

# SOUTH ASIA CONFLICT MONITOR

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## Karachi: Pakistan's Soft Underbelly

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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

The Monitor (SACM) is scheduled to be published at the beginning of each calendar month, assessing events and developments of the previous month.

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## Karachi: Pakistan's Soft Underbelly

The port city of Karachi remains Pakistan's most disturbed area. Until the completion of national and provincial assembly elections in May 2013, observers have opined that the violence in the city could be related to elections. However, the continuation of the targeted killings and bombings after the elections suggests that there is something beyond political vendetta and factional feud. The targeted nature of killings again reflects that the city has developed some serious inter-sectarian atmosphere. According to a media research report, around 273 people were abducted until June 2013 and their dead bodies were found in gunny bags.

The city has been experiencing a heightened level of violence since Pakistani Taliban (Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan and its factions) found it as a safe haven in the recent years, especially after the military offensive and drones strike in their strongholds. The attempts on the life of Sindh High Court Judge Justice Maqbool Baqar in late June exposed the chinks in Karachi's security armour. Though Justice Baqar had survived, the attack caused widespread damage to life and property at the Burns Road in the city. This also demonstrated the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)'s strong presence in the port city. The TTP claimed responsibility and reasoned that the attack was carried out due to Baqar's anti-Taliban judgments; TTP also threatened similar attacks against similar elements within the judiciary.

The city known for its migrant populations has a long history of sectarian schism and flourishing criminal syndicates. Once upon a time the capital of Pakistan, Karachi started witnessing massive demographic changes and a perennial sectarian violence since early 1990s. A demographical analysis of the city points out that the city has presence of Shia, Sunni, Pathan, Mohajir and Pashtun/Pathan. The Pathans are mostly engaged in transport business and Mohajirs are in small scale business activities. They have both ethnic and business rivalry. These groups have been fighting amongst themselves for quite some time. Since the Mohajir is largest population in Karachi, other groups for example the Pashtun community, which is consists of 20-25 percent of Karachi population, feel marginalised. Of late, the Pashtun assertion has led to sectarian violence in Karachi. The political parties including MQM and its factions, ANP and PPP, operating from Karachi are also divided on ethnic line. While the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) represents the Mohajir community, the Awami National Party (ANP) represents Pashtun population. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) gets supports from Sindhi and Baloch groups. The competition for capturing power in this bustling commercial city between these political parties also lead to confrontation and violence.

However, the presence and consolidation of TTP in the last couple of years has aggravated the conflict further. Until recently, the militant groups from the tribal areas (e.g. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) were using Karachi as shelter zone or for hibernating ground. Gradually they found the city as strategic resource zone for their terror campaigning. In Karachi, according to a media report, the TTP has already established a network of area-wise leaders: Khan Zaman Mehsud and Qari Yar Mohammed operate out of Ittehad Town; Sher Khan Mehsud in Sultanabad, Manghopir; Yaqoob Mehsud from Rasheedabad, Baldia; Naimatullah Mehsud Ameer and Saeed Alam of Sohrab Goth who is also the in-charge of the TTP's target killing unit. (The News, June 24, 2013)

Along with Taliban, the most violent anti Shia terrorist group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami (HuJI) and Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) have strong presence in Karachi. The LeJ which is known for sectarian violence in Pakistan works along with TTP and HuJI in Sindh province. They take advantage of already existing fault lines in the city.

Since most of the killings are happening by unidentified gun men or after abduction, it suggests that most of these killings are politically motivated in sectarian line. There is a pattern that most of the major incidents are happened either in the month of May or October. While earlier most of the violence was occurred due to fighting between Shia and Sunni sects, now the conflict was spread to other sects.

There is a perception in Karachi, that the new National government is very soft on the Islamists militant and radical religious groups. Except Taliban's overtures which need strong military countermeasures, since most of the incidents are politically motivated, the problem should be tackled politically. Moreover, there is also need of two-pronged strategy for establishing lasting peace in the city. While a large number of militant groups and anti-social elements are stationed in Karachi, there is a need of intelligence based action against them. Simultaneously, as confidence building measure, the government should initiate intra and inter sectarian dialogue for reconciliation and peace.

