

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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CONTENTS

In This Issue	Page
I. COUNTRY REVIEWS	
A. South Asia	2-10
B. East Asia	10-12
C. West Asia	12-16
II. DEFENCE REVIEW	16-17
III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW	18-21
IV. UN REVIEW	21-23

I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

(January 2-8, 2012)

- **Reports: Afghan Taliban reaches a preliminary agreement to set up a political office, possibly in Qatar; NATO plans to withdraw \$30 billion worth of military equipment and gear from Afghanistan**

In an important development, according to reports, Afghan Taliban have reached a preliminary agreement to set up a political office, possibly in Qatar, as part of Western plans to end the war. The move has been supported by President Karzai while western alliances like Germany and US have been pushing for such a move. The White House said it welcomed “any step along the road” towards reconciliation. President Barack Obama “has made clear that we would support and participate in Afghan-led reconciliation efforts”, said spokesman Jay Carney. But he added that reconciliation would only come if the Taliban renounced violence, broke with al-Qaeda and abided by the Afghan constitution.¹

Meanwhile, in another development, a spokesperson for NATO has said that it is planning the logistics for withdrawing \$30 billion worth of military equipment and gear from Afghanistan when alliance troops leave the country. The coalition’s state-of-the-art gear has to be taken out of Afghanistan by the end of 2014, when American and other NATO troops are to end their combat mission. The planning is still at its preliminary, he added.²

(January 9-15, 2012)

- **Kandahar police chief escapes suicide attack; Afghan Taliban: Taliban’s political wing is ready to enter peace talks to end the war in Afghanistan, but the insurgents will in the meantime continue their armed struggle**

According to reports, the police chief of Afghanistan’s troubled Kandahar province survived a suicide attack behind his office. The police chief Gen Abdul Raziq escaped unhurt due to separation from waiting room where the blast took place by a middle room. The interior ministry confirmed of the news and clarified that there has been no casualties. An investigation is underway, the ministry said in a statement without giving further details. It would be worth

¹ “Afghan Taliban back Western proposal for Qatar office”, *BBC*, January 3, 2012 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-16394107>

² “NATO to pull \$ 30 billion worth of gear from Afghanistan”, *Dawn*, January 3, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/03/nato-to-pull-30b-worth-of-gear-from-afghanistan.html>

noting that the former police chief of Kandahar, General Khan Mohammad, was killed in a suicide bombing inside the police headquarters in April 2011.³

In another development, according to reports, Taliban said in a statement that the Taliban's political wing is ready to enter peace talks to end the war in Afghanistan, but the insurgents will in the meantime continue their armed struggle. Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said the militants had been fighting for the past 15 years to establish an Islamic government in Afghanistan "in accordance with the request of its people". "It is for this purpose and for bringing about peace and stability in Afghanistan that we have increased our political efforts to come to mutual understanding with the world in order to solve the current ongoing situation," Mujahid said in an emailed statement. "But this understanding does not mean a surrender from Jihad and neither is it connected to an acceptance of the constitution of the stooge Kabul administration."⁴

Pakistan

(January 2-8, 2012)

- **President Obama signed a bill into law that could suspend a large chunk of US military aid to Pakistan; Karachi port faces severe congestion due to US ships carrying military hardware; PM Gilani reassures support for new provinces; 15 security officers killed by Taliban; PPP decides to hold senate elections in mid-February**

According to reports, US President Barack Obama has signed into law a bill that could suspend a large chunk of the \$1.1 billion military aid to the country. The suspension is part of a massive \$662 billion defence spending bill which President Obama signed on January 8, 2012 despite having "serious reservations" about some of its provisions. "The fact that I support this bill as a whole does not mean I agree with everything in it," President Obama said in a statement issued by his office.⁵

Meanwhile, according to reports, the situation at Karachi port already struggling to cope with severe congestion, may worsen as a US vessel carrying military hardware, including about 350 heavy vehicles, for NATO/ISAF forces in Afghanistan sailed into the port on December 31, 2011. Another two ships with NATO supplies, including reefer containers with refrigeration system, are due in a few days. Terminals and areas around the port are already choc a bloc with hundreds of containers unloaded post Pakistan's decision to block supply routes after drone attack that killed 24 soldiers.⁶

Reports noted that the Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani has reiterated his commitment for the creation of new provinces, including a Saraeki province and asked the chief whip in the National

³ "Kandahar police chief survives suicide attack", *Dawn*, January 11, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/11/afghanistan-police-chief-survives-suicide-attack.html>

⁴ "Peace talks don't mean an end to fighting: Afghan Taliban", *Dawn*, January 12, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/12/peace-talks-dont-mean-end-to-fighting-afghan-taliban.html>

⁵ "Restrictions on aid-new year US gift to Pakistan", *Dawn*, January 2, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/02/restrictions-on-aid-new-year-us-gift-to-pakistan.html>

⁶ "Ship with NATO supplies berths at port", *Dawn*, January 2, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/02/ship-with-nato-supplies-berths-at-port.html>

Assembly Syed Khursheed Shah to discuss it with allied parties and move a resolution in the House. The prime minister stated in the National Assembly in response to a point of order by Sardar Mehtab Ahmed Khan Abbasi of the Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N), “I am in full support of our province (Saraeki). If new provinces, including the Saraeki province, are not created during my premiership, then when it will happen,”⁷

According to reports, on January 5, 2012, militants of Pakistan Taliban killed 15 security force members, they kidnapped last month close to the Afghan border. The mens’ naked bodies were dumped in Shiwa town in the North Waziristan region, said local residents Sada-u-Alla and Salam Khan. The Taliban has said that killing was in retaliation of a military action on 1st January. The slain men were members of the Constabulary Corp, a paramilitary outfit active in the border region with Afghanistan.⁸

In other developments, according to reports, amid speculations that the coalition government may be wrapped up or face a ‘big blow’ before Senate elections scheduled for March 11, the Pakistan People’s Party leadership decided on Thursday to hold them in mid-February, a senior party member told Dawn. The decision was taken at a meeting of the PPP’s core committee, jointly presided over by President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani at the Presidency.⁹

(January 9-15, 2012)

- **Ex President Gen Musharraf vows to return to Pakistan; Pakistan Defence Secretary Naeem Lodhi sacked; Army Chief Gen Kayani meet its top commanders amidst a widening rift between the powerful armed forces and the civilian government; US urges Pakistan to “really lead and conduct a dialogue that takes the Balochistan issue forward”**

