

# South Asia Conflict Monitor

*monthly newsletter on terrorism, violence and armed conflict...*



## Nagaland: Elusive Reconciliations and Lingering Peace Process

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Despite substantial progress in the peace talks between New Delhi and the armed groups of Nagaland over the last five years, there are still uncertainties over finalising a permanent peace agreement. The second round of negotiations over a peace agreement with the Naga insurgent groups, including the NSCN-IM (Isak-Muivah), was initiated by New Delhi in 2015. But that appears to be in trouble since October 31, 2019. A fresh informal attempt by the Union Government in this regard with the NSCN-IM in August 2020 in New Delhi also has not moved in the right direction. While the central government has managed to address the grievances of other seven illegal Naga armed groups, who are willing to sign a permanent peace agreement, the NSCN-IM, one of the largest, oldest and well-organised armed groups of Nagaland, has remained adamant on its demand to have a separate flag and a constitution.

### Background

The Nagaland insurgency is one of the oldest political conflicts in India. It started around 1946 with the formation of the Naga National Council (NNC) under Phizo's leadership. The objective of the NNC was to set up an independent Nagaland based on the predominant presence of Naga tribes in the adjacent areas, including Myanmar. As the movement progressed, the NNC got fragmented into different factions based on ideology,

leadership, interests and external influences. The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (IM) was formed on January 31, 1980, by Isak Chishi Swu, Thuingaleng Muivah and S. S. Khaplang. They wanted to establish a 'Greater Nagaland' ('Nagalim' or the People's Republic of Nagaland) based on Mao Tse Tung's model. This outfit witnessed a split by Khaplang faction in April 1988. In 1997, the NSCN (IM) signed a ceasefire agreement and started a dialogue with the Union Government. The first round of ceasefire agreement ended without any solution after several rounds of dialogue until 2014.

The purpose of the August 2020 meeting was primarily to resolve differences between New Delhi and NSCN-IM over these two contentious issues demand for a separate flag and a constitution. The NSCN-IM leaders also expressed their dissatisfaction over the role of interlocutor, the governor of the state R. N. Ravi. After a series of informal meetings with senior IB officials in August 2020, the outfit issued a public statement against the governor as well. Besides, on September 5, 2020, the NSCN leaders blamed New Delhi for

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creating confusion, division and creating fear psychosis and threat perception amongst the Nagas. [1]

### Reasons for NSCN (IM) dissatisfaction

All this brewed perhaps due to dissatisfaction and marginalisation of the NSCN-IM from the peace talks since 2015. First, the NSCN-IM, as the largest and most organised outfit, which has been fighting for a greater Nagaland since 1947, was perhaps dissatisfied with the central government's approach of having parallel peace talks with other armed groups of Nagaland. Second, the NSCN-IM felt that New Delhi's similar approach had diluted its core demand of having a greater Nagalaim with a separate flag and a constitution. Other armed groups think that development and peace are more important than a flag and a constitution. Third, the NSCN-IM had called the October 2019 deadline for a final peace agreement "unethical", and it questioned Nagaland Governor N Ravi's attempt at "rushing" the talks.

Since the outfit could not express its dissatisfaction over the "parallel approach", it vented its anger on Governor Ravi by issuing a five-page public statement, titled "Mr RN Ravi's misdoings as Interlocutor" on August 11, 2020. In that statement, it said that the governor has "twisted the Framework Agreement and misled the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the steps taken to solve the Naga issue". It added that the group had taken umbrage towards the report furnished by Mr Ravi to the Parliamentary Standing Committee which said that the framework agreement talked of a solution "within India" and not "with India", which was the earlier position in peace talks. It pointed out that Ravi's letter to the Nagaland Government in June referred to them as "armed groups", accused them of extortion and said that their "parallel governments" were in contravention to India's security. [2]

Last but not least, the NSCN-IM could have become nervous about losing support base after the death of Isak Chishi Swu in June 2016. Isak was from a tribal area of main Nagaland and an influential leader. Thus any compromise on its core demands — greater Nagalim, flag and a constitution — could further deplete its support base. Therefore, NSCN-IM wanted to withdraw from the Framework Agreement by accusing N Ravi of distorting the facts.

### The way forward

The NSCN-IM is at present under pressure to sign a peace agreement since other Naga groups, also known as Naga National Political Groups (NNPG), are willing to do the same. [3] The Naga groups have been more flexible on their positions and intent to sign an agreement without a flag and a constitution. The Nagaland Gaon Burah Federation, an influential committee of village headmen, in a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that it wanted to settle the dispute at the earliest (by September, 2020).