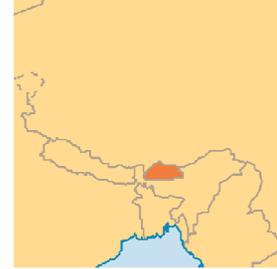
**Karachi: Major Terrorist Incidents: 2003-2013**

- October 03, 2003: Six employees of Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission were killed on Hub River Road in Mauripur, Karachi.
- May 07, 2004: 15 worshipers were killed in a suicide bomb attack on a Shia mosque in Sindh Madrassatul Islam.
- May 31, 2004: 16 worshipers were killed in a suicide bomb attack on Imambargah Ali Raza mosque.
- May 31, 2005: Six bodies were recovered from a fast food outlet set ablaze by an angry mob after an attack on a Shia mosque in Karachi.
- March 02, 2006: A suicide car bomb attack near the US consulate killed four people, including a US diplomat.
- April 11, 2006: Over 50 people were killed in a bomb explosion at a religious gathering at Nishtar Park.
- October 18, 2007: An attack on Benazir Bhutto's convoy killed 140 people.
- January 14, 2008: Nearly 10 people were killed when a bicycle bomb exploded in Quaidabad.
- December 28, 2009: At least 42 people were killed when a bomber struck the Shiite procession at MA Jinnah Road.
- February 05, 2010: At least 13 people killed in a blast in mini bus near Nursery Road.
- October 17, 2010: Around 22 people were killed in violence during polling for a by-election.
- October 20, 2010: At least 16 people were killed in political and ethnic violence.
- November 11, 2010: Around 20 people were killed in a suicide bomb attack targeting Karachi's Criminal Investigation Department building.
- April 21, 2011: 22 people killed in a blast at Rammy Club in Lyari.
- May 22, 2012: 13 persons were killed and 35 others injured in an attack by unidentified armed militants during a rally by the Awami Tehreek at Napier road in Karachi.
- April 20, 2012: Around 18 civilians were killed and 10 others were injured in ethnic violence in Orangi town area of Karachi.
- March 03, 2013: 80 people have been killed and over a hundred injured in an explosion in Abbas Town.

## COUNTRY ROUND UP

### BHUTAN

Following the primary round of General elections in the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan, two largest parties including the ruling Druk Phuensum Tshogpa party (DPT) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) have been preparing for the July 13 final rounds of the election which will decide the future shape of the 47-member National Assembly. The DPT has secured highest number of votes in the first round which underscores good governance and familiarity of its candidates at the grassroots level. Although PDP stood second in the contest, its overall performance has improved from the 2008 Elections. Quite certainly, the results of first round of elections has divided Bhutan into two political lines as the DPT and PDP are identified as parties of east and west respectively. In comparison to last (March 2008) National Assembly elections, this time, both the parties had accused each other of 'horse trading' by approaching candidates from other political parties, who could not qualify to the primary round of the National Assembly elections. Some top leaders of the Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT) confirmed that seven party candidates, including president of the DNT, have already joined the PDP. The DPT has lodged a complaint before the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) over the development as a possible formation of a coalition government between the PDP and DNT. Responding to the allegations, PDP defended the decision by saying that the candidates have joined the PDP according to the provision of the ECB's laws. Despite serious political competition and criticism, no violent incidents have been reported till end of June.



The reports of alleged Chinese intrusions surfaced in late June created much debate in the Indian media with concerns regarding the motives behind China's territorial overtures in Bhutan. A purported Indian intelligence note indicated Chinese People's Liberation Army personnel are stationed in the Sakteng (Trashigang district) and the Pang La areas (Lhuentse district), carrying out regular patrols. However, though Bhutan remains silent over the issue for the time being, there is a possibility of a direct dialogue between Bhutan and China for resolving the long standing border issues.

#### Major Events

**June 01:** The Election Commission of Bhutan declared results of primary round of National

Assembly elections. Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) are declared to run for the General round of elections with 93,949 votes and 68,650 votes, respectively. The voter turnout during the primary round was over 55 percent (Bhutan Broadcasting Service, June 01, 2013).

**June 06:** People's Democratic Party and Druk Phuensum Tshogpa have approached some of the candidates of the two political parties, who did not make it through the Primary Round (Bhutan Broadcasting Service, June 06, 2013).

**June 08:** The Resident travel document holders of Bhutan are reportedly being denied air travel into and out of India. Indian immigration has stopped recognising the document since September 2012. The resident travel document is an identification document used for travelling issued to foreigners legally married to Bhutanese and their legitimate children. The document is also issued to those, whose citizenship status is under review or under process (Kuensel Online, June 08, 2013).

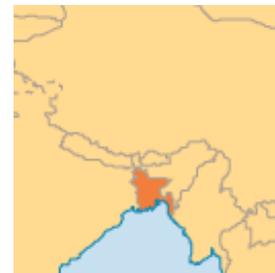
**June 11:** Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) has put a complaint letter to the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) about negotiation for a possible coalition government by People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT) (Bhutan Broadcasting Service, June 11, 2013).