According to reports, Pakistan’s former President, Gen Pervez Musharraf, has vowed that he will return to Pakistan at the end of this month. Gen Musharraf told a rally in Karachi that he would be in Pakistan from 27 to 30 January and planned to participate in parliamentary elections, which are due by 2013. Addressing the rally in Karachi by video link from Dubai, he asked his supporters to prepare for elections. He told supporters, “I’ve been threatened and warned but I’m not one of those who gets scared or backs down... “I’ve fought wars. I’ll come to Pakistan.”. It would be worth noting that Musharraf faces arrest on arrival as he is accused of failing to provide adequate security for former PM Benazir Bhutto ahead of her assassination in 2007. Gen Musharraf, who denies any wrongdoing, has been living abroad since stepping down in 2008.¹⁰

In another development, reports noted that Prime Minister Gilani sacked Defence Secretary Naeem Lodhi. The Prime Minister’s Office said in a statement: “General Lodhi was dismissed

⁷ “PM reiterates support for creation of new provinces”, *Dawn*, January, 3 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/03/pm-reiterates-support-for-creation-of-new-provinces.html>

⁸ “Pakistani militants kill 15 security officers”, *Dawn*, January 5, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/05/pakistani-militants-kill-15-security-officers.html>

⁹ “PPP hints at early general elections”, *Dawn*, January 6, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/06/ppp-hints-at-early-general-election-2.html>

¹⁰ “Gen Pervez Musharraf to return to Pakistan”, *BBC*, January 8, 2012 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-16463671>

for gross misconduct and illegal action ... and for creating misunderstanding between institutions." The government gave additional charge of the defence ministry to Cabinet Secretary Nargis Sethi. The new defence secretary happens to be the first woman bureaucrat to lead the ministry, a position that in the past was mostly occupied by retired generals. According to analysts, this could add to already troubled civil-military relations since the "memo gate incident".¹¹

However, on the other hand, according to reports, the Chief of Army Staff General Kayani met its top commanders amidst a widening rift between the powerful armed forces and the civilian government. Military spokesman Maj. Muhammad Ali Diyal declined to say what the talks at army headquarters were about, but the meeting is likely to fuel speculation about the army's next move in the country's political and legal crisis.¹²

In other developments, according to reports, the United States has urged Pakistan to "really lead and conduct a dialogue that takes the Balochistan issue forward". State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland addressed the issue in a "twitter-briefing" that the department holds every Friday, allowing people from around the world to tweet their questions to her. "This was a very popular question on our feed, so we wanted to make sure that we answered it today," said Ms Nuland who focused on the violence plaguing Balochistan instead of tackling political issues raised in most of the tweets. "The United States is deeply concerned about the ongoing violence in Balochistan, especially targeted killings, disappearances and other human rights abuses," she added.¹³

Bangladesh

(January 2-8, 2012)

- **Foreign Minister Dipu Moni rejects the notion that Bangladesh foreign policy is India tilted; Bangladesh signs a deal with China for the construction of the seventh Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge; Bangladesh signs a \$300 million energy infrastructure loan agreement with the ADB; Pakistan high commissioner to Bangladesh meets PM Hasina**

According to reports, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, in an interview with a news agency, has dismissed the notion that the government's foreign policy was tilted towards India, but said that it is very natural that India will be one of the main focus areas of the foreign policy because of historical, geographical, political and economic factors. "It has not just been India; it is beyond India" to deal with major concerns like food security, climate change, manpower export, trade and investment, she said.¹⁴

¹¹ "Defence Secretary Naeem Lodhi sacked", *Dawn*, January 12, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/12/defence-secretary-naeem-lodhi-sacked.html>

¹² "Army Chief meets top commanders amid rising tensions", *Dawn*, January 12, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/12/army-chief-meets-top-commanders-amid-rising-tensions.html>

¹³ "US urges Pakistan to hold dialogue on Balochistan", *Dawn*, January 15, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/15/us-urges-pakistan-to-hold-dialogue-on-balochistan.html>

¹⁴ "Foreign policy not India tilted: Says Dipu Moni", *The Daily Star*, January 5, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=217094>.

In another development, according to reports, Bangladesh signed a deal with China for the construction of the Seventh Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge on the Arial Khan river in Kazirtek, Madaripur on January 3, 2012. The 700-metre long bridge over the river flowing through Madaripur and Shariatpur districts will cost Tk275 crore, of which the Chinese government will provide Tk145 crore as grant and Tk 55crore as interest free loan. The government will provide the remaining Tk 75 crore for land acquisition, resettlement and other primary works.¹⁵

Meanwhile, Bangladesh signed a \$300 million energy infrastructure loan agreement with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on January 4, 2012 to help the country address critical power shortage.¹⁶

In other developments, Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Afrasiab Mehdi Hashmi called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office on January 4, 2012.¹⁷

(January 9-15, 2012)

- **PM Hasina visits to Indian state Tripura; PM Hasina sought assistance from UNICEF; USAID will provide \$922 million to Bangladesh**

Reports noted that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited Agartala, the capital of Indian state Tripura on January 11 for two days to receive an honorary Doctorate of Literature degree from Tripura University. The visit was the first by any prime minister of Bangladesh to Tripura. Besides attending the convocation on January 12, PM Hasina attended a civic reception and meet with political leaders as well as businessmen.¹⁸ During her visit, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina proposed that India set up joint venture power plants in its northeastern state of Tripura with Bangladesh in the interest of both Delhi and Dhaka.¹⁹

In another development, according to reports, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sought assistance from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on January 9, 2012 for introducing mid-day meal and school feeding programme to check the dropout of students as well as meet their nutritional demand.²⁰

In other developemts, reportedly, the United States Agency for International Development

¹⁵ "Deal Signed: Chinese firm to build Arial Khan bridge", *The Daily Star*, January 4, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=216939>.

¹⁶ "ADB to provide \$300m for energy infrastructure", *The Daily Star*, January 5, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=217069>

¹⁷ "Pakistan High Commissioner Meets PM", *The Daily Star*, January 5, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=217013>

¹⁸ "PM visits Tripura on Jan 11", *The Daily Star*, January 9, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=217587>.