In response to central government's decision to finalise the peace agreement as per the deadline (September 2020) without the NSCN-IM, the NSCN (IM) on September 3, 2020, said, "The Nagas are ready to fight another war if their political rights and history are not respected and that the Naga issue will remain India's Achilles' Heel if the Centre or its interlocutor try to "misinterpret" the prevailing situation or act clever. The NSCN (IM) is still firm on shared sovereignty, which would include a separate flag and a separate constitution for the Nagas. [4] But a media report said that the NSCN cadres are not very enthused over returning to a full-fledged armed struggle with a section understood to be in touch with the Centre. [5]

Since few days are left to the deadline, the NSCN-IM has asked its prominent leaders to assemble in New Delhi for wider consultations. The NSCN-IM top leaders are aware that there could a peace agreement between the NNPG and the Union Government by the end of September. There is also a pressure from the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR) to bring NSCN (IM) and the NNPG together and take forward the unfinished task of reconciliation. Therefore, given the rising pressure from tribal groups, youths and civil society, it would be a difficult decision for the NSCN-IM to continue its movement in isolation.

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### NOTES

[1] "NSCN (IM) alleges coordinated attempt to create confusion among Nagas," North East Now, September 5, 2020, <https://nenow.in/north-east-news/nagaland/nscn-im-alleges-coordinated-attempt-to-create-confusion-among-nagas.html>

[2] "Centre holds meet with NSCN-IM, interlocutor absent", Indian Express, August 14, 2020, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/centre-holds-meet-with-nscn-im-interlocutor-absent-6553738/>

[3] NSCN (Kitovi Zhimomi), the Naga Nationalist Council, the Federal Government of Nagaland, the NSCN (Reformation), the National Peoples Government of Nagaland (Non-Accord), the Government Democratic Republic of Nagaland (Non-Accord). Later, the Khango Konyak-led

faction of the NSCN (Khaplang)

[4] "NSCN-IM: Nagas ready for fresh 'war'", Telegraph India, September 03, 2020, <https://www.telegraphindia.com/north-east/nscn-im-nagas-ready-for-fresh-war/cid/1790761>

[5] "Naga pact soon as govt believes it can bypass NSCN(IM)", Times of India, August 30, 2020, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/naga-pact-soon-as-govt-believes-it-can-bypass-nscnim/articleshowprint/77828393.cms>

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## COUNTRY BRIEFS AND NEWS ROUNDUP: AUGUST 2020

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### AFGHANISTAN



Afghanistan's peace process is getting murky by each day. Despite a standing peace agreement, substantial progress in releasing of the Taliban prisoners by the Afghanistan Government and repeated appeal form international community, the level of violence continued unabated in the review period. The Taliban militia continued to target both Afghanistan security forces and the civilians. In retaliation, the security forces targeted the Taliban militia, IS-KP and other groups.

However, in a major progress on the peace process, the much awaited Loya Jirga (tribal assembly) was held in the first week of August. The objective of the Assembly was to decide the release of 400 prisoners, a process that is not within the authority of the president of Afghanistan. Both the government and the Taliban reiterated their commitment towards the peace process.

The Taliban especially declared that it would end conflict once those prisoners were released. After two days of discussion, the LJ approved the release of the 400 Taliban prisoners with the aim to start intra-Afghan talks and bring about a ceasefire and an end to the nation's war. While the LJ decision was welcomed by top political leaders and some neighbouring countries, France and Australia have asked the Afghanistan Government not to release those Taliban prisoners who were behind the killing of French citizens.

Politically, mutual suspicion and distrust between President Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah continued which has resulted in delay in the formation of the High Council for National Reconciliation even three months after the political agreement. This will affect the next phase of the peace process.

## MAJOR EVENTS:

**August 01:** According to the National Directorate of Security (NDS), Assadullah Orakzai, the intelligence chief of the Islamic State-Khorasan province (IS-KP), was killed in operation near Jalalabad city, Nangarhar province. Asadullah Orakzai who was a senior member of the IS-KP rumoured to have died in 2017 in an airstrike conducted by US forces in Achin district of the province. ([RFERL](#)).

**August 03-05:** Islamic State Khurasan province (IS-KP) terrorists stormed a prison in Jalalabad city (Nangarhar province) and killed at least 29 security personnel on August 02-03 operation. The IS-KP has released images showing 11 militants who had carried out the multi-pronged attack on Nangarhar central prison. Gunmen and Suicide bombers used a Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) at the gate of the prison, in PD4 of Jalalabad city of Nangarhar Province. Among the IS-K militants, three Indian jihadists have participated in the operation. Dr. Ijas Kallukettiya Purayil (Abu Rawaha al-Muhajr-al-Hindi) was the one who struck the main gate of Jalalabad prison with SVBIED. ([News18](#); [Tolo News](#); [AVA Press](#); [Times of India](#))



**August 09:** Kabul News television said the Pakistani military and intelligence have not abandoned the policy of training terrorist groups on their soil and have recently created a new terror group under the name of 'Khattak Taliban'. The Inter-Services Intelligence of Pakistan has newly formed this new militant group in a bid to fight the Afghan security forces and those Taliban members who are not under the control of Islamabad during the ongoing Afghan peace process. ([Afghanistan Times](#))