**June 12:** The seven former candidates of Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT) joined People's Democratic Party (PDP) (Bhutan Broadcasting Service, June 12, 2013).

**June 13:** Bhutan is among the 20 most peaceful countries in the world, as per the 2013 Global Peace Index (GPI), a research done by the Institute of Economics and Peace (Sydney, Australia) that measures peace globally. (Kuensel Online, June 13, 2013)

## BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, as part of the resistance to the present Awami League (AL) led government and mobilising support in favour of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)-led opposition alliance, the opposition parties with the support of their various front organisations continued *Hartal* (general strikes) throughout June 2013. Religious political party, Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) and its student front Islami



Chhatra Shibir (ICS) have carried out a series of protests and strikes demanding release of their arrested leaders. An unaccounted number of people were injured and public property was damaged during these strikes. The anti-government movement had strengthened further with wining of BNP led alliance supported candidates in the four city (Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Barisal) corporation polls. The opposition victory in the corporation elections could be an indication of public reactions to pro-secular Awami League (AL) government. In 2008, the Awami League candidates won corporation elections by defeating the BNP candidates. Later, the AL emerged as wining party in the Parliamentary election in the same year. During the city corporation election campaigning, the opposition parties and religious groups came together.

Members of the opposition parties reportedly carried *Koran* during the campaigning and asked people not to vote in favour of atheist, especially pro-Shabagh supporters.

The opposition also took advantage of corruption, mis-governance, failure of government to stock market manipulations and not taking action against some corrupt ministers. The opposition parties also presented the rigid position of the ruling party over formation of a neutral care taker government for the elections. Most

importantly, the strained relationship between the Awami League and Gramin Bank generated huge anti-government opinion in rural areas. The corporation poll results have emboldened the confidence of the opposition parties. Reports indicated that after opposition-backed candidate Mosaddeque Hossain Bulbul became

Rajshahi's Mayor, the Shibir activists tried to take control of the Rajshahi University campus.

#### Profile: Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT)



*"Five Lions of Ummah": Suspected members of Ansarullah Bangla Team*

A relatively new entrant in the Islamist landscape of Bangladesh, the Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) has surfaced during the Shahabag movement. Though its actual emergence remains in mystery, Ansarullah Bangla Team came to light in early March 2013 during the interrogation of five students enrolled at a prestigious university in Dhaka. However, the ABT could be well in place much before at least on the Web, if we follow the translated Jihadi literatures they published online that dated back to December 2010. All five members were arrested in connection with the brutal murder of prominent blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider, who played a key role in organizing the Shahabag movement. In early April 2013, the detective branch arrested four more ABT members for attempting to murder another blogger, Asif Mohiuddin. Police got their first clue of ABT's existence from the Ansar al-Mujahideen English language forum, an al Qaeda-affiliated website that posted news of the arrested students under the heading "Five Lions of the Ummah."

There are media inputs about ABT's shadowy links with Islami Chhatra Shibir and inspirations from Yemen's slain terror ideologue Anwar Awlaki. Bangladesh is not new to al Qaeda or its affiliates like Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Awlaki had influenced Rajib Karim, an expatriate Bengali who had a brief stint in the Airline industry in United Kingdom. Rajib, an alleged member of Jam'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), lived in the United Kingdom and was employed as an information technology expert with British Airways. Rajib's activities involved raising money and making propaganda videos for JMB.

#### Resources:

1. "Ansarullah Bengali Team – Presents – Eradicate Democracy" <http://mujahideenmedia.wordpress.com/2013/02/18/ansarullah-bengali-team-presents-eradicate-democracy/>
2. Blogger Rajib's 'killers' linked to al-Qaeda: DB, Daily Star, March 15, 2013.
3. "Ansarullah Bengali Team JIHAD! The Misconceptions Cleared", You Tube Video < <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBlld85g2UQ>>
4. "Five Lions of Ummah," <http://ansar1.info/showthread.php?t=44971>

Meanwhile, the opposition alliance is planning to put more pressure on government to accept to form a non-party caretaker government. The alliance may undertake massive campaigning against the Awami League by seeking support from Islamist groups. Predictably, the prevalent situation would pave the way for the underground militant elements especially affiliated with Jam'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami-Bangladesh (HuJi-B) or Hizb-ut Tahirir (HuT-B) to come out in the open to support the Pro Islamist political alliance against the present government.

### Major Events

**June 02:** Law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh are asked to keep a close and constant surveillance on at least 40 Islamist groups. According to the intelligence inputs, Islamist outfits are planning to launch attacks to destabilise the present government. (Dhaka Tribune, June 02, 2013)

**June 04:** Jamaat-e-Islami enforced a half-day shutdown in eight districts of Rajshahi division protesting the arrest of its Central committee (Majlish-e-Shura) member Rafiqul Islam (Daily Star, June 05, 2013).

