

# THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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## I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

### A. South Asia

#### Bangladesh

- **China considers Sonadia Island is of strategic importance; IMF imposes sixteen conditions for the possible \$1 billion credit to Bangladesh; PM Hasina proposes joint tourism packages by Bangladesh and Nepal; Sri Lanka invites Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to invest in prospective sectors of its northern and southern parts; Japan will provide 63 million US dollar for maternal and child health programme; The Power Development Board signs an agreement with the National Thermal Power Corporation of India**

According to reports, China said that Bangladesh's proposed deep seaport in Sonadia Island is of strategic importance to the country and is helpful to become the regional transportation and logistic centre. "So long Bangladesh side shows enough will and determination, this project can obtain positive progress very soon," outgoing Chinese Ambassador Zhang Xianyi made the remarks in his pre-departure interview with UNB. During Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Beijing last year, Bangladesh sought the Chinese assistance to build the deep seaport.<sup>1</sup>

In another development, according to reports, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has imposed 16 conditions, including demutualisation of Dhaka and Chittagong bourses by December, for the possible \$1 billion credit to Bangladesh.<sup>2</sup>

According to reports, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina proposed joint tourism packages by Bangladesh and Nepal for the promotion of tourism sector in the two countries as well as in the region. The proposal came when the newly appointed Nepalese Ambassador to Bangladesh Hari Kumar Shrestha called on the prime minister at her office on January 24, 2012.<sup>3</sup>

Reports noted that Sri Lanka has invited Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to invest in prospective sectors of its northern and southern parts as the two countries are going to sign a deal on trade and investment promotion. The business leaders of Sri Lanka also proposed to set up a joint training centre in Bangladesh to develop skilled professionals to handle port-related work.<sup>4</sup>

According to reports, Japan will provide 63 million US dollar (5.04 billion yen) for improvement

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<sup>1</sup> "China looks positive: Ready to participate in deep-sea project, set up road, rail links with Dhaka thru' Myanmar", *The Daily Star*, January 23, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=219549>.

<sup>2</sup> Karim Byron, Rejaul, "Conditions for \$1b credit must be met in time: IMF", *The Daily Star*, January 23, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=219465>.

<sup>3</sup> "PM for joint tourism packages with Nepal", *The Daily Star*, January 25, 2012 at

<sup>4</sup> "Sri Lanka seeks investment from Bangladeshi entrepreneurs", *The Daily Star*, January 26, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=219900>.

of maternal, neonatal and child health programme in Bangladesh. To this effect, an exchange of notes was signed on January 25, 2012 by Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Shiro Sadoshima and Senior Secretary at the Economic Relations Division Iqbal Mahmood. The loan agreement of the project was also signed between the senior secretary and Chief Representative of JICA Bangladesh Office Dr Takao Toda.<sup>5</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, the Power Development Board (PDB) signed an agreement with the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) of India to build a 1,320-megawatt coal-fired power plant in Bagerhat's Rampal. A five-member team of the NTPC led by Indian Power Secretary P Uma Shankar arrived in Dhaka on January 28, 2012 to sign the agreement. The PDB and the NTPC will implement the \$1.5 billion project on a 50:50 equity basis. The NTPC will set up and operate the plant.<sup>6</sup>

## Sri Lanka

- **Sri Lankan MEA paid two day visit to New Delhi; India-Sri Lanka bilateral trade reached an estimated all-time high of US\$ 5 billion; Sri Lankan business delegates visit Bangladesh; Pakistani trade delegation visits Sri Lanka; Sri Lanka-Indonesia bilateral trade to reach US \$ 1 billion by the year 2015; Japan has extended US\$ 223,075 grant aid for a reconstruction project in Killinochchi**

