

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

- **President Karzai visits the United States and meets US President Obama; Both leaders agreed to speed up the handover of combat operations in Afghanistan to Afghan forces**

According to reports, President Karzai visited Washington and held talks with President Obama. On January 11, both the leaders have agreed to speed up the handover of combat operations in Afghanistan to Afghan forces, raising the prospect of an accelerated U.S. withdrawal from the country and underscoring Obama's determination to wind down a long, unpopular war. Meanwhile, signaling a narrowing of differences, Karzai appeared to give ground in talks at the White House on U.S. demands for immunity from prosecution for any American troops who stay in Afghanistan beyond 2014, a concession that could allow Obama to keep at least a small residual force there.¹

Pakistan

- **Foreign Secretary Jalil Abbas Jilani: Pakistan expresses reservations over MFN status to India; Pakistan accuses India of attack on its check post, India denies the allegation; India accuses the Pakistan Rangers of resorting to "unprovoked mortar shelling" at Indian positions in Hajipir area of Uri sector**

According to reports, Foreign Secretary Jalil Abbas Jilani has said that Pakistan has reservations over granting the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to India. Speaking to the media in Islamabad, Jilani said commerce secretary-level talks will take place soon with India in which Pakistan will speak about its reservations, although he said that the federal cabinet had agreed upon granting MFN status to India. He further said that trade between two countries was important.²

According to reports, Pakistan protested to India over what it said was an unprovoked attack by the Indian Army on a Pakistani check post in the Kashmir region. However, Indian officials accused the Pakistan Rangers of resorting to "unprovoked mortar shelling" at Indian positions in Hajipir area of Uri sector on the LOC. The Pakistani shelling was intended to help militants to sneak into the Kashmir Valley from Pakistan but Indian troops thwarted the attempt, the official added.³

¹ "Obama, Karzai accelerate end of US combat role", *Reuters*, January 12, 2013 at <http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/01/12/obama-taliban-afghanistan-karzai-idINDEE90A0H520130112>

² Pakistan has reservations over granting India MFN status, *The Express Tribune*, January 10, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/492108/pakistan-has-reservations-over-granting-india-mfn-status/>

³ "Pakistan protests LoC violation by India", *The Times of India*, January 7, 2013 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-01-07/india/36191582_1_indian-positions-area-of-uri-sector-pakistan-rangers

Bangladesh

- **Bangladesh earned a record amount in remittance in 2012**

Reports noted that Bangladesh earned a record amount in remittance, more than \$14 billion, and exported the second highest number of workers last year despite the Middle East crisis, said researchers. The remittance earning of the country was around \$ 13 billion in 2011.⁴

Sri Lanka

- **Mahinda Rajapakse removes the country's first female Chief Justice Dr. Shirani Bandaranayake; Sri Lankan cabinet approves Chinese loan to finance additional cost of Phase I of the Hambantota Port Development Project; Rear Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne- New DG of SLCG; Sri Lanka and Canada agrees to cooperate on curbing the illegal migration of Tamils to Canada**

According to reports, Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapakse removed the country's first female Chief Justice Dr. Shirani Bandaranayake by ratifying parliamentary vote to impeach her on January 13, 2012.⁵

In another development, the Sri Lankan government received approval from the Cabinet to obtain a SLRs. 19 billion loan (Yuan 960 million) from the Exim Bank of China to finance the additional cost of Phase I of the Hambantota Port Development Project on January 10, 2013 under Chinese Government Concessional Loan Facility.⁶

Reports noted that Rear Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne assumed duties at the Coast Guard Headquarters as the new Director General of Sri Lanka Coast Guard (SLCG) on January 8, 2012.⁷

In other developments, reports noted that Sri Lanka and Canada have agreed to cooperate on curbing the illegal migration of Tamils seeking economic opportunities in that country. During a discussion between the External Affairs Minister of Sri Lanka Professor G. L. Peiris and Canada's Minister for Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney held on January 6, the two Ministers discussed ways of addressing the challenges posed by illegal migration. The two Ministers have also agreed on the need for closer cooperation to increase bilateral trade, investment and tourism and the need for frequent exchange of high level visits.⁸

⁴ "Record remittance despite ME crisis: Bangladesh earned \$14b last year", *The Daily Star*, January 12, 2013 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=264869>.