**June 10:** Jamaat-e-Islami activists clashed with police in different districts during countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal leaving four people including two police injured in Sirajganj (The Daily Star, June 11, 2013).

**June 10:** Two powerful bombs exploded at Shahabag Square in the capital Dhaka during Jamaat-e-Islami protest rally. Protesters clashed with police in several towns and set several vehicles on fire to enforce the strike (The Hindu, June 10, 2013).

**June 13:** Police arrested 21 suspected militants, including 10 students of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, from a hotel at Thatari Bazar, Dhaka. (Daily Star, June 14, 2013).

**June 15:** Bangladesh opposition party (BNP) led alliance supported candidates won majority of councilor positions in the four city- Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Barisal- corporation polls (Newagebd.com, June 17, 2013).

**June 20:** A Dhaka court sentenced 10 Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) operatives to death by hanging for killing eight people in a suicide bomb attack on Gazipur court premises on November 29, 2005. The militants of the proscribed organisation are Enayetullah, Arifur Rahman, Murshidul ul Islam, Saidur Munshi, Abdullah Al Shohail, Nizamuddin Reza, Tayebur Rahman, Ashraful Islam, Md Shafullah and Adnan Sami (Dhaka Tribune, June 20, 2013).

**June 24:** Two people have been killed during a gunfight between the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Jubo League over a railway tender in Chittagong (Newagebd.com, June 24, 2013).

**June 27:** Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS), the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami observed hartal in four districts (Newagebd.com, June 26, 2013).

**June 28:** Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) has threatened to enforce a countrywide daylong shutdown on June 30 if its leaders and activists including central President Delwar Hossain are not released by June 29 (The Daily Star, June 28, 2013).

**June 29:** Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, reiterated that the next national elections would be held the way they were conducted in other democracies (Newagebd.com, June 30, 2013).

**June 29:** Five persons were injured in a skirmish involving the police and Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) operatives in Rajshahi during a procession demanding release of its top leaders (Bdnews24.com, June 29, 2013).

## INDIA

In India, three major conflict theatres: Jammu & Kashmir, East and Central India infested with Left wing extremism (Naxalite violence or Maoist insurgency) and Northeastern (NE) region had witnessed low to moderate level of violence in June 2013. While the Union government had managed the conflicts in the NE region by engaging several insurgent groups in peace talk negotiations, other two conflict regions especially in J&K experienced a sudden rise of violent incidents. Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK) based Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militants have carried out several targeted attacks on Indian security forces in J&K. In one such violent attack, eight Army personnel were killed and 19 others were injured when an Army convoy was ambushed in the Bemina area of Srinagar on June 25. The incident took place on the eve of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress party President Sonia Gandhi's visit to that State. The attack suggests that the militants still have strong local support base in the areas surrounding Srinagar. Apart from the increased militancy, the State also experienced public protests against killings of two youths in alleged fake encounters with security forces. Public anger and occasional civil unrests have been manipulated by PAK based militants very often in J&K against the security forces and government apparatus.



There was also increase in Maoist violence in the eastern and central part of India. A total seven persons, including three security personnel were killed in four major incidents in June. The Maoists also targeted the public transport system and corporate houses during this period. The attack on the Dhanbad-Patna Intercity Express near Kundhar halt in Jamui district of Bihar was one of them. After the incident, the Union Government re-arranged the ongoing counterinsurgency operations by sending one more battalion of paramilitary forces to Bihar. The

Union Government also organised special meetings of Maoist affected Chief Ministers for better coordination to counter the Maoist rebels.

Meanwhile, Indian government reportedly negotiated successfully with United Liberation Front of Assom (ULFA)'s Arabinda Rajkhowa faction. According to the government sources, during the negotiation, the rebel group abandoned its demand for "Sovereignty" and the government agreed to amend the Constitution to grant safeguards for the identity of some schedule tribes in Assam. Not only with the ULFA, has the government successfully reduced the level of conflict in NE region by initiating peace talks with other insurgent groups. The successful mainstreaming of Rajkhowa faction would have some positive impact on other insurgent groups. Interestingly, ULFA's most violent Paresh Barua faction is yet to accept the peace talk proposal. The faction is still adamant on the sovereignty issue and responsible for major subversive activities in Assam.

#### Major Events

**June 02:** Seven people were injured in a grenade attack by Hizbul Mujahideen militant at Mehandi Kadal in Anantnag area of Jammu and Kashmir (Daily Excelsior, June 05, 2013).

