

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

- **Pakistan, US and Afghanistan agreed to provide 'safe passage' to Taliban militants willing to join reconciliation talks; Four killed and sixteen abducted by Taliban in Badakhshan province of northeast Afghanistan**

Reports noted that Pakistan, US and Afghanistan agreed on April 26, 2012 to provide 'safe passage' to Taliban militants willing to join reconciliation talks and set up a working group to settle modalities for their unhindered movement. This was announced by Foreign Secretary Jalil Abbas Jilani at a press conference addressed by heads of delegations at the 6th core group meeting of the three countries. Reports noted that the move, which comes in conjunction with the three sides agreeing to coordinate their activities at the UN for removing Taliban leaders from the Security Council sanctions list, is the biggest step forward for promoting reconciliation in Afghanistan since the core group was established a year ago for the sole purpose of advancing the peace process. The announcement came weeks ahead of a NATO summit in Chicago, which would review the military effort in Afghanistan and take stock of the progress towards reconciliation.¹

However, according to reports, Taliban insurgents have attacked a police post in Badakhshan province of northeast Afghanistan, killing four officers and abducting 16. Badakhshan province Deputy Gov Shams ul-Rahman said on April 26, 2012 that police reinforcements have been sent to secure the post, which sits on a key highway passing through Fayz Abad district.²

Pakistan

- **Pakistan successfully test-fired the Hatf IV (Shaheen 1A) missile; Supreme Court of Pakistan convicted PM Gilani in a verdict on the contempt proceedings against him**

According to reports, Pakistan on April 25, 2012 successfully test-fired the Hatf IV (Shaheen 1A) missile which is a nuclear-capable intermediate-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile, DawnNews reported. "Pakistan today successfully conducted the launch of the intermediate range ballistic missile Hatf IV Shaheen-1A weapon system," ISPR said in a statement. According to a statement issued by the ISPR, the 'Shaheen 1A' missile is an upgraded version of the 'Shaheen 1' with a longer range. Reports noted that Shaheen 1 is estimated to have a payload capacity of 1,000 kilograms and a range of 750 kilometres. The exact range of the missile was not revealed, but

¹ Afghan Taliban to get 'safe passage' for talks', *Dawn*, April 28, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/04/28/afghan-taliban-to-get-safe-passage-for-talks/>

² "Taliban kill four police, abduct 16: Afghan Official", *Dawn*, April 26, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/04/26/afghan-official-taliban-kill-4-police-abduct-16/>

retired General Talat Masood, a defence analyst, told AFP intermediate range ballistic missiles could reach targets up to 2,500 to 3,000 kilometres away, which would put almost all of India within reach.³

In another development, according to reports, the Supreme Court of Pakistan convicted Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani on April 26, 2012 during the announcement of a verdict in the contempt proceedings against him and sentenced him till the rising of court, Express News reported. The bench found Gilani guilty of contempt of court for refusing to reopen corruption cases against the president, but gave him only a symbolic sentence of a few minutes' detention in the courtroom, while he did not receive any jail term. "For reasons to be recorded later, the prime minister is found guilty of contempt for wilfully flouting the direction of the Supreme Court," said Justice Nasirul Mulk. A seven-member bench, headed by Justice Nasirul Mulk announced the verdict and convicted him for violating Contempt of Court Ordinance 2003 section 5 and the charges framed against him were for willfully disobeying the court's orders and ridiculing it. The court cited article 63 (1) (g) of the Constitution and observed that the premier might face consequences under it.⁴

Bangladesh

- **Ameerah Haq of Bangladesh appointed as an Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Field Support; Dipu Moni receives the prestigious Mother Teresa Lifetime Achievement Award**

Reports noted that UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has appointed Ameerah Haq of Bangladesh as an Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Field Support.⁵

In another development, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni has received the prestigious Mother Teresa Lifetime Achievement Award in Kolkata on April 29, 2012.⁶

Sri Lanka

- **President Rajapaksa visits South Korea; Sri Lanka Coast Guard took part in a sea exercise; The first ever bilateral consultations between the Ministry of External Affairs of Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel held; India takes action to initiate a programme to rehabilitate war widows in the Eastern Province; Sri Lanka Army strongly denies that unexploded cluster munitions have been found in North; 2012 Change Readiness Index**

³ "Pakistan successfully test fires Hatf iv ballistic missile", *Dawn*, April 25, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/04/25/pakistan-successfully-test-fires-hatf-iv-ballistic-missile/>

⁴ "Verdict out: SC convicts Gilani of contempt", *The Express Tribune*, April 26, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/370128/pm-contempt-escorted-by-entourage-gilani-walks-to-sc/>

⁵ "Ameerah Haq made UN under secy general", *The Daily Star*, April 27, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=231866>.