**August 10:** Hundreds of Hindus and Sikhs have reportedly fled their homes in Ghazni province due to threat and insecurity. Attacks against the communities in recent years have caused panic as most of Hindus and Sikhs who were significantly involved in the Afghan business, left their assets and properties behind and moving to foreign countries. ([Afghanistan Times](#))

**August 11:** Nearly 16 Taliban members were killed during clashes with Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) in the Maizan district of Zabul province. Seven hideouts belonged to the Taliban have been demolished following the attack. ([Bakhtar News](#))

**August 13:** The Afghan Interior Ministry said at least 121 Afghan civilians died and 336 more wounded in Taliban attacks in 29 provinces over the past two weeks. The majority of the casualties occurred in Kandahar, Baghlan, Nangarhar and Logar provinces. However, the Taliban rejected the Government's figures about the civilian casualties. ([Tolo News](#))

**August 16:** France opposed the release of Taliban prisoners convicted of crimes against French nationals, in particular soldiers and humanitarian workers. Its foreign ministry asked Afghan authorities not to proceed with the release of these terrorists. The Taliban fighters whose release France opposes had killed a French woman Bettina Goislard, an employee of the UN refugee agency, and five French troops. Earlier in August, Goislard's family also denounced the move to release the Taliban militants. ([DW](#))

**August 19:** Citing reports by the United Nations and the Pentagon, Afghanistan President's office alleged that the Taliban who had vowed to cut all ties with the international terrorist organisations under a peace deal with the United States, still holds relations with the al-Qaeda. ([Afghanistan Times](#))

**August 22:** Pakistan issued orders enforcing the UN sanctions against Afghanistan's Taliban. In a statement, Pakistan's foreign ministry said the sanctions are not new but rather are laid out in 2015 U.N. regulations. The U.N.-imposed penalties target dozens of individuals including Taliban chief peace negotiator Abdul Ghani Baradar and several members of the Haqqani family, including Sirajuddin, the current head of the Haqqani network and deputy head of the Taliban. ([Gandhara](#))

**August 29:** Afghanistan Army said at least 44 Taliban militants are killed in Afghanistan's Kunduz province as security forces stepped up operations in the area. According to the statement, three local commanders of the armed group were among those killed in the operations backed by warplanes in the restive Imam Sahib district. ([The Tribune](#))

## BANGLADESH



Bangladesh did not witness any violent conflict in the review period. Like the previous month, counter terrorism agencies of Bangladesh continued to take action against the radical Islamist groups, who had attempted to revive their activities in different parts of the country. The agencies arrested a large number of Ansar-al-Islam and Neo-Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (Neo-JMB) members. The arrested cadres were attempting to revive the operations in the name of fund raising and holding meetings both in urban and rural areas. In an interview, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Monirul Islam, who now heads the CTTC, claimed that militancy is under control. Given the commitment of the CTTC and strong counter-terrorism policy of the Awami League government, Bangladesh may not witness any major violent conflicts emanating from radical groups in the near future.

### MAJOR EVENTS:

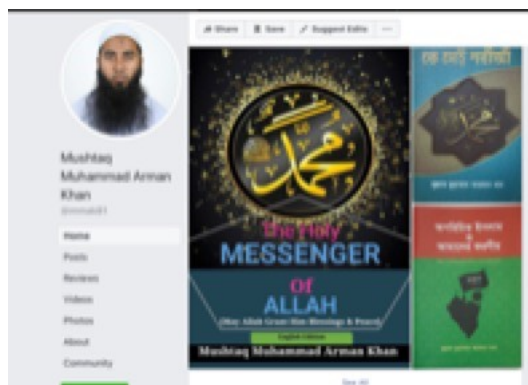
**August 05:** Bangladesh's Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU) arrested one Ansar al Islam militant, Mohamad Sajib Hossain from Monogononta Bazar in Jhenaidah District. Ansar-al-Islam, an affiliate of Al Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent(AQIS) have been conducting various activities for a long time to establish a caliphate in Bangladesh through armed conflict and by conspiring against the state, including through an online campaign to establish "Ghazwat-ul Hind." ([Dhaka Tribune](#))

**August 12:** Islamic State-linked Neo- Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (Neo-JMB) hatched a plan to attack famed Hazrat Shahjalal's shrine located in Sylhet before the Eid celebration. The Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit have learned about this conspiracy following the arrest of five militants from a house in the Shapla Bagh area of Sylhet on August 10. They are Sheikh Sultan Mohammad Naimuzzaman, 'regional commander' of Neo-JMB in Sylhet, Sanaul Islam Sadi, Rubel Ahmed, Sayem Mirza, and Abdur Rahim. Naimuzzaman confessed that they had plans to bomb different locations including an elite shopping mall in Gulshan on July 31. ([DT Next/ Dhaka Tribune](#))

