 19 changing the nomenclature of 'janata curfew' to 'ghar bitrai janata' (people inside homes) in their demand for a separate Gorkhaland (The Hindu, August 18, 2013).

**August 17:** Normal life in Srinagar and other major towns of the valley was partially affected due to a shutdown called by separatists. Syed Ali Geelani called for the protest shutdown against the Kishtwar communal riots and to press his demand for disbanding the village defence committees (VDCs) in Jammu region (Times of India, August 17, 2013).

**August 16:** The Delhi Police arrested Abdul Karim Tunda alias Abdul Quddoos, one of India's top 20 wanted terrorists, and mastermind of over 40 bombings in the country, from the India-Nepal border. Tunda, an expert bomb maker of the terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba was arrested from the Banwasa-Mehendarnagar border with Nepal. He was one of 20 terrorists India had demanded the Pakistani government to hand over after the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack (The Hindu, August 17, 2013).

**August 22:** At least four persons, including two policemen, were injured in a suspected grenade attack by cadres of the United Liberation Front of Asom-Independent (ULFA-I) at a police station in Mangaldai town of Assam's Darrang district (Assam Tribune, August 23, 2013).

**August 25:** Assam's four ethnic groups— the Bodos, the Karbis, the Dimasas and the Koch-Rajbangshis- have started demanding separate statehood with the United Progressive Alliance's nod to create a Telangana State spurring them. Political elites among the Bodos, the Karbis and the Dimasas argue that the Sixth Schedule experiment failed to fulfill the aspirations of the people in the three areas as the state government did not fully devolve powers on the councils as promised (The Hindu, August 25, 2013).

**August 26:** In two separate incidents, militants killed a policeman and CRPF personnel in Kashmir. While the policeman was killed afternoon when militants opened fire outside a



special operations group's (SOG) camp in Anantnag district, a CRPF personnel was killed and another injured in Shopian district in the evening (Hindustan Times, August 26, 2013).

**August 26 :** The government told Parliament that 26 Indian soldiers were killed in attacks by Pakistan army along the border in the last three years. In a written reply to a question, defence minister A K Antony said nine Indian soldiers were killed in 2010, while five lost their lives in 2011. Though only three soldiers were killed in 2012, the toll stands at nine already this year (Times of India, August 27, 2013).

**August 27:** The government informed the Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament) that there are as many as 66 terrorist/separatist groups active across the country, including 34 in Manipur alone. Most outfits are active in Jammu & Kashmir and the hinterland and are patronized by Pakistan-based parent outfits which extend to them shelter, training, weapons and funding (Times of India, August 27, 2013).

**August 27:** Four personnel of the Border Security Force (BSF) were killed and three others injured in a landmine blast by the CPI-Maoists, targeted at the vehicle of the security personnel in Koraput district of south Odisha. The blast occurred on NH26 at a culvert between the Sakirai and Kauguntha villages near Ralegada of Sunki Ghat under Pottangi police station limits (The Hindu, August 27, 2013).

**August 27:** Two security force personnel were killed in an encounter with the Maoists near Harra Koder village of Bastar region in Chhattisgarh (Times of India, August 28, 2013).

**August 29:** A Maoist cadre was killed in a gun-battle with security personnel in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh. A huge cache of arms and ammunition was recovered from the encounter spot (IBN Live , August 29, 2013).

**August 30:** Five militants were killed in an encounter with security forces in Ganderbal district of Kashmir. On August 26 militants had attacked a police patrol in Anantnag killing one person after which combing operations had been launched in that area to nab the militants (Times of India, August 30, 2013).

## MALDIVES

Campaigning for the September 07 presidential election picked up in Maldives. Anticipating the Maldivian Democratic Party's (MDP) victory in the elections, the Jumhoree Party (JP) and Gaumeed Ithihaadh Party (GIP) targeted the MDP presidential candidate Mohamed Nasheed. The Jumhoree Party unveiled its "Religion and Nationalism Policy" – a set of objectives focusing on strengthening Islamic faith and national identity in the Maldives. The Adhaalath Party, an alliance of the JP, was very critical of Nasheed. These two political parties also tried to appease the security agencies—the MNDF and the police.



