

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

- **Afghanistan expresses grave concern about “Pakistani military’s unilateral construction and physical reinforcement activities” along the border in the eastern Ningarhar province; Deadly attack on Afghan court in Farah kills at least forty six people; Afghan High Peace Council: Pakistan has a crucial role to play in the ‘difficult-to-achieve’ peace with the Taliban militia**

According to reports, Afghanistan on April 1 expressed grave concern about what it claimed the ‘Pakistani military’s unilateral construction and physical reinforcement activities’ along the border in the eastern Ningarhar province, the Afghan Foreign Ministry said. A formal protest was also lodged amidst growing diplomatic tension between the two uneasy neighbours which also led to the cancellation of Afghan army officers’ planned visit to Pakistan last week.¹

In another developments, according to reports, in an attempt to free Taliban fighters standing trial, suicide bombers disguised as soldiers stormed an court in Farah, the main town of Farah province on April 3, killing at least 46 people. At least nine fighters were also killed in the attack. The assault came as Afghan President Hamid Karzai recently said that he remained open to talks with the Taliban, but that he wanted to secure the progress his government has made.²

In other developments, according to reports, the Afghan High Peace Council has said that Pakistan has a crucial role to play in the ‘difficult-to-achieve’ peace with the Taliban militia. Abdul Hakim Mujahid, a senior member of the council, “The Afghan High Peace Council considers Pakistan’s role as extremely important to put an end to the armed struggle in Afghanistan,” Mujahid’s remarks came days after Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Javed Ludin said that Kabul could pursue the peace process without Pakistan’s help. He also alleged that those Taliban figures who want to reconcile were either killed or arrested in Pakistan. A day later, Afghan presidential spokesman Aimal Faizi came up with harsher statement, accusing Islamabad of ‘sabotaging’ the peace efforts.³

¹ Afghanistan protests Pakistan’s border construction, physical reinforcement, *The Express Tribune*, April 1, 2013 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/529763/afghanistan-protests-pakistans-border-construction-physical-reinforcement/>

² Dozens die in attack on court in Afghanistan, *Al Jazeera*, April 3, 2013 at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2013/04/201343105748841685.html>

³ Stabilising Afghanistan: Pakistan has crucial role, peace negotiator, *The Express Tribune*, April 1, 2013 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/529379/stabilising-afghanistan-pakistan-has-crucial-role-peace-negotiator/>

Pakistan

- **Anti-terrorism court to reopen Benazir murder case; British lawmakers recommends that Britain should not increase aid to Pakistan unless Islamabad tries to make its wealthy elite pay more taxes**

According to reports, an anti-terrorism court has decided to hear Benazir Bhutto murder case afresh as prime suspect former president Pervez Musharraf has returned to Pakistan. Around 25 witnesses had recorded their statements for the case, however, their statements will now be recorded again. Musharraf, along with other suspects, will be charged again in the murder case.⁴

In another development, reports noted British lawmakers recommended that Britain should not increase aid to Pakistan unless Islamabad tries to make its wealthy elite pay more taxes. Britain is due to double its assistance to Pakistan to £446 million (\$675 million) in 2014-2015, making it the biggest recipient of British aid. But parliament's International Development Committee said it was unfair for Britain to fund health and education projects unless Pakistan's new government, due to be elected in May, tackles "rife" corruption and tax evasion. "We cannot expect the people in the UK to pay taxes to improve education and health in Pakistan if the Pakistani elite is not paying income tax," the committee said in a report.⁵

Bangladesh

- **Arunachal Pradesh's Water Resources Development Minister and Bangladesh High Commissioner to India discuss management of Brahmaputra for mutual benefit; US Seventh Fleet Commander visits Bangladesh; Bangladesh-Bhutan sign MoU; Chittagong-based Hefajat-e Islam held a rally demanding punishment of "atheist bloggers"**

Arunachal Pradesh's Water Resources Development Minister Newlai Tingkhattr met Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Tariq A Karim in Itanagar on April 5, 2013 and discussed several measures for better management of the Brahmaputra river water for mutual benefit. Among the issues discussed were ways to tackle the problem of siltation in the river, dredging and building embankments to increase water depth for inland water transport.⁶

Reports noted that US Seventh Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Scott H Swift came to Dhaka on April 6, 2013 on a three-day visit to meet the Bangladesh navy chief and military and government officials to discuss maritime issues.⁷

⁴ Musharraf's return: Court to hear Benazir murder case afresh, *The Express Tribune*, April 1, 2013 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/529499/musharrafs-return-court-to-hear-benazir-murder-case-afresh/>

⁵ Stop extra aid to Pakistan unless tax reform: Britain, *Dawn*, April 4, 2013 at <http://dawn.com/2013/04/04/stop-aid-unless-wealthy-pakistanis-more-pay-taxes-britain/>

⁶ "Brahmaputra river water for mutual benefit: Indian minister, Bangladesh envoy talk about steps", *The Daily Star*, April 7, 2013 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/brahmaputra-river-water-for-mutual-benefit/>.