⁵ "Sri Lanka President removes Chief Justice", *The Colombo Page*, January 13, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12B/Jan13_1358064586CH.php.

⁶ "Sri Lanka to get Rs.19.5 billion loan from China to finance Hambantota Port development", *The Colombo Page*, January 11, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12B/Jan11_1357842762CH.php.

⁷ "New Director General of Sri Lanka Coast Guard assumes duties", *The Colombo Page*, January 8, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12B/Jan08_1357668762CH.php.

⁸ "Sri Lanka, Canada to cooperate on illegal migration", *The Colombo Page*, January 8, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12B/Jan08_1357585545CH.php.

Maldives

- **Maldives' export and import increased in 2012**

According to reports, Maldives Customs Service has said that a total of MVR 23.9 billion worth of goods was imported to the Maldives in 2012, which resulted in a 17 percent increase compared to 2011. The most value of goods was imported from United Arab Emirates (UAE) which totalled MVR 7.3 billion, which largely consisted of oil. The second most value of goods was imported from Singapore with a total of MVR 4.5 billion, while the third most value of imports came from India which totalled MVR 2.2 billion. The country's exports have also witnessed 44% increase in 2012 compared to 2011. The total exports summed up to MVR 2.5 billion in 2012, while the total exports for 2011 stood at MVR 1.8 billion.⁹

B. East Asia

China

(December 31, 2012-January 13, 2013)

- **Beijing sends aircraft to counter Tokyo's aircraft; Beijing rejects Japanese protests over Diaoyu Islands; Beijing publishes new maps; Beijing opposes US arms sale to Taiwan; Moscow-China vow closer ties; Xi asserts Russia as top priority; French finance minister visit China; Beijing negates reports of Myanmar's jets intrusion; China shows concern over Vietnamese maritime law; China to continue ahead with reform and modernization in 2013**

According to reports, the Ministry of National Defence of China has denounced the disruption by the Japanese military aircraft during the routine patrol conducted by Chinese administrative aircraft.¹⁰ Meanwhile China's ambassador to Japan Cheng Yonghua has rejected the protest by Japan. The protests were against Chinese ships patrolling waters near the Diaoyu Islands.¹¹

In another development, according to reports, Beijing has 'inked' the South China Sea islands on its official maps. These are represented in equal scale as the Chinese mainland.¹²

Beijing opposes weapons sale from the United States to Taiwan. It also opposes any official exchanges between the two sides.¹³

⁹ "Imports increase by 17 percent with goods worth MVR 23.9 billion", *The Sun Online*, January 13, 2013 at <http://sun.mv/english/8720>.

¹⁰ "China sends fighters to counter Japanese aircraft" *China Daily*, January 11, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012Diaoyu/2013-01/11/content_16106955.htm

¹¹ "Beijing rejects protest by Tokyo" *China Daily*, January 9, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/09/content_16096953.htm

¹² "China publishes new maps; S China Sea islands highlighted" *China Daily*, January 12, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/12/content_16107316.htm

¹³ "China consistently against US arms sales to Taiwan" *China Daily*, January 10, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/10/content_16103826.htm

Reports noted that Beijing and Moscow have agreed to strengthen and deepen their security cooperation.¹⁴ This was further emphasized by Xi Jinping. Xi said that, “relations with Russia is a priority for Chinese diplomacy.” He said this while meeting Russian delegates in Beijing.¹⁵

French Finance Minister Pierre Moscovici concluded his visit which was aimed at enhancing Chinese investments to France.¹⁶

Chinese air force issued a statement denying reports that a Myanmar’s jets had entered Chinese territory.¹⁷

Beijing is concerned about the Vietnamese maritime law and has urged Vietnam to refrain from undertaking any steps that will affect the situation between the two countries.¹⁸

In other developments, in the New Year speech, President Hu Jintao has stated that China will continue on the path of growth and modernization in the year 2013.¹⁹

C. Central Asia & Russia

Central Asia

- **The European Union allocates Euro 19.6 million to Kyrgyzstan to improve social protection, develop local income-generating initiatives and safety of uranium tailings; Kazakhstan and Russia to continue their cooperation over the Baikonur space station; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) provides a US\$ 196.5 million loan to Kazakhstan for building a strategic road network; Russian and Kazakhstan drug control agencies have seized a major drug haul; Pakistan pushes for more engagement with Central Asia; Central Asian economies rank low in economic freedom report**