⁶ "Dipu Moni to receive award in Kolkata today", *The Daily Star*, April 29, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=232094>.

ranks Sri Lanka at the 22nd place among 60 developing and emerging world economies and first among South Asian countries

Reports noted that President Mahinda Rajapaksa made a four-day official visit to Korea from April 23 – 27, 2012 on an invitation extended by the South Korean President Lee Myung-Bak.⁷ Agreement for the Cooperation in the area of Informatization; for Economic Development Cooperation Fund to provide USD 200 million for the development activities in Sri Lanka; and for an Electric Power Partnership were signed between Sri Lanka and South Korea at the Blue House, the official residence of the Korean President in Seoul following bilateral talks between President Mahinda Rajapaksa and his Korean counterpart, Lee Myung-Bak.⁸

Reports noted that the Sri Lanka Coast Guard took part in a sea exercise jointly conducted by Indian, Sri Lankan and Maldivian Coast Guards in the seas off Male from April 23 till April 27.⁹ Meanwhile, the first ever bilateral consultations between the Ministry of External Affairs of Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel were held at the Ministry of External Affairs in Colombo on 20th April, 2012.¹⁰

According to reports, the Sri Lanka Army strongly denied a media report that said unexploded cluster munitions have been found in North. The Army noted that the military had not used cluster bombs and that cluster munitions have not been found in the North as reported by a foreign news agency quoting an UN official and called for evidence on the report that has claimed cluster munitions have been found.¹¹

In another development, according to reports, the recently released results of the 2012 Change Readiness Index have ranked Sri Lanka at the 22nd place among 60 developing and emerging world economies and first among South Asian countries. The survey conducted by the KPMG International, in collaboration with researchers from the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) has assessed the level of change readiness across 60 countries with a focus on developing and emerging markets. India has ranked 23th place, Bangladesh at 45th place, Nepal at 50th, and Pakistan at 54th place.¹²

⁷ "President arrives in Seoul", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, April 23, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201204/20120423president_arrives_in_seoul.htm.

⁸ "SL, Korea sign three agreements", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, April 24, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201204/20120424sl_korea_sign_three_agreements.htm

⁹ "SL Navy to take part in joint sea exercise", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, April 23, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201204/20120423sl_navy_to_take_part_in_joint_sea_exercise.htm.

¹⁰ "Sri Lanka and Israel conduct bilateral consultations", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, April 23, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201204/20120423sl_israel_conduct_bilateral_consultations.htm.

¹¹ "Army denies cluster bombs allegations", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, April 28, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201204/20120428army_denies_cluster_bombs_allegations.htm.

¹² "Sri Lanka ranks first among SA countries on Change Readiness index", *Government of Sri Lanka website*, April 29, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201204/20120429sri_lanka_ranks_first_among_sa_countries_on.htm.

In other developments, reports noted that the government of India has taken action to initiate a programme to rehabilitate war widows in the Eastern Province.¹³

Maldives

- **Members of the visiting European Parliamentary delegation pays a courtesy call on President; Rear Admiral Ruwan Dias, Director General of Sri Lanka Coast Guard made a courtesy call on President; Cuban Ambassador Mrs Nirisia Castro Guevara pays a courtesy call on President**

Reports noted that members of the visiting European Parliamentary delegation have paid a courtesy call on President Dr Mohamed Waheed on April 29, 2012 at the President's office. At the meeting, the President said that the Maldivian government greatly valued the close relationship established between the Maldives and the EU. The President also updated the delegation on the measures taken by the government in stabilising the political situation in the country, following the transition of power on February 7, 2012. He also assured that the Maldives was safe for tourists visiting the country. Further, President Waheed spoke on the government's policies in continuing the welfare programmes initiated by the former government. The European Parliamentary delegation congratulated the President on the recent by-elections held in the country being free and fair, and being accepted by the general public.¹⁴