⁷ "US 7th Fleet commander arrives", *The Daily Star*, April 07, 2013 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/us-7th-fleet-commander-arrives/>.

According to reports, in a bid to further strengthen bilateral relations, Bangladesh and Bhutan inked a deal to establish a formal institutional mechanism to hold regular consultations for exploring new avenues of cooperation on April 1, 2013. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Bilateral Consultation was signed by Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque and Bhutanese Foreign Secretary Yeshey Dorji at state guesthouse Meghna in Dhaka. The foreign secretary of Bhutan is leading a four-member delegation on a three-day visit to Bangladesh at the invitation of his Bangladeshi counterpart to attend the first Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) held on April 2, 2013.⁸

In other developments, according to reports, Chittagong-based Hefajat-e Islam held a rally at Shapla Chattar in Dhaka on April 6 demanding punishment of “atheist bloggers” of Shahbagh..⁹

Sri Lanka

- **Proposal for formation of an Indo-Sri Lanka Marine Disputes Authority to find a permanent solution to end the “sufferings” of Indian fishermen; Sri Lankan Opposition leader met Indian President during his visit to India; Foreign Secretary-level bilateral political consultations between Pakistan and Sri Lanka held in Colombo; Sri Lanka suspends sending employees to Cyprus; Spiritual head of the Drupka Order of Tibetan Buddhism presents a bone relic of the Buddha to Sri Lanka**

According to reports, following the arrest of twenty six Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy, General Secretary of Indian National Fish Workers Forum M. Ilango has sought formation of an Indo-Sri Lanka Marine Disputes Authority to find a permanent solution to end the “sufferings” of Indian fishermen, allegedly at the hands of Sri Lankan Navy while fishing. The fishery official has said that there should be initiatives on the part of India’s central government and the Sri Lankan authorities to invite representatives of the fishermen of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry and Sri Lanka to find permanent solution.¹⁰

In another development, according to reports, as a neighbour with thousands of years of close ties, India has a natural interest in Sri Lanka and the Indian people cannot remain untouched by developments in Sri Lanka, President of India Pranab Mukherjee has told Sri Lanka’s Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremasinghe when he called on the Indian President at Rashtrapati Bhavan on April 03, 2013. President Mukherjee further noted that India has always felt that the end of the conflict in Sri Lanka provided a unique opportunity to pursue lasting political settlement, acceptable to all communities. “Sri Lanka must seize the opportunity for genuine national reconciliation and move ahead”.¹¹

⁸ “Dhaka, Thimphu ink deal for cooperation”, *The Daily Star*, April 02, 2013 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/dhaka-thimphu-ink-deal-for-cooperation/>.

⁹ “Govt given three weeks: Hefajat announces fresh programmes to realise 13 demands”, *The Daily Star*, April 07, 2013 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/govt-given-three-weeks/>.

¹⁰ “Indian fishermen request to set up an Indo-Lanka Marine Disputes Authority”, *The Colombo Page*, April 7, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13A/Apr07_1365319446CH.php.

¹¹ “Indian people cannot remain untouched by developments in Sri Lanka- Indian President”, *The Colombo Page*, April 4, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13A/Apr04_1365095158CH.php.

Reports noted that Sri Lanka and Pakistan agreed to enhance the level of cooperation and friendship between the two countries at the Foreign Secretary-level Bilateral Political Consultations held in Colombo on April 4, 2013. Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Jalil Abass Jilani led the Pakistan side, while Sri Lanka was represented by Foreign Secretary Karunaratne Amunugama during the talks.¹²

In other developments, according to reports, Sri Lanka government has decided to suspend sending employees to Cyprus due to the economic crisis in that country until the situation improves. According to Embassy of Sri Lanka in Rome, Sri Lankan migrant workforce, estimated to be around 25,000, is the second largest foreign workers' community in Cyprus.¹³

The spiritual head of the Drupka Order of Tibetan Buddhism, Gyalwang Drupka, presented a bone relic of the Buddha to President Mahinda Rajapaksa as a gift to Sri Lanka.¹⁴

Maldives

● President Waheed visits Kuwait; China provides assistance to Maldives under their "Provisions of goods to addressing climate change" initiative

According to reports, President Dr Mohamed Waheed and First Lady Madam Ilham Hussain went to Kuwait on an official visit on April 1–April 4, 2013. The President had separate meetings with the Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Education, the Chairman of Chamber Commerce, the Deputy Director General of the Kuwait Fund, and the Executive Director of Alternative Investments at the Public Authority for Investments. The meetings were held at the Bayan Palace, on April 3, 2013.¹⁵ During his meeting with senior officials, President discussed the water and sewerage project of Fuvamulah with the Kuwait Fund, assistance for the establishment of a medical centre in Hulhumale, and the development of the Ibrahim Nasir International Airport.¹⁶

In another development, reports noted that the Government of China has donated 250,000 LED tube lights to the Government of Maldives, as part of their "Provisions of goods to addressing climate change" initiative.¹⁷

¹² "Sri Lanka and Pakistan agree to enhance bilateral cooperation", *The Colombo Page*, April 4, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13A/Apr04_1365093023CH.php.