According to reports, Minister of External Affairs, Prof. G.L. Peiris, on a two-day visit to New Delhi, held discussions on 23 January 2012 with over seventy envoys accredited to Sri Lanka who are resident in New Delhi. The Minister briefed the envoys in detail regarding the situation which existed in Sri Lanka's North and East before the conclusion of the conflict in May 2009; the current situation; specific approaches that have been identified as a means of overcoming the challenges before the nation; and the progress made so far in multiple fronts since the end of the conflict approximately two-and-a-half years ago. Prof. Peiris while meeting with India's Minister of Human Resource Development and Minister of Communications and Information Technology of India, Kapil Sibal, discussed how India could support the effective implementation of the National Plan for a Trilingual Sri Lanka (2012-2021) that was launched on 21 January by President Mahinda Rajapaksa, with the participation of former President of India, Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam. With a view to enhancing cooperation between the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International Relations and Strategic Studies (LKIIRSS), and Indian Institutions, the Minister met former Indian Foreign Secretary Ambassador Shyam Saran, Chairman of the Research and Information Systems for Developing Countries (RIS) as well as the Director General of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), Ambassador Sudir Devare.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "\$63m Japanese support", *The Daily Star*, January 26, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=219932>

<sup>6</sup> "Power Plant: Deal with Delhi today", *The Daily Star*, January 29, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=220330>

<sup>7</sup> "Professor Peiris meets Indian Minister and Envoys in New Delhi", *Ministry of External Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka*, January 27, 2012 at <http://www.mea.gov.lk/index.php/media/3292-professor-peiris-meets-indian-minister-and-envoys-in-new-delhi>.

Meanwhile, reports noted that the bilateral trade between Sri Lanka and India last year surged by over 70 percent and reached an estimated all-time high of US\$ 5 billion, the High Commissioner of India Ashok Kantha said.<sup>8</sup>

According to reports, in a measure to boost trade relations between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka (NCCSL) has organized a tour for a Sri Lankan business delegation to visit Dhaka. Accordingly, a group of Sri Lankan businessmen from 11 local businesses has left the country to participate in an international trade exhibition in the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka.<sup>9</sup>

In another development, reports noted that a Pakistani trade delegation of fruit and vegetable producers and exporters is visiting Sri Lanka to explore the ways and means to enhance bilateral trade between Sri Lanka and Pakistan.<sup>10</sup>

In other developments, reports note that Sri Lanka and Indonesia resolved to set a target for bilateral trade to reach US \$ 1 billion by the year 2015.<sup>11</sup> In the meanwhile, Japan has extended US\$ 223,075 (approximately Rs.25 Million) grant aid for a reconstruction project in Killinochchi District in order to improve the living environment and livelihood of recent returnees in a conflict affected village in Kandavalai Divisional Secretary Division, Killinochchi.<sup>12</sup>

## Maldives

- **President Nasheed lauds Indian people, its its democratic institutions and government; Maldivian President sends republic day message to India**

According to reports, addressing a gathering in the Friendship Association of India-Maldives (FAIM) website launching programme on January 26, President lauded the Indian “people, its government and its institutions for the very necessary and good assistance they continue to give to the Maldives in its work to become a democratic society. Maldives has learnt its “lessons from the Indian experience”, said President Mohamed Nasheed as the Indian envoy in Maldives described the country as “perhaps one of India’s closest partners”.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> “SL, India bilateral trade reached an all-time high in 2011 – Indian envoy”, *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, January 27, 2012 at [http://www.priu.gov.lk/news\\_update/Current\\_Affairs/ca201201/20120127sl\\_india\\_bilateral\\_trade.htm](http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201201/20120127sl_india_bilateral_trade.htm).

<sup>9</sup> “Sri Lanka business delegation visits Dhaka to boost bilateral trade”, *Colombopage*, January 23, 2012 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_12/Jan23\\_1327338561CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12/Jan23_1327338561CH.php).

<sup>10</sup> “Pakistani trade delegation in SL to enhance bilateral trade”, *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, January 27, 2012 at [http://www.priu.gov.lk/news\\_update/Current\\_Affairs/ca201201/20120127pakistani\\_trade\\_delegation\\_sl.htm](http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201201/20120127pakistani_trade_delegation_sl.htm).

<sup>11</sup> “SL- Indonesia trade to reach USD 1b by 2015”, *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, January 27, 2012 at [http://www.priu.gov.lk/news\\_update/Current\\_Affairs/ca201201/20120127sl\\_indonesia\\_trade.htm](http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201201/20120127sl_indonesia_trade.htm).

<sup>12</sup> “Japan further assists Killinochchi reconstruction”, *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, January 24, 2012 at [http://www.priu.gov.lk/news\\_update/Current\\_Affairs/ca201201/20120124japan\\_further\\_assists\\_killinochchi\\_reconstruction.htm](http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201201/20120124japan_further_assists_killinochchi_reconstruction.htm).

