

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

November 19- December 2, (4&5), 2012

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

(November 19-25)

- **French troops ends their last combat mission in Afghanistan; A document for tripartite border coordination mechanism signed aimed at improving coordination along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border; Bomb attack ripped through the heavily barricaded diplomatic area of the Afghan capital Kabul**

Reports noted that French troops on November 20 ended their last combat mission in Afghanistan by withdrawing from Kapisa province as part of an accelerated departure from the war-torn country. The last 400 soldiers deployed to the volatile province started to leave Nijrab, the French base in Kapisa after a departure ceremony. A military official said, of the 2,200 French soldiers still left in Afghanistan, about 700 would return to France by the end of the year.¹

According to reports, to improve coordination along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, a document for tripartite border coordination mechanism was signed at a meeting of the Tripartite Commission at the Afghan ministry of defence in Kabul on November 20. The meeting was attended by Chief of Army Staff Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, acting Commander of ISAF Lt-Gen Nicholas Carter, Afghan Chief of General Staff Gen Sher Mohammad Karimi and their delegations. According to the ISPR, the participants reviewed ongoing military operations in Afghanistan and adjoining tribal areas of Pakistan.²

In other developments, according to reports, a bomb attack ripped through the heavily barricaded diplomatic area of the Afghan capital Kabul. Initial reports noted that at least two people were killed along with two suicide bombers, two people were also injured.³

Pakistan

(November 19-25)

- **US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta: Despite challenges in the bilateral relationship, the United States and Pakistan share an interest in defeating terrorists**

According to reports, US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta has said despite challenges in the bilateral

¹ France ends combat mission in Afghanistan, *The Express Tribune*, November 20, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/468552/france-ends-combat-mission-in-afghanistan/>

² Paper on Afghan border coordination signed at tripartite meeting, *Dawn*, November 21, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/11/21/paper-on-afghan-border-coordination-signed-at-tripartite-meeting/>

³ Blast hits diplomatic area of Afghan capital, *Al-Jazeera*, November 21, 2012 at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2012/11/201211214569221721.html>

relationship, the United States and Pakistan share an interest in defeating terrorists and that Washington would pursue defense cooperation with Islamabad on that common basis. Speaking at a Washington think tank, Panetta noted that in Afghanistan and Pakistan, prolonged military and intelligence operations have significantly weakened al Qaeda but saw the need to maintain pressure on the group. "Despite challenges in the bilateral relationship between the United States and Pakistan", Panetta said, "one area in which our national interests continue to align is defeating the terrorists on Pakistan soil that threaten both of us". "We remain committed to pursuing defence cooperation based on these shared interest", he said at the Center for a New American Security.⁴

B. East Asia

China

(November 19-25)

- **Congratulations pour for Xi Jinping; PLA general promoted; Tokyo warned to maintain peace and stability before elections; Le Keqiang vows to promote economic growth; Russia-China to maintain stable relations; Seoul-Beijing promote FTA; Beijing calls for ceasefire in Gaza**

On the domestic front, Xi Jinping was congratulated by countries, political parties, various organizations on his election as the general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee.⁵ Meanwhile Xi Jinping promoted Wei Fenghe to the post of full general.⁶

On the regional front, Beijing urged Japan to not undertake steps to harm the peace and security in the region. This was keeping in view the heightened right wing forces in Japan prior to the elections next month.⁷

On the other hand Le Keqiang, Vice-Premier, has announced to increase and strengthen economic reforms in order to achieve economic growth, which should be healthy and sustained.⁸

Meanwhile, Beijing also announced that it would follow its principle and guidelines in developing relations with Moscow.⁹

⁴ US committed to pursuing defence cooperation with Pakistan: Panetta, *Dawn*, November 22, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/11/22/us-committed-to-pursuing-defence-cooperation-with-pakistan-panetta/>

⁵ "Leaders congratulate Xi on election as CPC chief" *China Daily*, November 24, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-11/24/content_15955881.htm

⁶ "Xi Jinping promotes PLA general" *China Daily*, November 24, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-11/24/content_15955119.htm

⁷ "Beijing warns Tokyo not to destabilize region" *China Daily*, November 24, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-11/24/content_15955015.htm

⁸ "Vice-premier vows further reforms to boost economy" *China Daily*, November 23, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-11/23/content_15953633.htm

⁹ "Sino-Russian ties to remain stable" *China Daily*, November 22, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-11/22/content_15949417.htm

In other developments, China and South Korea have announced that they would be working towards speeding up their Free Trade Area negotiations.¹⁰

China has stated its concern over the situation Gaza Strip. It has urged Israel to exercise maximum restraint.¹¹

Japan

(November 19-25)

- **Japan and Russia to promote cooperation in medicine and energy; Japanese Prime Minister Noda insists on resolving territorial disputes through peaceful means**

During a recent bilateral ministerial meeting held between Japan and Russia in Tokyo, both the countries agreed to join hands in promoting cooperation in fields like medical care and energy. The two also agreed to establish joint working groups to discuss the ways of improving Russia's investment environment and resolving the issues pertaining to its urban areas.¹²

In another development, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, during his recent meeting with leaders of the member states of the ASEAN in Phnom Penh, emphasized on the necessity of resolving the ongoing territorial disputes in the South China Sea between China and Southeast Asian countries through peaceful means. He also urged the ASEAN states to abide by the international law in resolving those disputes. During that meeting, Noda asked for ASEAN's cooperation in Tokyo's efforts to resolve the abduction issue of Japanese citizens by North Korea some decades ago.¹³

South Korea

(November 19-25)

- **South Korea protests against Japan's reported move to name Dokdo peaks**

Seoul has offered a strong protest against Tokyo's recent reported move towards naming peaks on the Dokdo islands, over which both Japan and South Korea claim their own sovereignty though it is at present administered by the South. Seoul insists that such a move would amount to a "serious violation" of its territorial sovereignty". Tokyo's move is largely seen as a response to Seoul's recent renaming of the peaks last month in an apparent bid to bolster its sovereignty over the territory.¹⁴

¹⁰ "China, South Korea pledge to accelerate FTA talks" *China Daily*, November 19, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2012-11/19/content_15942539.htm

¹¹ "China urges immediate ceasefire in Gaza" *China Daily*, November 19, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-11/19/content_15942648.htm

¹² "Japan, Russia to team up in medicine, energy", *Yomiuri Daily*, November 22, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T121121004546.htm>

¹³ "Noda seeks peaceful end to sea disputes", *Yomiuri Daily*, November 20, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T121119004429.htm>

¹⁴ "Seoul blasts Tokyo over reported move to name Dokdo peaks", *Korea Herald*, November 20, 2012, at <http://nwww.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20121122001104>

North Korea

(November 19-25)