¹³ "Sri Lanka suspends sending employees to Cypress", *The Colombo Page*, April 4, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13A/Apr04_1365097049KA.php.

¹⁴ "Tibetan spiritual leader gifts Buddha Relic to Sri Lanka", *The Colombo Page*, April 6, 2013 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_13A/Apr06_1365264251CH.php.

¹⁵ "President Waheed meets with Senior Government Officials and Business Community of Kuwait", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, April 3, 2013 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=8796>.

¹⁶ "President says his visit to Kuwait has bolstered Kuwaiti-Maldivian relations", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, April 4, 2013 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=8803>.

¹⁷ "Maldives receives donation of 250,000 LED tube lights", *The Sun Online*, April 1, 2013 at <http://sun.mv/english/11142>.

B. Central Asia and Russia

Central asia

- **Kazakhstan hikes crude export duties by 50 per cent; Iranian nuclear talks resumed in Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan to cut energy (hydel) exports to Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan and Iran discuss ways to simplify their visa regime; Uzbekistan and Saudi Arabia discuss the prevailing security situation and ways to enhance cooperation; Tajikistan to increase power exports to Afghanistan; Kazakhstan and Ukraine sign a pact to strengthen inter-regional trade**

According to reports, in a bid to cut soaring oil product prices, Kazakhstan has hiked crude oil export duties by 50 percent. Export duties will be raised to \$60 per ton from the current price of \$40.¹⁸

In another development, according to reports, talks over Iran's nuclear program between Iranian and diplomats from Russia, China, France, UK, US and Germany have resumed in Almaty even though they have yielded little progress. It would be worth noting that even though the talks are being held in Almaty, Kazakhstan is not a party to the negotiations.¹⁹

According to reports, Prime Minister Serik Akhmetov has said that Kazakhstan expects to produce around 120 million metric tonnes of oil on an annual basis by 2020. Kazakhstan produced 79.2 million tonnes of oil in 2012, a 1.1 percent drop from the amount produced in 2011.²⁰

Reports noted that Kyrgyzstan will cut energy exports (water) to Kazakhstan this year due to low levels of available water in its largest reservoir Toktogul. It now expects to export 500 million kiloWatts of energy, a substantial decrease from the 1.3 billion kilWatts it exported to Kazakh territories in 2012.²¹

Reports noted that Kyrgyz Speaker Asylbek Jeenbekov and Iranian Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan Ali Najafi Hoshrudini have discussed the issue of bilateral simplification of visa regime for citizens of both countries in order to enhance tourism and attract investments.²²

¹⁸ "Kazakhstan Hikes Crude Export Duties 50 Percent", Rianovosti, April 3, 2013, <http://en.rian.ru/business/20130403/180416599/Kazakhstan-Hikes-Crude-Export-Duties-50-Percent.html>

¹⁹ "Iran nuclear talks resume in Kazakhstan", Central Asia Newswire, April 5, 2013, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13923>

²⁰ "Kazakhstan to produce 120 million tonnes of oil by 2020", Central Asia Newswire, April 5, 2013, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13924>

²¹ "Kyrgyzstan to cut energy exports to Kazakhstan", Central Asia Newswire, April 5, 2013, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13925>

²² "Kyrgyzstan, Iran intend to simplify visa regime", The Times of Central Asia, April 2, 2013, <http://www.timesca.com/index.php/m-news-by-category/politics-analyses-and-opinions/10369-kyrgyzstan-iran-intend-to-simplify-visa-regime>

In other developments, according to reports, members of Saudi Arabian Interior Ministry and the Uzbek First Deputy Interior Minister Adham Ahmedboev have discussed strengthening bilateral cooperation in the fight against terrorism, extremism and crimes related to drug trafficking.²³

Reports noted that Tajikistan plans to significantly increase the amount of electricity it exports to Afghanistan. It will provide 1.9 billion kilowatts/hour (kW/h) of electricity in 2013 as compared to 700 million kilowatts/hour in 2012. The deal is expected to fetch US\$ 200 million.²⁴

Reports noted that as part of an official meeting between the Prime Ministers of Kazakhstan and Ukraine in Kiev, the two countries have agreed to intensify their bilateral economic cooperation especially in the fields of agriculture, space industry, trade and transport. Bilateral trade stood at US\$ 4.18 billion in 2012, an increase of 11.9 per cent from the previous year.²⁵

Russia

- **Russia and Iraq agree to renew an arms deal worth US\$ 4.2 billion; Russia will not support its citizens affected by the Cyprus crisis; Russia says that the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) has no prospects in the future; Russia's Central Bank expresses concern over the slow economic growth; Russia's arms exports increases by 12 per cent in 2012; Venezuelan Parliament ratifies an oil deal with Rosneft; Russia sends a warship to participate in Blackseafor drills; Russia to start state tests of new ballistic missile in 2014; Pentagon to buy Russian made helicopters for Afghanistan despite opposition from US lawmakers; Russia's third Borey class nuclear submarine to start trials in June; Two landing ships of Russia's Pacific Fleet will enter Tartus in May; Russia's GDP growth to be less than 3 per cent in 2013; Russia has no plans to deploy a military base in Afghanistan**