<sup>13</sup> “Maldives learns from Indian democracy: Nasheed”, *Zee news*, January 28, 2012 at [http://zeenews.india.com/news/south-asia/maldives-learns-from-indian-democracy-nasheed\\_755287.html](http://zeenews.india.com/news/south-asia/maldives-learns-from-indian-democracy-nasheed_755287.html).

In other developments, President Mohamed Nasheed has sent republic day greetings to Indian President Pratibha Devisingh Patil and Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.<sup>14</sup>

## South East Asia

- **Thai Prime Minister visits India; Malaysia to give \$ 35 million to Bangladesh; Philippines to allow greater US military presence in the country; US- Philippines hold bilateral strategic dialogue; Myanmar's President visits Singapore; Suu Kyi begins campaigning for elections**

According to reports, the Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra visited India from 24- 26 January 2012. She was the Chief Guest at India's republic day parade. During her visit, India and Thailand inked six pacts in key areas including defence, security and economy.<sup>15</sup>

In another development, Malaysia has agreed to provide \$ 35 million to Bangladesh for a state water and sewerage authority project, which will generate an additional 150 million litres of water in Dhaka. A Memorandum of Understanding in that regard was signed on 30 January 2012.<sup>16</sup>

According to reports, the Philippine authorities, on 24 January, 2012, announced that the government is planning to allow the US army to have a greater military presence in its territory. However, it was also made clear that Philippines has no plans to allow a return of the large-scale US military bases that existed in the Philippines until 1992, when Filipino senators voted to close them down. The officials added that the military presence could include "planning more joint exercises to promote interoperability and a rotating and more frequent presence by them."<sup>17</sup>

According to reports, the United States and the Republic of the Philippines held the second Bilateral Strategic Dialogue on January 26-27 2012, in Washington D.C. on 27 January 2012. A joint statement on second bilateral was issued in which the two countries reaffirmed their commitment to fulfill the Manila Declaration goals. Among other things, significance of Mutual Defence Treaty was also discussed.<sup>18</sup>

Reports noted that Thein Sein, the President of Myanmar, is scheduled to visit Singapore from 1 February 2012. He will be accompanied by family members and a high-level delegation. The visit is part of Myanmar's increased efforts to engage ASEAN member countries.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "President Congratulates India on Republic Day", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, January 26, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=6654>.

<sup>15</sup> India, Thailand sign 6 key accords, *The Indian Express*, 25 January 2012, <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/india-thailand-sign-six-6-key-accords/903969>

<sup>16</sup> Malaysia to give \$ 35 mn for Bangladesh project, 30 January 2012, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/Malaysia-to-give-35-mn-for-Bangladesh-water-project/articleshow/11695973.cms>

<sup>17</sup> Philippines flags greater US military presence, *Daily Times*, 28 January 2012, [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012\01\28\story\\_28-1-2012\\_pg4\\_2](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012\01\28\story_28-1-2012_pg4_2)

<sup>18</sup> Joint statement of the United States- Philippines Bilateral Strategic Dialogue- Media Note, *US Department of State*, 27 January 2012, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/01/182688.htm>

<sup>19</sup> Myanmar's President Thein Sein visits Singapore, *Channel News Asia*, 29 January 2012, <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/singaporelocalnews/view/1179697/1/.html>



In other developments, according to reports, the pro-democracy leader of Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi started campaigning for her party, National League for Democracy, on 29 January 2012. According to the media reports, Suu Kyi's popularity and acceptance among the people is still intact, which is likely to favour her in the upcoming elections. The elections in Myanmar are due in April 2012.<sup>20</sup>

## II. DEFENCE REVIEW

### National

- **INS Sudarshini inducted into the Southern Naval Command; IAF contingent led by woman officer bags R-Day parade award**

According to reports, the second sail-training ship of the Indian Navy, INS Sudarshini was inducted into the Southern Naval Command by Vice-Admiral K N Sushil, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief. INS Sudarshini on January 27, 2012. Designed by British Naval architect Colin Mudie, the ship is a follow-on class of INS Tarangini which joined Southern Naval Command in 1997. Built at the Goa shipyard, it is commanded by Commander P K Boyiri Varma and has an overall length of 54 metre. The vessel can sail for up to 20 days with a crew of five officers, 31 sailors and 30 cadets. It will join the First Training Squadron based at the Southern Naval Command in Kochi, a Navy release said. Sail-training ships are crucial for training of naval officers in seamanship, navigation, ship handling and braving the elements.