**June 05:** Suspected tribal militants burnt down a bus of Meghalaya Transport Corporation (MTC) in North Garo Hills district, Meghalaya. No one was injured in the incident (Times of India, June 06, 2013).

**June 05:** Union Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde expressed concern about attempts by Pakistan to revive Sikh militancy and the Khalistan movement in Punjab (Hindu, June 5, 2013).

**June 13:** The Maoists killed three persons including a Vice President of Lloyds near Nender village in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra (Hindu, June 13, 2013).

**June 13:** At least three people including two security force personnel were killed during a Maoist attack on the Dhanbad-Patna Intercity Express (Rail) near Kundhar halt in Jamui district of Bihar. The Maoists managed to loot three self-loading rifles (SLR) (IBN Live, June 13, 2013).

**June 14:** The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has suspended its activities in Maoist affected Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh following the government order. (Hindu, June 14, 2013).

**June 17:** The Union Government has sent a battalion of Sashastra Seema Bal (Armed Border Force or SSB) to Bihar for undertaking anti-Maoist operations after recent attack on a passenger train (Hindu, June 17, 2013).

**June 21:** A police personnel was killed and 3 others were injured in a Maoist attack on police patrolling party in Konda Goan district of Chhattisgarh (Hindustan Times, June 21, 2013).

**June 23:** Two police personnel were injured in a Maoist attack in the Narayanpur district of

Chhattisgarh (Times of India, June 23, 2013).

**June 24:** Negotiation between ULFA (Arabinda Rajkhowa faction) and Government has reached a decisive phase and the key agreement points have been: safeguarding the identity of the people of Assam, land protection, and resolution of the problem of reported illegal immigration from Bangladesh (Hindustan Times, June 24; Hindustan Times June 27, 2013).

**June 25:** Eight Army personnel were killed and 19 others were injured in an attack on Army convoy by suspected Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists at Hyderabad bypass on the Airport-Lal Chowk road (Bemina area) of Srinagar (Zee News, June 25, 2013).

**June 28:** Manipur Naga Revolutionary Front and the United Naga People's Council have decided to unanimously dissolve the two groups and form the Manipur Naga People's Front (Kangla Online.com, June 28, 2013).

**June 30:** Local people organised protest over killing of two youths allegedly in Army firing in Sumbal area of North Kashmir's Bandipora district (India Today.in, June 30, 2013).

**June 30:** Three ULFA and nine Rabha Viper Army (RVA) cadres laid down arms at an official surrender event in Goalpara of Assam (New Indian Express.com, June 30, 2013).

## MALDIVES

As the election date is getting nearer in Maldives, the division in the Maldivian society on religious and secular lines is getting intense. It seems the ruling coalition government is feeling insecure about their electoral prospects due to growing popularity of Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) and its leader Muhammed Nasheed. In an effort to create terror amongst the MDP supporters, a group of unidentified youth reportedly close to some opposition party disrupted MDP gathering in the Henveiru ward of the capital Male.



In another incident, the Adhaalath Party (AP) tried to malign the MDP by criticising the Male' City Council's restriction of the time allowed for religious lectures. The MDP reportedly has majority in the city council. The members of the ruling coalition have been consistently trying to seek public support by projecting MDP and its Presidential candidate Nasheed as an atheist. Meanwhile, the ruling coalition government dismissed two ministers from Dhivehi Qaumeey Party. The dismissed ministers have alleged that the President Mohammed Waheed Hassan Manik has expelled them because they refused to support him in the forthcoming September 2013 general elections.

### Major Events

**June 19:** The Government dismissed Deputy Tourism Minister Mohamed Maleeh Jamal and Minister of State for Economic Development Abdulla Ameen at the insistence of the Dhivehi

Qaumeer Party (DQP) (Minivan News.com, June 19, 2013).

**June 24:** About a dozen young men with placards and a megaphone disrupted a Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) gathering in the Henveiru ward of Male' and "actively tried to incite violence" (Minivan News.com, June 25, 2013).

**June 26:** Nearly two-thirds of Maldivians support a moratorium on flogging, a survey conducted by Asia Research Partners and social activism website Avaaz.org has indicated. The survey found 92 percent of Maldivians believe that laws and systems to protect women from sexual assault should be reformed (Minivan News.com, June 26, 2013).

**June 30:** Adhaalath Party has raised concern regarding the opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) controlled Male' City Council's restriction of the time allowed for religious lectures (Miadhu.com, June 30, 2013).