According to reports, the European Union has allocated •19.6 million to Kyrgyzstan to improve social protection, develop local income-generating initiatives and safety of uranium tailings.²⁰

¹⁴ “China, Russia pledge closer security co-op” *China Daily*, January 9, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/09/content_16099631.htm

¹⁵ “Xi: China-Russia ties prioritized in diplomacy” *China Daily*, January 8, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/08/content_16096577.htm

¹⁶ “French finance minister arrives for talks” *China Daily*, January 7, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/07/content_16093112.htm

¹⁷ “China dismisses report of Myanmar jets’ intrusion” *China Daily*, January 5, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/05/content_16086317.htm

¹⁸ “China deeply concerned over Vietnam maritime law” *China Daily*, January 1, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/01/content_16073673.htm

¹⁹ “China to continue reform, development drive in 2013” *China Daily*, December 31, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-12/31/content_16073216.htm

²⁰ “EU allocates Euro 19.6 million to Kyrgyzstan”, *The Times of Central Asia*, January 10, 2013, <http://www.timesca.com/index.php/m-news-by-category/economy-finance-and-investment-news/9798-eu-allocates-196-million-to-kyrgyzstan>

Kazakhstan's Foreign Ministry has said that cooperation with Russia over the Baikonur space station will continue in the future. Russia pays Kazakhstan \$115 million a year for use of the facility, but is also working on a space launch station in its own territory.²¹

Reports noted that European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has provided a US\$ 196.5 million loan to Kazakhstan for building a strategic road network that will connect the southern Kazakh city of Shymkent and the Uzbek border. For the last three thousand years, merchants from Europe to China travelled through Kazakhstan along the Silk Road. At present, Kazakhstan aims to modernize the same routes to improve regional integration. The reconstruction of the roads is part of Kazakhstan's larger infrastructure project to build a Western Europe-Western China highway.²²

Drugs control agencies of Kazakhstan and Russia have intercepted 663 pounds of narcotics in a joint international sting operation²³.

Pakistan has pushed for more political and economic engagement with Central Asia.²⁴

In other developments, reports noted that Central Asian economies have been ranked from "moderately free" to "repressed" in the 2013 Index of Economic Freedom published by the Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal, with none of them rising above 68th out of 185 economies.²⁵

Russia

- **Russia declares that Syrian President Assad cannot be removed from the ongoing political process; Russia reiterates its support for Brahimi as the joint special envoy of the United Nations and League of Arab States for Syria; Russia expresses its concern over the current turmoil in Mali; TNK-BP increases production in Uvat by 19 per cent in 2012; Russia commissions the first Borei class nuclear-powered submarine Yuri Dolgoruky in its Northern Fleet; Russia to start building two additional Borei Class submarines in 2013**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that it will be impossible to remove Bashar al-Assad from the political process.²⁶

²¹ "Kazakh FM: Kazakhstan, Russia to continue Baikonur cooperation", Central Asia Newswires, January 11, 2013, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13461>

²² "EBRD provides \$196M for Kazakh road repair", Central Asia Newswires, January 19, 2013, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13447>

²³ "Kazakhs, Russians seize major drug haul in sting op", Central Asia Newswires, January 11, 2013, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13458>

²⁴ "Pakistan pushes for more engagement with Central Asia", Central Asia Newswires, January 10, 2013, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13454>

²⁵ "Central Asian economies rank low in economic freedom report", Central Asia Newswires, January 10, 2013, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13448>

²⁶ "Sergei Lavrov: Bashar al-Assad cannot be removed from political process", Itar-Tass, January 13, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/620075.html>

Russia has reaffirmed its support to Lakhdar Brahimi as the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for the Syrian Crisis.²⁷

The Foreign ministry of Russia has expressed its concern over the aggravating situation in Mali that poses a threat to stability in the Sahara-Sahel region.²⁸

According to preliminary data announced by TNK-BP, Uvat's 2012 oil production will amount to approximately 7 million tonnes; an increase of 19 percent from 2011.²⁹

Russia has commissioned the nuclear-powered submarine Yuri Dolgoruky of Borei Class in its Northern Fleet. This is the first strategic missile submarine to be launched in seventeen years since the end of the Soviet era and is a Russian (rather than Soviet) vessel.³⁰