Meanwhile, the Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) filed a case in the Supreme Court against the election Commission (EC), requesting the Court to order an independent audit of the commission's IT systems to "ensure they are credible", and to order state security forces to "ensure the election does not face any undue influence". Earlier, the PPM and the JP raised several concerns over the EC's involvement of Indian IT specialists handling its database, the wife of the Elections Commissioner Fuwad Thowfeek being an outspoken MDP supporter.

The division of Maldivian society along democratic secular and religious conservative lines may lead to more conflicts in Maldives after the election. The religious conservative groups with the support of some security officials may come together to prevent the MDP to emerge as the largest party. Even if the MDP manages to form the government, the opposition parties and the police may not cooperate with it.

#### Major Events

**August 05:** The Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) and its presidential candidate Abdulla Yameen dismissed as fake a leaked audio clip circulating on social media, in which Yameen admits to a "poor chance" of winning the upcoming 2013 presidential election (Minivan News, August 05, 2013).

**August 05:** Around 17 people were arrested in a clash between supporters of President Waheed Hassan Manik and the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) in Thinadhoo in Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll over a false document circulated in social media about arrest warrant of a MDP member for allegedly leaking an audio clip on social media (Minivan News, August 05, 2013).

**August 07:** The Jumhoree Party (JP) unveiled its "Religion and Nationalism Policy" – a set of objectives focusing on strengthening Islamic faith and national identity in the Maldives – as part of party's bid for presidency in the upcoming elections. JP has formed 'Jumhoree Alliance' with Adhaalath Party (AP) and Dhivehi Qaumeey Party (DQP) for the Presidential elections (Minivan News, August 07, 2013).

**August 08:** The presidential candidate of the Jumhooree Coalition, Gasim Ibrahim said that enemies are trying to cause friction and hatred against one another to erase the Islam as a religion from Maldives. He said this while speaking at the ceremony held at Arabiyya School to launch the Islamic and national policies of the Jumhooree Coalition (Miadhu, August 08, 2013).

**August 09:** The Imam of the Eid Prayer, Sheikh Ahmed Sameer Ibrahim has said that some people are working to destroy the Islamic unity of Maldives. He urged the people to be vigilant with the patience and determination necessary to maintain the country's independence and individuality, and to unwaveringly hold on to Maldivian Islamic faith. The prayer was attended by President Mohamed Waheed and the presidential candidate of the Jumhooree Coalition, Gasim Ibrahim (Miadhu, August 10, 2013).

**August 11:** The official spokesman of the Adhaalath Party and Minister of Islamic Affairs Mohamed Shaheem Ali Saeed said that more religious scholars have been joining the Jumhooree Coalition following the launching of the religious policies of the coalition (Miadhu, August 11, 2013).

**August 14:** The Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) and the Maldives Development Alliance (MDA) agreed to fight the presidential elections together. The PPM and MDA currently have 22,660 and 7,904 members, respectively, whilst the former is currently the second largest party in the Majlis, behind the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP). The MDA was founded in 2012 (Minivan News, August 14, 2013).

**August 18:** The Maldivian Police Service (MPS) has deployed a large number of police officers across the country in preparation for the upcoming presidential election. The MPS launched 'Operation Blue Waves' on August 15 and would continue it "until voting ends and the elected president is officially sworn in". Meanwhile, the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) has continued to accuse both the government and senior police officials of trying to undermine free and fair elections (Minivan News, August 18, 2013).

**August 21:** The Police Integrity Commission (PIC) has confirmed that it is investigating a tweet posted by Police Commissioner Abdulla Riyaz. Riyaz on August 20, 2013 posted a letter he claimed to have sent, urging the police to "say no" to former President Mohamed Nasheed on September 7, just as they had on February 7 – an event the author described as a "jihad" (Minivan News, August 21, 2013).