**August 17:** Dhaka police arrested two Neo- JMB militants, identified as, Safafat Islam and Yasir Arafat from Sadarghat area of Dhaka city. According to both are part of the 'FZ Force', a sleeper cell of Neo-JMB. Both were planning to target rich and famous people, including progressive and atheists, as per initial investigation reports. ([TBS NEWS](#))

**August 20:** The Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of Dhaka Metropolitan police submitted the charge sheet against nine Al Qaeda linked Ansar Al Islam operatives. AAI's fugitive chief, former Army Major Syed Mohammad Ziaul Haque along with other members, is accused over the killing of Jagannath University law student and blogger Nazimuddin Samad in the capital Dhaka city's Sutrapur on April 6, 2016. Four of the nine suspects were in custody while five others were still absconding. ([New Age](#))

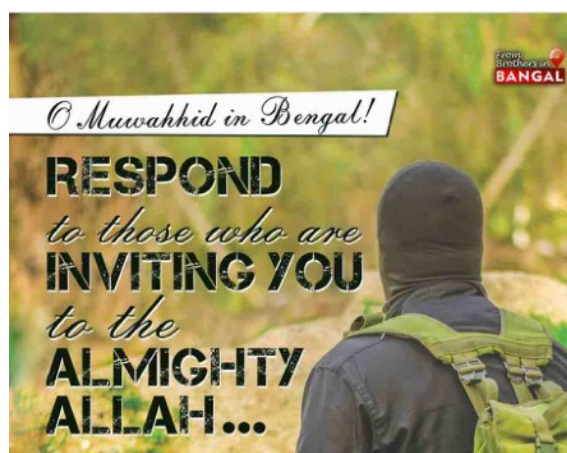
**August 20:** According to CTTC officials, one of the pioneers of Islamic militancy in the country Harkat-ul-Jihad-al Islami-Bangladesh (HuJI-B) is presently struggling to reorganise its activities due to its members leaving for other extremist groups. An al Qaeda and Afghan Taliban linked group HuJI-B was responsible for killing more than 100 people and injuring 600 others through various terror attacks in Bangladesh. Police claimed that HuJI-B hardly has any capacity to carry out any major subversive activities in the country. ([Dhaka Tribune](#))



**August 21:** The RAB arrested two Allah'r Dal operatives from Dhaka when they were distributing anti-Government propaganda material at Haranath Ghosh Road in Dhaka. The arrested individuals were identified as Hanif Hossain (31) and Jamal Bepari (30). RAB said that they are followers of Motin Mehedi Mondol, who is the organiser of the banned group. Earlier on August 18, police arrested Liton Hossain a militant affiliated with the banned 'Allah'r Dal' from Bezerdanga railway station area in Khulna District. Liton was engaged in recruiting members for the group. ([Dhaka Tribune](#); [Independent](#))

**August 22:** Bangladesh's CTTC filed a case under the ICT act (Information and Communication Technology Act (ICT) ) against Mustak Muhammad Arman Khan, also known as Imam Mahdi. According to CTTC information, Mustak left Bangladesh for Saudi Arabia in 2016 and is still living there and carrying out online teaching and preaching through dedicated FB page (<https://www.facebook.com/mmak81>) and YouTube channel ([Taqwa Online TV](#)). He has since released speeches and videos, mostly on Islamic values and traditions. According to police, he also called followers to carry out for jihad (holy war) on his behalf. Early this year, on May 4, a CTTC unit team arrested 17 cadres of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen (JMB) from the Kakrail area of Dhaka city who were trying to travel to Saudi Arabia to meet Imam Mahadi. ([Google Drive Page](#) / [Dhaka Tribune](#))

**August 22:** The latest issue of pro-Islamic State (IS) English-language magazine Voice of Hind (India), focused on the Indian Subcontinent has urged Muslims in Bangladesh to join the jihadist group. The magazine came at a time the Bangladesh-based IS militants (Neo-JMB) re-emerged last month and claimed three attacks between July 29-31. The two-page article, which is by-lined by "brothers in Bengal", offers religious advice to Muslims in Bangladesh and urges them to join the ranks of IS.