In other developments, according to reports, Russia will start building two Borei Class submarines in July and November 2013 respectively. These will be the fifth and sixth number in the serial production of the Borei class submarines. A total of 8 Borei class submarines will be built till 2020.³¹

D. West Asia

Syria

- **UN and Arab League special envoy on Syria Brahimi: Assad speech was "lost opportunity" for Syria peace; Rebels capture key military airbase; Humanitarian crisis deepens for Syrian refugees; Arab foreign ministers hold emergency meeting on Syria crisis; Russia reiterates that Assad departure cannot be precondition for peace; International Rescue Committee has requested international donors to step up aid for Syrian refugees**

According to reports, UN and Arab League special envoy on Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, has said that the address last week by Syrian president Bashar al-Assad was a "lost opportunity" to resolve the crisis in the country. Although Assad had earlier conveyed to Brahimi that he had a new initiative in mind, Brahimi has said that the latest address is not very different from past initiatives by Assad, and is "perhaps even more sectarian, more one-sided". Brahimi has also confirmed that Assad has said he will stand in the scheduled presidential elections in 2014. Brahimi's efforts

²⁷ "Russia reiterates support for Brahimi as UN/LAS special envoy for Syria", Itar-Tass, January 12, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/619687.html>

²⁸ "RF concerned over situation in Mali threatening Sahara-Sahel region", Itar-Tass, January 11, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/619302.html>

²⁹ "TNK-BP increases production in Uvat by 19 prc in 2012", Itar-Tass, January 12, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/619688.html>

³⁰ "Yuri Dolgoruky submarine joins Northern Fleet's 31st Submarine Division", Itar-Tass, January 11, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/618450.html>

³¹ "Two improved-project Boreis to be laid down at Sevmash this year", Itar-Tass, January 12, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/619498.html>

have involved talks with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister and the US Deputy Secretary of State, to invite all Syrian parties to begin a dialogue.³²

Meanwhile, Free Syrian Army (FSA) rebels were reported to have taken control of a strategic military airbase in north-west Syria following weeks of fighting with government forces. The Taftanaz military airport in Idlib province had been used previously by government forces to bomb rebel-held areas and to deliver supplies to these forces. The military was reported to have pre-emptively destroyed aircraft at the base to prevent rebels from gaining access to them.³³

According to reports, Foreign ministers of Arab League member states met on January 13 in Cairo to discuss the Syrian crisis and form a team to visit Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey to assess their needs. Arab League Secretary General Nabil al-Arabi said that UN and Arab League envoy Lakhdar Brahimi had not failed in his mission and that Brahimi has suggested several positive plans for a peaceful resolution to the crisis.³⁴

Meanwhile, Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov has said that Russia does not agree with Syrian President Assad's removal as a prerequisite for resolution of the crisis in the country. Lavrov said that despite this condition not being part of the Geneva agreement (formulated in June last year by the Action Group for Syria), some countries involved in talks held on to this. Lavrov also noted that dialogue between the various parties in the conflict was not likely to take place.³⁵

In other developments, reports noted that the International Rescue Committee has requested international donors to step up aid for Syrian refugees as the UN estimated that more than 60,000 people have been killed as a result of the Syrian conflict since 2011. More than 600,000 Syrians have fled the country and around 2 million have been internally displaced within Syria. Refugees in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq are facing the region's worst winter storms in 20 years with inadequate clothing and shelter available.³⁶

Jordan

- **King Abdullah: Jordan is in the process of forming an international coalition for talks on Israeli-Palestinian issue; Jordan blames Israel for plight of Palestinian refugees from Syria**

According to reports, Jordan's King Abdullah has said that the country is in the process of consolidating an international coalition to restart stalled negotiations on the Israeli-Palestinian

³² "Brahimi rues 'lost opportunity' to end Syria crisis", BBC News, January 9, 2013 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-20959332>

³³ "Rebels 'take control of key north Syria airbase'", BBC News, January 11, 2013 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20984142>

³⁴ "Arab League meeting on Syria", Anadolu Agency, January 14, 2013 at <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/headline/121478-arab-league-meeting-on-syria>

³⁵ "Russia: No precondition on Assad", Anadolu Agency, January 14, 2013 at <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/headline/121456-russia-no-precondition-on-assad>