## NEPAL

Amid opposition to the Chief Justice-led government and its decisions on the Constituent Assembly elections, the Interim Election Council has formally announced November 19 as the date for polls for electing a new Constituent Assembly. Following the announcement, the CPN-Maoist led 33 agitating parties decided to undertake a series of protest programmes until their demands are addressed. They also challenged



the interim government to conduct the elections without their consent. The CPN-Maoist consistently refused to join the dialogue process unless its minimum demands of postponing the election process and the "haphazard" distribution of citizenship certificates process is withdrawn. Meanwhile, making the November election more uncertain, the CPN-Maoists in a central committee meeting in Pokhara on June 29 declared that the party would boycott the elections and the party should be ready for retaliation in case any action taken by the government to arrest the party members.

Despite the non-cooperation from the agitating parties, four major political parties were busy in election preparations by discussing for pre-poll alliances with other political and front organisations. There are speculations that unless the agitating parties' grievances are addressed, the elections may not be peaceful.

### Major Events

**June 14:** The Interim Election Council has announced November 19 as the date for polls for electing a new Constituent Assembly (CA) (Republica, June 14, 2013).

**June 14:** The 33-party alliance led by CPN-Maoist (Baidya faction) and Federal Democratic Front, Nepal (FDFN) has unveiled a series of the protest programs for June 15 as a protest to the government's announcement of fresh date for Constituent Assembly elections (Republica, June 15, 2013).

**June 15:** Disqualified former Maoist combatants have warned of disrupting the second Constituency Assembly polls scheduled for November 19, 2013. They have formed an 8th division of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) (Republica, June 16, 2013).

**June 23:** A meeting of the Federal Democratic Republican Alliance (FDRA) led by UCPN (Maoist) Pushpa Kamal Dahal failed to take a decision relating to forming poll alliance as the Madhesi alliance has yet to come up with its stance on the issue (Republica, June 23, 2013).

**June 25:** The CPN-Maoist led 33-party alliance has adopted the second round of nationwide protests against the elections in November "without consultation with them" (Ekantipur.com, June 25, 2013).

**June 29:** UCPN (Maoist) Vice-chairman Baburam Bhattarai resigned to 'build a culture of sacrifice inside the party and promote a new generation' (Ekantipur.com, June 30, 2013).

**June 29:** The CPN-Maoist (Vaidya faction) formally announced to boycott the November 19 Constituent Assembly elections during the party's Central Committee meeting in Pokhara (Ekantipur.com, June 30, 2013).

## PAKISTAN

Post election Pakistan has experienced a brief lull in violent activities. However, the Islamist militants have unleashed a wave of attacks in June. The newly formed Nawaz Sharif led PML-N government have failed to unveil any new counter insurgency strategy to tackle various militant groups operating in Pakistan with impunity. An unaccounted number of civilians and security forces were killed in suicide attacks carried out by Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). In a major tactical shift, the militants have changed their focus towards the security forces (SF) personnel now, moving from their earlier target which largely centered on attacking secular politicians during the elections.



In tribal areas, a large number of militants were killed in counter insurgency operations in June. In retaliation, militant groups resorted to suicide bombings targeting both civilians and security forces. For example, LeJ militants have targeted a bus carrying women students on June 15 in retaliation to the Kharotabad incident where at least five people got killed including three militants. This retribution attacks owned by LeJ involved multiple bombings, indiscriminate

shootings and a hostage situation in which 25 people, including 14 female students and the deputy commissioner Quetta, were killed. According to the reports, while a female suicide bomber targeted the bus, armed militants targeted the Bolan Medical Complex where injured were taken for treatment.

In an effort to expedite attacks on foreigners, the TTP along with Lashkar-e-Jhangvi have formed a Jihadi strike force 'Junud-e-Hafsa' (Junood ul Hafsa) to take revenge against the drone operations in the Tribal areas and the killing of TTP's Waliur Rehman Mehsud. The TTP affiliated group unleashed a brutal attack on a tourist camp base in Nanga Parbat area of Gilgit-Balitistan, killing 10 foreign nationals on June 23. Pakistan based Jundullah too claimed responsibility. This incident has demonstrated that the federal government has little control over the security at remote areas of the country. The Gilgit-Balistan region along with other favorite hot spots like Swat valley for International mountaineers and adventure travelers are not safe which ultimately affect Pakistan's fledgling tourism industry.

Apart from Islamist violence against foreigners and Pakistani establishment, the sectarian violence was rampant in June. Scores of people were killed in targeted sectarian and group rivalry in Karachi.