**August 22:** The former Maldivian autocratic leader, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom said the Elections Commission (EC) has not prepared itself to the necessary standards to hold the presidential election scheduled for September 07. Earlier, his party, Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) raised several concerns over the EC that included the involvement of Indian IT specialists handling its database, the wife of the Election Commissioner Fuwad Thowfeek being an outspoken Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) supporter, and "politicised tweets" by the Commission's Legal Director Haneefa Khalid (Minivan News, August 22, 2013).

**August 25:** The opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) has alleged that officials in the government were threatening senior party figures in a bid to obstruct the party's presidential campaign, ahead of the upcoming presidential elections. The allegation was made after police summoned and prosecuted its senior figures – including parliamentary group members. It was alleged they it was part of the government's plan to obstruct campaigning (Minivan News, August 26, 2013).

**August 26:** The Deputy President of the Adhaalath Party, Mauroof Hussein strongly condemned religious scholars who defend the people of anti-religious ideology and their ilk. He said that Christian missionaries who were deported earlier were brought to Maldives when Maldivian Democratic Party candidate former President Mohamed Nasheed was in power. He made this remark speaking at the campaign rally of the Jumhooree Party (Miadhu, August 26, 2013).

## NEPAL

The ambiguity over the second constituent assembly (CA) elections on November 19 persisted. Several round of talks between the High Level Political Committee (HLPC) and the CPN-Maoist (Baidya faction) led 33-agitating political parties failed to bring the agitating parties to join the electoral process. The



The agitating parties placed five demands including cancellation of the November elections and announce a fresh date and the resignation of the Khilraj Regmi government. Since these two demands were not acceptable to the four-party led HLPC, the agitating forces have decided to disrupt the elections. In this regard, the CPN-Maoist-led 33-party alliance has planned a nationwide general strike to obstruct the scheduled CA election. The alliance said the strike would be imposed before September 26, the last day for political parties to register with the Election Commission (EC).

Meanwhile, the UCPN-Maoist (Prachanda faction) decided to deploy 200 members of the Young Communist League (YCL) in each polling station. In response, the Nepali Congress (NC) and the CPN-UML, also are prepared to take similar steps. This decision has forced the Regmi government to deploy the Nepal Army along with Nepal police and armed police during the elections. The EC has also come out with a statement that front organisations of the political parties would not be allowed to the polling stations.

Since the government has decided to hold the elections on November 19, any kind of non-cooperation from agitating parties may lead to police action. In that case, the agitating parties may retaliate violently by targeting state agencies and their rival parties. There are also possibilities of clashes between youth organisations of various political parties and violent protests from ethnic groups for single ethnic-based federalism to counter NC's decision recently in favour of geographical basis of federalism.

### Major Events

**August 01:** The Young Communist League (YCL), the youth organisation of the UCPN (Maoist) enforced a bandh (general shut down) in Chitwan for an indefinite period. Normal life in Chitwan district has been hard hit from this morning due to the bandh (Himalayan Times, August 01, 2013).

**August 02:** The CPN-Maoist led 33-party alliance decided to sit for talks with the government after the latter sent an invitation for talks without any preconditions. However, a meeting of the alliance held at the CPN-Maoist head office on the same day said that the alliance would sit for talks with the government only after receiving another invitation from the government addressing all the 33 parties in the alliance. The meeting also decided to continue protest programmes while holding talks with the government (Republica, August 03, 2013).

**August 01:** Five cadres of the United Ethnic Liberation Front (UELF) were arrested from different places of Kathmandu, along with devices and raw materials used for making explosives. Police said the group, which was responsible for the Babarmahal blast in 2012, was planning 'a series of bomb blasts' in the city to disrupt the November 19 elections (Republica, August 03, 2013).