INS Sudarshini is expected to undertake a historic ASEAN voyage in September this year. The voyage, which will cement the historic ties of India with ASEAN countries, will touch 18 ports in eight countries.<sup>21</sup> "INS Sudarshini joins Navy," The New Indian Express, January 30, 2012, at <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/ins-sudarshini-joins-navy/224999-60-122.html>

In another development, according to reports, the Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent that was led by a woman officer, Flight Lt. Sneha Shekhawat for the first time ever was adjudged the best marching team among the three armed forces, while the Border Security Force bagged the honour among the paramilitary forces. The Indian Air Force (IAF) transport pilot officer led the 144-airmen contingent at the 63rd Republic Day parade down Rajpath. This contingent was judged as the best by a defence ministry panel from among the army, navy and the air force teams.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Aung San Suu Kyi out on Burma campaign trail, *Telegraph*, 29 January 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/burmayanmar/9047857/Myanmar-Aung-Suu-Kyi-out-on-the-Burma-campaign-trail.html>

<sup>21</sup> "INS Sudarshini joins Navy," The New Indian Express, January 30, 2012, at <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/ins-sudarshini-joins-navy/224999-60-122.html>

<sup>22</sup> "Indian Air Force bags R-Day parade award," January 28, 2012, at <http://www.sify.com/news/indian-air-force-bags-r-day-parade-award-news-national-mb2vOgdbieb.html>

## International

- **France rules out immediate Afghanistan withdrawal amid panic; Philippines announces plans to allow a greater U.S. military presence on its territory**

According to reports, French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said on January 24 that France would not give in to “panic” and pull its troops out of Afghanistan this year after four of its soldiers were killed there last week. Juppe stated in French parliament, “When I hear talk of an immediate withdrawal, such as at the end of 2012, I am not sure that this has been thought through and studied... we must not give in to panic, we must not confuse an orderly withdrawal with a rushed withdrawal,” the minister said. Earlier four unarmed soldiers were killed on January 20 at a base in eastern Afghanistan in an attack that left 15 other French troops wounded and eight of them seriously. French President Nicolas Sarkozy had reacted angrily and threatened to pull his forces out of Afghanistan ahead of the 2014 deadline for all U.S.-led coalition combat troops and dispatched Defense Minister Gerard Longuet to Kabul.<sup>23</sup>

In another development, meanwhile, Philippines on January 27 announced plans to allow a greater U.S. military presence on its territory. The move is seen by analysts as directly aimed at trying to contain a rising China. Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario said the Philippines was looking for more joint military exercises with its former colonial ruler, as well as having a greater number of U.S. troops rotating through the country. “It is to our definite advantage to be exploring how to maximize our treaty alliance with the United States in ways that would be mutually acceptable and beneficial,” del Rosario said in a statement. Though, Del Rosario did not specifically name China as driving the Philippines’ push for a greater U.S. military presence, the fact remains that the most pressing territorial dispute for the Philippines is with China over claims to parts of the South China Sea, home to some of the world’s most important shipping lanes and believed to hold vast deposits of fossil fuels. In his statement, del Rosario said a greater U.S. military presence in the Philippines would help bolster regional security. Nevertheless, del Rosario and other officials emphasized there were no plans to allow a return of the large-scale U.S. military bases that existed in the Philippines until 1992, when Filipino senators voted to close them down.<sup>24</sup>

## III. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **UNSC condemns attacks against peacekeepers in Darfur; UNSC denounces terrorist attacks in Nigeria; UNSC welcomes political transition in Yemen; G4 calls for early UNSC reforms; Indian diplomat appointed as UN Secretary-General’s special adviser on Myanmar; India**

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<sup>23</sup> “France Rules Out 2012 Afghanistan Withdrawal,” AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE January 24, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120124/DEFREG01/301240005/-1/7daysarchives/France-Rules-Out-2012-Afghanistan-Withdrawal>