- **North Korea threatens to launch a bomb attack on South Korea**

North Korea recently threatened to launch a bomb attack on South Korea as the latter prepared to commemorate the second anniversary of the North's deadly shelling of a South Korean border island-Yeonpyeong in 2010. While alleging that by holding the Commemorative event, Seoul was trying to 'paint' the incident as a 'victorious battle' in a scenario to "spark off a new war in the (Yellow Sea border) area", Pyongyang threatened to launch a bomb attack on the South.¹⁵

C. Central Asia & Russia

Central Asia

(November 19-25)

- **Kazakhstan and France are keen to strengthen their bilateral partnership; CSTO will not interfere in Tajikistan's domestic affairs; South Korea-Kazakhstan commodities trade to reach US\$ 2 billion by the end of 2012; Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan attract lowest FDI rates in the CIS; Asian Development Bank to provide US\$20 million to Kyrgyzstan for budgetary support; Kazakhstan to spend \$41.2M combating drug trafficking; Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan's governments have initiated steps to partially privatise some sectors of the economy**

As part of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev's official visit to Paris, the two countries have pledged to strengthen their bilateral partnership with 27 joint projects worth US\$ 6 billion at different stages of implementation. France has invested \$9 billion into the Kazakh economy, while French energy firm Total has significant holdings in the country's largest gas and oil field Kashagan.¹⁶

CSTO's Secretary-General Nikolai Bordyuzha has said that the organization will not interfere to maintain stability in Tajikistan's domestic affairs.¹⁷

South Korea and Kazakhstan expect to double their commodities turnover year-on-year in 2012 to US\$ 2 billion. South Korean companies have in the past invested US\$3 billion in Kazakhstan.¹⁸

¹⁵ "N. Korea warns of another shelling on S. Korean border island", Korea herald, November 22, 2012, at <http://nwww.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20121122000258>

¹⁶ "Hollande maintains close Kazakh-French relations", Central Asia Newswire, November 21, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13204>

¹⁷ "CSTO will not interfere in Tajik domestic affairs, Bordyuzha says", Central Asia Newswire, November 21, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13205>

¹⁸ "Korean-Kazakh commodities trade to reach \$2B", Central Asia Newswire, November 21, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13202>

The Eurasian Development Bank has stated that Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan attract lowest FDI rates in the CIS. While Tajikistan attracted US\$933 million in 2011 the figure for Kyrgyzstan was US\$1.274 billion during the same period.¹⁹

Asian Development Bank will provide US\$20 million to Kyrgyzstan in order to meet a part of the country's budgetary deficit.²⁰

In other developments, the Kazakh government will spend close to US\$41.2 million as part of the effort to tackle drug trafficking in the region.²¹

Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan's governments have initiated steps to partially privatise some sectors of the economy including construction, transportation, and communications sectors.²²

(November 26-December 2)

- **World Bank to provide US\$ 46 million to upgrade Tajikistan's irrigation and drainage facilities; Kazakhstan to head UN regional economic group; Russia's Lukoil intends to double gas production in Uzbekistan; US Exim Bank has backed a US\$ 425 million Kazakh-GE deal; Uzbekistan has agreed to pay a US \$15 million fine to Kazakhstan over electricity; Indian oil firm to buy a US\$ 5 billion stake in Kashagan; EU's Foreign Policy Chief has wrapped up a her Central Asian tour; Gazprom to begin exploration of Kyrgyz field in March 2013**

The World Bank has pledged to give Tajikistan a grant of US\$ 45.9 million to upgrade irrigation and drainage infrastructure for farmers in the south of the country.²³

Kazakhstan has been elected to assume the one-year chairmanship of the UN Special Program for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). SPECA was created in 1998 to strengthen sub-regional cooperation in Central Asia and its integration into the world economy.²⁴

Russian gas energy giant Lukoil has said that it plans to double gas production in Uzbekistan to 8.2 billion cubic meters per year (bcm/y) by 2015. It expects to produce 4.1 billion cubic meters in 2012. Lukoil has produced 15 billion cubic meters of Uzbek gas to date.²⁵

¹⁹ "Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan have lowest FDI rates in CIS", Central Asia Newswire, November 23, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13213>

²⁰ "ADB to provide \$20M to Kyrgyzstan for budget support", Central Asia Newswire, November 19, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kyrgyzstan/viewstory.aspx?id=13189>

²¹ "Kazakhstan to spend \$41.2M combating drug trafficking", Central Asia Newswire, November 20, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=13195>

²² "Turkmen, Uzbek governments moving towards privatization", Central Asia Newswire, November 19, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/uzbekistan/viewstory.aspx?id=13187>

²³ "World Bank pledges \$46M to upgrade Tajik irrigation, drainage", Central Asia Newswire, November 30, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13248>

²⁴ "Kazakhstan to head UN regional economic group", Central Asia Newswire, November 30, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13249>

²⁵ "Lukoil intends to double gas production in Uzbekistan", Central Asia Newswire, November 28, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13231>

US Exim Bank has backed a US\$ 425 million Kazakh-GE deal which will enable Kazakhstan to purchase 200 locomotives worth US\$ 425 million from General Electric (GE). This move can be seen as an attempt to make Kazakhstan a transportation hub for trade, as it sits at the crossroads of Europe and Asia.²⁶

Uzbekistan has agreed to pay US\$ 15 million to Kazakhstan for the additional electricity it siphoned off from the shared electricity grid between Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan.²⁷

A subsidiary of India's national oil firm ONGC Videsh has agreed to buy a \$5 billion stake in Kazakhstan's massive Kashagan deposit. ONGC Videsh will now hold an 8.4 percent stake in the venture, sharing ownership of the oilfields with Italy's Eni, Royal Dutch Shell, France's Total, ExxonMobil, and Kazakh state-owned energy firm KazMunaiGas (KMG), all of which hold a 16.81 percent share. Japan's Inpex holds the remaining 7.56 percent.²⁸

In other developments, EU's Foreign Policy Chief has wrapped up her Central Asian tour. The issues discussed during the trip include regional stability and prospects for cooperation between EU and Central Asian countries.²⁹

Gazprom will begin exploration of Kyrgyz territory for fuel from March 2013 onwards. It had agreed to buy 75 percent of Kyrgyzgaz in April 2012, and plans to spend \$500 million on to modernize and expand gas transportation lines.³⁰

Russia

(November 19-25)

- **Russia to submit a draft resolution in UNSC on Gaza crisis; Net private capital outflow from Russia topped US\$61 billion during the period Jan-Oct 2012; Belarus has criticised Russia's oil supply plans to it for the year 2013; Russia's GDP growth rate has slowed down for the fifth month in succession; Rosneft and Statoil have signed a declaration on environmental-friendly work in the Arctic; Russia's Proton-M with US EchoStar satellite launched from Baikonur; Russia expresses concern over NATO's plans to deploy Patriot missiles in Turkey; Russia to buy twin-hull landing ships for helicopter carriers Mistral in France**