**August 03:** The General Secretary of the CPN-Maoist Ram Bahadur Thapa said his party was ready for talks with the High Level Political Committee (HLPC) even as its campaign against the Constituent Assembly election speeds up (Republica, August 03, 2013).

**August 06:** A Tibetan monk died for self-immolation in the Bouddhanath area of Kathmandu as a protest against 'Chinese occupation in Tibet'. In February 2013, a Tibetan protester died in similar action at the same place (Himalayan Times, August 06, 2013).

**August 06:** The High Level Political Committee (HLPC) held separate talks with the Upendra Yadav-led Madhesi Janadhikar Forum-Nepal (MJF-N) and the Maohan Baidya-led CPN-Maoist. During the talks, the CPN-Maoist and MJF-N placed 18 and 05-point demands respectively (Ekantipur, August 06, 2013).

**August 06:** A bandh called by the Limbuwan Provincial Council, close to the Rashtriya Janamukti Party, demanding to re-establish the Limbuwan State and timely Constituent Assembly (CA) elections, affected normal life in the nine districts of eastern Nepal (Ekantipur, August 06, 2013).

**August 06:** The number of political parties registered with the EC for the November 19 Constituent Assembly elections reached 125. A total 139 political parties had applied for registration at the EC in view of the fresh CA elections (Republica, August 07, 2013).

**August 08:** The Nepali Congress youth organisation, Tarun Dal, has called for an indefinite Chitwan strike demanding the release of its cadre. It demanded the release of Bharatpur Metropolitan Committee Vice Chairman Pramish Rai who was arrested on charge of beating an Indian national (Ekantipur, August 08, 2013).

**August 12:** Madhesi based political parties in Nepal have opposed the Constituency Delineation Commission (CD) saying that its recommendation on keeping the existing 240 constituencies intact has been made with an ill-intention of sidelining the Madhesi community (Republica, August 12, 2013).

**August 13:** The dialogue held between the government and the poll-opposing 33-party alliance ended inconclusively. The meeting ended without any agreement with the agitating political parties, including the CPN-Maoist, after the alliance proposed that the government defer the Constituent Assembly polls slated for November 19 (Ekantipur, August 13, 2013).

**August 19:** Police said illegally held firearms in Siraha district over the recent days have posed a

threat to the Constituent Assembly election slated for November 19. The police have confiscated half a dozen firearms from various parts of the district (Republica, August 20, 2013).

**August 19:** CPN-Maoist Vice-chairman C P Gajurel claimed that Constituent Assembly (CA) election would not be held on the scheduled date of November 19-even if the state met all of the demands put forth by the party. He also reiterated that the party will disrupt the poll process if its demands are ignored (Republica, August 19, 2013).

**August 21:** With a view to garnering public support against the Constituent Assembly polls scheduled for November 19, the Mohan Baidya-led CPN-Maoist has started a door-to-door campaign in all electoral constituencies in Nepal. The party also plans to hold mass rallies, shout anti-election slogans, distribute pamphlets and hold corner assemblies in the constituencies (Ekantipur, August 21, 2013).

**August 25:** A total of 70 former Maoist combatants were formally integrated into the Nepal Army with officer rank after their successful completion of officer-cadet training. Earlier, after completing the seven-month training, a total of 1,352 former combatants had already entered the junior ranks of the national army in July this year (Himalayan Times, August 26, 2013).

**August 30:** The Communist Party Nepal-Maoist (CPN-Maoist-Baidya) once again organized a rally in the capital Kathmandu as part of the poll boycott campaign (Nepal News, August 30).

## PAKISTAN

In retaliation to counterinsurgency operations, the militant groups continued to attack the security forces. Counterinsurgency operations in selected pockets also intensified. Foreign nationals especially from the West remained vulnerable to militant attacks. As a new trend, the militants increased attacks on the public transport



system and other infrastructural facilities. During this period about 14 people were injured in a bomb explosion by unknown militants on board a passenger train- Shalimar Express. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's (TTP) role was suspected in the attack. On August 16, at least three people were killed and 32 others injured in a rocket attack on Jaffar Express near Kolpur area in Bolan district, some 45 kilometres southeast of Quetta. On August 21, 2013, at least two persons were dead and ten others injured in a bomb blast near the railway station in Balochistan's Chaman town situated near the Pak-Afghan border.

