

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Bangladesh

(January 30- February 05, 2012)

- **Agreement signed between Bangladesh's Power Development Board (PDB) and India's National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) to build a 1,320-megawatt coal-fired power plant; PM Sheikh Hasina: Concerted action by the member states of SAARC is required to deal with the problems that arose due to the global financial turmoil; Nepal proposes for joint venture with Bangladesh for setting up a 3,000-megawatt power plant; Passenger train between Khulna and Kolkata; National flag of Bangladesh at Antarctica**

According to reports, the Power Development Board (PDB) of Bangladesh penned an agreement with the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) of India to build a 1,320-megawatt coal-fired power plant at Rampal in Bagerhat on January 29, 2012. ASM Alamgir Kabir, chairman of PDB, and Arup Roy Choudhury, chairman and managing director of the New Delhi-based company, signed the deal to install two units of the plant with 660 MW generation capacity each.¹ However, the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports has demanded cancellation of the deal signed with India to build a 1,320-megawatt coal-fired power plant at Rampal in Bagerhat, saying this will put the Sundarbans and adjacent rivers at risks of severe pollution.²

In another development, according to reports, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stressed the need for a concerted action by the member states of SAARC to deal with the problems that arose due to the global financial turmoil. She made the comment while addressing the inaugural session of 5th SAARC Finance Ministers' Meeting at Hotel Ruposhi Bangla.³

According to reports, Nepal, on January 31, 2012 proposed setting up a 3,000-megawatt power plant in its territory in a joint venture with Bangladesh. Nepalese Finance Minister Barsha Man Pun made the proposal at a meeting with Finance Minister AMA Muhith at the latter's secretariat office. Kathmandu also requested Dhaka for transit from Mongla to Banglabandha land port in Panchagarh district.⁴

¹ "Major power deal inked", *The Daily Star*, January 30, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=220434>

² "Cancel deal on Rampal power plant: Demands Oil, Gas committee", *The Daily Star*, January 31, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=220558>

³ "PM for joint action within Saarc to fight recession", *The Daily Star*, January 31, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=220605>.

⁴ "3,000mw Power Plant: Nepal offers partnership", *The Daily Star*, February 1, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=220740>.

Meanwhile, in a bid to attract more passengers, railway officials of Bangladesh and India have agreed in principle to operate a passenger train between Khulna and Kolkata. This would be the second train link between the two neighbours after the Maitree Express on Dhaka-Kolkata route. The decision was made at an inter-governmental railway meeting held in Dhaka on January 10-12.⁵

In other developments, according to reports, Environment and Forests Minister of Bangladesh Hasan Mahmud hoisted the national flag of Bangladesh at Antarctica during his visit with former US Vice President Al Gore.⁶

Sri Lanka

(January 30- February 05, 2012)

- **Sri Lanka's 64th Independence Day celebrated; Sri Lanka's Minister of External Affairs Prof. Peiris visits Cameroon and Congo; Inflation declines to 3.8% in January, 2012; 1.5 lakh Indian tourists visited Sri Lanka in 2011**

Reports noted that Sri Lanka celebrated the 64th Independence Day on February 4, 2012.⁷

According to reports, Sri Lanka's Minister of External Affairs Prof. GL Peiris made a two day official visit to Cameroon and met Prime Minister Philemon Yang and Acting Foreign Minister John Ngute. Following that Prof. Peiris left for Congo for a series of official meetings.⁸

According to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, inflation decreased significantly to 3.8 per cent in January 2012 from 4.9 per cent in December 2011.⁹

In other developments, reports noted that during the period from January to November 2011, Sri Lanka received just over 7.5 lakh tourists. Of this, over 1.5 lakh were Indians, which is 20 per cent of the tourists to Sri Lanka in 2011. In 2010, out of the total of about 6.5 lakh tourists, Indians accounted for over 1.2 lakh.¹⁰

⁵ Azad, M Abul Kalam, "Train to link Khulna with Kolkata:", *The Daily Star*, February 2, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=220889>.

⁶ "Climate Awareness: Bangladesh flag at Antarctica", *The Daily Star*, February 3, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=221017>.