According to reports, Russia is ready to submit a draft resolution on the Gaza crisis to the U.N. Security Council that will consist of three principal parts. First, it will call for an immediate stop of the violence in order to ensure ceasefire. Second, it will support all international and regional

²⁶ "US Ex-Im Bank backs \$425M Kazakh-GE deal", Central Asia Newswire, November 28, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13235>

²⁷ "Uzbekistan agrees to pay \$15M fine to Kazakhstan over electricity", Central Asia Newswire, November 27, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/uzbekistan/viewstory.aspx?id=13226>

²⁸ "Indian oil firm to buy \$5B stake in Kashagan", Central Asia Newswire, November 26, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=13219>

²⁹ "Ashton wraps up Central Asia tour with Astana visit", Central Asia Newswire, November 30, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13250>

³⁰ "Gazprom to begin exploration of Kyrgyz field in March", Central Asia Newswire, November 30, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13253>

efforts to settle the situation in a peaceful and political manner. Third, it will call for a resumption of talks between Israelis and Palestinians in the broader context of Palestinian-Israeli conflict.³¹

Net private capital outflow from Russia reached \$61 billion in January-October as against \$60 billion over the same period of last year.³²

Belarusian Prime Minister Mikhail Myasnikovich has said that his government is not satisfied with Russia's oil supplies plans to the country for the year 2013.³³

Russia's economic growth has slowed down to 2.3 per cent in October. On the whole, the Economics Ministry has estimated that the GDP grew by 3.7 per cent during the period January to September 2012³⁴.

Russia's Rosneft and Norway's Statoil have signed a declaration on nature conservation and preservation of biological diversity in developing mineral resources of the Arctic continental shelf.³⁵

Russia's Proton-M launch vehicle with a Briz-M upper stage and a U.S. telecommunications satellite EchoStar-16 has been launched from the Baikonur space ground.³⁶

In other developments, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov has expressed Russia's concern over NATO's plans to deploy Patriot missiles in Turkey.³⁷

Russia will buy small twin-hull landing ships in France in order to use them for the helicopter carriers Mistral. The Mistrals will be delivered in the years 2014 and 2015.³⁸

(November 26-December 2)

- **Russia expresses concern over plans to deploy Patriot missile systems at Turkish-Syrian border; Russia terms the detainment of its 14,000 tonnes of fuel meant for the Black Sea**

³¹ "Russia ready to submit draft resolution on Gaza crisis", ITAR-TASS, November 19, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/576183.html>

³² "Net private capital outflow from Russia reaches \$61 bln in Jan-Oct", ITAR-TASS, November 21, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/577719.html>

³³ "Minsk not happy with Russia's oil supplies plans for 2013 - Prime Minister", ITAR-TASS, November 20, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/577128.html>

³⁴ "Russia's GDP growth rate slowing down for fifth month in succession", ITAR-TASS, November 23, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/579396.html>

³⁵ "Rosneft, Statoil sign declaration on environment-friendly work in Arctic", ITAR-TASS, November 24, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/580469.html>

³⁶ "Russia's Proton-M with US EchoStar satellite launched from Baikonur", ITAR-TASS, November 20, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/577161.html>

³⁷ "Moscow worried over NATO's plans for deploying Patriot systems in Turkey", ITAR-TASS, November 24, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/580442.html>

³⁸ "Russia to buy twin-hull landing ships for helicopter carriers Mistral in France", ITAR-TASS, November 23, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/580258.html>

Fleet by Ukraine's Customs as unjustifiable; All infrastructural facilities are ready for the Sochi Winter Olympics; Prime Minister Medvedev criticises the Magnitsky law adopted by the US Congress; Russia calls for the immediate resumption of Palestine-Israeli talks; Russia takes over rotating presidency of the G20 group; Russia and Belarus to spend over 2 billion roubles on a Union State border security program; Syrian opposition wants to preserve Russian presence in Tartous; US Congress ban on Rosoboronexport can damage Russia's cooperation with the USA; President Putin suggests tax incentive for new businesses in the Far East and the Baikal region

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Denisov has said that the deployment of Patriot missile systems at the Turkish-Syrian border would rather create more problems than solve any and expressed concern over such a deployment.³⁹

Russia has termed the detainment of its 14,000 tonnes of fuel meant for the Black Sea Fleet by Ukraine's Customs as unjustifiable.⁴⁰

Russian Olympic Committee President Alexander Zhukov has said that all infrastructure facilities are ready for the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi.⁴¹

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has said that the Magnitsky law, which the US Congress has adopted, is Washington's unacceptable attempt to dictate its will to a foreign country, and the European countries' reproduction of the decision is "unwise and senseless."⁴²

Moscow called for an immediate resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and for holding a ministerial meeting of the Middle East Quarter.⁴³

Russia has taken the rotating presidency of the G20 for twelve months to come.⁴⁴

Russia and Belarus will spend 2.8 billion roubles to implement the program of enhancing border security of the two states.⁴⁵

In other developments, the head of the National Coordination Committee of Syria Hassan Abdel

³⁹ "Russia worried over plans to deploy Patriot missile systems at Turkish-Syrian border", ITAR-TASS, November 27, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/583060.html>

⁴⁰ "Ukraine's customs unjustifiably detain 14,000 tonnes of fuel for Russian Black Sea Fleet – FM", ITAR-TASS, November 27, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/582672.html>

⁴¹ "Infrastructure facilities ready for Sochi Olympic Games", ITAR-TASS, November 26, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/582030.html>

⁴² "Medvedev: Magnitsky law is US' unacceptable attempt to dictate its will", ITAR-TASS, November 29, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/584319.html>

⁴³ "Moscow calls for immediate resumption of Palestine-Israeli talks", ITAR-TASS, November 28, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/584260.html>

⁴⁴ "Russia takes rotating presidency of G20 Sat", ITAR-TASS, December 1, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/586565.html>

⁴⁵ "Russia, Belarus to spend over 2 bln roubles on Union State border security program", ITAR-TASS, December 1, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/586510.html>

Azim has said that the 'internal' Syrian opposition would like Russia to preserve its presence in Tartous port.⁴⁶

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov has said that the U.S. Congress ban on the contracts with Rosoboronexport can damage Russian-American cooperation.⁴⁷

President Vladimir Putin suggested setting the rate of the federal part of the profit tax at zero in the first decade of operation of new businesses, the so-called greenfields in the Far East and the Baikal region.⁴⁸

D. West Asia

Syria

(November 26-December 2)

- **US warns Syria on use of chemical weapons; UN agencies pull out of Syria amid increasing violence; Russia defends refusal to call for Assad's exit**