Karachi continued to bleed due to sectarian and militant violence. According to a media survey as many as 172 people lost their lives during the Holy month of Ramadan in Karachi either because of target killings or abductions. People who lost their lives include 105 civilians, 13 police personnel, seven workers of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), three members of

the Awami National Party, one worker of Pakistan People's Party and one worker of the Pakistan Sunni Tehreek. The situation deteriorated further by the end of the month with a series of killings and targeted attacks. Around 13 people were killed, including a sector in-charge for Pakistan Sunni Tehreek and a spokesperson for Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, in various incidents of violence in Karachi. Supporters of the Pakistan Sunni Tehreek responded to the attack by torching a mini bus and dozens of shops in the New Chali area. They give a 24-hour ultimatum to the government and law enforcers to take action against the culprits. The business community also organised an indefinite strike against the killings. As a result the government came under pressure and the deployment of the army is being considered to manage the situation in Karachi.

Despite a consensus between political parties to bring peace in Karachi, the city will continue to bleed for about a couple of months given the deep sectarian feeling there. The TTP will diversify its target groups and will undertake synchronised attacks to nullify the dominance of the security forces in their strongholds.

#### Major Events

**August 03 :** Around eight persons, including five policemen, were killed in separate incidents of violence in Karachi (Dawn, August 03, 2013).

**August 05:** Unidentified men destroyed four power transmission towers between Balochistan's areas of Sibbi and Machh. The attack led to a reduction of 100 MW of electricity to parts of the south-western province (Dawn, August 05, 2013).

**August 05:** Around 14 people were injured in a bomb explosion by unknown militants on board a passenger train- Shalimar Express- in central Pakistan (Nation, August 05, 2013).

**August 05:** A security personnel was killed when militants attacked two tankers carrying fuel for the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) in Bolan district of Balochistan province. However, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack (Dawn, August 06, 2013).

**August 06:** Three people, including a senior police officer and two army officers were killed and three others injured as their convoy came under Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) attack in Gilgit-Baltistan's Chilas area of Diamer district (Dawn, August 06, 2013).

**August 07:** Seven people were killed and 26 were injured in a bomb blast in Karachi. The blast took place in Lyari after a football match. No militant groups have claimed responsible for the blast (Dawn, August 07, 2013).

**August 06:** Around 14 people, including three security personnel, were killed in an attack by the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) in the Machh area of Bolan district, Quetta. The militants kidnapped four Levies personnel (paramilitary force) after the attack and looted their weapons (Nation, August 07, 2013).

**August 07:** Three persons were killed and 21 others were injured in an explosion near a shopping centre in Mastung area of Balochistan (Nation, August 08, 2013).

**August 07:** Around 11 people died, mostly teenagers playing street football at a crowded market in Lyari district of Karachi (Daily Times, August 08, 2013).

**August 08:** Around 38 people, including three senior police officials, were killed and more than 60 injured, in a suicide blast at the funeral of a slain police officer in Quetta. Earlier, the police officer was shot dead by unknown gunmen in Killi Almo area. (Dawn, August 08, 2013).

**August 08:** The United States evacuated all non-emergency staff from its Consulate in the Pakistani city of Lahore, citing “specific threats” amid a worldwide alert over Al Qaeda intercepts. The travel warning issued by the State Department also reiterated longstanding advice to US citizens to avoid all non-essential travel to Pakistan (Dawn, August 09, 2013).

**August 10:** At least six suspected militants were killed during a security forces' operation in Bolan district's Mach area in Balochistan whereas another two were killed in an attack on a FC check post in the Quetta's Ispilnji area (Dawn, August 10, 2013).