⁷ "President's Independence Day message: National flag flutters pointing to a new country in the making", Government of Sri Lanka Website, February 4, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201202/20120204president_independence_day_message.htm.

⁸ "Prime Minister of Cameroon welcomes strengthened ties with Sri Lanka", *Ministry of External Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka*, January 31, 2012 at <http://www.mea.gov.lk/index.php/media/3296-prime-minister-of-cameroon-welcomes-strengthened-ties-with-sri-lanka>.

⁹ "Inflation drops in January", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, February 1, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201202/20120201inflation_drops_january.htm.

¹⁰ "Over 1.5 lakh Indian tourists visited SL in 2011", Government of Sri Lanka Website, January 30, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201201/20120130over_1.5lakh_indian_tourists_visited_sl.htm.

Maldives

(January 30- February 05, 2012)

- **Maldives will soon nominate new candidate as the SAARC Secretary General**

According to reports, the Maldives has conveyed to the SAARC member states that it would soon nominate a new candidate as the SAARC Secretary General. The post fell vacant with effect from January 22 as the former secretary general, Fathimath Dhiyana Saeed, a Maldivian national, resigned on January 20 amid allegations from senior Maldivian officials of favouring anti-government forces in the country's political issues.¹¹

B. East Asia

China

- **China urges talks on Iran nuclear issue; Hu calls for expansion of China-Germany links; Premier Wen meets 11th Panchen Lama; Wen stresses upon reform, rural democracy; Xi to visit US, Ireland, Turkey; China opposes sanctions on Iran; UK's criticism on China 'irresponsible'**

According to reports, Beijing announced that it is keen on working with relevant parties to start the official dialogue between Iran and a group of six international mediators.¹²

In another development, President Hu Jintao has said that China was ready to push forward its long and healthy relationship with Germany and also work towards improving the strategic partnership.¹³

On the domestic front Premier Wen Jiabao met the 11th Panchen Lama in Beijing in Zhongnanhai compound.¹⁴

According to reports, Premier Wen Jiabao pledged unwavering push towards opening and reform in the face of recent challenges and difficulties and has also stated that he will work towards farmer's right to vote and improve rural community administration.¹⁵

¹¹ "Maldives to fill Saarc secretary general post soon", *The Daily Star*, January 31, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=220562>

¹² "China urges talks on Iran nuclear issue" *China Daily*, February 10, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-02/10/content_14581120.htm

¹³ "Hu calls for expansion of China-Germany links" *China Daily*, February 3, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-02/03/content_14533201.htm

¹⁴ "Premier Wen meets 11th Panchen Lama" *China Daily*, February 11, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-02/11/content_14581846.htm

¹⁵ "Wen stresses reform, rural democracy" *China Daily*, February 5, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-02/05/content_14539987.htm

On the regional front, according to reports, Beijing announced that Xi Jinping, the Vice President of China, will pay an official visit to United States, Ireland and Turkey from February 13 to 22, 2012.¹⁶

In other developments, according to reports, Beijing has refuted the British Foreign Secretary William Hague's criticism on China for vetoing a draft resolution on Syria. Beijing called his denouncement irresponsible.¹⁷

C. Central Asia & Russia

Central Asia

(January 30- February 05, 2012)

- **India plans to increase FDI in Kyrgyzstan; Central Asians comprise of one third of migrants to Russia; NATO aids Dushanbe to secure civil war munitions; Kabul promises security to Pakistan for TAPI pipeline; Astana retains its position as global leader in uranium production**

According to reports, the Indian ambassador to Kyrgyzstan, Phunchok Stobdan has said that India is looking to increase the amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Kyrgyzstan. More funds will be poured into training Kyrgyz personnel as well as offer training for workers in the food processing fields. India is also eager to provide training in the fields of tourism and light industry. Ambassador Stobdan also said that Indian entrepreneurs would like to invest in the tourism sector but Kyrgyzstan's visa regime is problematic.¹⁸

In another development, according to the latest migration statistics provided by Moscow, Central Asians comprised almost one-in-three legal migrants entering Russia in 2011. Out of the 13.8 million foreigners and stateless people that have legally arrived in the country in 2011, Uzbeks comprised around 2 million, Kazakhs almost 1.5 million, less than 1 million came from Tajikistan, and Kyrgyz migrants totaled around half a million.¹⁹