The United States has warned Syria against using chemical arms on its own people, amidst reports of intelligence pointing to evidence that Syria has begun mixing chemicals to make sarin, a deadly nerve agent. The US has so far been reluctant to directly intervene in Syria but has indicated that the use of chemical weapons by the President Bashar Al-Assad would "invite unspecified US action". The Syrian government vowed never to resort to use of such weapons. Meanwhile, the United Nations has suspended operations in Syria and has announced that it is pulling out non-essential staff, prompted by the deteriorating security situation in Syria. The European Union has also reduced its activities in Damascus.⁴⁹

However, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has accused Western nations of trying to "advance democracy abroad through iron and blood" and defended Moscow's refusal to seek the exit of President Assad. Lavrov said that advancing democracy through this means strengthened extremist forces and decreased chances of real democratic change. Russia has taken the stance that Assad's exit from power cannot be imposed from abroad. It has denied it is propping up the Assad government and said it will not allow a scenario similar to that in Libya last year to repeat in Syria.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ "Internal' Syrian opposition wants to preserve Russian presence in Tartous", ITAR-TASS, November 30, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/586369.html>

⁴⁷ "US Congress ban on Rosoboronexport can damage RF-US coop", ITAR-TASS, December 1, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/586849.html>

⁴⁸ "Putin suggests tax incentive for new businesses in the Far East and the Baikal region", ITAR-TASS, November 29, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/585115.html>

⁴⁹ "US warns Syria on chemical weapons", The Daily Star, December 3, 2012 at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Dec-03/197006-strong-warning-to-assad-over-chemical-arms-clinton.ashx#axzz2E3mDp5EG>

⁵⁰ "Russia says West pushing democracy with 'iron and blood'", The Daily Star, December 1, 2012 at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Dec-01/196875-russia-says-west-pushing-democracy-with-iron-and-blood.ashx#axzz2E3mDp5EG>

Israel/Palestine

(November 26-December 2)

- **UN General Assembly recognises Palestine as observer state**

The UN General Assembly voted on November 29 to recognise Palestine as an observer state, with 138 members voting in favour, nine against and 41 absentions. The US and Israel were among those who voted against the resolution. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas returned to cheering crowds in the West Bank and indicated that in the absence of a peace deal with Israel, the largely symbolic UN decision may only have limited impact on the ground for some time to come.⁵¹ Abbas has also pledged to resume reconciliation efforts between rival Palestinian factions.⁵² The US denounced the plan as counterproductive to Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy that has been frozen since 2010.

In response to the UN vote, Israel rejected the borders of the Palestinian state that was recognised by the international body and has announced that it will not transfer to the Palestinian Authority tax and tariff funds that it collects for the Palestinians. Israel normally transfers around US\$ 120 million per month to the PA. Israel has said that the withholding of funds applies only to this month and will be used to pay PA debts to the Israeli electricity company.⁵³ The PA depends on this tax money to pay around 150,000 Palestinian civil servants. Israel also announced new settlement construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem immediately following the vote. UN chief Ban Ki-Moon has said that the plan for construction of at least 3,000 new settlements would deal a fatal blow to prospects for peace between the two sides.⁵⁴ The US and a number of European countries have urged Israel to reconsider this decision.⁵⁵ Israel has claimed that merely by approaching the UN for recognition, the Palestinians have violated past agreements that, according to Israel, binds both sides from taking unilateral steps towards a solution to the conflict.

Jordan

(November 26-December 2)

- **Number of Syrian refugees on the rise in Jordan**

Jordanian Prime Minister Abdullah Ensar has said that Jordan is now hosting more than 250,000

⁵¹ "Flag-waving Palestinians cheer Abbas for U.N. recognition win", The Daily Star, December 2, 2012 at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Dec-02/196915-flag-waving-palestinians-cheer-abbas-for-un-recognition-win.ashx#axzz2E3mDp5EG>

⁵² "Abbas pledges new Palestinian reconciliation efforts", The Daily Star, December 2, 2012 at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Dec-02/196902-abbas-pledges-new-palestinian-reconciliation-efforts.ashx#axzz2E3mDp5EG>

⁵³ "Israel halts Palestinian tax transfer over UN bid", The Daily Star, December 2, 2012 at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Dec-02/196907-israel-halts-palestinian-tax-transfer-over-un-bid.ashx#axzz2E3mDp5EG>

⁵⁴ "Israeli settler plans a 'fatal blow' to peace: Ban", The Daily Star, December 2, 2012 at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Dec-02/196916-israeli-settler-plans-a-fatal-blow-to-peace-ban.ashx#axzz2E3mDp5EG>

⁵⁵ "Israel says will stick with settlement plan", The Daily Star, December 3, 2012 at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Dec-03/197018-israel-feels-heat-from-europe-over-settlements.ashx#axzz2E3mDp5EG>

Syrian refugees within the country, and this constitutes an “enormous burden” on Jordan. Hundreds of Syrian civilians reportedly cross the border into Jordan every day because of violent fighting between Syrian government forces and opposition rebels. In addition to the Zaatari camp near the Syrian border, Jordanian authorities are planning to build a new camp to receive more refugees. The United Nations estimates that there are more than 460,000 Syrians living as refugees in neighbouring and North African countries, and around 20,000 in European countries.⁵⁶

Kuwait

(November 26-December 2)

- **Kuwait: Parliamentary elections held amidst opposition boycotts**

Kuwaitis voted for the parliamentary elections on December 1, 2012 with 40.3 percent voter turnout. The independent National Electoral Commission is certifying the results of the elections in which 306 candidates who contested for 50 seats.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, the opposition has demanded scrapping of the newly elected parliament and vowed to press on with its protests until the newly elected parliament is abolished and a disputed electoral law is scrapped. The opposition has no representative in the 50-member parliament after it opted to boycott the polls to protest the government’s unilateral amendment of electoral law. Under the previous law, a voter was able to choose a maximum of four candidates which was reduced to only one in the new system. The opposition, which held 36 seats in the dissolved 2012 parliament, has described the move as unconstitutional and says it enables the government to manipulate elections. As a result of the massive boycott by the opposition, candidates from the Shiite minority won unprecedented 17 seats, almost doubling their strength from nine seats in 2009.⁵⁸

E. Africa

(November 19-25)

- **Tension in Libya after security chief was assassinated in Benghazi; Clashes erupt in ethnic-Somali town of Garissa in Kenya; Egypt confiscates trucks carrying explosive warheads from Libya; Nigeria seeks to re-energise bilateral ties with Pakistan; Ethiopia and Kenya renew commitment to jointly tackle regional security threats; UN Sahel envoy seeks to promote peace in Mali; Regional African leaders call for immediate end to fighting in Congo; Egypt in turmoil following a decree that consolidates presidential influence; 11 killed in twin suicide bombings at Nigeria church**

According to reports, raising questions about the government’s ability to impose the rule of law,