**August 13:** Around six militants were killed and 10 others arrested in an operation in the Pir Ghaib area of Bolan in Balochistan (Daily Times, August 13, 2013).

**August 16:** At least three people were killed and 32 others injured in a rocket attack on Jaffar Express near Kolpur area in Bolan district, some 45 kilometres southeast of Quetta (Nation, August 17, 2013).

**August 15:** The Baloch Republican Party (BRP) condemned the killing of four Sindhi political activists by Pakistani security forces and the murder of eight Baloch peasants in Mach, Bolan on August 16. It said atrocities of the Pakistani forces in Balochistan continue unabated and the “cruel forces” have intensified their brutal actions against the innocent Baloch civilians in different parts of Balochistan (Daily Times, August 18, 2013).

**August 17:** Four people including two political activists were shot dead by unidentified armed riders in separate incidents of violence in Karachi. A former unit in charge of Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) was gunned down in Ali market. Police suspects that Lyari gangster group has been involved in this murder. Further, a worker of Ahle-Sunnat Wal-Jamat (ASWJ) was gunned down in Liaqtabad (Daily Times, August 18, 2013).

**August 16:** Three police officials including a deputy superintendent of police and four alleged gangsters were killed while four others were injured in a shootout near Safari Park, Gulshan-e-Iqbal in Karachi (Nation, August 16, 2013).

**August 21:** According to intelligence sources an illegal gateway exchange allegedly being operated by Al Qaeda network has been busted in Lahore and six suspects, including four women, have been taken into custody. Hundreds of thousands of cell phone SIMs, telephone lines, equipment, weapons and explosives had been seized (Dawn, August 21, 2013).

**August 20:** Paramilitary forces seized more than 100.5 tonnes of bomb-making chemicals from a truck and a compound in Balochistan and detained 10 suspects (Daily Times, August 21, 2013).

**August 21:** At least two persons were dead and ten others injured in a bomb blast near the



railway station in Balochistan's Chaman town situated near the Pak-Afghan border (Dawn, August 21, 2013).

**August 22:** Tehreek-e-Taliban Punjab chief Asmatullah Muawiya welcomed a call for dialogue by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif with extremists to end bloodshed that has left thousands dead. Sharif made the offer to extremists on August 19 (Daily Times, August 23, 2013).

**August 23:** One person was killed while 18 others injured including 10 army personnel as a roadside bomb exploded by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan in Korangi area of Karachi. The blast was aimed to target the convoy of the Pakistan Army after the completion of their duties during the by-polls (Nation, August 23, 2013).

**August 24:** The Pakistani Taliban announced they have removed the commander for welcoming a call for dialogue by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Asmatullah Muawiya, the head of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's (TTP), Punjab on August 22 hailed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's offer (Daily Times, August 25, 2013).

**August 27:** At least four militants were killed during an attack by the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) on a security forces' camp which claimed the lives of two soldiers and wounded nine others in South Waziristan tribal region. The attacks happened after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif offered dialogue to TTP last week. (Dawn, August 27, 2013).

**August 28:** The Chief Minister of Balochistan, Abdul Malik Baloch has revealed that mass migration and worsening law and order situation in different parts of the province has deprived around 70,000 children from education (Dawn, August 28, 2013).

**August 28:** Traders in Karachi have held the Sindh government responsible for the poor law and order situation in the city and announced a strike for an indefinite period. The traders staged a protest demonstration against extortion and target killings, outside the Karachi Press Club. Muttahida Qaumi Movement leader (MQM) Rasheed Godail also participated in the protest (Daily Times, August 28, 2013).

**August 28:** The Supreme Court (SC) was told that militant wings of political parties were active in Karachi. The court held law enforcement authorities responsible for the deteriorating law and order situation in Karachi, amid calls from political parties for deployment of the military in the metropolis (Daily Times, August 29, 2013).

