

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

January 14-20, (3), 2013

Editor: Sanjeev Kumar Shrivastav

Contributors

Anwesha Roy Chaudhuri

Gulbin Sultana

Pranamita Baruah

Gunjan Singh

Mahtab Alam Rizvi

Princy Marine George

Prashant Pradhan

Amit Kumar

Shristi Pukhrem

Keerthi Kumar

Afghanistan, Pakistan

Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh

Japan, South Korea, North Korea

China

Iran, Iraq

Syria, Israel, Palestine

Bahrain, UAE

Defence Review

Internal Security Review

UN Review

Review Adviser: S. Kalyanaraman

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Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg, New Delhi-110010

Telephone: 91-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191 Website: www.idsa.in; Email: twir@idsa.in

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

- **President Karzai: Immunity for US soldiers in Afghanistan after 2014 to be decided by Loya Jirga; Afghan Intelligence headquarters rocked by suicide attack killing two guards**

According to reports, President Karzai has said that immunity for US soldiers remaining in Afghanistan after 2014 will be decided by Afghan elders at Loya Jirga. Earlier, during the talks with Karzai in Washington DC last week, US President Barack Obama had warned that no American troops would remain behind in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of NATO forces in 2014 unless they were granted immunity from prosecution in local courts.

In another development, according to reports, the Afghan Intelligence headquarters in Kabul has been attacked by a squad of suicide bombers in which two guards were killed and dozens were injured. The National Directorate of Security is playing increasingly important role in the war against Taliban as US and NATO prepare to withdraw. The Taliban have claimed responsibility for the attack.²

Pakistan

- **Talks between military officials from India and Pakistan ended in a stalemate; Pakistan Supreme Court orders arrest of Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf; Pakistan to release all Afghan Taliban detainees including Mullah Baradar**

According to reports, talks between military officials from Pakistan and India ended in a stalemate on January 15 with the two sides accusing each other of violating the ceasefire at their heavily-militarised de facto border in the disputed Jammu and Kashmir region. A brigadier-level flag meeting was held at Chakan-da-Bagh in Ponch Sector on the LoC to defuse tensions triggered by the recent border skirmishes, which killed four soldiers from both sides. During the 30-minute meeting, both sides refused to budge on their previously stated positions, accusing each other of provoking the shootings and lodged protests against each other.³

In another development, reports noted that the Pakistan Supreme Court on January 15 directed the authorities to arrest Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf. PM Ashraf has been accused of receiving

¹ Afghan elders to decide on immunity for US troops: Karzai, *The Express Tribune*, January 14, 2013 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/493805/afghan-elders-to-decide-on-immunity-for-us-troops-karzai/>

² Suicide attack targets Afghan spy headquarters in Kabul, *Dawn*, January 16, 2013 at <http://dawn.com/2013/01/16/large-explosion-gunfire-heard-in-kabul/>

³ Ceasefire violations: Pakistan, India talks end in stalemate, *The Express Tribune*, January 15, 2013 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/494114/ceasefire-violations-pakistan-india-talks-end-in-stalemate/>

kickbacks in the case during his tenure as minister of water and power.⁴

According to reports, Pakistan plans to release all Afghan Taliban prisoners still in its detention, including the group's former second-in-command Mullah Baradar, Pakistan's foreign secretary Jalil Jilani said on January 18. the clearest signal yet that it backs reconciliation efforts. "The remaining detainees, we are coordinating, and they will be released subsequently," Jilani said at a news conference in Abu Dhabi.⁵

Bangladesh

- **PM Sheikh Hasina visits Russia; Bangladesh divides its border area into four zones; European Parliament backed a call to encourage tougher safety laws and proper inspections in Bangladesh**

According to reports, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited Russia from January 14-17, 2013. This was the second highest level visit from Dhaka to Moscow after a span of 40 years since Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman first visited the then Soviet Union in 1972. Ms. Hasina led a 54-member delegation, which includes the foreign minister and State Minister for Science and Technology Yeafesh Osman.⁶ During the visit, both the countries signed a \$1 billion deal under which Bangladesh would procure military equipment and arms from Russia. The arms purchase agreement includes orders for armoured vehicles and infantry weapons, air defence systems and Mi-17 transport helicopters. The two countries also signed two other agreements and six memoranda of understanding (MoU) on cooperation in different fields like agriculture, public health, medical science, education, counterterrorism, culture, law, justice and parliamentary affairs. A part of the agreements saw Russia assign \$500 million to finance the construction of Bangladesh's first nuclear power plant to be built at Rooppur.⁷

In another development, reports noted that Bangladesh has over 4,427 kilometres of border with India and the total area has been divided into four regional headquarters in Rangpur, Jessore, Sarail and Chittagong for better border management. This was noted by Director General of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) Major General Aziz Ahmed on January 14, 2013.⁸