⁵⁶ “Over 250,000 Syrian refugees a burden for Jordan”, The Daily Star, December 4, 2012 at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Dec-04/197105-over-250000-syrian-refugees-a-burden-for-jordan.ashx#axzz2E3mDp5EG>

⁵⁷ “Foundation for a new start of development, cooperation” , *Kuwait Times*, December 2, 2012, at <http://news.kuwaittimes.net/2012/12/02/foundation-for-a-new-start-of-development-cooperation/>

⁵⁸ “Kuwait opposition demands new assembly scrapped”, *Gulf News*, December 2, 2012, at <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/kuwait/kuwait-opposition-demands-new-assembly-scrapped-1.1113406>

colonel Farag al-Dersi, Benghazi's chief of security, was assassinated by three gunmen in the eastern Libyan city. Al-Dersi played a key role in curbing the power of extremist militias in Benghazi following the murder of US ambassador Chris Stevens in September 2012, by banning some and trying to bring others under control of government-appointed officers. His killing highlights the problems faced by Libya's new cabinet in tackling the country's security vacuum. The uncertainty at the heart of government also affected reform as the three-day international trade conference meeting in Tripoli was taking place without the participation of government ministers or officials, leaving investors unsure about Libya's future economic policy.⁵⁹

In another development, Kenyan army and security forces clashed with locals in the predominantly ethnic-Somali town of Garissa and left scores wounded and many residents enraged with accusations of arson and physical abuse. The violence broke out after unknown gunmen killed three soldiers in the northeastern region that borders war-torn southern Somalia. Residents complained that security officers burned down some businesses in the course of searching for the attackers, prompting some locals to riot in protest. Red Cross officials in Kenya said that one person had died and 48 others were treated at Garissa hospital. Meanwhile, calm returned to Nairobi's predominantly ethnic-Somali neighbourhood of Eastleigh, where paramilitary officers patrolled mostly empty streets after clashes involving Kenyan and Somali youth broke out in the wake of a bombing on a Nairobi bus which killed at least seven and injured 29.⁶⁰

According to reports, Egyptian interior minister Ahmed Gamal Eddin said that the Egyptian authorities confiscated trucks carrying explosive warheads and a variety of small arms ammunition smuggled from Libya. He mentioned that the trucks were carrying 108 warheads for Soviet-designed Grad rockets, near Marsa Matrouh, 270 miles northwest of Cairo on the Mediterranean coast. Smuggled weapons often fall into the hands of Islamist militants in the Sinai Peninsula, or pass via underground tunnels to the Gaza Strip, adding to Egypt's security concerns as police have yet to fully return to their duties.⁶¹

Reports noted that following his talks with Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan sought to strengthen bilateral ties with Pakistan by "re-energising" the existing bi-national commission with a view to promoting trade relations between the two countries. Jonathan arrived in Islamabad to attend a summit of eight developing nations (D8) in the first visit to Pakistan by a Nigerian leader in 28 years. Jonathan also sought to sign air services and banking deals with Pakistan, as well as explore collaborations in other areas.⁶²

Ethiopian Prime Minister, Hailemariam Dessalegn, held bilateral talks with Kenyan President, Mwai Kibaki, in Kenyan capital wherein both nations renewed their commitment to work jointly

⁵⁹ "Libyan security chief assassinated in Benghazi", The Guardian, November 21, 2012, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/nov/21/libya-security-chief-assassinated-benghazi>

⁶⁰ Mohammed Yusuf, "In Kenya, Reports of Police Abuse in Mostly Ethnic-Somali Town", Voice of America, November 21, 2012, at <http://www.voanews.com/content/residents-allege-police-abuse-in-predominantly-muslim-ethnic-somali-garissa-kenya/1550343.html>

⁶¹ Maggie Michael, "Egypt confiscates warheads smuggled from Libya", AFP, November 21, 2012, at http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5h1Pv8_SnBr8hCwWGfdE4Yz2gk5Zw?docId=73d86031c9ba4aeb9f15bc1dcc5123e

⁶² "Nigeria seeks to strengthen Pakistan trade ties", AFP, November 22, 2012, at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hMP4bxOQbiEAWXaEZPT2tL2WzjXw?docId=CNG.6611fb1b0c38c4c3fd36e91b1738c55e.631>

to tackle the security challenges facing the Horn of Africa region. The two sides agreed to promote regional peace and security particularly in tackling terrorism, piracy, and other organized crime that threatens the already volatile region. Both nations also reviewed the progress made by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and noted that this successful operation provided a unique opportunity to put an end to years of conflict and instability in the region. Earlier, the 34th Kenya-Ethiopia Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) technical meeting was held in Nairobi, which witnessed the signing of draft bilateral agreements on a number of areas including enhancing bilateral ties, socio-economical and security cooperation, and consolidation of the political transition and current stability gained in Somalia following decades of factional fighting and disorder.⁶³

United Nations Sahel envoy and former Italian premier Romano Prodi spoke about the need to promote peace in Mali before turning to a military solution. The UN official, who met with Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane and Foreign Minister Saad Eddine El Othmani in Rabat, committed himself to exploring all possible avenues to prevent war and allow peace to prevail in Mali through dialogue. Prodi stated that, according to experts, military action in Northern Mali would not be possible before September 2013. The UN official said that the international community needs to take action to promote economic development in the region and to give the people of Mali the means to make a living.⁶⁴

The extraordinary meeting of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, a regional bloc of central and east African nations, ended in Kampala with calls for the M23 rebel forces to immediately stop fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The meeting was organized after M23 rebels took the key eastern Congolese city of Goma and during the meeting, the officials called for the rebels to end their threats to overthrow the Congolese government. The regional leaders told the rebels to immediately withdraw at least 20 kilometers north of Goma so that Congolese troops and police officers could regain control of the city. The 10-point declaration also emphasized the Congolese government's role in ending the conflict. The regional body further called for a composite force of neutral troops and soldiers of the Congolese government and M23 to be stationed at Goma's airport.⁶⁵

In an effort to consolidate his influence after successfully sidelining Mubarak-era generals in August 2012, Egyptian president Mohamed Mursi issued a decree that defends from judicial review of decisions taken by Mursi until a new parliament is elected in a vote. It also shields the Islamist-dominated assembly writing Egypt's new constitution from legal challenges that have threatened the body with dissolution, and offers the same protection to the Islamist-controlled upper house of parliament. Following the move, president faced a rebellion from judges who accused him of expanding his powers at their expense, deepening a crisis that triggered violence in the street and exposed the country's deep divisions. The Judges' Club, a body representing judges across Egypt, called for a strike during a meeting interrupted with chants demanding the

⁶³ Tesfa-Alem Tekle, "Ethiopia, Kenya leaders vow to combat threats to regional security", Sudan Tribune, November 22, 2012, at <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article44612>