According to reports, Russia and Iraq have agreed to renew an arms deal worth US\$ 4.2 billion that was put on hold in 2012 amid corruption allegations. Russia has reportedly agreed to send four extra assault helicopters as part of the renegotiations. It will be Iraq's largest arms deal with a partner other than the US and its key allies in the post Saddam period. The deal will involve supply of Pantsir-S1 short-to-medium-range air defence systems and Mi-28NE strike helicopters.²⁶

According to reports, First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov has said that there are no plans to provide any support to Russian citizens who are directly affected by the Cyprus bailout issue. However, Russia will be willing to consider any case if a state owned company is involved.²⁷

²³ "Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia discuss security cooperation", The Times of Central Asia, April 4, 2013, <http://www.timesca.com/index.php/m-news-by-category/other-central-asian-news/10386-uzbekistan-saudi-arabia-discuss-security-cooperation>

²⁴ "Tajikistan to significantly increase power exports to Afghanistan", Central Asia Newswire, April 2, 2013, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/tajikistan/viewstory.aspx?id=13899>

²⁵ "Kazakhstan-Ukraine pact to build inter-regional trade", Central Asia Newswire, April 4, 2013, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=13921>

²⁶ "Iraq to resume \$4.2bn Russian arms deal", Russia Today, April 1, 2013, <http://rt.com/news/russia-iraq-arms-contract-146/>

²⁷ "No State Help to Russians Affected by Cyprus Crisis – Shuvalov", Rianovosti, April 1, 2013, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20130401/180363236/No-State-Help-to-Russians-Affected-by-Cyprus-Crisis-Shuvalov.html>

According to reports, Russia has declared that the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) has no prospects in the future. Instead, Russia hopes to discuss with NATO new mechanisms of arms controls in Europe during a European security conference due in Moscow on May 23-24.²⁸

According to reports, Russia's Central Bank has expressed concern over the slow economic growth in the country. From January to February 2013, Russia's GDP grew by a mere 0.9 per cent as compared to growth of 4.3 per cent during the same period in 2012. Industrial output has fallen to 1.5 per cent.²⁹

According to reports, President Putin has said that Russia's global arms exports have increase by 12 per cent in 2012 and now stands at US\$ 15.2 billion. Russia currently supplies arms and military equipment to 66 countries, has concluded agreements on military and technical cooperation with 85 countries and its portfolio of orders for defence-related products stands at US\$ 46.3 billion.³⁰

Reports noted that the Venezuelan parliament has ratified a deal to set up a joint oil extraction venture of state-run Russian and Venezuelan oil companies. The joint venture will extract oil and associated gas at the Carabobo-2 ("Northern") and Carabobo-4 ("Western") blocks of Orinoco belt. Rosneft will hold a 40-percent stake in the joint venture and will invest US\$ 16 billion over a period of 25 years.³¹

Reports noted that Russia has sent the Novocherkassk large amphibious landing ship to take part in the international Black Sea Naval Force (Blackseafor) naval exercise. The Blackseafor was formally established in 2001 at Turkey's initiative and comprises Turkey, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Romania, Georgia and Russia. The purpose of Blackseafor is to cooperatively promote security and stability in the Black Sea maritime area and beyond.³²

According to reports, the state tests of a new solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) will begin in 2014. Russia had announced the development of a new ICBM to replace the existing Topol-M and Yars missiles in 2012. If the tests are successful, the new system can be commissioned by 2015.³³

According to reports, Russia may extend the deadline for complete destruction of its chemical weapons arsenal until 2020 as it lacks industrial capacity to finish the task on schedule. It has

²⁸ "Russian Military Says CFE Treaty Has No Future", Rianovosti, April 2, 2013, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20130402/180392027/Russian-Military-Says-CFE-Treaty-Has-No-Future.html

²⁹ "Russia's Central Bank Alarmed by Slow Growth Rates", Rianovosti, April 3, 2013, <http://en.rian.ru/business/20130403/180428301/Russias-Central-Bank-Alarmed-by-Slow-Growth-Rates.html>

³⁰ "Putin Says Russia's Arms Exports Up 12% in 2012", Rianovosti, April 3, 2013, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20130403/180422031/Putin-Says-Russias-Arms-Exports-Up-12-in-2012.html

³¹ "Venezuelan Parliament Ratifies Oil Deal with Rosneft", Rianovosti, April 4, 2013, <http://en.rian.ru/business/20130404/180434626/Venezuelan-Parliament-Ratifies-Oil-Deal-with-Rosneft.html>

³² "Russia Sends Warship to Join Blackseafor Drills", April 5, 2013, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20130405/180452526/Russia-Sends-Warship-to-Join-Blackseafor-Drills.html