In other developments, the European Parliament backed a call to encourage tougher safety laws and proper inspections in Bangladesh and Pakistan on January 17, 2013, following deadly fires in garment factories in Dhaka and Karachi.⁹

⁴ SC orders arrest of PM Ashraf in RPP case, *Dawn*, January 15, 2013 at <http://dawn.com/2013/01/15/sc-orders-arrest-of-pm-ashraf-reports/>

⁵ Pakistan to release Mullah Baradar, other Afghan Taliban detainees, *The Express Tribune*, January 18, 2013 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/495798/pakistan-to-release-mullah-baradar-other-afghan-taliban-detainees/>

⁶ "PM goes to Russia today; nuke, defence purchase deals to top agenda; interest rates unclear", *The Daily Star*, January 14, 2013 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=265115>.

⁷ "\$1b defence deal sealed: Dhaka, Moscow also sign nuke plant, 7 other agreements; agree to fight terrorism together", *The Daily Star*, January 16, 2013 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=265372>.

⁸ "Border dists to be split into 4 zones", *The Daily Star*, January 15, 2013 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=265293>

⁹ "Europe for Dhaka to make tougher laws", *The Daily Star*, January 18, 2013 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=265720>.

Sri Lanka

- **India to set up nine language labs in the nine provinces of Sri Lanka; U.S. designs through USAID a new, US\$4.5 million dollar “Increased Responsiveness in the Legal System Program” for Sri Lanka; Agreements signed between Sri Lanka and the UAE; China to grant a consignment of sports gear worth Sri Lankan Rs. 50 million for the children in Northern Sri Lanka; 36 Indian companies participated in the JITE; World Bank projects Sri Lanka’s economy to grow at 6.8 percent in 2013**

Reports noted that the Government of India is undertaking a project to set up nine language labs in the nine provinces of Sri Lanka. The project is implemented under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between India and Sri Lanka on 13 September 2011 to set up a “Three-Tier English Language Training System” in the island. The project will be implemented under full grant assistance of the Indian government and will be completed in three months.¹⁰

In another development, the U.S. has designed through USAID a new, US\$4.5 million dollar “Increased Responsiveness in the Legal System Program” to train Sri Lanka’s judges, court administrators and staff to improve their skills with the increased use of information technology, and to promote the use of all three official languages in the legal system. According to the U.S. Ambassador to Colombo Michele Sison, the project will train Ministry of Justice and Judicial Services Commission officials to improve the planning, administration, and oversight of the legal system.¹¹

Reports noted that an agreement to establish a Joint Commission for the purpose of promoting co-operation in various fields and strengthening existing bilateral relations between Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This agreement was signed by the Foreign Minister of UAE Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Sri Lanka’s Minister of External Affairs Prof. G.L. Peiris following a meeting between the two in Abu Dhabi on January 17. The two countries also signed an agreement to avoid double taxation of income derived from international air transport, an air service agreement and an agreement for the avoidance of fiscal evasion with regard to taxes levied on income.¹²

According to reports, the Chinese government has agreed to grant a consignment of sports gear worth Sri Lankan Rs. 50 million to the Sri Lankan government to be distributed among the children in Northern Sri Lanka. An official agreement to donate the sports equipment was signed on January 18 with the participation of China’s Ambassador to Sri Lanka Wu Jianghao and External Affairs Minister Prof. G.L. Peiris at a function held in Temple Trees. The sports equipment is to be distributed among schools and sports clubs within the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu Districts.¹³

¹⁰ “India to set up English language labs in all provinces of Sri Lanka”, *The Colombo Page*, January 18, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13A/Jan18_1358527042CH.php.

¹¹ “US working on strengthening Rule of Law in Sri Lanka to promote business ties”, *The Colombo Page*, January 18, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13A/Jan18_1358451433CH.php.

¹² “Sri Lanka, UAE to establish a Joint Commission to enhance bilateral relations”, *The Colombo Page*, January 20, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13A/Jan20_1358668962CH.php.

¹³ “China donates Rs. 50 million worth sports gear to children in Northern Sri Lanka”, *The Colombo Page*, January 19, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13A/Jan19_1358592136CH.php.