According to a study, around 273 people were killed till June 2013. Lyari and its adjoining areas

### Junood-ul Hafsa



*Asmatullah Moavia*

Junood-ul Hafsa (also Junud-e-Hifsa or 'the union of Jamia Hafsa') a relatively new militant organization closely affiliated with the Taliban and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) was reportedly responsible for June 23 killing of 10 foreign nationals (adventure tourists) and their local guide in Gilgit-Balistan area, located in the Northern areas of Pakistan. Those foreigners killed were American, Chinese, Ukrainian, Slovakian, Lithuanian and Nepali nationals (Express Tribune, June 24, 2013). After the macabre incident, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an umbrella group of Pakistani Taliban, spokesperson Ehsanullah Ehsan called media outlets saying the group's faction named Junood-ul-Hafsa carried out the brutal attack. According to him the attack was perpetrated to avenge the killing of TTP's deputy chief, Maulvi Wali ur-Rehman who was killed along with six militants on May 29, 2013 in a US drone attack in Miranshah, North Waziristan.

Details about the new group remain a mystery. As the name suggests JuH is named after the religious seminary Jamia Hafsa linked with the Islamabad-based Lal Masjid. The group perhaps comprised of militants who are aiming to avenge the July 2007 siege of Islamabad's Lal Masjid (Red Mosque). The group is now perhaps operating in close coordination Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and TTP. It is possible that JuH too operates with other Punjabi Taliban groups like Ghazi Force. According to available reports JuH formed by the TTP and now commanded by Asmatullah Moavia. (The News, June 25, 2013). Moavia who is a native of Vehari (Multan) in the Punjab province, responsible for establishing the Punjab chapter of TTP. With past linkages with Anti Shia Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and Jaish e Muhammed (JeM), Moavia has been instrumental in numerous sectarian and targeted killings.

remain sensitive with highest number of violent incidents. Even the MQM protest to the Karachi killings in National Assembly on June 19 didn't bring any reprieve to the heightened threat situation.

### Major Events

**June 02:** General Secretary Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP) of Attock (Punjab), Daud Mustafai, was killed and three others were injured in indiscriminate firing by some unidentified person at the village Pindsultani in Attock (Nation, June 02, 2013).

**June 06:** Around five people were killed and 15 security personnel were injured in encounter with suspected Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) militants in the Kharoatabad area of the provincial capital Quetta. (Express Tribune June 07, 2013).

**June 06:** Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) supporters declared general shutdown of Karachi in response to mourn the murders of the three MQM supporters, who were kidnapped and killed on June 05 (Gulf News.com, June 06, 2013).

**June 09:** Twelve people including three police personnel were killed and 30 others injured in targeted killing incidents and hand grenade attacks in different areas of Karachi (Pak Asia Times, June 10, 2013).

**June 13:** Nearly 12 people were shot dead in separate incidents of sectarian violence in Karachi (Nation, June 14, 2013).

**June 15:** Around 25 civilians were killed in twin suicide bomb attacks by the banned Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) in Quetta (Daily Times, June 17, 2013).

**June 15:** Militants have bombed the resident of Pakistan's founding president Mohammad Ali Jinnah at Ziarat (Quetta). The bomb attacks have destroyed the historic monument (Dawn, June 15, 2013).

**June 16:** Three police personnel were killed in a militant attack in the Muslim Bagh area of Qilla Saifullah district of Balochistan (Daily Times, June 17, 2013).

**June 16:** Ten people, including suspected commander of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), security force personnel and three political workers were killed in separate incidents of target killing in Karachi (Daily Times, June 17, 2013).

**June 16:** The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was reportedly asked local businessmen in Rawalpindi to pay 'protection money' to them to help militants carry out 'jihad' (Dawn, June 17, 2013).

**June 18:** Five people were killed in sectarian violence in different areas of Karachi (Dawn, June 18, 2013).

**June 18:** Around 34 civilians were killed, including a provincial lawmaker of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and over 50 people injured in suicide bomb blast during a funeral procession near Mardan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (Dawn, June 18, 2013).

**June 18:** Three civilians, including a worker of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), were shot dead in Karachi. (Dawn, June 19, 2013).

**June 19:** At least 10 people including three political workers were killed in Karachi in separate sectarian violence (Nation, June 20, 2013).

**June 19:** Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) walked out of National Assembly protesting the extra-judicial killings in Karachi and apathetic attitudes of the authorities (The News, June 19, 2013).

**June 19:** Six security personnel were killed and three injured when a military convoy was ambushed by militants in Sara Khwaara area of Peshawar (Dawn, June 20, 2013).