³³ "Russia to Start State Tests of New Ballistic Missile in 2014", April 5, 2013, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20130405/180450967/Russia-to-Start-State-Tests-of-New-Ballistic-Missile-in-2014.html

destroyed about 25,000 metric tons of chemical weapons, or 62 per cent of its 40,000-ton stockpile as of April 29, 2012.³⁴

According to reports, The US Department of Defence has said that it plans to sidestep a Congressional ban to purchase 30 Mi 17 helicopters from Russia valued at US\$ 690 million, despite objections from US lawmakers who allege that the Rosoboronexport has equipped the Syrian government to commit brutal crimes against civilians. The Pentagon has argued that most of Afghan troops are used to flying Russian machines and switching to a new platform will set back the plan of a self sustaining Afghan air force by 3 years.³⁵

In other developments, According to reports, Russia is planning to take part in a future tender to build a nuclear power plant (NPP) in Finland.³⁶

Russia's third Borey class nuclear submarine will start trials in the White Sea in June 2013. It is capable of carrying 16 Bulava submarine-launched ballistic missiles. A total of eight Borey-class submarines are to be built for the Russian Navy by 2020.³⁷

Two landing ships of Russia's Pacific Fleet will enter the Syrian port of Tartus in May.³⁸

Minister for Economic Development Andrei Belousov has said that Russia's GDP growth will be around 3 per cent in 2013.³⁹

Deputy Defence Minister Anatoly Antonov has said that Russia has no plans to establish a military base in Afghanistan.⁴⁰

³⁴ "Russia May Delay Chemical Weapons Disposal Until 2020 – Paper", Rianovosti, April 5, 2013, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20130405/180455026/Russia-May-Delay-Chemical-Weapons-Disposal-Until-2020-Paper.html>

³⁵ "Pentagon to Buy Russian Helicopters Despite Ban", Rianovosti, April 4, 2013, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20130405/180451358/Pentagon-to-Buy-Russian-Helicopters-Despite-Ban.html

³⁶ "Russia Eyes Nuclear Power Project in Finland – Source", Rianovosti, April 5, 2013, <http://en.rian.ru/business/20130405/180454073/Russia-Eyes-Nuclear-Power-Project-in-Finland-Source.html>

³⁷ "Russia's Third Borey-Class Sub to Start Trials in June", Rianovosti, April 1, 2013, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20130401/180383681/Russias-Third-Borey-Class-Sub-to-Start-Trials-in-June.html

³⁸ "Pacific Fleet's amphibious ships to enter Syrian Tartous late May", April 6, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/698494.html>

³⁹ "Russia's GDP growth likely to be less than 3% - minister", Itar-Tass, April 4, 2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/699104.html>

⁴⁰ "Russia plans to deploy no military bases in Afghanistan - deputy defence minister", Itar-Tass, April 4, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/697752.html>

C. West Asia

Jordan

- **Syrian refugees in Jordan expected to double this year**

According to reports, the UN has estimated that the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan will be more than double to 1.2 million by the end of 2013. The UNICEF had earlier announced that it is rapidly running out of funds to maintain its programs in the region, and urgently needed new funding to cope with the influx of refugees. Jordan has a total of population of 6 million; the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan is now approaching half a million. The UN has also said that the pace of fleeing refugees has increased dramatically in the recent months.⁴¹

Turkey

- **Turkey adopts migration and asylum policy in push to join EU; US urges improved Turkey-Israel ties**

According to reports, Turkey has adopted a long-awaited law that will regulate migration and asylum. The move was hailed by the European Union and is seen as renewing Turkey's stalled efforts to join the EU. Turkey currently hosts around 400,000 refugees who have fled the Syrian conflict and is under pressure to regulate their legal status while simultaneously relaunching the EU entry talks. The new law will protect refugees in the country as "conditional refugees" instead of the previous description of "guests", and will allow them to stay within Turkey till they are placed in a third country. The EU has said that the adoption of the law indicated Turkey's "clear commitment to build an effective migration management system in line with EU and international standards." Turkey's efforts to join the EU have been stalled particularly by its human rights record.⁴²

In another development, according to reports, US Secretary of State John Kerry has urged Turkey and Israel to restore full relations as this is essential to regional stability. Kerry said it was not up to Washington to dictate the terms of this relationship but a reconciliation between the two countries could improve regional coordination to contain the spill-over from the Syrian war, as well as ease Israel's increasing isolation in the region over Iran's nuclear program. Kerry also urged Israel to honour its commitment to compensate the families of those killed by Israeli marines aboard a Turkish ship delivering aid to Gaza in 2010. Kerry's remarks came two weeks after President Barack Obama brokered a thaw in Turkey-Israel relations following the killing of nine Turkish citizens in the flotilla raid.⁴³

⁴¹ "UN: 1.2 million Syria refugees in Jordan this year", The Daily Star, April 5, 2013 at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Apr-05/212739-un-12-million-syria-refugees-in-jordan-this-year.ashx#axzz2PqIJwy8Z>