In other developments, according to reports, 36 Indian companies participated in the 4th Jaffna International Trade Fair (JITF), held on January 18-20, 2013 at the Duraiyappa Stadium in Jaffna.¹⁴

The World Bank has projected that Sri Lanka's economy will grow at 6.8 percent in 2013 after slowing to a 6.1 percent in 2012 and to strengthen to 7.2 percent in 2015.¹⁵

Indian Coast Guard has arrested 21 Sri Lankan fishermen for allegedly crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) and entering Indian waters.¹⁶

Maldives

- **Maldives elected as vice Chair of IRENA; Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development of Mauritius visits Maldives; Maldives prescribes a temporary ban on import of live animals and meat products from Tamil Nadu**

Reports noted that Maldives has been elected as the Vice Chair of the Assembly of International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).¹⁷

According to reports, upon sighting of cases of anthrax in live animals in Tamil Nadu, the Ministry of Health of the Maldivian Government has prescribed a temporary ban on import of all kinds of live animals and meat products from Tamil Nadu to the Maldives.¹⁸

In other developments, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development of Mauritius, Xavier Luc Duval paid a courtesy call on President Dr Mohamed Waheed on January 15 at the President's Office.¹⁹

B. East Asia

China

- **China appoints new ambassador to India; India-China agree to work towards strengthening military ties; US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton: Diaoyu Islands fall "under the administrative authority of Japan" and thus they were under the purview of US-Japan**

¹⁴ "36 Indian companies participate in international trade fair in Sri Lanka's Northern Province", *The Colombo Page*, January 18, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13A/Jan18_1358525574CH.php.

¹⁵ "World Bank forecasts Sri Lanka's economy to grow 6.8 percent this year", *The Colombo Page*, January 18, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13A/Jan18_1358481254CH.php.

¹⁶ "Indian Coast Guard arrests 21 Sri Lankan fishermen", *The Colombo Page*, January 19, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13A/Jan19_1358588153CH.php.

¹⁷ "Maldives Elected as Vice Chair of the Assembly of IRENA", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, January 17, 2013 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=8510>.

¹⁸ "Temporary ban on live animals and meat products from Tamil Nadu", *The Sun Online*, January 19, 2013 at <http://sun.mv/english/8872>.

¹⁹ "Vice Prime Minister of Mauritius calls on the President", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, January 15, 2013 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=8494>.

Security Treaty; China warns United States over Diaoyu Islands stand; Myanmar's President meets Chinese special envoy in Yangon; Diaoyu Islands patrolled by Chinese surveillance ships; China thanks the Sudanese government for release of Chinese nationals; Chinese leader Jia Qinglin calls for dialogue with Japan on Diaoyu Islands

According to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), Hu Jintao has appointed Wei Wei as new ambassador to India who will be replacing Zhang Yan.²⁰ Meanwhile, Indian Defence Secretary Shashi Kant Sharma met Xu Qiliang who is the vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission in Beijing on January 14, 2013. They agreed to strengthen military ties.²¹

In recent developments over the Diaoyu Islands, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said on January 18 that the Islands fall "under the administrative authority of Japan" and thus they were under the purview of US-Japan Security Treaty. She also said that, "United States opposed any unilateral actions that would seek to undermine Japanese administration".²²

As a reaction to the United States statement over Diaoyu Islands, Beijing has stated that the US needs to be "responsible and also should try and choose its words carefully". This was expressed by China as it prepared to receive a high ranking member of the governing coalition in Japan. The visiting member is expected to deliver a letter which is aimed at improving ties between the neighbours.²³

Myanmar's President U Thein Sein met Chinese vice foreign minister Fu Ying in Yangon on January 19, 2013. The two sides discussed views towards strengthening the comprehensive strategic partnership.²⁴

According to reports from the State Oceanic Administration (SOA), a fleet of Chinese marine surveillance ships consisting of Haijian 137, Haijian 23 and Haijian 26 continued to patrol the territorial waters around the Diaoyu Island.²⁵

In another development, the spokesperson with the Chinese Foreign Ministry expressed gratitude to the Sudanese governments for their help in rescuing four Chinese nationals abducted in the

²⁰ "Hu appoints new ambassador to India" *China Daily*, January 16, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/16/content_16128073.htm

²¹ "China, India agree to strengthen military ties" *China Daily*, January 14, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/14/content_16116416.htm

²² "US sends wrong signal over islands issue" *China Daily*, January 21, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/21/content_16147139.htm

²³ "Beijing blasts Washington over islands" *China Daily*, January 21, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/21/content_16146073.htm

²⁴ "Myanmar president meets Chinese special envoy" *China Daily*, January 19, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/19/content_16144293.htm

²⁵ "Chinese surveillance fleet patrol Diaoyu Islands" *China Daily*, January 19, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/19/content_16144113.htm

Darfur region. Hang Lei the spokesperson declared that the four men were “stable and well”. However one of them had a minor injury in his leg.²⁶

The top political advisor Jia Qinglin said on January 16, 2013 that Tokyo and Beijing should work towards solving the Diaoyu Island dispute through dialogue and consultation. According to him, “the two sides should handle the Diaoyu Islands dispute properly in order to ensure that bilateral relations remain on track of healthy and stable development.” Jia Qinglin is the chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). He said this during his meeting with the former Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama.²⁷