According to reports, NATO has agreed to help Tajikistan locate and secure thousands of tons of munitions left abandoned and decaying since the country's 1992-97 civil war. NATO aims to secure \$760,000 in funding for its yearlong Partnership Trust Fund project signed with Tajikistan

¹⁶ "Xi to visit US, Ireland, Turkey" *China Daily*, February 7, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-02/07/content_14555562.htm

¹⁷ "UK's criticism on China 'irresponsible'" *China Daily*, February 8, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-02/08/content_14563601.htm

¹⁸ "India vows more FDI for Kyrgyzstan", *Universal Newswires*, February 06, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kyrgyzstan/viewstory.aspx?id=11321>

¹⁹ "One-third of legal migrants to Russia are Central Asians, FMS says", *Universal Newswires*, February 03, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kyrgyzstan/viewstory.aspx?id=11306>

to find unidentified caches and either secure or destroy them. This initiative will help counter illegal cross-border trade in munitions.²⁰

In another development, as per the leaked NATO report, the Taliban believe that victory will be theirs once NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) pulls out of Afghanistan in 2014. The Islamist force is now in charge of all anti-government activity in the troubled state, which will raise concerns in the near future to the neighboring Central Asian states due to the narcotics trade.²¹

In the meanwhile, according to reports, the Afghan government, during the two-way talks in Islamabad over the proposed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project in the first week of February, promised Pakistan that it would provide security along the Afghan stretch of the TAPI pipeline once the operations begin. The Afghan delegation included Deputy Finance Minister Mohammad Mustafa Mastoor and Deputy Policy and Mines Minister Mir Ahmad Jawid Sadat.²²

In other developments, Kazakhstan's state nuclear company Kazatomprom announced that it has boosted uranium output by 9 % in 2011, retaining its position as global leader with a 35 percent share of world production of the nuclear fuel. It mined 21,440 tons of the power metal in 2011 against 19,624 tons in 2010 – providing around 17 percent of world reactor requirements.²³

(February 6-12, 2012)

- **Germany and Kazakhstan sign cooperation deal; Kazakhstan to inaugurate a nuclear fuel bank in late 2013; Gazprom to acquire controlling stake in Kyrgyz Gas Company; Pakistan to provide Tajikistan market access through Gwadar; Kyrgyzstan: Kumtor industrial dispute ends in stalemate; Uzbek route proves to be expensive to exit French troops**

According to reports, Germany and Kazakhstan has signed a cooperation deal on February 7, 2012 designed to give German firms greater access to raw materials in exchange for technology and know-how. During the visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Berlin, German companies signed 50 separate contracts worth a total of 3 billion euros.²⁴ One of the agreements was to give better access to German companies to rare earths, which are used in high-technology products.²⁵

²⁰ "NATO to help Tajikistan clear civil war-era munitions", *Universal Newswires*, February 01, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/tajikistan/viewstory.aspx?id=11287>

²¹ "Taliban see imminent victory in Afghanistan, NATO report says", *Universal Newswires*, February 01, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/tajikistan/viewstory.aspx?id=11288>

²² "Afghanistan promises troops for TAPI pipeline", *Universal Newswires*, February 03, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/turkmenistan/viewstory.aspx?id=11304>

²³ "Kazakhstan increases uranium output by 9% in 2011", *Universal Newswires*, February 03, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=11305>

²⁴ "Germany and Kazakhstan seal raw materials deal", *Reuters*, February 08, 2012 at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/08/germany-kazakhstan-idUSL5E8D86HX20120208>

²⁵ "Merkel strikes Kazakh rare earth accord", *Financial Times*, February 08, 2012 at <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f58a77b0-5281-11e1-ae2c-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1mM2HLMN3>

Also, Germany has agreed to assist Kazakh state-run railway Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ) in developing the Khorgos border hub with China as part of a transportation corridor to Europe.²⁶