⁴² "Eyeing EU, Turkey adopts migration and asylum law", The Daily Star, April 5, 2013 at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Apr-05/212716-eyeing-eu-turkey-adopts-migration-and-asylum-law.ashx#axzz2PqIJwy8Z>

⁴³ "Kerry urges Turkey, Israel to take steps to normalizing ties", The Daily Star, April 7, 2013 at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Apr-07/212835-afghan-tragedy-mars-kerry-trip-focused-on-syria-mideast.ashx#axzz2PqIJwy8Z>

Israel/Palestine

- **Palestinian president demands two-state map from Israel; Tensions rise in Gaza as UNRWA shuts down offices**

According to reports, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has said that any return to negotiations on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will require a map for a future Palestinian state, according to an aide of the president. The remarks came days ahead of a visit by US Secretary of State John Kerry to the region to help revive stalled peace talks. Abbas has said that participation in any peace talks be conditioned by a halt to Israeli settlement building in the Palestinian territories, and using red lines as existed prior to the 1967 war as basis for negotiating future borders.⁴⁴

In another development, according to reports, the Hamas government in Gaza has urged the main UN humanitarian agency operating in Gaza to resume its operations following the shutting down of its offices in the territory after protesters stormed its headquarters. The protesters were demanding that the UNRWA reverse its decision to cut an annual \$40 handout that was given to the poorest residents in Gaza. The past week also witnessed violent clashes between youth and Israeli security forces, leading to the death of at least two Palestinian teenagers, and raising concerns that a new 'intifada' may be brewing. UNRWA serves at least five million Palestinians across Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Gaza, and the West Bank; it has said that it will not resume operations until it receives assurances of safety for its staff from the Hamas government.⁴⁵

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

- **Agni-II missile successfully test fired; CCEA approves continuation of scheme for special Infrastructure in Left Wing Extremism affected states**

According to reports, the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) fired the medium range Agni-2 missile successfully on April 7 from the Wheelers Island, off the Odisha coast. The missile has a range capability of over 1700 kms. Agni-2 missile is equipped with state of the art avionics, advanced high accuracy navigation system and guided by an innovative guidance scheme. The state-of-the-art Agni-II missile was developed by Advanced Systems Laboratory (ASL) and integrated by the Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), Hyderabad. An SFC spokesman said, the flight "most importantly,

⁴⁴ "Abbas demands two-state map from Netanyahu: aide", The Daily Star, April 5, 2013 at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Apr-05/212724-abbas-demands-two-state-map-from-netanyahu-aide.ashx#axzz2PqIJwy8Z>

⁴⁵ "Palestinians simmer with anger ahead of Kerry visit", The Daily Star, April 5, 2013 at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Apr-05/212738-palestinians-simmer-with-anger-ahead-of-kerry-visit.ashx#axzz2PqIJwy8Z>

conveys our preparedness to meet any eventuality. The mission “fully validated our operational readiness as also the reliability of the systems and the missile.”⁴⁶

In another development, reports noted that the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on April 2 approved the proposal of the Ministry of Home Affairs for continuation of the Scheme for Special Infrastructure (SIS) in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected states during the 12th Plan period (upto 31.03.2017). The current proposal includes an added objective of up gradation and critical gap filling of training infrastructure, residential infrastructure, weaponry, vehicles and any other related items pertaining to Special Forces of LWE affected states. The total cost would be Rs. 373 crore comprising Rs. 280 crore as central government share and Rs. 93 crore as state government share on a 75 (central) : 25 (state) funding pattern.

The scheme was being implemented from the year 2008-09. During the 11th Plan period 100 percent funding was provided by the Central Government to the 9 LWE affected states for implementing various projects under the scheme. The total funds release under the scheme by the central government to the 9 LWE affected states during the 11th Plan period is Rs. 445.82 crore. This scheme tries to fill the gap in development of critical infrastructure for better policing, particularly in the Naxal affected areas.⁴⁷

International

● United States to return land to Japan; North Korea pitches up war cries

According to reports, Japan and the United States on April 5 agreed on a plan that will see some land occupied by the U.S. military returned to Japan in a phased manner. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and U.S. Ambassador John Roos issued a joint statement on the agreement, under which five U.S. military facilities and other areas on Okinawa’s main island will return to Japan over the coming years. Tokyo and Washington also agreed they will return land currently occupied by the controversial Futenma airbase “in fiscal 2022 or later,” the joint statement said.⁴⁸

In another development, according to reports, North Korea has said it cannot assure the safety of embassies in Pyongyang after April 10 and has urged Britain, Russia and other European nations to evacuate diplomatic staff amid soaring nuclear tensions. Russia, which has relatively close ties with North Korea, also received the missive, following its criticism of the North’s actions as “categorically unacceptable.”⁴⁹

⁴⁶ “Agni-2 Launched : Accurately Hits Target Area,” PIB, April 7, 2013, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=94527>

⁴⁷ “Approval for continuation of scheme for special Infrastructure in Left Wing Extremism affected states,” PIB, April 2, 2013, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=94417>