Japan

January 7-13

- **Japanese Prime Minister Abe reiterates his resolve to defend Senkaku islands; Japan, US and South Korea to hold regular trilateral security talks from late January 2013; Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida to visit Southeast Asia**

According to reports, Japanese Prime Minister Abe reiterated his resolve to defend the Senkaku islands over which China has been claiming its own sovereignty. Even while emphasizing on his government’s wiliness to strengthening the bilateral strategic partnership between Japan and China, Abe stated that there is no room for negotiation between the two sides on the islands.²⁸

In another development, the Japanese, US and South Korea governments have decided to hold regular trilateral security talks where senior officials in defense and foreign affairs will participate. The talks are aimed at boosting the security cooperation among the three countries in the face of growing uncertainty in the security environment in the Northeast Asia due to North Korean nuclear threat and China’s naval buildup. The first bureau chief-level talks are scheduled to be held in late January this year.²⁹

In other developments, Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida is to visit the Philippines, Singapore, Brunei and Australia during a six-day tour starting from January 9, 2013. It will be his first overseas visit after assuming office as Foreign Minister. He argued that cooperation with those countries is essential to help ensure peace and stability in the whole Asia-Pacific region amid the changing strategic environment.³⁰

²⁶ “China thanks Sudanese govt’ for rescuing Chinese” *China Daily*, January 17, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/17/content_16134578.htm

²⁷ “Chinese leader calls for dialogue on Diaoyu Islands issue” *China Daily*, January 17, 2013 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/17/content_16128373.htm

²⁸ “Abe stresses resolve to defend Senkakus”, *The Yomiuri Daily*, January 12, 2013, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T130111004124.htm>

²⁹ “Japan, US, S. Korea plan security talks”, *The Yomiuri Daily*, January 10, 2013, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T130110004871.htm>

³⁰ “Foreign minister to visit S.E. Asia”, *The Yomiuri Daily*, January 9, 2013, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T130108004382.htm>

South Korea

January 7-13

- **The US Army Chief of Staff visits South Korea, assures South Korea is capable of reclaiming its wartime operational command from the US in 2015; South Korea to speed up the deployment of long-range missile to deal with North Korean threat**

According to reports, US Army chief General Raymond Odierno, during his recent two-day visit to Seoul, met with his South Korean counterpart General Cho Jung-hwan and the two discussed the ways to strengthen the allies' deterrence against North Korea after the planned transfer of operational command from Washington to Seoul in 2015. Odierno expressed confidence that South Korea strong confidence in South Korea's army's capability in reclaiming its wartime operational command and taking responsibility of security in Asia-Pacific. He also stated that with a view to strgthening the US-South Korea combat capability, the US government has recently approved deploying an additional attack-reconnaissance squadron with 24 Apache helicopters in South Korea. At present 28,500 US soldiers are currently stationed in South Korea.³¹

In another development, reports noted that South Korea intends to speed up its development of long-range missile capable of striking North Korea and to deploy them as early as possible. It is worth noting that under the new missile agreement between Seoul and Washington that was signed in October 2012, the South was allowed to extend its range of ballistic missiles from 300 kilometers to 800 kilometers.³²

January 14-20

- **South Korean President-in-waiting Park insists on strengthening South Korea-US security alliance to forge a "21st century comprehensive strategic alliance"**

South Korean President-elect Park Geun-hye recently met with Kurt Campbell, US assistant secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific affairs at Seoul. During the meeting, Park insisted on joint efforts to deepen trust between the two counties to forge a "21st century comprehensive strategic alliance." Park also pledged to upgrade the alliance to deal with North Korean threats and the current security uncertainties in the region.³³

³¹ "US Army chief says S. Korean capable of taking wartime", Yonhap News Agency, January 11, 2013, at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2013/01/11/0301000000AEN20130111004351315.HTML>

³² "S. Korea to push for quick deployment of long-range ballistic", The Korea Herald, January 7, 2013, at <http://nwww.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20130107001022>

³³ "Korea, US to discuss ways to boost alliance", The Korea Herald, January 16, 2013, at <http://nwww.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20130116000940>

North Korea

January 7-13

- **Google chairman visits North Korea, assess the country's internet environment despite Obama government's reservation; North Korea to donate a museum to Cambodia as a gesture of friendship; North Korea plans to offer mineral resource development right to Chinese companies in exchange of pledges to upgrade its backward infrastructure**