In another development, Kazakhstan plans to inaugurate a nuclear fuel bank in late 2013 as part of international efforts to combat the spread of nuclear weapons, Kazakh Foreign Minister Yerzhan Kazykhanov said last week. Kazakh government is in talks with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the facility which would hold 60 tons of low-enriched uranium for exporting to countries with nuclear power reactors.²⁷

Meanwhile, Russia's state-controlled Gazprom began negotiations last week on acquiring a controlling stake i.e., 75% in Kyrgyzgaz, according to Eugene Orlenko deputy general director of Kyrgyzgaz.²⁸ According to reports, the Kyrgyz government so far has an 82 percent holding in Kyrgyzgaz. In the meanwhile, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari last week expressed readiness to provide landlocked Tajikistan with access to international markets via the Arabian Sea port of Gwadar, and also proposed that the two countries explore ways to develop bilateral trade links on the current foundation laid by the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement.²⁹ Recently, Kyrgyz Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov ordered all parties in the ongoing industrial dispute at the Kumtor Operating Company, the nation's largest gold mine, to resolve their differences by February 10, 2012. The workers' demand extra payments to a state social fund that a new law requires employees to pay from their wages.³⁰ However, the dispute failed to resolve within the set deadline.³¹

In other developments, according to reports, the French defense minister Gérard Longuet said at a government hearing in France's National Assembly that payment fee to Uzbekistan to exit French troops from Afghanistan owing to the closure of NATO's Pakistan route is proving to be costly.³² While the USA is paying the Central Asian governments around \$500 million per year to transit its non-military supplies through the Northern Distribution Network (NDN), Uzbekistan charges Germany \$21 million per year rent for use of the southern Termez airbase on the border with Afghanistan.³³

²⁶ "Germany to develop Kazakh-Chinese Khorgos border hub", *Universal Newswires*, February 10, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=11356>

²⁷ "Nuclear fuel bank to be operative in 2013, Kazakh FM says", *Universal Newswires*, February 08, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=11337>

²⁸ "Gazprom begins negotiations on acquiring Kyrgyzgaz stakes", *Universal Newswires*, February 09, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=11345>

²⁹ "Pakistan renews sea port access proposal for Tajikistan", *Universal Newswires*, February 10, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=11355>

³⁰ "Kyrgyz PM orders resolution of Kumtor industrial dispute", *Universal Newswires*, February 10, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=11357>

³¹ "Kumtor strike continues despite ultimatum from PM", *Universal Newswires*, February 03, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=11369>

³² "Uzbekistan a costly exit route from Afghanistan, French minister says", *Universal Newswires*, February 13, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=11364>

³³ *ibid*

Russia

- **French President Sarkozy urges Russia to support the League of Arab states plan on Syria; Ukraine pays Gazprom US\$800 million for the January supplies; Russia and South Korea to discuss North Korea's nuclear programme in Moscow; Russia to buy underwater drones from Iceland; China supports Russia's attempt in reaching a political settlement on Syria; Russian Navy's ambitious 30 year development plan to be ready by June this year; A new missile warning radar to be commissioned in Leningrad**

According to reports, French President Sarkozy has called on Russia to support the plan of the League of Arab States /LAS/, which includes the transfer of power in Syria.³⁴

Reports noted that ending months of disagreement, Naftogaz Ukraine has paid Russia's Gazprom about 800 million dollars for January supplies with the price for gas in the first quarter of the year being fixed at 416 dollars per 1,000 cubic metres.³⁵

In another development, according to reports, Russia and South Korea will discuss in Moscow the prospects of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and try formulating ways towards resuming the nuclear dialogue with North Korea.³⁶

Reports noted that Russia plans to buy 8 underwater drones at an estimated cost of 729 roubles (US\$24.5 million) from Iceland. These drones can be used for surveillance, clearing mines, and anti-submarine warfare.³⁷

According to reports, China has supported Russia's attempts in reaching the political settlement of the conflict in Syria.³⁸