⁴⁸ “U.S. Military To Return Some Okinawa Land to Japan,” Defense News, April 5, 2013, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130405/DEFREG03/304050010/U-S-Military-Return-Some-Okinawa-Land-Japan>

⁴⁹ “N. Korea Warns It Cannot Protect Embassies After April 10,” Defense News, April 5, 2013 at www.defensenews.com/article/20130405/DEFREG03/304050011/N-Korea-Warns-Cannot-Protect-Embassies-After-April-10

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Hizbul Mujahideen militant Liyaqat Ali Shah to be questioned by National Investigation Agency (NIA); Uttar Pradesh government raises objections to deploying J&K police along its border with Nepal; Online campaign for the return of the mortal remains of Afzal Guru**

Reports noted that the National Investigation Agency (NIA) was allowed by a Delhi court on April 2 to interrogate suspected Hizbul Mujahideen militant Liyaqat Ali Shah in Tihar Jail till April 30. Liyaqat Ali Shah has been booked for waging war against the country by Delhi Police which claimed he was planning to carry out attacks in New Delhi.⁵⁰

According to reports, in a new twist to the Rehabilitation Policy for Kashmiri youth who had crossed over to Pakistan administered Kashmir (PaK), Uttar Pradesh government has raised objections to deploying J&K police along its border with Nepal, a move recently approved by New Delhi to legalize return of the youth through Indo-Nepal border. In the wake of the arrest of former militant Liyaqat Shah by Delhi Police last month, the Centre decided to legalize surrender of the Kashmiri militants via Nepal route. The states which share border with Nepal include Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Uttarakhand and Sikkim. Under a new arrangement and to plug loopholes in the Rehabilitation Policy, New Delhi had consented that J&K police would assist Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) along Indo-Nepal border to facilitate return of Kashmiri militants.⁵¹

In other developments, according to reports, reiterating that the demand for return of mortal remains of Muhammad Afzal Guru and Muhammad Maqbool Bhat would continue, the Muthahida Majlis-e-Mashawarat(MMM), a united forum of separatists, on April 7 urged people to take part in its online campaign by voting in favour of the main demands. However, the MMM did not call for any strike in the coming week.⁵²

North East India

- **Arunachal Pradesh faces power crisis; Rabha National Liberation Front (RNLF) ultras arrested; Myanmar delegation in Manipur; President to visit North-East states; Diversion of Brahmaputra a common concern for both North-East and Bangladesh; Commission probing encounters in Manipur notes six cases not genuine; Thailand keen on investing in Nagaland**

According to reports, Arunachal Pradesh, often described as the future powerhouse of the country with an estimated 58,000 MW hydro power generation potential, has been facing an acute power crisis for the past two and a half months. With the sources of rivers rapidly drying up directly

⁵⁰ "NIA allowed to quiz Liyaqat in jail", *Greater Kashmir*, April 2, 2013 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Apr/3/nia-allowed-to-quiz-liyaqat-in-jail-63.asp>

⁵¹ "Rehabilitation policy hits another roadblock", *Greater Kashmir*, April 3, 2013 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Apr/4/rehabilitation-policy-hits-another-roadblock-67.asp>

⁵² "MMM calls for online campaign", *Greater Kashmir*, April 7, 2013 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Apr/8/mmm-calls-for-online-campaign-77.asp>

impacting generation in the entire North East, Arunachal Pradesh is also suffering from a supply shortfall. The situation has been compounded by a large number of fires being reported in the State this year, forcing consumers, particularly students, to reach for conventional energy sources like kerosene and candles.⁵³

In another development, according to reports, Police on April 3 arrested seven persons from two different parts of the State, which include five cadres of Rabha National Liberation Front (RNLF) and two arms dealers of Meghalaya. According to the Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) LR Bishnoi all the five arrested were cadres of RNLF and were heading towards Assam-Meghalaya border in Byrnihaat to procure arms for the outfit.⁵⁴

According to reports, even as the entire North East continue to reel under power crisis, an 11-member Myanmar delegation led by Saigang division's Power Minister U Kyaw Win called on Manipur Chief Minister O Ibobi Singh and discussed the proposal of buying electricity from Manipur. The Myanmar delegation was on a five-day visit to Manipur to seek help in purchasing electricity for the power-starved Tamu township in north-western Myanmar's Saigang division bordering Manipur's border town Moreh, 110 km south of Imphal. Besides, the team aims to strengthen the existing bi-lateral relationship between India and Myanmar.⁵⁵

Reports noted that President Pranab Mukherjee will visit the northeastern States in April and May. From April 15 to 17, the president will be visiting Manipur and Sikkim in the first phase of his tour. In the second phase, the President will visit Assam, Nagaland and Tripura from May 13 to 16.⁵⁶

According to reports, Arunachal Pradesh and Bangladesh have discussed several measures for better management of the Brahmaputra river for mutual benefit. Arunachal Pradesh Water Resources Development Minister Newlai Tingkhattr during a meeting at Itanagar on April 5 with visiting Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Tariq A Khan discussed ways to tackle the problem of siltation through river dredging and building embankments so that proper water depth was developed for inland water transportation. Khan advocated an integrated and holistic management of the flood problem in Arunachal Pradesh as well as the Brahmaputra basin. He also said that Bangladesh was equally concerned and apprehensive over diversion of Brahmaputra's water in China.⁵⁷