According to reports, Google chairman Eric Schmidt went on a four-day visit to North Korea along with Former New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson despite the reservations of Obama administration over this trip. During the visit, while Eric Schmidt assessed the North's internet environment while Bill Richardson pressed the country to stop its missile launches and nuclear tests. Richardson also insisted that Pyongyang should allow more cell phones and unrestricted internet access for its citizens.³⁴

In a significant development, North Korea has built a museum near the Angkor Wat temple in Cambodia and intending to donate it to the latter as a gesture of friendship. The museum, built up primarily with the \$10 million invested by the North Korean regime, is to become operational from April this year. It is worth noting that both North Korea and Cambodia have close ties. North Korea is involved in a variety of business ventures in Cambodia.³⁵

In other developments, according to reports, North Korea intends to give mineral resources development rights to Chinese investors if the latter pledges to upgrade the former's backward infrastructure, such as roads and hotels. Pyongyang have been desperately looking for outside support and tie ups after Seoul stopped all cross-border trade following the Cheonan incident in 2010.³⁶

C. West Asia

Syria

- **Syrian opposition meets to choose prime minister-in-exile**

According to reports, Syria's opposition umbrella group, the National Coalition, met last week in Istanbul in a bid to name a prime minister-in-exile. The group is recognised as the sole representative of the Syrian people by many Western and Arab governments. Differences have emerged over who should lead the government-in-exile. One proposal named Riad Hijab as a possible candidate

³⁴ "Google chairman delegation pressing N. Korea to stop missile, nuke tests", The Korea Herald, January 9, 2013, at <http://nwww.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20130109000871>

³⁵ "N.K builds museum near Angkor Wat", The Korea Herald, January 8, 2013, at <http://nwww.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20130108000643>

³⁶ "N.K. linking mineral development with infrastructure construction", The Korea Herald, January 8, 2013, at <http://nwww.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20130108000610>

but it has been criticised. Hijab is a former prime minister in the Assad government who defected late last year and has helped Turkey to attempt to restructure the fragmented Syrian opposition. The National Coalition has called for the establishment of interim government with executive powers in rebel-held areas of Syria.³⁷

Israel/Palestine

- **Joint Israeli-Palestinian campaign ‘donates’ Israeli votes to Palestinians; Arab League calls on Israeli Arabs to vote to stop far-right; Netanyahu not to dismantle settlements if re-elected**

According to reports, Palestinians living in occupied territories can now vote through Israeli citizens thanks to a protest initiative by Israeli and Palestinian activists. The Real Democracy project allows Israeli citizens to ‘donate’ their ballot to Palestinians. Many Israelis view the Israeli system as undemocratic given that the Israeli government rules over Palestinians but are not elected by them. The founders of the initiative say they have “thousands” of supporters, but many Palestinians are wary of being associated with a joint project with Israelis, that could place them at risk of being seen as collaborators. The project also aims to draw attention to reform of veto powers in the United Nation, instead calling for reorganising along the lines of the European Union.³⁸

In another development, reports noted that the Arab League on January 20 called for Israeli Arabs to vote so that they can stop the establishment of a right-wing government “that will promote racist laws and ethnic cleansing.” The Cairo-based Arab League said it was following the trends leading up to the Israeli elections, which it claimed show that right-wing extremists “want a Jewish state under the banner of the Arab threat to the Land of Israel,” according to an article in the Egyptian paper Al-Masry al-Youm. Israeli Arabs make up at least 20 percent of the population of Israel and can be part of a strong opposition in the Knesset, the Arab League added. Israeli-Arab voter turnout was expected to drop lower than 50%, according to a Ma’ariv report released last week. The community’s voter turnout was around 53.4% in 2009 and was at its lowest point in 2001, when only 18% voted. Israeli Arabs make up at least 20 percent of the population of Israel and can be part of a strong opposition in the Knesset, the Arab League added.³⁹

In other developments, according to reports, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that no Jewish settlements in the West Bank will be dismantled during his next term in office if he is re-elected in Tuesday’s elections. Polls have predicted that Netanyahu is set to have an easy win. Settlements have been a key obstacle to negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians. Close to 500,000 Israelis live in settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, though the settlements are considered illegal by the international community.⁴⁰

³⁷ “Syrian opposition meets to name PM-in-exile”, The Jordan Times, January 20, 2013 at <http://jordantimes.com/syrian-opposition-meets-to-name-pm-in-exile>

³⁸ “Israelis ‘donate’ votes to Palestinians in protest”, The Jordan Times, January 20, 2013 at <http://jordantimes.com/israelis-donate-votes-to-palestinians-in-protest>

³⁹ Ariel Ben Solomon, “Arab League to Israeli Arabs: Vote to stop far-right”, The Jerusalem Post, January 21, 2013 at <http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=300269>