In other developments, Rear Admiral Ruwan Dias, Director General of Sri Lanka Coast Guard made a courtesy call on President Dr Mohamed Waheed on April 26, 2012. The meeting was held this morning at the President's Office.¹⁵ President Dr Mohamed Waheed also met with the Director General of Indian Coast Guard Vice Admiral M.P. Muralidharan. Discussions at the meeting were focused on strengthening the mutual cooperation between the Coast Guards of the two countries.¹⁶ Also, Cuban Ambassador Mrs Nirisia Castro Guevara has paid a courtesy call on President Dr Mohamed Waheed. The meeting was held at the President's Office on April 25, 2012.¹⁷

¹³ "India to rehabilitate Tamil war widows", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, April 24, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201204/20120424india_rehabilitate_tamil_war_widows.htm.

¹⁴ "European Parliamentary delegation call on the President", *President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, April 29, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7281>.

¹⁵ "Director General of Sri Lanka Coast Guard pays a courtesy call on the President", *President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, April 26, 2012, <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7270>.

¹⁶ "Director General of Indian Coast Guard pays a courtesy call on the President", *President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, April 24, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7255>.

¹⁷ "Cuban Ambassador makes a courtesy call on the President", *President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, April 25, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7262>.

B. East Asia

South East Asia

- **Laos resumes dam construction; Indonesia summons Malaysian Ambassador on migrant killings; Prominent Cambodian environment activist shot dead; Thousands of Demonstrators Staged Protest in Malaysia; EU Suspends Some Sanction on Myanmar; UN Secretary General Visits Myanmar**

In Laos, reports noted that construction has resumed on a controversial dam on the lower Mekong River, despite an agreement amongst Mekong countries to suspend dam projects pending further study. It's been reported that a Thai company signed a US \$ 1.7 billion deal to construct a hydropower dam in northern Laos.¹⁸

Indonesia, on April 24, 2012, summoned the Malaysian ambassador to explain why three Indonesian migrant workers were shot and killed by the Malaysian police and unconfirmed reports the deceased's organs were harvested. "We want them to come as soon as possible and bring along the clarification [from Malaysia]," said Tatang Razak, the Indonesian Foreign Affairs Ministry's director for the protection of Indonesian citizens overseas. He also said the ministry was coordinating with police in Lombok to conduct autopsies to verify reports organs had been harvested from the three dead men. The Indonesian government is demanding that Malaysia release the autopsy results and chronology of the deaths of workers.¹⁹

According to reports, prominent Cambodian environment activist Chut Wutty was shot dead along with a military police officer on April 26, 2012, in Cambodia's south-western province of Koh Kong. Other military personnel were apparently present during the shootings. Two women journalists from the Cambodian Daily newspaper - Cambodian Phorn Bopha and Canadian Olesia Plokhii - were with Wutty when he was shot. Both were initially detained, but have since been released. Wutty was the Director of the Natural Resource Protection Group (NRPG), a Cambodian NGO that campaigns against the destruction of the country's forests.²⁰

Reports noted that to curb a massive street protest held on April 28, 2012, the Malaysian police unleashed tear gas and chemical-laced water at thousands of demonstrators demanding fair rules for national elections expected soon. At least 25,000 demonstrators swamped Malaysia's largest city, hoping to pressure Prime Minister Najib Razak's ruling coalition - which has held power for

¹⁸ 'Laos resumes construction of controversial Xayaburi dam', *Radio Australia*, April 23, 2012, <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/radio/program/asia-pacific/laos-resumes-construction-of-controversial-xayaburi-dam/932204>

¹⁹ 'Indonesia summons Malaysia Ambassador over migrant worker killings', *The Jakarta Globe*, April 24, 2012, <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/seasia/indonesia-summons-malaysia-ambassador-over-migrant-worker-killings/513574>

²⁰ 'Prominent Cambodian environment activist shot dead', *RTT News*, April 27, 2012, http://www.rttnews.com/1870530/prominent-cambodian-environment-activist-shot-dead.aspx?type=gn&utm_source=google&utm_campaign=sitemap

nearly 55 years - to overhaul electoral policies before polls that could be held in June. Authorities insist the elections will be free and fair, rejecting activists' claims that the Election Commission is biased.²¹