¹⁹ "Civic Reception at Agartala: Hasina for joint venture power plant in Tripura", *The Daily Star*, January 13, 2012, at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=218172>

²⁰ "School Feeding Programme: PM seeks Unicef's support", *The Daily Star*, January 10, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=217780>

(USAID) will provide \$922 million to Bangladesh over the next five years to help the country address food security, health and global climate change.²¹

Sri Lanka

(January 2-8, 2012)

- **EAM Krishna: “Security wise, we are dependent on Sri Lanka – there are large security concerns that can affect both countries in the Indian Ocean”; India to provide loan to Sri Lanka for the restoration of Northern Railway service; Navies of Sri Lanka and India held meeting to discuss fishing activities and naval operations; No charges for the SL refugees returning from Tamil Nadu; Annual average rate of inflation stabilized at the mid-single digit level at the end of 2011; IMF ready to discuss any Sri Lankan request for a follow up programme to its current US\$2.6 billion loan programme**

Indian External Affairs Minister S M Krishna said in an interview on January 1st , 2012 that “Security wise, we are dependent on Sri Lanka – there are large security concerns that can affect both countries in the Indian Ocean. We would like to continue to keep on the right side of Sri Lanka”, said.²²

Meanwhile, according to reports, the Government of India has agreed to provide a loan of US\$ 382.37 million for the restoration of Northern Railway Service.²³

Reports noted that on January 6, 2012, the Sri Lankan Navy and Indian Navy held discussions on fishing activities and naval operations in the Palk Strait and the Gulf of Mannar seas to enhance maritime security during the 20th International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) meeting.²⁴ In another development, Sri Lankan cabinet has decided not to levy any charges from Sri Lankan refugees returning from Tamil Nadu when they are issued with the necessary travel documents.²⁵

According to reports, the annual average rate of inflation stabilized at the mid-single digit level at the end of 2011 decreasing from a 6.2 percent in January 2011 to a 4.9 percent in December 2011. The contribution to the annual average increase of 6.7 per cent in the Index came mainly

²¹ “USAID pledges to spend \$922m by 2016”, *The Daily Star*, January 13, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=218157>

²² “Security wise, we are dependent on Sri Lanka” – Indian External Affairs Minister, *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, January 4, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201201/20120104security_wise.htm

²³ “Indian assistance to restore northern railway service”, *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, January 8, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201201/20120108indian_assistance_to_restore_northern_railway_service.htm

²⁴ “Indian and Lankan navies discuss fishing activities”, *The Daily Mirror*, January 6, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/15924-indian-and-lankan-navies-discuss-fishing-activities.html>.

²⁵ “No charges for refugees”, *The Daily Mirror*, January 6, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/15945-no-documentation-charges-for-refugee-returnees-from-tn.html>.

from price increases in the sub category of Food and nonalcoholic beverages, the Central Bank said in a press release on January 2, 2012.²⁶

In other developments, according to reports, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said it is ready to discuss any Sri Lankan request for a follow up programme to its current US\$2.6 billion loan programme, which is now on hold due to the island nation's failure to implement currency flexibility. The IMF has withheld the eighth tranche of the loan since September after the central bank failed to meet the global lender's repeated request to allow rupee flexibility. However, the central bank said Sri Lanka would seek a follow up or surveillance programme for its US\$59 billion economy after the current loan facility, which is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2012.²⁷

(January 9-15, 2012)

- **Sri Lanka to officially turn down India's proposal to share their territorial waters by fishermen; Volume of bilateral trade between Sri Lanka and India increases in the first 11 months of 2011; Sri Lanka is to establish a Resident Diplomatic Mission in the Ukraine; No. of IDPS in Sri Lanka decline; Drop reported in the No. of Sri Lankan refugees returning home; The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) sought insights from the findings and recommendations of the Truth Commission of South Africa; Sri Lanka to defy rules and regulations stipulated by the UPU**

According to reports, Sri Lanka will officially turn down India's proposal to share their territorial waters by fishermen so as to avoid clashes in the fishing industry, Fisheries Minister Rajitha Senaratne said on January 10, 2012.²⁸

In another development, according to reports, the volume of bilateral trade between Sri Lanka and India during the first eleven months of 2011 had reached US\$4.46 billion, an increase of 71.94 per cent when compared with the corresponding period of the previous year, an official said quoting Sri Lanka customs data.²⁹

Sri Lanka is to establish a Resident Diplomatic Mission in the Ukraine. The government of Ukraine, on a reciprocal basis, will establish a Resident Mission in Colombo.³⁰

Reports noted that the total number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Menik Farm relief

²⁶ "Inflation remains at single digit in 2011", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, January 3, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201201/20120103inflation_remains_single_digit.htm

²⁷ "IMF to discuss SL loan follow-up", *The Daily Mirror*, January 8, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/15970-imf-to-discuss-sl-loan-follow-up.html>

²⁸ "SL won't share territorial waters with India", *The Daily Mirror*, January 11, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/16023-sl-wont-share-territorial-waters-with-india.html>

²⁹ "Indo-Lanka trade booms in Delhi's favour" *The Daily Mirror*, January 10, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/16006-indo-lanka-trade-booms-in-delhis-favour.html>

³⁰ "SL to establish embassy in Ukraine", *The Daily Mirror*, January 9, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/15988-sl-to-establish-embassy-in-ukraine.html>

village has declined to 6,553 as of Jan. 10, 2012.³¹ Meanwhile, the number of Sri Lankan refugees returning home has dropped in 2011 when compared with the previous year due to suspension of the Colombo-Tuticorin ferry service, latest UNHCR statistics show. A total of 1,728 Sri Lankan refugees returned under UNHCR's facilitated voluntary repatriation programme last year while higher numbers were recorded in 2010 during which the agency helped some 2,054 Sri Lankan refugees come home. In 2009, UNHCR facilitated the voluntary return of some 818 individuals.³²

According to reports, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) said on January 13, 2012 that during its recent interaction with African National Congress (ANC) leaders it had sought insights from the findings and recommendations of the Truth Commission of South Africa.³³

In other developments, reports noted that Sri Lanka's postal authorities have decided to defy rules and regulations stipulated by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) when dealing with letters and parcels with stamps bearing the emblem of the LTTE and the image of its late leader.³⁴

Maldives

(January 2-8, 2012)

- **Parliamentary State Secretary at the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation & Nuclear Safety meets President Nasheed; President Nasheed sent message of sympathy to President of Philippines and Brazil; Maldivian government lifted the nationwide ban on spas and massage parlors; Maldives will take part in the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime**

According to reports, Parliamentary State Secretary at the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation & Nuclear Safety Katherina Reiche paid a courtesy call on President Mohamed Nasheed on January 8, 2012. At meeting held at the President's Office, President Nasheed and the Parliamentary State Secretary exchanged views on domestic and international political situations and ways to resolve the current political environment.³⁵

In another development, President Mohamed Nasheed sent a message of sympathy to President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III of Philippines and to President Dilma Rouseff of Brazil, following the loss of lives and devastation caused by heavy flooding and landslides in both countries.³⁶

³¹ "IDPs drop to 6,553", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, January 10, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201201/20120110idp_drop.htm

³² "Less SL refugees return with suspension of ferry service", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, January 9, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201201/20120109less_sl_refugees_return.htm.

³³ "TNA seeks insights from South Africa", *The Daily Mirror*, January 14, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/16080-tna-seeks-insights-from-south-africa.html>.