<sup>24</sup> “Philippines Agrees to Larger U.S. Troop Presence,” AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, January 27, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120127/DEFREG03/301270002/-1/7daysarchives/Philippines-Agrees-Larger-U-S-Troop-Presence>



### **criticizes Israeli settlements in Palestinian lands; UNSC to discuss draft resolution on Syria**

According to reports, the UN Security Council condemned the attack on UN-AU patrol in Darfur which caused one death and also called on the Sudanese Government to bring the perpetrators to justice. The Council reiterated its support for UNAMID and called on all parties in Darfur to cooperate with the mission.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, UNSC expressed sympathy and condolences to the victims of the multiple terrorist attacks that occurred in Kano, Nigeria and underlined the need to bring the perpetrators to justice. The statement issued by the Council reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of motivation, wherever and by whomsoever committed and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.<sup>26</sup>

In another development, the UNSC welcomed the progress towards the implementation of the political transition in Yemen, based in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) initiative. The Council urged all the parties in Yemen to reject violence, refrain from provocations and cooperate with the Military Affairs Committee to fully implement the GCC implementation mechanism and Security Council resolution. The 15-member body also stated that it was gravely concerned over the humanitarian situation in Yemen, including food insecurity, alarming levels of malnutrition and increasing number of IDPs.<sup>27</sup>

According to reports, in the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council, India pushed for early implementation of comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council. The first of the five rounds of talks was on January 26, which saw the G4 nations – India, Brazil, Germany and Japan making their case. The G4 nations stressed on a ‘short resolution’ that calls for ‘early reforms of the Security Council, expansion in both its permanent and non-permanent categories and improvement in its working methods.’<sup>28</sup> The short resolution received an encouraging support in the form of 85 signatures, 53 other expressions of support and another 14-15 in the pipeline.<sup>29</sup>

According to reports, veteran Indian diplomat, Vijay Nambiar, the current Chief of Staff to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will take over as Mr. Ban’s special adviser on Myanmar.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> “Darfur: Security Council condemns attack on UN-African Union peacekeepers”, *UN News Centre*, January 23, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41015&Cr=darfur&Cr1=>

<sup>26</sup> “Perpetrators of ‘heinous’ attacks in Nigeria must be brought to justice – Security Council”, *UN News Centre*, January 26, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41047&Cr=Nigeria&Cr1=attack>

<sup>27</sup> “Yemen: Security Council urges timely, inclusive political transition”, *UN News Centre*, January 26, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41050&Cr=yemen&Cr1=>

<sup>28</sup> “India to push for early comprehensive UNSC reform”, *The Economic Times*, January 26, 2012 at [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-01-26/news/30666817\\_1\\_unsc-reform-inter-governmental-negotiations-afghanistan-s-permanent-representative](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-01-26/news/30666817_1_unsc-reform-inter-governmental-negotiations-afghanistan-s-permanent-representative)

<sup>29</sup> “Solid support for resolution on UNSC expansion: Puri”, *The Hindu*, January 28, 2012 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2837740.ece>

<sup>30</sup> “Nambiar appointed Ban Ki-moon’s special adviser on Myanmar”, *The Hindu*, January 26, 2012 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article2834214.ece>

Reports noted that in an open debate at the UN Security Council on situation in the Middle East, India's permanent representative, H.S.Puri criticized the increasing Israeli settlement activities in Palestinian territories as not compatible with the two-state solution. Puri also added that the settlement activities are not only illegal under international law but also undermine efforts taken by the international community.<sup>31</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, the Security Council is likely to discuss a draft resolution which is backed by most Arab states that calls for the Assad regime to surrender its totalitarian hold on Syria. This marks a new phase in the regional stand against Syria as the Arab League has been looking actively for ways to end the crisis.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> "Israel's settlement activities undermine peace efforts: India", *The Times of India*, January 25, 2012 at [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-01-25/middle-east/30662327\\_1\\_settlement-activities-peace-efforts-puri](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-01-25/middle-east/30662327_1_settlement-activities-peace-efforts-puri)

<sup>32</sup> "UN security council to discuss Arab-backed Syria plan", *The Guardian*, January 27, 2012 at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/27/un-security-council-discuss-syria>