According to reports, Myanmar's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and elected members of her party on April 21, 2012, announced they will postpone attending parliament until changes are made to the swearing-in oath to the country's pro-military constitution. NLD leader Suu Kyi and 36 other members of Myanmar's main opposition party who won seats in the April 1 by-elections were initially scheduled to be sworn in to Parliament in the capital Naypyitaw, 350 kilometres north of Yangon, on April 23, 2012.²²

Reports noted that European Union foreign ministers on April 23, 2012, agreed to suspend most sanctions on Myanmar in response to political reforms there, but continued to press for vigilance over the pace of change in the former military state even while opening the door to a potential surge in investment. The EU also plans to open a trade office in Yangon, Myanmar's commercial capital. Member states said they backed restoring Myanmar "as soon as possible" to the Generalized System of Preferences, which gives low-income nations better access to EU markets—a move likely to happen once an International Labor Organization report presents a paper on allegations of forced labor in Myanmar.²³

In other developments, according to reports, on April 30, 2012, the UN chief Ban Ki-moon held landmark talks with Myanmar's President. During his three-day visit, Ban Ki-Moon is expected to urge further steps towards democracy and appeal for unfettered humanitarian access to tens of thousands of refugees who have fled ethnic conflict. Ban is also due to meet opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi on what is his first trip to the country since decades of military rule ended in 2011.²⁴

Japan

- **Japan to resume yen loans to Myanmar to accelerate its democratic reforms; Japan to offer 1.5 billion yen aid to Cambodia**

Reports noted that during his recent meeting with visiting Myanmar President Thein Sein, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda has expressed Japan's plan to resume its yen loans to Myanmar after 25 years to promote democratic reforms. The yen loans to Myanmar were suspended by Japan in 1987, a year ahead of the military coup that crushed democratic uprising in Myanmar.

²¹ '25k rally in Malaysia, police fire tear gas', *Hindustan Times*, April 28, 2012, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/RestOfAsia/25k-rally-in-Malaysia-police-fire-tear-gas/Article1-847796.aspx>

²² 'Myanmar's Suu Kyi to boycott Parliament opening over oath dispute', *The Hindu*, April 22, 2012, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article3342175.ece>

²³ 'EU suspends sanctions on Myanmar', *The Wall Street Journal*, April 24, 2012, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303459004577360874233371832.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

²⁴ 'Ban meets Myanmar leader to encourage reforms', *Hindustan Times*, April 30, 2012, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/Myanmar/Ban-meets-Myanmar-leader-to-encourage-reforms/Article1-848290.aspx>

Noda also agreed to forgive 303.5 billion yen of Myanmar's debt and overdue charges. Japan is the first country to announce plans to forgive Myanmar's debts. It is also the largest yen loan to be forgiven by Tokyo.²⁵

In another development, according to reports, during Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen's visit to Tokyo, Japanese PM Noda has assured his counterpart to provide with 1.51 billion yen with a view to help Cambodia recover from damage caused by last year's flood. The aid would help Cambodia to finance projects as road and drainage repairs.²⁶

North Korea

- **North Korea Vice Marshal Ri Young: North Korea is armed with "powerful modern weapons" capable of defeating the US; UN Chief warns Pyongyang from taking "further provocative measures"; China pushes for strengthening its ties with North Korea**

According to reports, during a closed meeting recently held in Pyongyang on April 25, 2012 to make the 80th anniversary of the founding of the North Korean army, Vice Marshall Ri Yong, chief of the army's general staff, stated that Pyongyang is armed with "powerful modern weapons" which was capable of defeating imperialist powers like the US at a 'single blow.' While calling the North as a nuclear and military power, Ri emphasized on the importance of strengthening its military capabilities further to deal with threats from the US as well as South Korea.²⁷

In another development, according to reports, while reacting to North Korean military's threat to take 'special actions' that would reduce South Korean government to ashes within minutes, UN General Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who previously served as Foreign Minister of South Korea, warned the North against "further provocative measures." Ban also urged Pyongyang to fully observe UN Security Council Resolution on North Korean nuclear and missile tests.²⁸ It is worth noting that last week, while alleging South Korean President Lee Myung-bak of insulting the birth centennial of Kim Il Sung, national founder of North Korea, Pyongyang renewed its age old promise to wage a 'sacred war' against Seoul.²⁹

In other developments, according to reports, Beijing has expressed its willingness to strengthen its ties with Pyongyang. Chinese President Hu Jintao, during his recent meeting with Kim Jong Il, North Korea's Workers' Party international relations chief, Hu sent his congratulations to newly appointed North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as he assumed the title of Workers' Party first