⁴⁰ “Israel election: Netanyahu ‘will not dismantle settlements’”, BBC News, January 18, 2013 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-21075558>

Iran

- **Iran agreed for talk with the IAEA regarding its Nuclear Programme**

Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency ended two days of talks in Tehran on January 17, 2013 and agreed to hold more talks on February 12. The Iranian ambassador to the IAEA, Ali Asghar Soltanieh, headed the Iranian delegation, and IAEA Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Safeguards Herman Nackaerts was the head of the IAEA delegation. The recent meeting was concluded without positive result. The previous round of talks between the agency and Iran had been held in Tehran on December 13, 2012. The IAEA has called on Iran to sign and implement a structured approach document to resolve the outstanding issues and has stated that gaining access to the Parchin military site, which is located southeast of Tehran, is a priority for the UN nuclear watchdog.⁴¹

Iraq

- **27 people killed in suicide and bombs attacks in Iraq**

According to reports, attacks in Baghdad and North Iraq killed 27 people on January 16 as hundreds attended the funeral of a Sunni MP who died in a suicide attack a day earlier, amid a political crisis engulfing Iraq. The latest violence, which struck mostly in disputed territory in north Iraq and was the deadliest so far this year, comes with Prime Minister Nuri Al Maliki facing several protests hardening opposition against his rule and calls for his ouster from many of his erstwhile government partners. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks, which also left more than 220 people wounded, but Sunni militants often carry out waves of violence in a bid to destabilise the government and push the country back towards the sectarian violence that blighted it from 2005 to 2008.⁴²

Bahrain

- **Police disperse anti-government protest in Manama**

According to reports, Bahrain police fired tear gas on January 19, 2013 to disperse Shiite protesters who were protesting in the streets of the capital Manama chanting anti-government slogans. The protesters attempted to march in small groups in the narrow alleys of central Manama, as riot police fired tear gas canisters and stun grenades. Some protesters reportedly also staged demonstrations outside Manama as they failed to reach the capital due to a heavy security cordon. Police has arrested several protesters while the government has said that the demonstration had not been authorised and warned security forces would prevent such protests.⁴³

⁴¹ "Iran, IAEA agree to meet again on Feb. 12," *Mehr News Agency*, January 18, 2013, at <http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1794165>

⁴² "Wave of Iraq attacks kill 27," *Khaleej Times*, January 16, 2013, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=/data/middleeast/2013/January/middleeast_January240.xml§ion=middleeast

⁴³ "Bahrain police disperse anti-government protest", *Gulf News*, January 19, 2013, at <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/bahrain-police-disperse-anti-government-protest-1.1134328>

UAE

- **UAE signs nuclear cooperation agreement with Argentina**

Reports noted that the UAE has signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with Argentina on January 14, 2013. The deal makes Argentina the ninth country to have signed nuclear ties with the UAE. The UAE has signed nuclear agreements with the US, the UK, South Korea, Japan, France, Canada, Russia and Australia since 2009. Hamad Al Kaabi, the UAE's permanent representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency has stated that, "The agreement constitutes a framework which governs and facilitates cooperation in the area of peaceful nuclear energy and related applications between the two countries."⁴⁴ The agreement was signed during the visit by Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, president of Argentina, ahead of the World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi.

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

- **Army Chief warns Pakistan of strong reaction if provoked; Indian Navy long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft P8-I gives a big boost to its fighting power**

According to reports, Indian Army chief Gen Bikram Singh on January 14 warned Pakistan that India's military will retaliate aggressively in case of any further provocation. The Army Chief's stern warning has come in the face of the beheading of an Indian soldier by Pakistan on the Line of Control early this month. The General said that the attack on the Indian soldiers was "pre-planned" and "stage-managed." While, cautioning the Pakistan Army about the repeated violation of the LoC, General Singh said that "India reserves its right to retaliate at the time and place of its choice." The army will also look into the lapses on its own part that led to such a loss, he said.⁴⁵

In another development, reports noted that the Indian Navy got last month one of its most sophisticated weapon system Boeing P8-I long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft (LRMRA). The key capability of P8-I is to detect and destroy hostile submarines, the most potent threat to Indian naval power. The aircraft has the latest radars, electronic warfare systems, and weapons to kill hostile submarines. India has purchased eight P8-Is from the US Navy and the government has cleared four more aircrafts. The aircraft will be integrated with the Indian Navy and IAF assets, including fighters, AWACS and ground stations to achieve jointness.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ "UAE signs nuclear cooperation deal with Argentina", *The National*, January 15, 2013, at, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/politics/uae-signs-nuclear-cooperation-deal-with-argentina>

⁴⁵ "India won't remain passive if attacked: Army chief," TOI, January 14, 2013, at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-01-14/india/36330732_1_pakistan-army-pakistan-soldiers-lance-naik-hemraj