³⁶ "Syria conflict causing 'staggering' humanitarian crisis", BBC News, January 14, 2013 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-21007519>

peace process. He said he was working with several European countries on ideas that will also enable the US to play a lead role in the peace process, and hoped that Germany, the UK, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait would also participate in the efforts. Abdullah has cited a number of reasons for increasing likelihood of achieving peace, including the re-election of US President Barack Obama, the impacts of the Arab Spring, and the elevation of Palestine to observer state in the UN last year.³⁷

In another development, according to reports, Jordanian Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour has said that Jordan has refused to allow entry of Palestinian refugees fleeing the violence in Syria and has blamed Israel for preventing them from returning to their homes in the Palestinian territories. Ensour said that Jordan “is not the place to solve the problems of Israel” and that allowing Palestinian refugees holding Syrian documents to enter Jordan would be a prelude to another wave of displacement of Palestinians. Jordan is increasingly concerned with the refugee situation caused by the Syrian crisis; it currently hosts more than 300,000 Syrian refugees. Palestinians already comprise the majority of Jordan’s population and also part of the Islamist opposition.³⁸

Iran

- **Iran successfully launched long range missile; United States imposed fresh sanctions on Iran; Iranian Foreign Minister visits Egypt**

According to reports, in the last phase of ‘Velayat 91’ Naval drills, the Iran’s Army Navy has launched its super-advanced surface-to-surface missile. ‘Noor’ has been improved on anti-radar system, tracking the target and control, and anti-forking (electronic war) compared to previous generations of the missile. In January 1, ‘Qader’ long-range ground-to-sea missile was fired and hit the target successfully. ‘Nasr’ and ‘Ra’ad’ had been also fired December 31, 2012 in final days of ‘Velayat 91’ naval drills. The main features of tested missiles are the product of national expert knowledge of Iran’s Army Naval Force and research and development centres of the defence industries.³⁹

In another development, according to reports, the United States has imposed fresh sanctions on Iran that include bans on the country’s media. The new bans are included in the \$633-billion military bill for 2013 which US President Barack Obama signed into law on January 2, 2013. The recent sanctions portion of the bill, among other economic features, blacklists the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) and its president Ezzatollah Zarghami. The sanctions will also block all the IRIB assets and prevent others from doing business with it. Iran media said the sanction against IRIB is an attempt by the West to silence Iranian media. It is on top of another flagrant

³⁷ Yoni Dayan, “Jordan forming int’l bloc to spur peace talks”, The Jerusalem Post, January 13, 2013 at <http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=299448>

³⁸ Ariel Ben Solomon, “Saudi Arabia to aid Jordan with Syrian refugees”, The Jerusalem Post, January 14, 2013 at <http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=299480>

³⁹ “Noor long-range missile successfully launched,” Mehr News Agency, January 1, 2013, at <http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1781855>

violation of freedom of speech by satellite providers Eutelsat SA and Intelsat SA which stopped the broadcast of several Iranian satellite channels in October. The new sanctions comes as US lawmakers say the fresh anti-Iran sanctions portion of the bill is part of measures aimed at pressuring Iran to halt its nuclear energy program.⁴⁰

In other developments, according to Egyptian sources, Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Akbar Salehi visited Cairo on January 10, 2013. Salehi had meeting with Mohammad Morsi, and has delivered Ahmadinejad's message to Egyptian President. Egyptian sources added that Mohammad Kamel Amr, Egyptian Foreign Minister also attended the meeting, where two sides discussed regional developments including Syrian crisis. Reports noted that in Cairo, before visiting Morsi, Salehi had a meeting with Nabil Elaraby, an Egyptian diplomat, the Secretary-General of the Arab League and Lakhdar Brahimi, UN-Arab League Envoy to Syrian crisis.⁴¹

Qatar

- **Qatar reiterates proposal to send an Arab force to Syria**

According to reports, Qatar has made a fresh appeal for an Arab force to intervene in Syria if the ongoing diplomatic efforts by international peace envoy Lakhdar Brahimi fail. Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani has stated that "Arabs must think seriously about sending forces to ensure security in Syria if diplomatic efforts fail to resolve the crisis."⁴² He further added that, "It is not a question of intervention in Syria in favour of one party against the other, but rather a force to preserve security." Earlier, Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani had noted that Arab states should intervene in Syria given the UN Security Council's failure to stop the civil war.