In other developments, according to reports, Russia will develop a detailed 30-year plan of strengthening its naval forces by June 2012. The state military program for 2012-2020 has allocated 4.7 trillion rubles (\$155 billion) for the military modernization programme and last year, 85 billion rubles (\$2.8 billion) was allocated on the construction of nuclear submarines, frigates, ship repair and maintenance.³⁹ Meanwhile, reports noted that a new generation missile attack warning radar is scheduled for commissioning in Leningrad and other potential sites where they can be installed in the future could be Pechora, Barnaul, Yeniseisk, Omsk and Murmansk.⁴⁰

³⁴ "Sarkozy asks Russia to support the LAS plan on Syria", ITAR-TASS, February 9, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/338433.html>

³⁵ "Naftogaz Ukraine pays Gazprom about \$ 800m for January supplies", ITAR-TASS, February 8, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/337411.html>

³⁶ "RF, SKorea to hold consultations on DPRK nuclear problem in Moscow", ITAR-TASS, February 8, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/337020.html>

³⁷ "Russia to buy Icelandinc underwater drones", The Moscow Times, February 3, 2012, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-to-buy-icelandic-underwater-drones/452238.html>

³⁸ "China supports Russia's attempts in reaching political settlement of the Syrian conflict", ITAR-TASS, February 7, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/336395.html>

³⁹ "Russian Navy 30-year development plan to be ready by June", RIA Novosti, February 6, 2012, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20120206/171171735.html

⁴⁰ "Missile warning radar in Leningrad region to enter duty Sat", ITAR-TASS, February 11, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/340186.html>

II. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

(January 30-February 05, 2012)

- **Government of India unclear on interlocutors report; Chief Minister Omar Abdullah: Youth in favour of political solution to Kashmir; Washington to have specialist on Kashmir; Militants killed in Pulwama**

According to reports, uncertainty seems to be looming large on the fate of the Kashmir Interlocutors' reports as even the Union Home Ministry seems to be unsure as to when would it be made public and a follow up action taken. A similar situation prevails on the issue of partial withdrawal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from some areas of Jammu and Kashmir.⁴¹

In another development, according to reports, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said the youth of Jammu and Kashmir are strongly in favor of a political solution to the Kashmir problem and the state government is working in that direction. Referring to a study conducted by Delhi-based Institute for Research on India and International Studies, he said a majority of the state's youth have rejected the gun culture. The study showed that a vast majority of Kashmiri youths were disillusioned with mainstream democratic politics in the state with 50 percent of them having never voted and only 5 percent of them joining political parties. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said that the good thing in the report is that it has exposed many good things about role of media and how it influences the opinions in the valley on different subjects.⁴²

In a significant development, according to reports, the US Embassy at New Delhi is appointing a political specialist on Kashmir to keep the envoys updated on developments in the region.

This is for the first time that the US Embassy is appointing an expert on Kashmir who shall be fully conversant in the major issues affecting Indo-Pak relations and India's policy in Kashmir.⁴³

In other developments, according to Police sources, two militants of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) were killed in a gunfight with forces in the south Kashmir district of Pulwama. A joint party of soldiers from 55-RR and SOG personnel cordoned off Wadoora village and launched searches. Militants present in the house of Abdul Hameed Shah opened fire on the search party which was retaliated, triggering a gunfight. However, forces suspended the operation during the night. Militants

⁴¹ "Govt of India unclear on interlocutors report, AFSPA", *Greater Kashmir*, January 31, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Feb/1/govt-of-india-unclear-on-interlocutors-report-afspa-5.asp>

⁴² "Youth want political solution of Kashmir", *Greater Kashmir*, February 1, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Feb/2/-youth-want-political-solution-of-kashmir-86.asp>

⁴³ "Washington to have Kashmir Specialist", *Greater Kashmir*, February 3, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Feb/4/washington-to-have-kashmir-specialist-26.asp>

resorted to indiscriminate firing and tried to break the cordon. However, they were trapped and after a fierce gun-battle two militants were killed.⁴⁴

North East India

(January 30-February 05, 2012)

- **Chief Electoral Officer: Re-polling may be ordered in 33 booths of Manipur; ULFA, GNLA building ties causing concern**

According to Chief Electoral Officer P.C. Lawmkunga repolling may be ordered in 33 polling booths in five hill districts of Manipur that saw violence. The state election department had made the request to the Election Commission. Seven people were killed in election-related violence in Manipur on January 28 when people voted to pick a new assembly. Of the 33 polling booths, nine are in Ukhrul district, four in Tamenglong, eight in Senapati, four in Churachandpur and eight in Chandel.⁴⁵