⁴⁶ "P8-Is: Indian Navy's eye in the sky," Deccan Herald, January 16, 2013, at <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/305692/p8-indian-navys-eye-sky.html>

International

- **French military sees no respite from budget nightmares after Mali operation; U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta: US-UK aircraft carrier cooperation mutually rewarding**

According to reports, the recent French offensive in Mali against Islamist fighters is likely to prolong and this puts the defence ministry under severe budgetary strain. The defense budget was expected to get relief from the withdrawal of French forces from Afghanistan, but the latest involvement in Mali does not augur well for the defence ministry budget plans. While replying to a question on how much the week-old operation would cost, French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said, "I cannot evaluate that yet. It will all be public knowledge of course." The French defense ministry's external operations budget for 2013 is 630 million Euros, about 90 million less than last year owing to anticipated savings from the Afghan withdrawal, but the anticipated savings may not fructify in the event of a prolonged involvement of France along with EU in Mali.⁴⁷

In another development, according to reports, a U.S.-U.K. effort to make sure aircraft carriers can operate together seamlessly is a model other initiatives between the British and American militaries, U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said. Through this partnership — known as Integrated Aircraft Carrier Cooperation — the U.S. Navy is helping its British counterparts develop a next generation carrier. The group also looks at ways to make existing aircraft carriers more interoperable. "That is a model for the kind of cooperation we want to engage in in the future," Panetta said during a Jan. 19 briefing after a meeting with British Defense Secretary Philip Hammond. This type of cooperation is important now more than ever, Panetta said, particularly as defense spending in each nation shrinks.⁴⁸

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Resignation of more Panchs continues in J&K; Army Chief is not in favour of dilution of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in the state; Amid avalanche threats, Police evacuates about 40 families in South Kashmir**

According to reports, day after twenty Panchs and Sarpanches from Hardshiva area of Sopore tendered their resignation, twenty more Panchayat representatives from Zainagair belt resigned

⁴⁷ "Mali Operation Another Burden for French Defense Budget," Defense News, January 18, 2013, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130118/DEFREG01/301180016/Mali-Operation-Another-Burden-French-Defense-Budget?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

⁴⁸ "Panetta Touts U.S.-U.K. Aircraft Carrier Cooperation Effort," Defense News, January 19, 2013, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130119/DEFREG02/301190021/Panetta-Touts-U-S-U-K-Aircraft-Carrier-Cooperation-Effort?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

on January 14 stating that they do not need any security cover. The Panchayat representatives alleged that they were being made scapegoats by the government.⁴⁹

Reports noted that Army Chief Gen Bikram Singh on January 14 said he did not favour dilution of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in Jammu and Kashmir as it was an enabler for soldiers to fight militancy in an asymmetric environment. The Chief also disfavoured demilitarization of Siachen Glacier area against the backdrop of the trust deficit existing with Pakistan. Answering a query on AFSPA at his press conference on eve of the Army Day, Army Chief said that soldiers in the state work in an environment where it was difficult to differentiate between friend and foe as militants mingle with civilian population. He said the soldiers face a great deal of challenges and they need to be given “enablers” to operate against militants.⁵⁰

In other developments, according to reports, amid avalanche threats in the wake of heavy snowfall, police have evacuated about 40 families comprising 130 persons in the remote village of Waltengoo Nar in the South Kashmir district. A police official said that teams were dispatched on January 18 evening to rescue the villagers in the avalanche prone area.⁵¹

Northeast India

- **National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) ultras arrested; Polls in three North-East states to be monitored by flying squads; Indo-Bangla rail projects to be expedited; Peace talks between National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) and Govt. of India to take place in January, 2013 end; With the arrest of a central committee member, Maoist expansion plans in North-East receive major blow; Protection of Manipur State boundaries demanded by CM; International tourism mart organised in Guwahati**

According to reports, security forces in Assam’s Kokrajhar district have nabbed two militants of the anti-talk faction of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) on January 14. The security forces have recovered two grenades, one pistol and some incriminating documents from the injured militants.⁵²

In another development, reportedly, according to a poll panel official, the Election Commission of India will form flying-squads to check illegal arms, distribution of money and other unlawful materials during the assembly polls in Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura in February. District magistrates will head the flying-squad in each assembly segment to check illegal arms, distribution of money, liquor and other unlawful materials. The Election Commission will also deploy observers in each district of the election-bound states.⁵³

⁴⁹ “20 more Panchs resign”, *Greater Kashmir*, January 14, 2013 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Jan/15/20-more-panchs-resign-58.asp>

⁵⁰ “No revocation, dilution of AFSPA”, *Greater Kashmir*, January 14, 2013 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Jan/15/-no-revocation-dilution-of-afspa-53.asp>