Saudi Arabia

- **Saudi Arabia announces USD 10 million aid for Syrian refugees in Jordan**

According to reports, Saudi Arabia will send aid worth USD 10 million to help Syrian refugees in Jordan where severe winter weather has compounded their misery. Reportedly, the first shipment of supplies, including blankets, covers and mattresses, has already been dispatched. Torrential rain has flooded several hundred tents in the Zaatari camp in Jordan which has forced people to look for shelter in prefabricated caravans. The rough weather has raised concern for 600,000 Syrian refugees, especially those in rebel-held areas where fuel and food are growing scarce.⁴³

⁴⁰ "U.S. imposes new sanctions on Iran," *Mehr News Agency*, January 5, 2013, at <http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1783582>

⁴¹ "Salehi meets Morsi in Cairo," *Mehr News Agency*, January 10, 2012, at <http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1788405>

⁴² "Qatar revives proposal to send an Arab force to Syria", *Asharq al Awsat*, January 13, 2013, available at <http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=32532>

⁴³ "Saudi Arabia gives \$10 million for Syrian refugees in Jordan", *Asharq al Awsat*, January 11, 2013, available at <http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=32516>

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

- **India successfully test-fires manoeuvrable version of supersonic cruise missile BrahMos; Inshore patrol vessel ICGS Rajkamal commissioned**

India on January 9 successfully test-fired a highly manoeuvrable version of the 290-km range supersonic cruise missile BrahMos from a naval warship off the coast of Vishakhapatnam in Bay of Bengal. A joint venture between India and Russia, the missile was inducted into the Indian Navy in 2005 and since then has been a key feature of many Indian warships. January 9 test further demonstrated the missile's capability to hit the target with bull's eye accuracy.⁴⁴

In another development, reports noted that Indian Coast Guard Ship 'ICGS-Rajkamal', the fourth in the series of eight Inshore Patrol Vessels (IPVs) was commissioned at Chennai by the Minister of State for Defence Shri Jitendra Singh on January 8. The ship is designed and built by M/s Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers, Kolkata. Indigenously developed, the 50 meter ship can achieve a maximum speed of 34 knots, with an endurance of 1500 nautical miles at an economical speed of 16 knots. It is equipped with state-of-the-art weaponry and advanced communication and navigational equipment which make it an ideal platform for undertaking multifarious close-coast missions such as surveillance, interdiction, Search and Rescue, and medical evacuation. The ship will be based at Chennai and will be under the administrative and operational control of the Commander, Coast Guard Region (East). The induction of the ship will add to the Indian Coast Guard's capability to undertake operations to further maritime safety and security and coastal security on the Eastern Seaboard.⁴⁵

International

- **U.S. Defense Department concerned about impending budget cuts in March; China sends fighter jets to the East China Sea after the report of after Japanese aircraft following a Chinese plane**

According to reports, The U.S. Defense Department is preparing to ground military aircraft and call ships back to port should the Pentagon get hit with nearly \$50 billion in budget cuts in March. Senior defense officials appear to be losing hope that congressional leaders and the White House will be able to come up with a comprehensive deficit-reduction plan before the spending cuts are enacted. the U.S. Defense Department is concerned about the nearly \$50 billion budget cuts in March. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said during a January 10 briefing at the Pentagon "[W]e have no idea what the hell's going to happen." He added, "All told, this uncertainty, if left

⁴⁴ "India test-fires manoeuvrable version of BrahMos missile," TOI, January 9, 2013, at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-01-09/india/36236640_1_version-of-brahmos-missile-sivathanu-pillai-test-fires

⁴⁵ "Commissioning of inshore Patrol Vessel (IPV) ICGS Rajkamal," PIB, January 8, 2013, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=91415>

unresolved by the Congress, will seriously harm our military readiness.” Panetta is still hopeful that the Congress will remedy these fiscal issues. However, the DoD is preparing itself to meet the emerging budgetary challenges and in this connection Air Force and the Navy has been asked to cancel maintenance on its aircraft and ships in the third and fourth quarters to meet the fiscal targets.⁴⁶