⁶⁴ Siham Ali and Walid Ramzi, "West Africa: UN Sahel Envoy Seeks Mali Solution", Magharebia, reported in All Africa, November 23, 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201211240463.html>

⁶⁵ Andrew Green, "African Leaders Demand Rebels Leave Goma", Voice of America, November 24, 2012, at <http://www.voanews.com/content/africa-leaders-drc/1552142.html>

“downfall of the regime”. Further, Mursi’s political opponents and supporters, representing the divide between newly empowered Islamists and their critics, called for rival demonstrations over the decree that triggered concern in the West.⁶⁶

In other developments, according to reports, twin suicide bombings resulted in killing of eleven people in Nigeria and wounded another 30 people. In the first attack, a suicide bomber rammed his bus into a church at military barracks in the town of Jaji in northern Nigeria in the latest such attack against Christians in the West African nation where the Islamist extremist group Boko Haram waged a deadly campaign and another detonated his explosives-packed car minutes later. Those killed included soldiers, but it was not clear how the bombers were able to enter the military barracks.⁶⁷

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

(November 19-25)

- **Defence minister presses for expediting China border projects; India successfully demonstrates capability of missile defence system**

Reports noted that Defense minister Shri A K Antony reviewed the development of new infrastructure including airfields along the China border in the northeast and asked the military top brass on 19th November to expedite the completion of the projects “in view of the current security scenario.” “We need to go beyond the PDCs (proposed date of completion) in view of the current security scenario,” the minister told a meeting to review infrastructure development on the northeast border. The meeting was attended by chiefs of the Army and IAF, defence secretary, the chief of BRO (Border Roads Organisation) and other senior officials. The defence minister also setup a monitoring committee under the vice-chief of the IAF, and comprising representatives from the MoD and other arms, to constantly monitor the revival of advance landing grounds and other airfields.⁶⁸

In a landmark achievement, India on November 23 demonstrated its capability to intercept multiple missile attacks. This capability was on demonstration, when a real interceptor destroyed an incoming target missile in endo-atmosphere at a height of 15 km over the Bay of Bengal and

⁶⁶ “Egypt crisis deepens as Mursi faces judicial revolt over decree”, Daily News and Analysis, November 25, 2012, at http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_egypt-crisis-deepens-as-mursi-faces-judicial-revolt-over-decree_1769140

⁶⁷ Victor Ulasi, “Twin suicide bombings kill 11 at Nigeria church”, AFP, November 25, 2012, at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hvkIFDBIbGRDncErJczyl-Rlnh6w?docId=CNG.48c03aeca7763de28a091ad1cced8d84.771>

⁶⁸ “Fast-track China border projects: Antony to Army,” TOI, November 20, 2012, at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-11-20/india/35227137_1_top-brass-antony-defence-minister

another simulated 'hostile' missile was killed in exo-atmosphere at 120 km almost simultaneously. This was the first time that missile technologists from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted such an exercise to test the efficacy of the Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system in near deployable configuration against more than a single missile attack. Scientific Advisor to Defence Minister V.K. Saraswat stated, "We are now in a position to deploy the system."⁶⁹

(November 26-December 2)

- **CAG points at major deficiencies in defence procurement process; CAG finds fault with the new defence offsets policy**

According to reports, the Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) report on the air force and navy tabled in parliament points to several shortcomings, including "inordinate delay in procurement and integration of a Radar Warning Receiver system" by the defence ministry and "procurement of unsuitable Navigation Computers" by the navy.⁷⁰

In another development, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report tabled in Parliament on 29th November has pointed to the shortcomings in the implementation of the new defence offsets policy of July 2005. After examining 16 offset contracts worth Rs 18,445 crore, the latest CAG report tabled in Parliament said the policy was floundering to strengthen self-reliance in defence preparedness. The report is mainly critical of ambiguity in the offset provisions. It calls for a better monitoring mechanism to ensure effective implementation of the projects.⁷¹

International

(November 19-25)

- **New U.S. force structure in Afghanistan emphasizes support role; China conducts the first successful landing of a fighter jet on its new aircraft carrier**

According to reports, the United States has undertaken a major reshuffle of its troops in Afghanistan in sync with its declared plans to move out of Afghanistan. Up to eight newly designed units – dubbed security force assistance brigades (SFABs) – will replace an equal number of U.S. Army brigade combat teams (BCTs) across the east and south of the country by next spring. The focus now will be on training and advising mission, while preparing Afghans to take the lead in security operations. While no final decision has been made on the size of the U.S. contingent in Afghanistan in the run up to the December 2014 conclusion of combat operations, Army Chief of Staff Gen.

⁶⁹ "India proves capability of missile defence system," The Hindu, November 23, 2012 <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-proves-capability-of-missile-defence-system/article4126430.ece>

⁷⁰ "CAG reports major shortcomings in defence procurements," TOI, November 29, 2012, at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-11-29/india/35434795_1_defence-ministry-defence-preparedness-procurement

⁷¹ "CAG punches holes in MoD's offsets policy," TOI, November 30, 2012, at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-11-30/india/35484095_1_defence-deals-crucial-defence-projects-cag-punches-holes

Ray Odierno has said that, "I expect over the next month that some decisions will be made. The first decision that has to be made is what are we going to leave behind after 2014. I believe that that decision will be made after the first of the year, but we haven't even started intense discussions on it yet." At their core, SFABs will be made up of a number of security force assistance teams of 10 to 20 officers and noncommissioned officers each, who will rely on the remainder of the brigade for their security, logistics, intelligence and joint fires needs.⁷²

In another development, reports noted that China has conducted the first landing of a fighter jet on its new aircraft carrier. The Chinese-made J-15 made the successful landing on the Liaoning, a former Soviet carrier, during recent exercises, according to the Chinese defense ministry. Zhang Junshe, a vice director at the military's Naval Affairs Research Institute, told state television, "The successful landing ... has always been seen as a symbol of the operating combat capability for an aircraft carrier." "This is a landmark event for China's aircraft carrier ... and (moves it) one step closer to combat readiness," he added.⁷³

(November 26-December 2)

- **U.S. Department of Defense reaches to an agreement with Lockheed Martin to purchase a fifth block of F-35 jets; U.S arms export faring well despite a sluggish global economy**

According to reports, the U.S. Department of Defense has reached an agreement in principle with Lockheed Martin to purchase a fifth block of F-35 jets. The agreement covers the manufacture of 32 F-35 Lightning II stealth fighters, along with support equipment and instrumentation. These 32 planes will meet the requirements of the Air Force, the Marines and the Navy. Vice Adm. Dave Venlet, the head of the F-35 program, said in a statement, "It's been a long journey, but I'm pleased we've achieved an agreement that is beneficial to the government and Lockheed Martin."⁷⁴