⁵¹ “Avalanche threat: 40 families shifted from Waltengoo”, *Greater Kashmir*, January 19, 2013 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Jan/20/avalanche-threat-40-families-shifted-from-waltengoo-43.asp>

⁵² “Two anti-talk militants arrested”, *The Assam Tribune*, January 14, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1513/city05>

⁵³ “Flying-squads to monitor polls in Northeastern States”, *The Assam Tribune*, January 17, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1713/at042>

According to reports, in keeping with the policy of improving connectivity between the North Eastern States of India and neighbouring Bangladesh, India and Bangladesh on January 16 firmed up plans to expedite the rail projects between the two sides. It has been decided to expedite the projects for opening rail links between Akhaura (Bangladesh) – Agartala (India), Chilahati (Bangladesh) – Haldibari (India), Shahbazzpur (Bangladesh) – Mahishashan (India) and Birol (Bangladesh) – Radhikapur (India). India and Bangladesh also decided to examine the feasibility of establishing a rail link between Feni (Bangladesh) and Belonia (India).⁵⁴

Reports noted that the next round of political dialogue between the Government and NDFB (P) faction is likely to be held later January, even as the Bodo militant outfit renewed its demand for creation of a separate State of Bodoland. A five-member delegation of NDFB (P) led by general secretary Govinda Basumatary on January 16 had their first interaction with Union Home Minister, SK Shinde. The rebel leaders urged the Union Home Minister to expedite resolution of their charter of demands. The meeting was also attended by senior Home Ministry officials including Joint Secretary (North-east), Shambhu Singh.⁵⁵

According to reports, the expansion plan of the Maoist rebels in Assam and other parts of the North East region received a major blow with the arrest of Alok Bakshi, a central committee member of the Maoist rebels. Bakshi, who hails from West Bengal, was arrested in Visakhapattanam by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) with the help of Andhra Pradesh police. According to sources, the NIA has received permission from the Court to bring the arrested Maoist leader to Assam for questioning in connection with the else relating to the links between the Maoist rebels and Manipur based militant outfit People's Liberation Army (PLA).⁵⁶

According to reports, Manipur Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh has asked the central government to amend Article 3 of the constitution to ensure that the boundaries of Manipur state are not altered in attempts made to resolve the six-decade Naga insurgency problem. Article 3 deals with the formation of a new state by separation of territory from any state, or by uniting two or more states or parts of states. Ibobi, who led an all-party delegation from Manipur, met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde January 17 evening, urging them to amend Article 3 of the constitution by adding a proviso for a long-term commitment to ensure the state boundaries of Manipur are not disturbed. The Chief Minister's demand for a long-term commitment comes in the wake of reports hinting that the central government has arrived at a settlement with the NSCN-IM to sort out the six-decade Naga insurgency issue.⁵⁷

In other developments, according to reports, Guwahati is set to host the first ever International Tourism Mart of the North-East from January 18. The three-day event at the Sarusajai sports

⁵⁴ "Indo-Bangla rail projects to be expedited", *The Assam Tribune*, January 16, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1713/at05>

⁵⁵ "NDFB peace talks by Jan-end", *The Assam Tribune*, January 16, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1713/at06>

⁵⁶ "Maoist expansion plan in NE suffer setback", *The Assam Tribune*, January 16, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1713/at092>

⁵⁷ "Manipur CM demands protection of State boundaries", *The Assam Tribune*, January 18, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1813/at0421>

complex will witness the participation of a large number of nations and a matching assemblage of delegates. Reportedly, this will be the first international tourism mart to focus on a specific region of India.⁵⁸

Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) News

- **Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) extended; Jharkhand under President's Rule**

Reports noted that it has been decided and mutually agreed to extend the Suspension of Operations (SoO) Agreement with National Democratic Front of Bodoland (Progressive) (NDFB/P) up to June 30, 2013. Tripartite talks on the demands of NDFB/P are continuing.⁵⁹

In another development, reports noted that the President has proclaimed the imposition of President's Rule in Jharkhand under Article 356(1) of the Constitution on January 18. The Union Cabinet in its meeting held on January 17, 2013 approved the proposal to issue a Proclamation imposing President's Rule in the state of Jharkhand, keeping the State Legislative Assembly under suspended animation.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ "International tourism mart begins today", *The Assam Tribune*, January 17, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1813/at07>

⁵⁹ "Suspension of Operations Agreement with NDFB (P) Extended", *Press Information Bureau, Govt. Of India*, January 15, 2013 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=91570>

⁶⁰ "President's Rule imposed in Jharkhand", *Press Information Bureau, Govt. Of India*, January 18, 2013 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=91687>