³⁴ Bandara, Kelum, "Tiger Stamps: Lanka to Defy Upu Laws", *The Daily Mirror*, January 2012 at <http://epaper.dailymirror.lk/epaper/viewer.aspx>

³⁵ "Parliamentary State Secretary at the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation & Nuclear Safety Calls on the President", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, January 8, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=6557>

³⁶ "President Nasheed Sends Sympathy to the President of Philippines and to the President of Brazil", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, January 5, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=6549>

According to reports, the Maldives government lifted the nationwide ban on spas and massage parlors on January 4, 2012 revoking a circular sent by the Tourism Ministry the previous week which ordered spas to cease operations.³⁷

In other developments, reports noted that according to the cabinet decision made on January 3, 2012 Maldives will take part in the “United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime”.³⁸

(January 9-15, 2012)

- **Meeting held between President Nasheed and Chief of Naval Staff of the Indian Navy**

Chief of the Naval Staff of the Indian Navy, Admiral Nirmal Verma has paid a courtesy call on the President at his office. The admiral and the President discussed the historic close friendly relations existing between the Maldives and India, and ways to enhance these relations by strengthening shared national concerns in the areas of maritime security and coordinating surveillance efforts in this area.³⁹

B. East Asia

China

(January 2-15, 2012)

- **Chinese Premier Wen urges greater China-Saudi business links; Wen meets Nepalese PM, leaders of political parties; China, India to hold border talks; Chinese envoy to attend Libyan president's inauguration; China calls for negotiation on Iran nuclear issue; China, ROK president concludes China visit Uzbekistan to strengthen ties; China refutes reports of Indian diplomat's mistreatment**

On the bilateral front, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao has urged the Saudi and Chinese enterprises to expand cooperation and mutual investment.⁴⁰ On the other hand Wen also met his Nepalese counterpart Baburam Bhattarai as well as leaders of Nepalese political parties, exchanging views on development of relations between China and Nepal.⁴¹

³⁷ “Government Lifts Ban on Spas in Tourist Resorts and Hotels”, *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, January 4, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=6540>

³⁸ “Maldives to become Member of United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime”, *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, January 3, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=6535>.

³⁹ “Chief of the Naval Staff of the Indian Navy Admiral Nirmal Verma Calls on the President”, *President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, January 11, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=6572>.

⁴⁰ “Wen urges greater China-Saudi business links” *China Daily*, January 15, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/15/content_14449449.htm

⁴¹ “Wen meets Nepalese PM, leaders of political parties” *China Daily*, January 14, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/14/content_14447171.htm

There are reports that special representatives from China and India will be meeting to discuss border issues from January 15 to 17 in India, foreign ministry spokesperson said.⁴²

According to reports, Beijing also stated that a special envoy of President Hu Jintao will attend the inauguration ceremony of Liberia's re-elected President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf on January 16.⁴³ On the other hand, Beijing has called in all concerned parties to enhance the diplomatic efforts for a long term resolution regarding Iran's expanding nuclear programme.⁴⁴

According to reports, President Lee Myung-bak concluded his three day visit to China on January 11 January.⁴⁵ Also, China and Uzbekistan have pledged to further bilateral relations and also ties with other central Asian countries.⁴⁶

In other developments, China said that media a report regarding an Indian diplomat was mistreated in a court case in Yiwu are not factually accurate.⁴⁷

Southeast Asia

(January 2-8, 2012)

- **William Hague concludes Myanmar visit; Philippines protests Chinese 'intrusion' in South China Sea; Three million Catholics gather despite terror threat in Philippines; Chief of Indian Army Staff visits Myanmar; Cambodia reassures of its ASEAN responsibilities**

According to reports, UK's foreign secretary William Hague concluded his trip to Myanmar on 6 January 2012. Hague is the first British foreign secretary to have visited Myanmar in the past more than fifty years. During his visit Hague said that the Sein government has to take more steps towards democracy. He met with Aung San Suu Kyi and also the senior members of the government.⁴⁸

In another development, two Chinese vessels and a military ship were spotted within the Philippine territory on 11 and 12 December 2011 causing furore in the Philippines. The Department of Foreign Affairs lodged a protest in that regard to the Chinese Embassy in Manila on 5 January.

⁴² "China, India to hold border talks" *China Daily*, January 14, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/14/content_14446906.htm

⁴³ "Chinese envoy to attend Libyan president's inauguration" *China Daily*, January 11, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/11/content_14424929.htm

⁴⁴ "China calls for negotiation on Iran nuclear issue" *China Daily*, January 11, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/11/content_14424864.htm

⁴⁵ "ROK president concludes China visit" *China Daily*, January 11, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/11/content_14422746.htm

⁴⁶ "China, Uzbekistan to strengthen ties" *China Daily*, January 7, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/07/content_14399683.htm

⁴⁷ "China refutes reports of Indian diplomat's mistreatment" *China Daily*, January 4, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/04/content_14382114.htm

⁴⁸ Hague concludes historic Burma visit, *The Jakarta Globe*, 6 January 2012, <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/seasia/hague-concludes-historic-burma-visit/489455>

Philippines have been wary of Chinese intentions on South China Sea and have been vocal in registering its protest on the matter.⁴⁹

According to reports, more than three million Roman Catholic worshippers paraded through Manila in an annual procession Monday despite a warning from the president that terrorists might target the gathering. President Benigno Aquino III warned on 8 January at a news conference that several terrorists planned to disrupt the event and had reportedly been seen in the capital.⁵⁰

Reports noted that India's Chief of Army Staff General V.K. Singh is on a five-day visit to Myanmar, starting 5 January 2012. The visit is expected to bolster defence ties and mutual understanding between the two countries. During his five-day visit from January 5 to 9, the Army Chief will meet Myanmar's President, Commander-in-Chief of its defence forces, Chief of General Staff of the Army and other senior officials in the government.⁵¹

In other developments in the region, Prime Minister of Cambodia, Hun Sen, on 5 January 2012, said that Cambodia would chair the ASEAN summit 2012 with full responsibility. He also pledged on ASEAN's behalf that the organization would achieve ASEAN community by 2015. Cambodia's ties with Thailand have not been smooth in the past as the two are entangled in territorial disputes.⁵²

C. West Asia

Iran

(January 2-8, 2012)

- **Iran successfully tested long range missile during naval war games; Faezeh Hashemi, the daughter of former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani sentenced six months on the charge of spreading propaganda against the Islamic system; IRGC general: US forces should leave the region to prevent undesirable consequences**

According to reports, Iran successfully test-fired a new domestically manufactured coast-to-sea long-range missile, named the Qader (Capable), during the power stage of the 10-day Velayat 90 naval war games. The naval maneuvers started on December 24, 2011, in a large area from the Strait of Hormuz to the Gulf of Aden. The Qader cruise missile has a range of 200 kilometers and