**August 30:** Information Minister Pervez Rashid said that unofficial talks between the Government side and TTP are in progress and added that the government was exploring all options to restore lasting peace in the country. The talks reportedly encompassed a wide range of issues including prevention of sectarian violence and termination of ties with al Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ).

## SRI LANKA

Differences between ruling alliances widened further over participation in the Northern Provincial Council polls. The relationship between the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) and the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) turned unpleasant when the SLMC decided to contest the Northern Provincial Council



polls as a separate entity. On the other hand, the opposition parties were critical over the election process to the Northern Provincial Council polls. In fact, the election officials also blamed the police for poll-related violence in the Northern Province after a violent incident in the last week of August.

Sri Lanka witnessed an increase in attacks by Buddhist extremist groups on the minority groups. The suspected Bodu Bala Sena (BBS), an extreme Sinhala Buddhist organization, attacked a Muslim prayer centre. Another little known Buddhist extremist group called Buddhist Ravana Balaya (BRB) (Power of Ravana) staged a demonstration in Colombo against the visit of the United Nations Human Rights High Commissioner Navi Pillay to the Island nation on a fact-finding mission.

The BBS and BRB terror tactics will continue to influence the September provincial elections in favour of the ruling party. The government will try its best to sabotage the 13th Amendment and justify its action by saying that the Tamil Diaspora is trying to revive the movement.

### Major Events

**August 01:** Three persons were dead and 13 others injured due to clashes between the army, police and protestors at Weliveriya in Gampaha district. The Army fired on protestors demanding from the government provision of clean water and the closure of a glove manufacturing plant that is allegedly polluting the ground water resources (*Daily Mirror*, August 01, 2013).

**August 08:** The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) sources said its members in the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) government are under pressure to vacate their ministerial posts. The ruling alliance is under pressure reportedly since the party has decided to contest as a separate entity for the three Provincial Council elections scheduled for September (Colombo Page, August 08, 2013).

**August 08:** Sri Lanka's opposition parties, trade unions, intellectuals and religious leaders have joined hands to form a people's movement called Force for Unity (FFU) to struggle for rights. FFU will take to the streets next week demanding justice for the persons killed and affected by

last week's clash in Weliveriya and for people's rights in general (Colombo Page, August 08, 2013).

**August 11:** The Sri Lankan police imposed a curfew for a second day in the Grandpass area of Colombo after tensions flared up again in the area following the mob attack by suspected Bodu Bala Sena (BBS), on a Muslim prayer centre (Colombo Page, August 11, 2013).

**August 18:** Seven media organizations of Sri Lanka protested against the Army's call for media personnel, who covered the military attack on protesters at Weliveriya on August 01, 2013, to appear before an inquiry panel (Colombo Page, August 18, 2013).

**August 18:** Opposition leader in the Sri Lankan Parliament Ranil Wickramasinghe said that his party is disappointed over the election process to the Northern Provincial Council polls in his country. He said not only Tamils, but other sections of the Lankan society like Muslims and Sinhalese faced problems and "that is why we are campaigning for National Elections next year" (Daily Mirror, August 18, 2013).

**August 20:** A Buddhist monk in Sri Lanka accused the Sinhala Buddhist extremist organization Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) of assaulting him for preaching ethnic harmony among communities. The monk had recently criticized the extremism of the BBS in his speech and called for peaceful coexistence among different communities. (Colombo Page, August 20, 2013).

**August 21:** The Sri Lankan Military denied Indian media reports that Pakistan-based terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba would use Sri Lanka as a launch pad to attack Tamil Nadu. The Army said that the entire island was secure and that no armed group could launch any such attack (Daily Mirror, August 21, 2013).

**August 26:** A mob of protesters led by the Buddhist extremist outfit Buddhist Ravana Balaya (Power of Ravana) staged a demonstration in Colombo against the visit of the United Nations Human Rights High Commissioner Navi Pillay to the island on a fact-finding mission (Colombo Page, August 26, 2013).