²⁵ "Japan giving Myanmar push/ Loan resumption, debt forgiveness aimed at supporting democracy", The Yomiuri Shimbun, April 23, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120422002427.htm>

²⁶ "Japan to give 1.5 bil. Yen aid to flood-hit Cambodia", Yomiuri Shimbun, April 23, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120422002345.htm>

²⁷ "Military says North Korea has powerful modern weapons.", Mainichi Daily, April 25, 2012, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120425p2g00m0in060000c.html>

²⁸ "UN chief warns North Korea against" April 24, 2012, Mainichi Daily, <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120424p2g00m0in020000c.html>

²⁹ "North Korea military warns of 'special action' soon", April 23, 2012, Mainichi Daily, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120423p2g00m0in083000c.html>

secretary. According to Hu, strengthening of ties with Pyongyang was a key priority for Chinese communists. In response to Hu's remark, the North Korean leader reportedly stated that "It is the steadfast stand of our party and government to invariably develop the traditional DPRK-China friendship provided and cultivated by the leaders of elder generations of the two countries."³⁰

II. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Home Secretary postpones Jammu and Kashmir visit**

Reports noted that the proposed visit of Union Home Secretary R K Singh to two cross-LoC trade points at Uri in district Baramulla and Chakan-da-Bagh in Poonch on April 25-26, 2012 has been postponed and fresh dates would be announced soon. During his visit to both the places, Singh was expected to assess facilities required for facilitating cross-LoC trade at Salamabad and Chakan-da-Bagh. The cross-LoC trading days on both the routes had recently been increased from twice a week to four days a week.³¹

North East India

- **Chief Minister of Assam: Maoist menace will grow if not checked; Vehicles burnt down in Shillong; NSCN returns seized weapons; GNLA triggers IED blast**

According to reports, Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi, on April 23, 2012, admitted that Maoist outfits have made some headway in the state and sought the Centre's economic and technical assistance to wean away youths. Addressing a press conference Gogoi said he had apprised Prime Minister Manmohan Singh about the issue during the latter's trip to Guwahati on April 20, 2012. The Maoist have made some headway and got in touch with some local organisations. They will grow take preventive steps are not taken. The Centre had recently raised an alert about growing Maoist presence in some parts of the state, mainly in the upper Assam districts of Jorhat, Sibsagar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Dhemaji and Lakhimpur.³²

Meanwhile, according to reports, Meghalaya State capital Shillong was hit by a series of petrol bomb attacks with the police saying the attacks were pre-mediated. Nobody, however, was injured in the attacks. A Government vehicle belonging to the Sports and Youth Affairs department was torched by miscreants at Mawkhar. Some time later, motorcycle-borne miscreants lobbed a petrol bomb on a truck near Food Corporation of India godown at Lum Jingshai. Miscreants also lobbed

³⁰ "China,North Korea reaffirm ties after rocket test", Mainichi Daily, April 24, 2012, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120424p2g00m0in016000c.html>

³¹ "Home Secy defers JK visit", *Greater Kashmir*, April 24, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Apr/25/home-secy-defers-jk-visit-46.asp>

³² "Maoist menace will grow if not checked: CM", *The Assam Tribune*, April 23, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=apr2412/at06>

a petrol bomb at the Narsingh Akhara Ashram near Garikhana around the same time. One person has been detained in connection with the attack on the Ashram. Twenty KSU activists were arrested in connection with the arson, the police said.³³

Reports noted that bringing an end to the stalemate of the last few days, the NSCN-IM returned the seized arms and ammunition of the 29 Assam Rifles. The move came following a mutual agreement arrived at in a between the group and Ceasefire Monitoring Group (CFMG) chairman Maj Gen (Retd) N George at Chumukedima. The arms and ammunition and other seized articles were handed over to the Police at Camp Hebron who in turn handed them over to the Assam Rifles after completion of necessary procedures at Manglumukh village, few kms away from the outfit's headquarter.³⁴

In other developments, according to reports, suspected GNLA militants triggered an IED blast in Chokpot area of South Garo Hills following which a heavy gun battle took place there. A platoon of armed police personnel from the State battalion was returning to Tura when militants hiding in the thick jungles triggered the blast which very narrowly missed them. However, a local woman, who was passing through the area, suffered shock from the explosion.³⁵

III. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **UN Secretary-General visits India; UN Security Council calls for ceasefire between Sudan and South Sudan; UNSC stresses on speedier deployment of UN Military observers in Syria; UNSC condemns attacks against peacekeepers in West Darfur; Indian Supreme Court judge elected to ICJ; UNSC commends Timor-Leste elections; UNSC extends sanctions on Ivory Coast**

The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon was on a three-day visit to India when he interacted with senior political leadership in Delhi and business leaders in Mumbai. Among other issues discussed, Mr. Ban Ki-moon welcomed the improving ties between India and Pakistan, wanted India to comply with the UNSC resolution 1887 but refrained from commenting on the expansion of the Security Council.³⁶ Mr. Ban also expected India to play a greater role in world affairs and lead by example in helping countries in the Arab world achieve democratic stability.³⁷

³³ "Vehicles torched in Shillong", *The Assam Tribune*, April 23, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=apr2412/oth06>

³⁴ "NSCN returns seized weapons", *The Assam Tribune*, April 25, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=apr2612/oth06>

³⁵ "GNLA triggers IED blast in Chokpot", *The Assam Tribune*, April 26, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=apr2712/oth05>

³⁶ "Ban Ki-moon refrains from commenting on expansion of UN Security Council", *The Hindu*, April 28, 2012 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article3361540.ece>

³⁷ "UN chief wants India to play a greater role in world affairs", *The Indian Express*, April 25, 2012 at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/un-chief-wants-india-to-play-greater-role-in-world-affairs/941341/0>

In Another development, members of the Security Council urged an immediate ceasefire and a return to negotiations for Sudan and South Sudan. The Council also demanded an immediate halt to aerial bombardment by the Sudanese Armed Forces and voices concern over the damage to Heglig's oil infrastructure.³⁸ Meanwhile, the Council expressed skepticism of the Syrian government's intentions and stressed on the need for a quicker deployment of UN military observers to Syria.³⁹

According to reports, the UNSC strongly condemned the attack on African Union-UN peacekeepers in West Darfur Sudan. Council members also called on the Government of Sudan to bring the perpetrators to justice and demanded an end to impunity for those who attack peacekeepers.⁴⁰ In a simultaneous polling for a seat on the International Court of Justice in the UN General Assembly and the Security Council, India's Supreme Court judge, Dalveer Bhandari was elected to serve on the ICJ.⁴¹

In the interim, the UNSC welcomed the second round of presidential elections in Timor-Leste and called it 'an important milestone for the consolidation of peace and stability' in the country. The members also commended the support provided by the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) during the election process.⁴²

Meanwhile, the UNSC extended the sanctions imposed on Cote d'Ivoire for another year till April 30, 2012. However, the Council adjusted the arms embargo in light of the need for weapons and ammunition to train and equip the country's security forces. The sanctions also include ban on rough diamonds and targeted measures on a individuals including former president Laurent Gbagbo.⁴³

In other developments, the guilty verdict handed down against former Liberian President Charles Taylor for war crimes and crimes against humanity by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone was welcomed by the Security Council. Mr. Taylor is the first former head of State to be convicted by an international criminal tribunal since the Nuremberg trials in 1946.⁴⁴

³⁸ "Security Council urges immediate ceasefire between Sudan and South Sudan", *UN News Centre*, April 24, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41851&Cr=sudan&Cr1=>

³⁹ "Syria: Security Council urges rapid deployment of military observers", *UN News Centre*, April 24, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41856&Cr=syria&Cr1=>

⁴⁰ "Security Council condemns 'in strongest terms' attack on peacekeepers in Darfur", *UN News Centre*, April 24, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41857&Cr=darfur&Cr1=>

⁴¹ "Indian judge elected to serve on UN International Court of Justice", *UN News Centre*, April 27, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41881&Cr=court+of+justice&Cr1=>

⁴² "Elections in Timor-Leste a milestone for peace consolidation, says Security Council", *UN News Centre*, April 26, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41867&Cr=Timor-Leste&Cr1=>

⁴³ "Security Council extends sanctions on Cote d'Ivoire for another year", *UN News Centre*, April 26, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41869&Cr=ivoire&Cr1=>

⁴⁴ "Security Council welcomes conviction in war crimes trial of Charles Taylor", *UN News Centre*, April 27, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41883&Cr=charles+taylor&Cr1=>