⁴⁹ Philippines Protests New China 'intrusion' in disputed waters, *Business Week*, 9 January 2012, <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-01-09/philippines-protests-new-china-intrusion-in-disputed-water.html>

⁵⁰ Philippine Catholics gather despite terror warning, *Google News*, 9 January 2012, http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5ivk_PwoTT-FnxE7PVMLoidVorpIg?docId=8931b465aaee43f096fa0d5d17519eb3

⁵¹ Army chief begins five-day visit to Myanmar, *Moneycontrol.com*, 5 January 2012, http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/wire-news/army-chief-begins-five-day-visit-to-myanmar_645846.html

⁵² Cambodia PM pledges to Chair ASEAN with responsibilities, *People's Daily*, 5 January 2012, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90777/7697376.html>

flies at a low altitude. It has high destruction power and can target destroyers and battleships. A short-range Nasr (Victory) cruise missile, which is fired from the seashore and has the capability to destroy large vessels, and a surface-to-surface Nour (Light) missile were also fired during the maneuvers and successfully hit mock targets. A domestically manufactured surface-to-air medium-range smart missile, named the Mehrab (Altar), was also successfully test-fired recently during the war games. In a special operation, Iranian naval units also practiced foiling pirate attacks and thwarted an attempted ship hijacking. The missiles tests and drill came in wake of recent US-Iran tensions.⁵³

In another development, according to reports, Faezeh Hashemi, the daughter of Expediency Council Chairman and former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, was sentenced to six months in prison on the charge of spreading propaganda against the Islamic system. She was also banned from having political, cultural, and media activities for five years.⁵⁴

In other developments, according to reports, IRGC Brigadier General Masoud Jazayeri warned that if the US aircraft carrier, which had left the Persian Gulf because of Iran's naval war games, returns to the sea, it may face problems. He added that US forces should leave the region to prevent undesirable consequences.⁵⁵

(January 9-15, 2012)

- **Iran's Judiciary orders the execution of suspected CIA agent Amir Mirza-Hekmati; Iran's nuclear scientist killed in bomb attack; Senior UN nuclear inspectors expected to visit Iran soon**

According to reports, Iran's Judiciary ordered the execution of Amir Mirza-Hekmati, who was recently arrested by Iranian intelligence agents on a charge of spying for the CIA. The Intelligence Ministry announced his arrest on December 7, 2011. He was convicted of espionage, moharebeh (enmity against God), being a 'corrupt person on the earth', and attempting to implicate Iran in terrorist actions. According to the confessions that the defendant had made, he had links with the CIA and had intended to act against Iran's national security, the indictment said. The taped confessions of the defendant were broadcast on Iranian television on December 18, 2011. "I first thought that no blow would be dealt to Iran in this regard, and I did not intend to deal a blow (to the Islamic Republic). I was deceived," Mirza-Hekmati stated. He also mentioned that he was offered \$500,000 in return for carrying out the mission.⁵⁶

In another development, according to reports, an Iranian nuclear scientist was blown up in his car by a motorbike hitman, prompting Tehran to accuse Israeli and US agents but insist the

⁵³ "Iran test-fires long-range missile in naval drill," *Tehran Times*, January 3, 2012, at <http://www.tehrantimes.com/politics/94168-iran-test-fires-long-range-missile-in-naval-drill->

⁵⁴ "Rafsanjani's daughter sentenced to 6 months in prison," *Tehran Times*, January 4, 2012, at <http://www.tehrantimes.com/politics/94173-rafsanjani-daughter-sentenced-to-6-months-in-prison->

⁵⁵ "U.S. carrier may face problems if returns to Persian Gulf: IRGC general," *Tehran Times*, January 5, 2012, at <http://www.tehrantimes.com/politics/94224-us-carrier-may-face-problems-if-returns-to-persian-gulf-irgc-general>

⁵⁶ "Iran sentences CIA agent to death," *Mehr News*, January 9, 2012, at <http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1505407>

killing would not derail a nuclear programme that has augmented fears of war and threatened world oil supplies. The fifth daylight attack on technical experts in two years, the magnetic bomb delivered a targeted blast to the door of 32-year-old Mostafa Ahmadi-Roshan's car during morning rush-hour. Israel, whose military chief said recently that Iran could expect to suffer more mysterious mishaps. However, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton denied any US involvement in the killing of Ahmadi-Roshan.⁵⁷

In other developments, reports noted that Senior UN nuclear inspectors are expected to visit Iran "quite soon" to discuss their alleged concerns about the country's nuclear program. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ramin Mehmanparast announced on January 3 that a delegation of IAEA officials will take a trip to Iran soon at the invitation of Tehran. The delegation would probably be headed by Herman Nackaerts, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) deputy director general and head of the Department of Safeguards. Iran announced on August 23, 2011 that Nackaerts had recently taken tours of inspection to the Fordo and Natanz enrichment facilities, the Arak heavy water reactor, the Isfahan uranium conversion facility, and the Bushehr nuclear power plant. Iran and the six major powers have recently signalled readiness to resume nuclear talks. Meanwhile, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, in his visit to Tehran on January 4 and 5, carried a message from EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton to Iranian officials for a resumption of nuclear talks.⁵⁸

Iraq

(January 2-8, 2012)

- **72 people killed in coordinated attacks in Iraq**

According to reports, a wave of bombings, targeting Shias in Iraq killed seventy two people on January 5 thus deepening sectarian tensions that exploded just after the last American troops left the country in mid-December, 2011. The coordinated attacks targeting Shias bore the hallmarks of Sunni insurgents linked to Al Qaeda, however, there was no immediate claim of responsibility. The bombings began early in the morning when explosions struck two Shia neighborhoods in Baghdad, killing at least 27 people. A few hours later, a suicide attack hit Shia pilgrims heading to the holy Shia city of Karbala, killing 45, said provincial official Quosay Al Abadi. The blasts occurred in the run-up to Arbreen, a Shia holy day which marks the end of 40 days of mourning that follow the anniversary of the death of Imam Hussein, a revered Shia figure. Fears have already been running high that the sectarian tensions could re-ignite Shia-Sunni warfare that just a few years ago pushed Iraq to the brink of civil war.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ "Bomb kills Iran nuclear scientist as crisis mounts," *Khaleej Times*, January 12, 2012, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2012/January/middleeast_January323.xml§ion=middleeast

⁵⁸ "IAEA inspectors expected to visit Iran soon: report," *Mehr News*, January 11, 2012, at <http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1507586>

⁵⁹ "Wave of bombings kill 72 in Iraq," *Khaleej Times*, January 5, 2012, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/displayarticle.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2012/January/middleeast_January126.xml§ion=middleeast&col=

(January 9-15, 2012)