In another development, according to reports, despite a sluggish global economy the U.S. defence export market is doing well. Andrew Shapiro, assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs said on November 28, "The growth of the U.S. defense trade has been truly remarkable." "Despite the tough global economy over the last four years, demand for U.S. defense sales abroad remains robust. There has been significant growth both in direct commercial sales and in foreign military sales." The current U.S. administration has sought to revitalize U.S. diplomatic engagement, especially relating to security assistance and defense trade in order to gain better access to arms markets.⁷⁵

⁷² "New U.S. Force Structure Emphasizes Support Role in Afghanistan," Defense News, November 25, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20121125/DEFREG02/311250001/New-U-S-Force-Structure-Emphasizes-Support-Role-Afghanistan?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

⁷³ "China Conducts First Landing on Aircraft Carrier," Defense News, November 25, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20121125/DEFREG03/311250002/China-Conducts-First-Landing-Aircraft-Carrier?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|World%20News|s>

⁷⁴ "Lockheed, DoD Agree on F-35 Fifth Block Purchase," Defense News, November 30, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20121130/DEFREG02/311300005/-1/7daysarchives/Lockheed-DoD-Agree-F-35-Fifth-Block-Purchase>

⁷⁵ "U.S. State Dept Official: Exports, Agency Influence Up," Defense News, November 29, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20121129/DEFREG02/311290008/-1/7daysarchives/U-S-State-Dept-Official-Exports-Agency-Influence-Up>

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

(November 19-25)

- **Life in Valley paralyzed due to shutdown; Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) commander killed in encounter in North Kashmir**

According to reports, normal life across the valley was paralyzed on November 19 due to separatist-sponsored shutdown called against the continued detention of Muslim League chief Dr Qasim Fakto. The strike call was given by Hurriyat Conference (G) Chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) Muhammad Yasin Malik..⁷⁶

In another development, according to reports, a top Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) commander was killed in an encounter with Police and Army on November 24 killed in Rafiabad area of Baramulla district in north Kashmir. Giving the details, Superintendent of Police Sopore, Imtiyaz Hussain, said that on the basis of specific information about the presence of the commander in the house of Ali Muhammad Bhat at Chatlor Rafiabad, Sopore, a police party with the assistance of Army's 22 Rashtriya Rifles cordoned the house. The police officer said the militant was wanted in several civilian killings. He had infiltrated into the Valley in year 2002 and had been active in Kupwara and Sopore area since then.⁷⁷

North East India

(November 19-25)

- **Trade set to rise between Northeast States and Bangladesh; PM for boost to ASEAN-NE trade; Alternative lifeline of Manipur by 2013; Normal life hit by blockade in Manipur; Explosive expert of ULFA killed in an encounter in Assam-Meghalaya border**

According to reports, trade between Bangladesh and the northeastern States of India has been increasing every year, and the volume of trade this fiscal is expected to be around Rs 500 crore with Tripura alone. Tripura Commerce and Industries Minister Jitendra Chowdhury said that trade between Bangladesh and Tripura alone has increased from Rs 4.12 crore in 1995-1996 to Rs 330.60 crore in the last financial year. During the current fiscal (2012-13), the trade is expected to increase to Rs 500 crore. He said that trade between Bangladesh and other northeastern states, including Meghalaya, has also been increasing every year. Bangladesh and India have agreed to set up a number of border haats (border markets) along the boundaries, which, if opened, are expected to witness bilateral trade worth \$20 million every year.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ "Shutdown paralyses life across valley", *Greater Kashmir*, November 19, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Nov/20/shutdown-paralyses-life-across-valley-67.asp>

⁷⁷ "Jaish commander killed in encounter", *Greater Kashmir*, November 24, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Nov/25/jaish-commdr-killed-in-encounter-51.asp>

⁷⁸ "Northeast States' trade with Bangladesh set to rise", *The Assam Tribune*, November 19, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=nov1912/at048>

In another development, reports noted that notwithstanding the delay in linking the India's North East region with the ASEAN countries, India is looking at the possibility of further strengthening trade with neighbouring countries of the North Eastern States. Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, taking part in the 10th ASEAN Summit and Seventh East Asia Summit (EAS), is expected to focus on further boosting connectivity with the ASEAN and East Asian nations as part of the UPA Government's flagship Look East Policy (LEP). India and East Asian countries would be discussing some common problem like eradication of malaria, human and drugs trafficking, connectivity, earthquake management among other major issues.⁷⁹

Reports noted that Director General (Lt Gen) S Ravi Shanker of Border Road Organisation (BRO) during an interaction with the media on way to Aizawl recently reaffirmed that the construction of 222 km Imphal-Jiribam Road (NH-37) which is the second life line of Manipur, would be completed within December next year. Highways are very important in a blockade prone state Manipur which is connected with the rest of the nation with Imphal-Dimapur (NH 39) and Imphal-Jiribam (NH 37). The visiting BRO chief who had visited Jiribam recently along with the then Union Minister of state (Defence) MM Pallam Raju, added that the 10 km Indo-Myanmar border fencing which is undertaken at Moreh border town, 110 km south of Imphal will also be completed in 2014.⁸⁰

In other developments, according to reports, the Kuki State Demand Committee (KSDC) sponsored indefinite blockade on National and State Highways in Kuki areas of Manipur has hit normal life in the State. The blockade has severely affected the inter-State transport system disrupting the transport system between the five hill district headquarters and the State capital. The KSDC called the blockade since November 24 evening demanding creation of a Kuki State as they felt Kukis are neglected in the present set up in Manipur.⁸¹

However, according to reports, the hardline faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) on November 20 received a major jolt with the killing of explosive expert Saurav Gogoi. Meanwhile, though the flow of funds to the outfit has slowed down, some businessmen of Guwahati are regularly sending money to the outlawed militant outfit. Saurav was killed in an encounter with a joint team of Army and police at Thamti hills in Assam-Meghalaya border. The security forces launched the operation after receiving a specific tip off and killed the militant, while, another member of the ULFA managed to escape. The security forces also managed to recover a cache of arms and explosives from the slain ULFA member.⁸²

⁷⁹ "PM for boost to ASEAN-NE trade", *The Assam Tribune*, November 18, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=nov1912/at05>

⁸⁰ "Manipur alternative lifeline by 2014", *The Assam Tribune*, November 18, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=nov1912/oth06>

⁸¹ "Blockade hits normal life in Manipur", *The Assam Tribune*, November 19, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=nov2012/oth06>

⁸² "ULFA explosive expert killed in encounter", *The Assam Tribune*, November 20, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=nov2112/at094>

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

(November 19-25)

- **UN Security Council condemns attacks by M23 group, to consider additional sanctions; UNSC adopts resolution condemning all acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia; UN welcomes ceasefire between Israel and Gaza; India calls on international community to address threat posed by terrorist financing; India votes against UN resolution abolishing death penalty; HIV infections in India drops by 57%: UN report**