In another development, according to reports, China has sent fighter jets to the East China Sea after Japanese aircraft followed a Chinese plane in a territorial dispute. China’s official Xinhua news agency said that two J-10 fighters flew to the East China Sea on January 10 to monitor two Japanese F-15 fighters that had trailed a Chinese Y-8 aircraft. The two countries are at odds over the small, uninhabited islands controlled by Tokyo as the Senkakus but claimed by Beijing, which calls them Diaoyu.⁴⁷

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Two Indian soldiers killed by Pak troops at Line of Control (LoC); India strongly condemn the killing of its two soldiers, Pakistan envoy summoned to MEA to register India’s strong protest; Taliban threaten to fight in Kashmir; India protests soldier’s killing at LoC; Sarpanch shot dead in Sopore, North Kashmir**

According to reports, in a horrid attack, Pakistani troops on January 8 crossed into Indian territory and ambushed an Army patrol party killing two soldiers. The attack took place along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district when Pakistanis came about 100 meters into Indian territory and assaulted the patrol party. Besides killing two Lance Naiks, Hemraj and Sudhakar Singh, they also injured two other soldiers. Reportedly, during the heinous assault on the patrol party, the Pakistanis are said to have chopped off their heads, one of which they carried with them.⁴⁸

Reports noted that taking strong exception to the killing of two soldiers on the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, India has strongly condemned the incident and described it ghastly and unacceptable. The reaction was followed immediately by the External Affairs Ministry summoning Pakistan High Commissioner Salman Bashir and registering a strong protest. Defence Minister Shri AK Antony called alleged action by Pakistani troops as “inhuman” and “provocative”

⁴⁶ “Panetta Warns of Severe Reductions in Operations if March Sequester Occurs,” Defense News, January 10, 2013, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130110/DEFREG02/301100013/Panetta-Warns-Severe-Reductions-Operations-March-Sequester-Occurs?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

⁴⁷ “Report: China Launches Fighters Amid Dispute with Japan,” Defense News, January 11, 2013, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130111/DEFREG03/301110012/Report-China-Launches-Fighters-Amid-Dispute-Japan?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

⁴⁸ “Pak troops cross LoC, kill 2 soldiers”, *Greater Kashmir*, January 8, 2013 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Jan/9/pak-troops-cross-loc-kill-2-soldiers-86.asp>

and said that India will register a strong protest. External Affairs Minister Shri Salman Khurshid had earlier said; "We have to make it known to Pakistan that this is unacceptable, ghastly and extremely short-sighted on their part." He said India will take steps that are meaningful and effective."⁴⁹

According to reports, a top Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) leader Wali-ur-Rehman in a rare video appearance has pledged to send fighters to Kashmir and wage a struggle for implementation of Shariah rule in India.⁵⁰

In other developments, reports noted that unidentified gunmen on January 11 shot dead a Sarpanch in Sopore Tehsil of north Kashmir's Baramulla district, taking the number of such killings to five in the past less than two years. The Chief Minister Omar Abdullah termed the killing as a cowardly act and hoped that police would get to the bottom of the issue as soon as possible.⁵¹

Northeast India

- **Operations against North-East ultras to intensify; Poll dates of three North-East States announced; Ban on ULFA and National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) to continue; North-East ultra groups setting up bases in Nepal**

Reports noted that the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is in favour of intensifying counter-insurgency operations against militant groups, which have not shown willingness to come forward for talks to solve their problems through dialogues according to the Joint Secretary (North East) of the MHA, Sambhu Singh. Mr. Singh said that the Government would act tough against those who take up weapons to raise their demands. He said that anyone having grievances can come out democratically to solve their problems instead of taking up weapons hoping for the Government to yield to their pressure.⁵²

Reports noted that the Election Commission announced polls to the Assemblies of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura. Meghalaya and Nagaland will go to poll on February 23, while February 14 is the date for Tripura. The notification for Tripura elections will be issued on January 21 and for Meghalaya and Nagaland on January 30. All the three State Assemblies have 60 seats each. While 10 are reserved for SCs and 20 for STs in Tripura, 55 Assembly seats are reserved for STs in Meghalaya and 59 in Nagaland.⁵³

⁴⁹ "India protests soldiers' killing; MEA Summons Pak Envoy; Prime Minister Monitoring Situation", *Greater Kashmir*, January 9, 2013 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Jan/10/india-protests-soldiers-killing-89.asp>