- **53 pilgrims killed in suicide bomb attack in Basra**

According to reports, a suicide bomber killed 53 people in an apparent sectarian attack in southern Iraq casting a fade over the climax of a Shia pilgrimage that draws hundreds of thousands from around the world. The attack on Shia devotees on the outskirts of the port city of Basra, which left 137 wounded, came with Iraq mired in a political row that has ruffled the Shia-led government against the main Sunni-backed bloc and stoked sectarian tensions less than a month after US forces completed their pullout. The violence was the latest in a spate of attacks against Shia pilgrims in the two weeks leading to the conclusion of Arbreen, which marks 40 days after the Ashura anniversary. The death toll was the highest since attacks on Shias in Baghdad and southern Iraq killed 70 people on December 5. This year is the first time Iraqi troops have been solely charged with security for Arbreen since the US-led invasion of 2003. American troops, who previously helped with surveillance and reconnaissance, completed their withdrawal from Iraq last month.⁶⁰

Bahrain

(January 9-15, 2012)

- **Bahrain: King Hamad announces reforms**

According to reports, Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa announced constitutional amendments on January 16, 2012, giving Parliament more powers of scrutiny over government, but the opposition said they fell far short of demands for democracy that have driven a year of unrest in the country. The amendments grant permission to question and remove ministers and withdraw confidence in the Cabinet. In a televised speech, the King announced that, "Our people have proven their desire for continuing with reforms ... We complete the march today with those who have an honest patriotic desire for more progress and reform." However, the main opposition party, Wefaq, withdrew from the dialogue, saying it did not go far enough to offer real reform. Noting that the reforms could have been effected via legislation rather than constitutional changes a Wefaq party official stated that, "This reflects a denial of the demands for better representation for Bahrainis and a fair judiciary...It ignores previous promises from the crown prince on a government that represents the people."⁶¹

Saudi Arabia

(January 9-15, 2012)

- **Saudi Arabia signs nuclear cooperation agreement with China**

According to reports, Saudi Arabia signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with China in Riyadh

⁶⁰ "Iraq suicide bomber kills 53 pilgrims," *Khaleej Times*, January 14, 2012, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle11.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2012/January/middleeast_January391.xml§ion=middleeast

⁶¹ "Bahrain's king announces reforms", *Arab News*, January 15, 2012, at <http://arabnews.com/middleeast/article563750.ece>

on January 15, 2012 during the visit of the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to Saudi Arabia. The cooperation is intended for cooperation in the development and use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, which will help to meet Saudi Arabia's rising demand for energy and cut its growing dependence on oil and gas. According to official sources, "The nuclear energy cooperation agreement seeks to establish a legal framework that strengthens scientific, technological and economic cooperation between Riyadh and Beijing, while the two sides reaffirm their desire to place the highest priority on nuclear safety and environmental protection." The signing ceremony was witnessed by King Abdullah and Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao together with a large number of high-ranking Saudi and Chinese officials.⁶²

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

(January 2-8, 2012)

- **Army Chief on Myanmar visit; Army conducted a two-day major disaster management exercise**

Reports noted that Indian Army Chief General VK Singh on began his five-day visit to Yangon to bolster defence ties and mutual understanding between India and Myanmar. During this five-day visit from January 5 to 9, the Army Chief will meet Myanmar's President, Commander-in-Chief of its defence forces, Chief of General Staff of the Army and other senior officials in the government. General Singh will also visit the country's defence institutions like National Defence College, Command and General Staff College and North Western Command headquarters. In order to strengthen the defence cooperation between the two countries, India will offer to increase the number of vacancy reserved for Myanmar's gentlemen cadets in the National Defence Academy (NDA) at Khadakvasla in Pune. With enhanced thrust on sprucing up existing border mechanism between India and Myanmar, India will also offer road construction equipment to Myanmar for improving connectivity in bordering areas and across the border.⁶³

In another development, reports noted that the Army conducted a two-day major disaster management exercise - ex-Mountain Rescue in Aid to Civil Authority - at the Annandale ground, Shimla, on January 6 and 7, in order to be prepared for the natural calamities and disasters. The exercise was conducted in conjunction with the Civil Administration and Fire Service Department. The aim of exercise was to practice evacuation of Civilian population from the disaster affected areas in the mountains of Himachal. Army Aviation Corps and Air Force helicopters practiced casualty evacuation drills in conjunction with the Army's Special Forces and regular troops of Jutogh battalion. The Army spokesperson noted that major calamities that have struck the Indian

⁶² "Kingdom, China ink nuclear cooperation pact", *Arab News*, January 16, 2012, at <http://arabnews.com/saudi-arabia/article563797.ece>

⁶³ "Army chief begins five-day visit to Myanmar," January 05, 2012, at <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/army-chief-begins-fiveday-visit-to-myanmar/218156-3.html>

sub continent during the last decade have underscored the need to adopt a multi dimensional, multi disciplinary and multi sector approach to disaster management. "Within the ambit of this approach the armed forces constitute a significant and potent entity, available with in the Central and State Government for disaster response and relief. The armed forces by virtue of their organisational strength motivation discipline and operational preparedness have always risen to the occasion earning the appreciation of the environment for their singular contribution towards disaster management", the spokesperson added. The organizational strength of the Army formation and units was also displayed during the exercise.⁶⁴

International

(January 2-8, 2012)

- **Israeli premier Netanyahu announces an increase of nearly \$700 million in Israel's defence budget; China wary of new US defence policy**

According to reports, Israeli premier Benjamin Netanyahu announced an increase of nearly \$700 million in the country's defense budget, detracting from his last year promise that he would cut military spending to finance social reforms. "We are going to add three million shekels to the defense budget," Netanyahu said at a news conference. On his promise to cut defence spending he said, "I have reflected on this question, but in view of what has happened in the region, I have reached the conclusion that cutting the defense budget would be a mistake, even a big mistake." "Any sensible person can see what is happening around us. ... All these changes have strategic implications for the national security of the state of Israel, for our ability to face the new challenges and instability," he told a weekly cabinet meeting, according to a statement from his office. The Israeli army "is the shield of the country, which is why we must increase its means," he added.⁶⁵

In another development, according to reports, China has criticized a new U.S. defense strategy focused on countering China's rising power as based on "groundless" charges, and insisted it posed no threat to any nation. "The charges against China in this document are groundless and untrustworthy," foreign ministry spokesman Liu Weimin said in response to a question from state media about whether China poses a threat to U.S. security. Liu was referring to the strategy document released last week, which said the growth of China's military power "must be accompanied by greater clarity of its strategic intentions in order to avoid causing friction in the region." "To maintain the peace, stability and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region serves the common interest of all countries within the region," Liu added. "We hope the U.S. side will play a more constructive role to this end. China's official Xinhua news agency said on January 6 that it welcomed a bigger U.S. presence in Asia as "conducive to regional stability and prosperity," while urging it against "warmongering."⁶⁶