According to reports, the UN Security Council strongly condemned the latest wave of attacks by the M23 rebel group and demanded its immediate withdrawal from Goma in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The 15-member body also demanded “the cessation of any further advances by the M23 and that its members immediately and permanently disband and lay down their arms”. The Council also intends to consider additional targeted sanctions against the leadership of the M23 and those providing external support to it and those acting in violation of the sanctions imposed by the Council.⁸³ Meanwhile, the UN Secretary-General welcomed a joint statement issued by DRC’s President, Joseph Kabila and Rwandan President, Paul Kagame calling on the M23 rebel group to immediately cease fire in eastern DRC. He also welcomed the outcome of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Summit attended by several African heads of State which urged the rebel groups to stop violence and threats to depose the DRC government.⁸⁴

In a resolution unanimously adopted by the UN Security Council, the 15-member body condemned all acts of piracy and armed robbery against vessels in the waters off the coast of Somalia and stressed the need for a comprehensive response by the international community to fight the menace. One of the underlying causes of the problem recognised by the Council is the ‘ongoing instability in Somalia’ and underscored Somalia’s responsibility in fighting it.⁸⁵

Meanwhile, the UN Secretary-General and the Security Council welcomed the ceasefire between Israel and Gaza after a week-long violence in southern Israel and Gaza. The Council called on the parties to uphold the agreement and to ‘act seriously to implement its provisions in good faith’. Ban Ki-moon added that the status quo was unsustainable and that long-term solutions must be found to the problems of Gaza and for the Palestinians as a whole.⁸⁶

⁸³ “DR Congo: Security Council demands immediate withdrawal of M23 rebels from Goma”, *UN News Centre*, November 21, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43564&Cr=democratic&Cr1=congo#.ULMQwuS7Iq8>

⁸⁴ “UN Chief welcomes African leaders’ call on M23 rebels to stop war in DR Congo”, *UN News Centre*, November 25, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43596&Cr=democratic&Cr1=congo#.ULMQveS7Iq8>

⁸⁵ “Security Council stresses need for comprehensive global response to tackle piracy”, *UN News Centre*, November 21, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43569&Cr=piracy&Cr1=#.ULMQweS7Iq8>

⁸⁶ “UN chief and Security Council welcome ceasefire between Israel and Hamas”, *UN News Centre*, November 21, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43574&Cr=gaza&Cr1=#.ULMQweS7Iq8>

In other developments, India which currently chairs the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee called on the international community to give priority to tackling the threat posed by terrorist financing. India's representative H S Puri stated that it is imperative for member states and the international community to continue to update and strengthen the legal, regulatory and institutional framework to combat the challenge. He added that the committee is supportive of efforts to provide assistance to member states in implementing the UN instruments that tackle the threat in accordance with international law.⁸⁷

Meanwhile, India voted against a UN General Assembly draft resolution that called for a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty. The resolution which was voted in favour by 110 nations was adopted by the General Assembly's Third Committee that deals with social and humanitarian issues. In its defence, India argued that each state had the sovereign right to determine its own legal system and that in India, the practice of death penalty was exercised only in the 'rarest of occasions' and that in the cases of pregnant women the penalty was suspended.⁸⁸

According to the UNAIDS World Aids Day report 2012, HIV infections in India has dropped by 57 per cent over the last decade. The report added that "exceptional leadership is coming from the world's fastest-growing emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS)".⁸⁹

(November 26-December 2)

- **Palestine becomes non-observer state at the UN; UNSC welcomes cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait; India and China call for resolution of outstanding issues in UN Climate Change talks; India showcases Aakash tablet at the UN**

In a historical UN General Assembly vote, the status of Palestinian Authority was upgraded from 'entity' to 'non-member observer state'. India was among the 138 nations in the UNGA to vote in favour while nine countries opposed the resolution. This vote enables Palestine to access bodies like the International Criminal Court in The Hague. The Assembly through the resolution also voiced the hope that the Security Council will 'consider favourably' the application for full UN membership submitted by Palestine in September 2011.⁹⁰ Meanwhile, India expressed the hope that Palestine's upgraded status will lead to the resumption of 'serious and direct talks' with Israel.⁹¹

⁸⁷ "India calls for action against terror financing", *The Economic Times*, November 21, 2012 at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-11-21/news/35256139_1_counter-terrorism-committee-hardeep-singh-puri-important-partner

⁸⁸ "India votes against UN resolution on death penalty", *The Indian Express*, November 21, 2012 at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/india-votes-against-un-resolution-on-death-penalty-ban/1033868/0>

⁸⁹ "New HIV infections in India drop by 57 per cent: UN report", *The Economic Times*, November 21, 2012 at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-11-21/news/35256004_1_new-hiv-infections-aids-response-unaid

⁹⁰ "Palestine wins historical vote to upgrade UN status", *Business Standard*, November 30, 2012 at <http://business-standard.com/india/news/palestine-wins-historical-vote-to-upgrade-un-status/197791/on>

⁹¹ "India hopes UN vote will help resume Palestine, Israel talks", *Business Line*, December 01, 2012 at <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/international/india-hopes-un-vote-will-help-resume-palestine-israel-talks/article4153475.ece>

In other developments, the Security Council welcomed the continued cooperation between the Governments of Iraq and Kuwait and called on both states to continue to act in a spirit that builds further confidence and cooperation.⁹²

At the UN Climate Change negotiations at Doha, India and China insisted that the older negotiating platforms cannot be closed down till all outstanding issues such as those related to equity, providing finances and technology to developing countries and higher emission reduction targets by industrialised countries are resolved satisfactorily.⁹³

Meanwhile, India showcased the world's cheapest tablet, Aakash as an instance of country's technological innovation amidst China-made allegations. The device was unveiled in the presence of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and other member nations.⁹⁴ The tablet was endorsed by the UN with Ban Ki-moon personally approving the Indian effort at the UN headquarters.⁹⁵

⁹² "UN Security Council welcomes continued cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait", *UN News Centre*, December 01, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43655&Cr=Iraq&Cr1=#.UL3atuS7Iq8>

⁹³ "UN Climate Change Negotiations 2012 kick off at Doha", *The Economic Times*, November 26, 2012 at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-11-26/news/35365224_1_durban-platform-new-climate-regime-long-term-co-operative-action

⁹⁴ "Undeterred by 'China-made' allegations, India to showcase Aakash 2 at UN", *The Economic Times*, November 29, 2012 at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-11-29/news/35385780_1_datawind-ceo-suneet-singh-tuli-cheapest-tablet

⁹⁵ "UN endorses India's Aakash outreach", *The Times of India*, November 30, 2012 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-11-30/hardware/35484102_1_aakash-ii-datawind-ceo-suneet-singh-tuli