**June 23:** 10 foreign tourists (two Chinese, one Chinese-American, three Ukrainians, two Slovaks, one Lithuanian, one Nepalese) and their Pakistani guide/cook have been killed in suspected Junood-ul Hifsa (JuF) militants in attack in Gilgit-Baltistan. JuF is believed to be affiliated with Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ) and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan's (TTP). Pakistan based Jundallah too claimed responsibility for the killings. (Express Tribune, June 23, 2013; Dawn, June 24, 2013)

**June 24:** Three persons were killed in two separate violent incidents in Peshawar (Dawn, June 24, 2013).

**June 23:** Frontier Corps claimed that it killed six militants, including a commander, in an encounter in Dera Bugti district (Nation, June 24, 2013).

**June 24:** Five people were killed in targeted attacks in separate incidents in Karachi (Nation, June 25, 2013).

**June 26:** Around nine people were killed and 15 others injured when a bomb targeting the convoy of Sindh High Court judge Justice Maqbool Baqir exploded near Karachi's Burns Road area (Dawn, June 26, 2013).

**June 26:** One security personnel was killed and three others were injured in a militant attack in a remote-controlled bomb blast on a Frontier Corps (FC) convoy in the Awaran district of Balochistan (Dawn, June 26, 2013).

**June 27:** Two people including the suicide bomber died in the explosion in Kuchlak area of Quetta, Balochistan (Dawn, June 27, 2013).

**June 29:** Eight people were killed in different violent incidents in Karachi. On the Same day, police killed an alleged gangster in an encounter during targeted operation in Lyari area of the city (Nation, June 29, 2013).

**June 30:** Around three persons were killed and several others injured in a firing on a bus passenger by unidentified men in the Khuzdar district of Balochistan (Dawn, June 30, 2013).

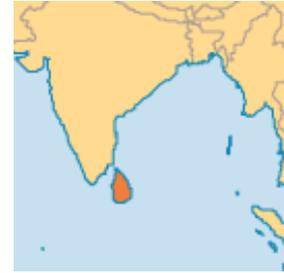
**June 30:** A massive explosion targeted at the convoy of security vehicles near Badaber police station of Peshawar resulted in the killing of 17 persons. More than 45 others were injured in the blast. In a separate incident, three security personnel were killed and 10 others injured in an

attack on a security forces' convoy in Miranshah area of North Waziristan. (Dawn, June 30, 2013).

**June 30:** The Army sources said the security forces have cleared Para Chamkani area by flushing out 75 militants from their hideout in a counter insurgency operation in Khyber Agency. Around 21 security personnel killed in the 34-day operation ( Nation, June 30, 2013).

## SRI LANKA

The 13th Amendment to the Constitution took the centre stage of political debate over ethnicity in Sri Lanka. The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and ruling coalition partner Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) had opposed the government move to bring changes in the provision. The SLMC has decided that “if the Supreme Court does not accept the SLMC argument, the party will look for the opportunity to hold a referendum regarding the police and land powers of the Provincial Councils.” Although the SLMC has clarified not to withdraw support from the government, on this issue, it has decided to contest the provincial council election alone. The TNA has already refused to join the parliamentary select committee (PSC) appointed by the government to study the 13th Amendment issue. TNA leaders suspect government intentions of bringing changes in the 13th Amendment before the elections to the Northern Province Council planned for September. The United National Party and Marxist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna have also decided not to participate in the PSC.



### Major Events

**June 06:** Tamil political party, Tamil National Alliance (TNA) opposed the government's move to amend the 13th Amendment to the Constitution (Colombo Page, June 06, 2013).

**June 16:** Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), a coalition partner of ruling alliance, warned to take legal action if the parliamentary select committee that will be appointed to revise the 13th Amendment to the Constitution approves the proposals to curtail the powers devolved to the Provincial Councils (Colombo Page.com, June 16, 2013).

**June 18:** Sri Lanka parliament passed with amendment the Registration of Electors (Special Provisions) Bill to ensure the voting rights of the displaced people in the North (Colombo Page.com, June 18, 2013).

**June 22:** Sri Lanka appointed Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) leader and Minister Nimal Siripala De Silva as chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) to study on the 13th Amendment. The committee has 19 members, all drawn from the SLFP-led United People's Freedom Alliance (Hindu, June 22, 2013).

**June 23:** Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the UN in Geneva Ravinatha Aryasinha politically mobilized pro-LTTE Diaspora prevents reconciliation in Sri Lanka (Colombo Page.com, June 23, 2013).

**June 26:** Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), a coalition party of the ruling United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA), has decided to contest the upcoming elections for provincial councils alone (Colombo Page.com, June 26, 2013).

**June 29:** The Tamil National Alliance decided not to participate in the Parliamentary Select Committee appointed to resolve the national problem (Daily Mirror, June 30, 2013).