⁶⁴ "Army holds disaster management exercise," Indian Express, January 08, 2012, at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/army-holds-disaster-management-exercise/897073/>

⁶⁵ "Israel Hikes Defense Spending By \$700 Million," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, January 8, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=8785672&&s=TOP>

⁶⁶ "China Criticizes New U.S. Defense Policy," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 09 January, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=8791138&&s=TOP>

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

(January 2-8, 2012)

- **Student killed in protest in Baramulla; Police busted LeT and HM modules in Bandipora; One killed and five injured in militant attacks in Sopore**

According to reports, a student was killed and two persons injured when Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel guarding National Hydroelectric Power Corporation projects in Kashmir opened fire on people protesting against power shortage in Boniyar area of North Kashmir's Baramulla district. Police immediately arrested five CISF personnel allegedly involved in the firing while the state Government lodged a protest with the Union Home Ministry. Facing acute shortage of power in the areas including Kichama, Gantmula and Boniyar, Boniyar residents were staging protests outside NHPC-run Uri-I power project.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, according to reports, State Police claimed to have busted two militant modules allegedly responsible in various target killings in Sonawari area of this north Kashmir district. Superintendent of Police Bandipora Bashir Ahmed Khan and Additional Superintendent of Police Shemsher Hussain said in a joint press conference that after strenuous efforts, police arrested six youths in two separate raids from Hajin area of Bandipora affiliated with Hizbul Mujahadeen (HM) and Laskhar-e-Toiba (LeT) outfits.⁶⁸

In other developments, reports noted that a civilian was killed and five others including two policemen injured in north Kashmir's Sopore town in a spate of militant attacks, police said. The town witnessed three attacks within a span of 30 minutes.⁶⁹

(January 9-15, 2012)

- **Centre claims that there was no proposal from Jammu and Kashmir Government on AFSPA review**

According to reports, the Union Home Ministry has claimed that it never received any recommendation or request from the Jammu and Kashmir government, during past nine years, for withdrawal/amendment/revocation of the contentious Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). This disclosure has been made by Home Ministry in response to a RTI application filed by Irfan Hafiz Lone, Vice-President of Baramulla Bar Association. The disclosure by MHA

⁶⁷ "Student killed in power protest", *Greater Kashmir*, January 2, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jan/3/student-killed-in-power-protest-58.asp>

⁶⁸ "LeT, HM modules busted in Bandipora: Police", *Greater Kashmir*, January 4, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jan/5/let-hm-modules-busted-in-bandipora-police-41.asp>

⁶⁹ "3 militant attacks in Sopore, 1 killed, 5 hurt", *Greater Kashmir*, January 7, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jan/8/3-militant-attacks-in-sopore-1-killed-5-hurt-27.asp>

comes at a time when Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has raised the pitch over partial withdrawal of AFSPA from the state.⁷⁰

North East India

(January 2-8, 2012)

- **Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS), All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and other associate organisations resume blockade against NHPC in North Lakhimpur for an indefinite period; Manipur dailies protest with blank editorials; Election Commission team arriving in Manipur; High Alert in Upper Assam; Security tightened in Agartala, Tripura ahead of the visit of Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina**

According to reports, the anti-dam movement activists led by Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) and its associate organisations resumed their blockade against NHPC in North Lakhimpur for an indefinite period. The KMSS and its associate organisations like MMK, AATASU, AADSU, AAMSU and AJYCP blocked movement of construction materials meant for NHPC's dam site at Gerukamukh after a gap of two days on NH-52 at Ghagar Nagar in North Lakhimpur. Similarly, the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and 13 other organisations started their blockade against the NHPC on NH-52 at Kakoi Chariali in North Lakhimpur. The AASU yesterday made it clear that they would stage a complete blockade on movement of NHPC's construction materials across the State to make them come to the negotiating table to resolve the impasse on the mega dam on river Subansiri at Gerukamukh. Both these blockades led by the KMSS and AASU stalled the movements of vehicles carrying materials and construction goods of NHPC in North Lakhimpur.⁷¹

In another development, reports noted that unidentified persons claiming to be members of Kangleipak Communist Party-Lanchen Chanu delivered a hand grenade at the office of a local daily in Manipur for not publishing the group's statement. Sources said the Chinese made hand grenade was found inside a small gift package addressed by one commander Henthoiba Mangang of the KCP (MC) Lanchen Chanu group. The package was kept near the office staircase of the local vernacular Naharolgi Thoudang at Airport road. Condemning the incident, All Manipur Working Journalists' Union (AMWJU) local dailies left their editorial blank as a mark of protest.⁷²

According to reports, Chief Election Commissioner S Y Quraishi and his team will be arriving in Imphal to go into the arrangements being made for Manipur Assembly polls to be held on January 28. The Election Commission team will hold a meeting with the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Manipur and Electoral Registration Officers besides separate meetings with the Chief Secretaries and DGPs of the neighbouring States. The ECI official is also scheduled to address a press conference here prior to his departure for the national capital.⁷³

⁷⁰ "No proposal from JK Govt on AFSPA review: Centre", *Greater Kashmir*, January 11, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jan/12/no-proposal-from-jk-govt-on-afspa-review-centre-23.asp>

⁷¹ "KMSS, AASU stage blockade against NHPC", *The Assam Tribune*, January 2, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan0312/at05>

⁷² "Manipur dailies protest with blank editorial", *The Assam Tribune*, January 3, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan0412/oth06>

⁷³ "EC team arriving in Manipur today", *The Assam Tribune*, January 4, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan0512/oth05>

Meanwhile, according to reports, the State government has sounded a high alert in upper Assam following intelligence reports that the Paresh Baruah-led anti-talk ULFA faction may target Oil India Limited (OIL) and ONGC officials along with politicians during the run-up to Republic Day. According to intelligence reports, the outfit was likely to make soft targets on OIL and ONGC officials, particularly those hailing from outside the state.⁷⁴

In other developments, reports that ahead of the visit of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Indian government has tightened security along the India-Bangladesh border by deploying additional troopers. BSF's Tripura frontier Inspector General P.C. Meena said that Security along the border with other northeastern states has also been strengthened. Though there is no specific security threat to the Bangladesh premier, additional deployment has been done in vulnerable areas of the border to foil any intrusion bid from across the border.⁷⁵

(January 9-15, 2012)

- **Citizenship likely to be granted to Chakma and Hajong refugees in Arunachal Pradesh; Three people injured in a turf war between members of the two factions of NSCN; Seven injured in Manipur blast; Reports: Peace pact with DHD (J) almost finalized; Central team reviews Manipur law and order situation; Three North-East outfits pledge against use of land mines**