"There are soldiers of Khilafah [caliphate] present in Bengal and Hind, who are striving to establish the deen [religion] of Allah in this land by waging jihad and qital [battle] "So help them in this matter by joining hands with them and give victory to the religion of Islam. "The Bangladesh article included the image of the slain 'sorcerer'. The local media did not cover any killing of a man practising witchcraft in Gazipur. ([Telegram/\(@SoutulHind\\_bot/ Voice of Hind\)](#))

**August 24- 27:** The CTTC police arrested Neo-JMB a 'fundraiser' Sibbir Ahmed from Sabujbagh area of Dhaka city. A cell phone, five Jihadi books and a bank deposit receipt book were recovered from the

arrestee's possession. He was in touch with Islamic State-linked groups in the Philippines, Indonesia, United Kingdom, France, and Afghanistan using different online platforms. He also has records of financial transactions with some foreign nationals returning from Syria. He had a very close relationship with a senior Neo-JMB operative Maynul Islam (Musa), reportedly killed in a drive on a militant hideout in Sylhet in 2017. Earlier on August 24, arrested another Neo-JMB operative Mohamad Salek from Babubazar Bridge area in Dhaka city. ([Daily Star](#)/ [Daily Sun](#))

**August 30:** Dhaka police arrested Shamsul Alam of Ansar al Islam (AaI) from Kalyanpur area of Dhaka city. He used to propagate extremism online, collect funds and recruit fresh operatives in Sunamganj and Habiganj Districts. Earlier on August 27, police also arrested another AAI militant Ismail Hossain from Raghurampur village in Rajshahi District. Ismail Hossain had several books and a leaflet promoting extremism at the time of his arrest. ([Bangladesh Post](#)/ [Daily Star](#))

## INDIA



In a major move to bring normalcy and as a confidence building measure, New Delhi ordered "immediate" withdrawal of about 10,000 paramilitary personnel from the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Although the exact reasons of such decision is not yet known, the fact is that in comparison to the previous months, there were reduced number of violent incidents reported in the review period in J&K. The number of incidents may have come down in this month perhaps due to COVID-19 related restrictions and also increase in number of COVID cases in Kashmir. Another factor could be Pakistan's failure to send militants in to Kashmir. There is a correlation between Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) violation along the Line of Control (LoC) by Pakistan and number of terrorist related violence in Kashmir. The review period witnessed increase in CFA violations by Pakistan. That indicated that Pakistan attempted to infiltrate more militants in to

Indian side by violating CFA repeatedly in this month.

As for the North-eastern (NE) region, a large number of cadres of different militant groups were arrested in the review period. The number of arrests has been highest in the last three months. The number of arrested cases went up since the NE-based insurgent groups attempted to revive the movement in the post-COVID lockdown period. However, the month ended on a positive trajectory with the revival of peace talks between Nagaland's NSCN-IM and the central government.

Like the NE region, there was a spike in number of arrests and surrenders of Maoist cadres in the Maoist affected states even as the rebel groups celebrated "Martyr Week" from July 28 to August 3. Anticipating violence by the Maoists, the affected states had asked their state forces to stay alert. As the rainy season is coming to an end, both the affected states and the Maoists are getting ready for active operations in the deep forests. In that case, there are possibilities of more casualties in the coming months.

### MAJOR EVENTS:

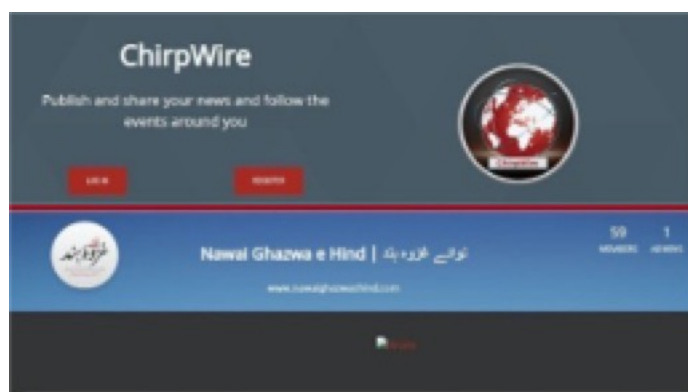
**August 01:** Al-Qaeda and its Kashmir affiliate Ansar-Ghazwat-ul-Hind issued statement through GIMF/ Al-Hurr media criticising Pakistan for betraying Kashmir jihad. It also targets Kashmiris, and existing militants in Kashmir for the failure to wage a successful campaign. The spokesman of AGH says "it's their duty to direct Kashmiris and its mujahideen towards the right direction" says, "the so-called leaders of Kashmiris (referring

to Hurriyat/ Pakistani militant leaders) who claimed to be torchbearers of Kashmir jihad, have vanished as if they never existed. ([ChirpWire/ Twitter](#))

**August 03:** Seven day 'Martyrs Week celebration', from July 28 to August 3 (2020), of the outlawed CPI-Maoist, ended across the country. Earlier, the outfit in a press release requested the people to celebrate Charu Mazumdar's birthday and pay grand tributes to all martyrs who laid their lives in the people's movement. ([The Times of India](#))

**August 06:** A Special National Investigation Agency (NIA) Court in New Delhi found six people linked with the Islamic State guilty in 2014 Anti-India conspiracy case. These group of people were involved in a criminal conspiracy to establish its base in India by recruiting Muslim youths through different social media platforms to carry out acts of terrorism in the country. The NIA registered the case on December 9, 2015, under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the UAPA (Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act). ([One News](#))

**August 06:** Jammu and Kashmir based militants killed a Sarpanch (village level elected leader) Sajad Ahmad Khanday affiliated with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The incident took place at Vessu in Qazigund area in Kulgam District.