⁵⁰ "Taliban threaten to fight in Kashmir", *Greater Kashmir*, January 8, 2013 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Jan/9/taliban-threaten-to-fight-in-kashmir-80.asp>

⁵¹ "Sarpanch shot dead in Sopore", *Greater Kashmir*, January 11, 2013 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Jan/12/sarpanch-shot-dead-in-sopore-50.asp>

⁵² "Centre to intensify operations against NE ultra groups", *The Assam Tribune*, January 7, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan0813/at05>

⁵³ "Assembly poll dates for NE States announced", *The Assam Tribune*, January 11, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1213/at07>

According to reports, despite the Centre starting political dialogue with militant outfits in the North-East, Union Home Minister, Sushil Kumar Shinde on January 10 said that ban on outlawed ULFA and NDFB would continue. Though the Centre has started dialogue with pro-talk faction of ULFA, the rival Paresh Barua faction continues to wage an armed struggle. In case of NDFB (P), the Centre has initiated negotiation, it is yet to start dialogue with Ranjan Daimary group of the Bodo militant outfit.⁵⁴

In other developments, according to reports, terror funding, that is funding received by the militant outfits of the North East region of the country has become a major cause of concern and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has started a probe in this regard. Meanwhile, the militant groups have also started to establish their bases in Nepal to evade arrest by the police and security forces.⁵⁵

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **UN calls for de-escalation of tensions between India and Pakistan, India rejects UN probe; UN Security Council condemns attacks in North Mali; Intergovernmental Committee to work on treaty to reduce use of mercury; UN Human Rights report highlights hazards faced by mine workers in Rajasthan**

According to reports, following the escalation of tensions between India and Pakistan after two Indian soldiers were brutally killed by Pakistani troops, the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) urged both the countries to respect the ceasefire and “de-escalate” tensions over the recent cross-border firings through dialogue.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, utilising its current position as the president of the UNSC, Pakistan has pushed the UN option to “resolve” the ceasefire violations by its army on the LoC.⁵⁷ But India has rejected Pakistan’s proposal and said that it would not agree to “internationalise the issue or allow the UN to hold an inquiry”.⁵⁸

In another development, according to reports, the UN Security Council expressed grave concern over the military movements and attacks by terrorists and military groups in the northern part of

⁵⁴ “Ban on ULFA, NDFB to continue”, *The Assam Tribune*, January 10, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1113/at08>

⁵⁵ “NE ultras setting up bases in Nepal”, *The Assam Tribune*, January 9, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1013/at06>

⁵⁶ “UN urges India, Pakistan to de-escalate tensions through dialogue”, *The Hindu*, January 10, 2013 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/un-urges-india-pakistan-to-deescalate-tensions-through-dialogue/article4293832.ece>

⁵⁷ “Pak using position on Security Council to push UN probe”, *The Times of India*, January 11, 2013 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-01-11/india/36279015_1_ceasefire-violations-india-and-pakistan-unmogip

⁵⁸ “India shoots down Pak talk of UN probe”, *The Hindu*, January 10, 2013 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-shoots-down-pak-talk-of-un-probe/article4294414.ece>

Mali, especially the city of Konna. The members in a press statement said that the serious deterioration of the situation causes even more instability and threatens the integrity of Mali.⁵⁹

Reports noted that at a session organised by UN Environment Programme, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee will work to prepare a globally binding instrument on mercury. The treaty will include actions to reduce the supply and trade of mercury, its use in products and atmospheric emissions and ultimately reduce human exposure to mercury globally.⁶⁰

In other developments, a report published by the working group on Human Rights in India and the UN (WGHR) gives an account of the unhealthy and exploitative conditions of mine workers in the state of Rajasthan. The report suggests that minimal wages, poor working conditions and lack of training are rampant in the mining sector of the state. The study also noted that the lack of government monitoring and legal provisions perpetuate such conditions.⁶¹

⁵⁹ "Mali: UN Security Council expresses 'grave concern' over reports of rebel military activity", *UN News Centre*, January 11, 2013 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43902&Cr=+Mali+&Cr1=#.UPTd9OS7Iq9>

⁶⁰ "UN committee seeks to work out a treaty on mercury", *The Times of India*, January 12, 2013 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-01-12/pollution/36295728_1_mercury-pollution-control-mercury-emissions-toxics-link