⁵³ "Powerhouse Arunachal in grip of power crisis", *The Assam Tribune*, April 1, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=apr0213/oth05>

⁵⁴ "5 Rabha ultras arrested", *The Assam Tribune*, April 3, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=apr0413/at06>

⁵⁵ "Myanmar delegation in Manipur", *The Assam Tribune*, April 3, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=apr0413/oth05>

⁵⁶ "President to visit NE States", *The Assam Tribune*, April 7, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=apr0713/at046>

⁵⁷ "B'desh concern over Brahmaputra diversion", *The Assam Tribune*, April 6, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=apr0713/oth05>

In other developments, reports noted that the Supreme Court appointed Commission probing six cases of alleged extra-judicial killings in Manipur has informed the apex court that these cases were not genuine encounters and all the six victims did not have any criminal records. A division bench of the apex court comprising Justices Aftab Alam and Ranjana Prakash Desai examined the panel's report. The Commission, comprising of former Supreme Court judge Santosh Hegde, ex-Chief Election Commissioner JM Lyngdoh and former Karnataka DGP Ajay Kumar, had its proceedings from March 3- 7 last in Imphal and later continued in New Delhi from March 13-21.⁵⁸

According to reports, the Board of Investment, Government of Thailand, has expressed keen interest on investment in the North East in general and Nagaland in particular. A delegation of high ranking officials of Thailand visited Kohima and had detailed consultations with State Government officials led by Development Commissioner HK Khulu, Commissioner & Secretary Industries & Commerce Thangi Mannen to explore possible areas of investment and cooperation in Nagaland. The broad areas of interest indicated were agro-processing, infrastructure (building) hotels, tourism, etc. The delegation informed that the Government of Thailand has taken a policy decision to make/facilitate investments outside Thailand in various identified countries including India.⁵⁹

Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) News

- **Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2013 passed; India Signs Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty with Azerbaijan; Union Home Minister to visit Russia**

Reports noted that the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2013 was passed by the Lok Sabha on 19th March, 2013 and by the Rajya Sabha on 21st March, 2013. The President of India has accorded his assent to the Bill on 2nd April, 2013 and it will now be called the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013.⁶⁰

In another development, reports noted that a Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters was signed between India and Azerbaijan on 4th April, 2013 in New Delhi. Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty is one of the significant legal instruments to improve and facilitate effectiveness of the contracting states in investigation and prosecution of transnational crime including terrorism by providing the necessary legal framework for rendering/receiving legal assistance in criminal matters.⁶¹

According to reports, Union Home Minister Shri Sushilkumar Shinde is visiting Russia from April 10-12, 2013 along with a high level delegation. Union Home Secretary Shri R.K. Singh will also

⁵⁸ "Probe finds encounters in Manipur not genuine", *The Assam Tribune*, April 4, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=apr0513/oth06>

⁵⁹ "Thailand keen on investing in Nagaland", *The Assam Tribune*, April 7, 2013 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=apr0813/oth07>

⁶⁰ "President's Assent to Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2013", *Press Information Bureau, Govt. Of India*, April 3, 2013 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=94424>

⁶¹ "India signs mutual legal assistance treaty with Azerbaijan", *Press Information Bureau, Govt. of India*, April 4, 2013 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=94474>

accompany him. Union Home Minister will hold delegation level talks separately with three Russian Ministers on various security related issues of mutual interest, including the issues relating to the Trans National Terrorism, Disaster Management and combating of illicit drug-trafficking in the international context. The Union Home Minister will also visit various security related installations and high-end training facilities in Russia.⁶²

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

● UN General Assembly approves global arms trade treaty, India abstains

According to reports, the UN General Assembly approved a global arms trade treaty that regulated the international trade in conventional arms. Though the treaty failed to garner unanimous support, it received 154 votes in its favour. The adoption of the treaty was welcomed as a “historic diplomatic achievement by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Three countries including Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Iran and Syria voted against the resolution while India was among the 23 countries that abstained.⁶³ India’s abstention was in protest of the draft which it described as a instrument in the hands of weapons exporting countries. It had also stressed consistently that the treaty should make a real impact on illicit trafficking in conventional arms and that it should ensure balance of obligations between exporting and importing states.⁶⁴

⁶² “Union Home Minister to visit Russia”, *Press Information Bureau, Govt. Of India*, April 8, 2013 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=94540>

⁶³ “UN General Assembly approves global arms trade treaty”, *UN News Centre*, April 02, 2013 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=44539&Cr=arms+trade&Cr1=#.UWOxEKLe4y4>

⁶⁴ “India abstains from UN vote on global arms trade treaty”, *The New Indian Express*, April 03, 2013 at <http://newindianexpress.com/nation/article1528551.ece>