Khanday's death came a couple of days after another Sarpanch Arif Ahmad Khan was shot at Akhran Qazigund in Kulgam. Recent assassinations triggered large scale resignation of BJP leaders from party fearing for life and security. ([Economic Times](#))

sharing purpose (@sahabsubcontinent). Late last month, on July 27, al-Furqan media publicised its ChirpWire so also other outlets such as al-Hurr (@AlHurrMedia), Nawai Ghazwa-e-Hind, al-Firdaws, and al-Hikmah. New to the business, ChirpWire has so far over 150 users. Several accounts are named after the media arms of al-Qaeda jihadist groups or pro-al-Qaeda outlets. (RocketChat)

**August 07:** Al Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent and its affiliate media outlets have found using a new social network called ChirpWire for message and file

**August 12:** Four armed cadres of the outlawed Communist Party of India (CPI)-Maoist were killed in an encounter with security forces at Jagargunda in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district. No further information was available on this incident. ([Hindustan Times](#))

**August 17:** A suspect, identified as Samiuddin, linked to with extremist Al-Hind organisation was arrested in connection with recent Bengaluru violence (rioting and arson) that took place on August 11. Al-Hind is believed to be a pro-IS organisation ([Bangalore Mirror](#)).

**August 18:** Five security force personnel and three terrorists including Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commander Sajjad were killed during the gunfight within Baramulla area of Jammu and Kashmir. The incident happened while the terrorists attacked the joint patrolling party in Kreeri area of Baramulla district. ([Times Now](#))

**August 18:** A suspected Islamic State (IS) sympathiser Abdur Rahman, an eye doctor by profession working at Bengaluru's M S Ramaiah Medical College, was arrested by National Investigation Agency (NIA) for alleging developing a medical application for helping the injured Islamic State (IS) terrorists in the conflict-zones and a weaponry-related application for the benefit of IS fighters. NIA statement said that Abdur Rahman was arrested in connection with the agency's probe against a Kashmiri couple - Jahanzaib Sami Wani and Hina Bashir Beigh, arrested from Jamia Nagar in Delhi in March 2020. NIA had already arrested 'two more accused - Sadiya Anwar Sheikh and Nabeel Siddiqui Khatri in India and to carry out subversive activities in the garb of anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests. ([Hindustan Times](#))



**August 19:** Two Islamic State operatives have pleaded guilty before a Delhi court in a case of criminal conspiracy by the IS to establish its base in India. Accused Abu Anas and Najmul Huda submitted to the court, which was scheduled to hear arguments on the quantum of punishment for six other accused who had earlier pleaded guilty in the case. The accused had formed Junood-ul-Khilafa-Hind organisation, seeking to establish a caliphate in India and pledging allegiance to IS. They tried to recruit Muslim youths to work for the ISIS and commit acts of terrorism in India at the behest of Syria-based Yusuf-Al-Hindi who is purportedly the media chief of IS, it said. The NIA had filed charge sheets against 16 accused in 2016-2017. ([New India Express](#))



**August 19:** The convenor of the North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA), Himanta Biswa Sarma, said that the peace parleys between NSCN-IM and the Government of India are back on track. However, the NSCN-IM has asserted that it will not sign any agreement that affects the freedom of future generations of Nagas. ([The Economic Times](#))

**August 21:** Special Cell of Delhi Police arrested a suspected Islamic State (IS) operative, identified as Abu Yusuf Khan after a brief encounter in Ridge Road between Karol Bagh and Dhaula Kuan in South Delhi. Two Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and a pistol have been recovered from his possession. Abu Yusuf (Mohammad Mustakim Khan) used to train youth near his village in Uttar Pradesh ([Zee News](#))

**August 22:** The pro-Islamic State group (IS) magazine Voice of Hind (Sawt al-Hind) focused on the Indian Subcontinent has called on Muslims in India to engage in violence over the decision to build a Hindu temple at the site of demolished 16th-century Babri mosque in Ayodhya. An article in the magazine drew a comparison between the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem to the 500-year old Babri mosque in Ayodhya located in India's northern state of Uttar Pradesh. (Telegram, @SoutulHind\_bot).

**August 22:** Five militants of Islamic State of Jammu and Kashmir (ISJK) were arrested in Bandipora District of Jammu and Kashmir. According to police, these militants were waiting for the weapon consignment from Pakistan to carry out subversive activities. The group also engaged in providing support, motivating and radicalising the youths to join the ISJK militant outfit. ([Daily Excelsior](#))

## NEPAL



Politically, the top leaders of the ruling NCP (Nepal Communist Party) of Nepal were busy in resolving intra-party factionalism. The leaders have spent little time addressing the governance and development issues, which have become major concerns of the public lately. The intra-party factionalism has severely affected government actions to control the spread of COVID-19 infections.