According to reports, a major breakthrough has been achieved on the fate of the Chakma and Hajong refugees staying in Arunachal Pradesh as a high power committee decided that those who came to India between 1964 to 1969 can be granted Indian citizenship. Joint Secretary (North East) of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Sambhu Singh said after the meeting in Itanagar that the issue has been creating controversy for years and a major breakthrough has been achieved in the meeting. Singh noted that the Government of India had formed the committee to look into the issues pertaining to the citizenship issue of Chakma and Hajong refugees in 2010. Representatives from the Government of India and Government of Arunachal Pradesh as well as All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAPSU) and Citizenship Demand Committee for Chakma and Hajong refugees are members of this committee.⁷⁶

Reports noted that three persons were injured and a house was gutted during a turf war between two factions of the NSCN at Chasa village in Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh. Meanwhile, security forces including Army's 14th Rajput Regiment from Longding, a company of 19 Assam Rifles, CRPF and local police reached the village to contain the violent situation.⁷⁷

In another development, according to reports, seven persons including a woman sustained

⁷⁴ "High alert in Upper Assam", *The Assam Tribune*, January 6, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan0712/at07>

⁷⁵ "Security tightened along Agartala border ahead of Hasina visit", *The Assam Tribune*, January 8, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan0812/at015>

⁷⁶ "Citizenship likely to Chakma, Hajong refugees in Arunachal", *The Assam Tribune*, January 9, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1012/at08>

⁷⁷ "3 injured in turf war between NSCN factions", *The Assam Tribune*, January 9, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1012/oth06>

injuries in a bomb explosion at Khoyathong Pukhri Achouba Mapal under Imphal police station. Police suspect that the bomb might have been planted earlier.⁷⁸

Reports noted that the Government of India has almost finalised a peace pact with militant group DHD(J), while, it is still apprehensive of the peace overtones of the Ranjan Daimary faction of the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB). The Joint Secretary (North East) of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Sambhu Singh said that the Government has reached an agreement with the DHD (J) and the date for signing a formal agreement with the outfit would be finalised soon. However, the Government has not yet been able to come into an agreement with DHD (Nunisha) faction. He said that the DHD (N) is demanding inclusion of 94 more villages in Dima Hassao district, which is not practical.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, according to reports, concerned over the law-and-order situation in Manipur, the Central Government has decided to put the State under a thick security blanket in the run-up to the elections to the State Assembly. A high-level team comprising senior officers of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Intelligence Bureau (IB) are in Imphal on a three-day trip to assess the situation and to chalk out strategies to ensure violence-free elections.⁸⁰

In other developments, according to reports, out of the over 100-odd militant outfits in the North-east, only three have pledged against using land mines. The NSCN (I-M), Kuki National Organisation and little-known Zomi Re-unification Organisation have signed the Deed of Commitment under an initiative called Geneva Call.⁸¹

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

(January 2-8, 2012)

- **UN Security Council to hold debate on cooperation between UN and regional organizations; UN expresses concern over terrorist attacks in Syria**

Reports noted that the UN Security Council is scheduled to hold a debate later this month on strengthening strategic cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, with the current president of Council calling for closer ties to help deal with issues such as conflict resolution. Some of the issues expected to emerge during the debate include cooperation

⁷⁸ "7 injured in Manipur blast", *The Assam Tribune*, January 10, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1112/oth06>

⁷⁹ "Peace pact with DHD(J) almost finalized", *The Assam Tribune*, January 11, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1212/at094>

⁸⁰ "Central team reviews Manipur law and order", *The Assam Tribune*, January 12, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1312/at07>

⁸¹ "3 NE outfits pledge against using land mines", *The Assam Tribune*, January 12, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1312/oth05>

between the UN and the African Union (AU) in Somalia and the work of a joint team examining the implications of the last year's conflict in Libya for countries in West Africa.⁸²

In another development, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon and the Security Council expressed grave concern at the deteriorating situation inside Syria after an apparent suicide bomb attack in the capital that left many dead or injured. The Council also reiterated its determination to combat all forms of terrorism in accordance with its responsibilities under the UN Charter.⁸³

(January 9-15, 2012)

- **UN Security Council encourages Guinea-Bissau to preserve stability during transition; UNSC calls for support to peacekeeping mission in Somalia; India makes a strong pitch for African membership in UNSC; UNSC calls for reconciliation between warring communities in South Sudan**

According to reports, The Government, political parties and people of Guinea-Bissau were encouraged by the UN Security Council to respect the country's legal institutions and pursue political dialogue to preserve stability and promote national reconciliation during the transition following the death of President Malam Bacai Sanha and ensure peaceful, timely and fair presidential elections. Meanwhile, UNSC also reiterated the need for the armed forces to respect civilian rule and urged the authorities to intensify efforts to create an enabling environment for enhanced civilian control over the security forces and to combat impunity.⁸⁴

In another development, the Security Council called for predictable, timely and reliable resources to support the African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia to strengthen its capability in helping the country's transitional government. The Council also reaffirmed its full support for the Djibouti Agreement as the basis for the resolution of conflict in Somalia and the Kampala Accord and the Roadmap to end the transition in Somalia by August this year.⁸⁵

Meanwhile, reports noted that India made a strong pitch for the expansion of permanent membership of the UN Security Council and called for representation in the body from developing countries including Africa. India's representative to the UNSC argued that as much as two-third of the active items on the Council's agenda concerned Africa and three-fourth of the Council's time was spent on African issues. On the issue of UN-AU partnership, India said it was necessary that the Council not adopt a selective approach to this cooperation.⁸⁶

⁸² "Security Council to discuss closer ties between UN and regional blocs this month", *UN News Centre*, January 04, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40882&Cr=security+council&Cr1=>

⁸³ "UN voices grave concern after dozens die in bomb blast in Syrian capital", *UN News Centre*, January 06, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40896&Cr=syria&Cr1=>

⁸⁴ "Guinea-Bissau: Security Council calls for respect of institutions during transition", *UN News Centre*, January 13, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40941&Cr=bissau&Cr1=>

⁸⁵ "Security Council urges reliable support for African peacekeepers in Somalia", *UN News Centre*, January 11, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40923&Cr=Somalia&Cr1=>

⁸⁶ "India for Security Council representation from Africa", *The Hindu*, January 14, 2012 at <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/article2799128.ece>

In other developments, according to reports, UNSC called on warring ethnic communities in South Sudan's Jonglei state, the Lou Nuer and the Murle to engage in reconciliation and the 'cycle of conflict' which has claimed a number of casualties.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ "Security Council presses for ethnic reconciliation in troubled area of South Sudan", *UN News Centre*, January 10, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40910&Cr=South+Sudan&Cr1=>