**August 30:** Two people are injured in poll-related violence in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. One person was arrested in the incident. Jaffna Assistant Commissioner of Elections said the police are entirely to be blamed for the election-related clashes in the North (Colombo Page, August 30, 2013).

### **Bodu Bala Sena (BBS): Buddhist Army of Sri Lanka**

Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) literally means Buddhist Army, is in limelight again after its attacks on Muslims and other minorities in Sri Lanka in August, 2013. Although ambiguity shrouds the formation and objective of the BBS, available documents suggest that it was formed sometime in May 07, 2012. According to a media source, the BBS celebrated its first anniversary on May 07, 2013. There are allegations that the BBS has the political patronage of the present Mahinda Rajapaksa government and was formed by none other than Secretary of Defence Gotabaya Rajapaksa. In an interview, although he denied being one of the founding members of the BBS, he in fact accepted his long association with BBS's chief priest. The allegations have some merit due to the government being no more than a mute spectator despite BBS's involvement in almost all the communal violence against minorities in Sri Lanka in the last year and a half. Since its formation, in the post LTTE period, Sri Lanka has witnessed increase in communal violence.

**Leadership and Support Base:** Although the BBS's political patronage is yet to be established, it was reportedly formed under the leadership of Buddhist priests Ven. Kirama Vimalajothy Thera and Ven. Galagodatthe Gnasara Thera. Galagodatthe Gnasara represents the extremist views of the BBS. Presently, Dilantha Withanage is the Chief Executive Officer of the BBS. Other Executive Committee members are Ven. Haputhalea Paghgasara Thera and Ven. Vitharandheniyea Nandha Thera. Most of the executive members are reportedly residing in the West for a long time before joining the BBS.

It seeks support from majority Sinhala Buddhists especially in the central and southern part of Sri Lanka. The BBS is not a political force. But it seems to have the sympathy of political parties. The BBS has provided passive support for the continuation of the Rajapaksa government because it is a true Sinhala Buddhist government. The BBS's political affiliation can be discerned from the fact that Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa inaugurated the Buddhist Leadership Academy of the BBS on March 09, 2013 at Galle. Even other Buddhist organizations are critical of the BBS's anti-minority policy and extremist views.

**Objective and Demands:** BBS's objective is to preserve, spread, protect and promote Sinhala Buddhist culture and Sri Lanka's territorial integrity against the separatist movement in northern Sri Lanka. The organization has been closely monitoring the activities of the Tamil Diaspora in Canada, USA, and Scandinavian countries. It has been openly opposing Muslims. It demands prohibition of Purdah or hijab, citing security reasons. It also demands boycotting halal foods because it is against Buddhism. It protests against family planning of the Sinhala Buddhists because that would shrink the Sinhala population and other minority group populations especially those of the Muslims would grow.

The BBS opposes the implementation of the 13th Amendment and any kind of interference from India on that issue.

**Modus Operandi:** Attack on minorities, spreading rumours about minorities and threats to Buddhism, anti-Muslim propaganda and attack on other Buddhist organizations affiliated to other political parties, who have been criticizing BBS's anti-Muslim operations is the modus operandi of the BBS.

**Funding and Linkages:** The BBS generates funds through voluntary contributions from Buddhist followers. However, there are speculations that the BBS receives funds from Norwegian Embassy in Sri Lanka. Before the formation of the BBS, an eight-member delegation visited Norway to attend a Reconciliation Conference between 20 and 26 October, 2011. These eight members are presently holding important positions in the BBS. The BBS is associated with a lesser known International NGO called the Worldview International Foundation (WIF). The WIF is headed by Arne Fjortoft, a Norwegian citizen. The BBS executive members frequently visit the US, Norway, Sweden and other European countries.

#### NOTES:

"Genesis of Bodu Bala Sena" the *Asia Tribune* editor's interview with Dilantha Withanage, Executive Committee member and the Coordinator of Bodu Bala Sena, on 07 April 2013, at <http://www.asiantribune.com/node/62223> (accessed 29 August 2013).