In case of internal security, Nepal did not witness any violence in the review period. The security forces were busy taking actions against the renegade Maoist party, the CPN-Maoist-Chand, cadres in different parts of the country. The security forces managed to arrest around 30 cadres of the Chand faction in the review period.

Although the anti-government street protest like 'Enough is Enough' was suppressed by the security forces, Nepal will witness more such anti-government

protests once the second phase of lockdown is removed in the first week of September.

## MAJOR EVENTS:

**August 19:** Police arrested nine youths belonging to the Tamang ethnic community of Nepal in connection with a controversial music video named 'Deshdrohi' that contains the footage of burning Nepal's national flag and inciting hatred against certain ethnicities. ([My Republica](#))

## PAKISTAN



The review period witnessed increase in violence and killings in Baluchistan. The Liberation Front (BLF) militants attacked security personnel on multiple occasions to take revenge against attack on Baloch youths in the province. Similarly, there was a spike in violent incidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in the review period due to increase in sectarian violence and cross border firings with Afghanistan. Perhaps in response to that, Pakistan Government proscribed a group identified as Khatam-ul-Ambia for being an offshoot of the banned Ansar-ul-Hussain involved in terrorism under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997. The National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) added Khatam-ul-Ambia's name to its list of proscribed organisations after the Federal Ministry of Interior issued the notification.

Other than these provinces, Karachi city witnessed spike in violence perpetrated by some unidentified groups.

The groups targeted both police and political gatherings

by using low intensity explosives. One person died and 38 others were injured in a cracker bomb attack on the Kashmir rally organised by Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) in Gulshan-e-Iqbal town of Karachi. Hafiz Naemur Rehman, who was leading the rally, accused Indian intelligence agencies for the attack. Interestingly, the Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army (SRA) claimed responsibility for the attack through its social media account later.

There is a continuous spike in attacks on religious minorities, sectarian violence and attacks on civil society activists in Pakistan. It is believed that Imran Khan government has been indirectly encouraging this to divert public attention from its utter failure to control involvement of the Army in all the internal matters and growing economic crisis.

## MAJOR EVENTS

**August 01:** Five suspected militants of the Balochistan Republican Army (BRA) died during a raid in Arbi Tibba road in Rojhan area of Punjab province. The slain militants were identified as Ghulam Hussain, Master Ali, Ramzan, Dost Muhammad and Atta Muhammad. Huge cache of arms and explosives recovered from the hideout. The police spokesperson noted that these pro-Balochistan independent movement militants had planned to attack government installations and law enforcement agencies in the district. ([Express Tribune](#))

**August 03:** A senior member of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Mahmood Khan Achakzai warned that Pashtoons would revolt against Pakistani Government if it didn't stop fencing alongside the Durand Line. He accused the Government of Pakistan of worse approach toward the Pashtoon community even than the British colony back in the 1900s. ([Afghanistan Times](#))

**August 05:** Nearly 39 people sustained injuries in a hand grenade attack by unidentified motorcyclists at the participants of a rally organised by Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) for Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir in Gulshan-e-

Iqbal. The rally was organised to show solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, near Baitul Mukarram mosque on University Road. ([The Express Tribune](#))

**August 09:** Islamic State group (IS) 's Pakistan wing has claimed a deadly attack on members of the intelligence services in Mamund area in the Bajaur district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. IS-P statement claimed its militants attacked, using machine guns killed one intelligence agent and injured another. Last month, in July, the group claimed an attack on a member of the intelligence services in Bajaur, allegedly injuring him. IS made its claim in the name of its self-proclaimed "Pakistan Province" branch, emerged in May 2019. (Hoop)

**August 12:** An Ahmadi man was shot dead in Peshawar in a religiously-motivated attack. Saleem- ud-Din, the spokesperson of the Ahmadiyya community, condemned the murder and called it a hate crime. The killing indicated about a campaign of hatred and incitement to violence against Ahmadis, making the members of the community more vulnerable to attacks. ([UCA News](#))

**August 17:** The Pakistani Taliban (Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), have brought two splinter groups Jamat-ul-Ahrar (JuA) and Hizb-ul-Ahrar (HuA) back into their fold. A joint statement issued said days after anti-militant operations in Pakistan had brought "hard-earned success". The reunion with appears significant given the rise in militant attacks against security forces, most claimed by the TTP, including some suicide bombings. Pakistani army spokesman Major General Babar Iftikhar said last week however that the military's operations against militants had been very successful. TTP is under the leadership of Taliban commander NoorWali Mehsud is gaining strength through consistent propaganda and strategic alliance with splinter groups. ([Reuters/ Telegram](#)).