In another development, according to reports, growing ties between the hard line faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and Garo National Liberation Army have become matter of serious concern for the Government of Meghalaya as well as for the security agencies. However, in recent times, the Meghalaya Government has started taking steps for strengthening its own police force to deal with insurgency. According to highly placed police sources, members of the hard line faction of the ULFA have been providing help to the GNLA for its own benefits. Sources said that as the hard line faction of the ULFA does not have any shortage of sophisticated weapons, it is providing the same to the members of the GNLA. The senior cadres of the ULFA are also providing training to the new recruits of the GNLA and in return, the ULFA is getting a major share of the funds collected by the GNLA.⁴⁶

III. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

(January 30-February 05, 2012)

- **UNSC calls for an inclusive approach to address problems of Sahel region; India opposes high-level panel recommendations on global sustainability; India to vote against Syria**

According to reports, the UN Security council called for a coordinated and inclusive approach to ensure a solution to the problems that the Sahel region of Africa faces which includes

⁴⁴ "2 militants killed in Pulwama", *Greater Kashmir*, February 4, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Feb/5/2-militants-killed-in-pulwama-47.asp>

⁴⁵ "Repolling likely in 33 booths in Manipur", *The Assam Tribune*, January 31, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan3112/at034>

⁴⁶ "ULFA, GNLA ties causing concern", *The Assam Tribune*, February 3, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=feb0412/at08>

humanitarian crisis, lack of socio-economic development, insecurity and the threat of terrorism. The Council also stated its support for a collaborative approach that consists of cooperation among the Sahel and Maghreb states, the African Union, European Union, the UN and other relevant stakeholders.⁴⁷

In another development, according to reports, India and several other developing countries opposed the recommendation of a high-profile panel of the UN Secretary-General on Global Sustainability. The panel had recommended that the world adopt sustainable development targets which India criticized as creating a backdoor for caps on emissions and green targets and also breaching the firewall between developing and rich countries.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, according to reports, India announced that it will vote in favour of a UN Security Council resolution against Syria. However, the Indian representative to the UN expressed India's reservations about enforcing substantial international measures against Syria.⁴⁹

(February 6-12, 2012)

- **India votes against Syria in UNSC; UN Secretary-General expresses discontent**

According to reports, India expressed its disappointment with the Assad regime in failing to implement the political package of reforms it had promised in late 2011, by supporting a Western-backed draft resolution against Syria but only after provisions of regime change in the resolution were removed.⁵⁰

Meanwhile, reports noted that India explained its vote on the resolution in the Security Council stating that it sought concurrence among all sides for a solution that manages to 'address the grievances of the Syrian people'. India called for direct talks between the warring sides and criticized both the government and the armed groups for perpetuating violence.⁵¹ However, the resolution was vetoed by the Council permanent members, Russia and China. The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon expressed his regret for the lack of consensus on the resolution.⁵²

⁴⁷ "Security Council calls for multilateral action to address challenges in the Sahel", *UN News Centre*, January 31, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41095&Cr=sahel&Cr1=>

⁴⁸ "India opposes UN panel's 'back door' for green caps", *The Times of India*, January 31, 2012 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-01-31/developmental-issues/31008994_1_sustainable-development-rich-countries-climate-talks

⁴⁹ "India to support UN resolutions against Syria", *International Business Times*, February 03, 2012 at <http://www.ibtimes.com/articles/292819/20120203/india-syria-bashar-al-assad-united-nations.htm>

⁵⁰ "India voted on Syria resolution after getting draft amended", *The Economic Times*, February 06, 2012 at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-02-06/news/31030546_1_syria-resolution-draft-resolution-unsc

⁵¹ "It was India's vote against Assad's prevarication on reforms", *The Hindu*, February 06, 2012 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2863596.ece>

⁵² "Syria: Ban voices deep regret after the Security Council fails to agree on resolution", *UN News Centre*, 04 February 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41144&Cr=Syria&Cr1=>