**August 19:** Pakistan Rangers Sindh and police carried out a joint operation in Karachi's Baldia Town and killed two suspected militants in an 'encounter' who had recently arrived from Afghanistan allegedly to carry out terror attacks in the metropolis. ([Dawn](#))

**August 22:** Pakistan Government has placed sanction on more than 88 individuals suspected associated with different terrorist groups, including Islamic State, Al Qaeda and Taliban. The Government has also seized the bank accounts and properties of the individuals in the country. It is pertinent to mention here that the 88 individuals were included in the

terrorists' list issued by the United Nations (UN) a few days back. In a statement, the Foreign Office had said, Pakistan is "implementing the sanctions in compliance with the relevant UNSC resolutions, and we hope that other countries will also follow suit." The Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) put Pakistan on the grey list in June 2018 and asked Islamabad to implement a plan of action by the end of 2019, but the deadline was extended later due to COVID-19 pandemic. ([Daily Times](#))

**August 29:** Pakistan's anti-terrorism court in Lahore, convicted three members of Islamic Charity Jama'at ud Dawa (JuD) in a new case of terror financing registered by the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD). The JuD leaders Malik Zafar Iqbal, Hafiz Abdul Salam and Hafiz Abdul Rehman Makki, were charged under various sections of Anti-Terrorism Act 1997. The court awarded collective imprisonment of 16-and-a-half years to Iqbal and Salam while one-and-a-half-year jail term to Makki. ([AP News/ Dawn](#))

## SRI LANKA



The Island state successfully conducted the parliamentary elections even amidst the COVID-19 situation. The Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) emerged as the largest party with 145 seats, just five seats short of a two-thirds majority. This victory has come within nine months after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, SLPP's front leader, was elected to power, with about 52 per cent majority.

The election results once again prove that Rajapaksa brothers have used Sinhala nationalism to gain votes against minorities. The leaders used the same electoral tactics to win the presidential election last year. Since both the leaders are known for their anti-minority stance, there is a perceived fear among the minorities like Tamils, Muslims and Christians of losing their basic rights in the country.

### MAJOR EVENTS

**August 07:** Sri Lanka President's party Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) swept the parliamentary elections held on August 05 to elect 196 members to the 225-member parliament. The SLPP received 6,853,693 votes and secured 128 electoral seats. The Sri Lanka People's Front won the elections with a majority of 4,081,709 votes. The Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), the breakaway party from the United National Party (UNP) led by Sajith Premadasa came in second with 2,771,984 votes winning 47 electoral seats and received seven national list slots totalling 54 seats in the 9th parliament. ([Colombo Page](#))

**August 19:** Sri Lanka's new cabinet approved the proposal of the new Government to abolish the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. The previous Government introduced the bill. Prior arrangement imposed a two-term limit on the Presidency and curtailed the executive powers of President and transferred it to parliament and independent commissions. ([Colombo Page](#))

**August 19:** Nilantha Jayawardena said to the Presidential Commission of Inquiry (PCoI), probing the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks that India was a haven for National Thowheed Jamaat (NTJ) leader Zahran Hashim and his associates. According to Jayawardena, former State Intelligence Service (SIS) Director SDIG, Zahran and his associates had travelled to India several times and had stayed there before the attacks. ([Global Tamil News](#))

**August 25-31:** The Presidential Commission of Inquiry summoned the former Sri Lankan President and current MP-elect Maithripala Sirisena on August 26, 2020. Earlier, the Commission has summoned former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe to appear before the Police Unit on August 21, 2020. The PCoI has also summoned eight lawmakers including former Ministers Akila Viraj Kariyawasam and Ranjith Madduma Bandara, to appear before the Police Investigation Unit of the Commission. Former Member of Parliament (MP) Sunil Handunneththi is notified to appear before the Commission on August 28, and former Minister Akila Viraj Kariyawasam was summoned to be present on August 31. Former Minister Ranjith Bandara and former MP Ashu Marasinghe are scheduled to appear on September 02 while former Minister Mangala Samaraweera and MP Sivanesathurai Chandrakanthan will be summoned on September 03. Minister Keheliya Rambukwella is expected to give statements on September 07, and State Minister Dilum Amunugama is scheduled on September 08, 2020. ([Colombo Page](#); [News Wire](#))



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

**The South Asia Conflict Monitor** 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 the general reader by filtering relevant open source information and intelligence gathered from the ground contacts and sources.

**The South Asia Conflict Monitor** is scheduled to be published at the beginning of each calendar month, assessing events and developments of the previous month.

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The Society for the Study of Peace and Conflict (SSPC) is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan research organization based in New Delhi, dedicated to conduct rigorous and comprehensive research, and work towards disseminating information through commentaries and analyses on a broad spectrum of issues relating to peace, conflict and human development. SSPC has been registered under the Societies Registration Act (XXI) of 1860. The SSPC came into being as a platform to exchange ideas, to undertake quality research, and to ensure a fruitful dialogue.

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