

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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CONTENTS

In This Issue	Page
I. COUNTRY REVIEWS	
A. South Asia	2-6
B. East Asia	6-9
C. Central Asia & Russia	9-12
II. DEFENCE REVIEW	12-13
III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW	13-15
IV. UN REVIEW	16

I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

- **Afghan Foreign Minister visits India; Obama pays surprise visit to Afghanistan, signs strategic partnership agreement with Afghanistan**

According to reports, Afghanistan's foreign minister Zalmai Rassoul arrived in New Delhi on May 1, 2012 to meet senior government ministers, months after his country signed a strategic pact with India. He met with his Indian counterpart S M Krishna. The two leaders are leading the first session of an India-Afghanistan council set up under the strategic pact signed in October, 2011. It would be worth noting that this strategic partnership agreement was Afghanistan's first with any country and outlined areas of common concern including trade, economic expansion, education, security and politics.¹

In another significant development, US President Barack Obama arrived in Afghanistan on May 1, 2012 on a surprise visit a year after American elite Navy Seals killed Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden in a raid inside Pakistan.² President Barack Obama signed the strategic partnership agreement with his Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai in the wee hours of May 2, 2012 shortly after he arrived in the Afghan capital Kabul for a surprise visit. US Ambassador to Afghanistan Royce Crocker, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) commander Gen. Johan Allen, National Directorate of Security (NDS) chief Rahmatullah Nabil, National Advisor on Security Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanta and other high-level officials from both sides attended the landmark signing ceremony.³

Pakistan

- **Pakistan Foreign Office: Pakistan had been sincerely working with the US at several levels to resolve all issues, including finding an alternative to drone attacks**

According to reports, Pakistan on May 3, 2012 said that it had been sincerely working with the United States at several levels to resolve all issues, including finding an alternative to drone attacks, because both countries were partner in the war on terror. Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Moazzam Ahmad Khan stated, "There is need to resolve all issues with the US." At his weekly media briefing, he said Pakistan had a clear stand on drone attacks and considered

¹ Afghan Foreign Minister in India to boost ties, *Dawn*, May 5, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/05/01/afghan-foreign-minister-in-india-to-boost-ties-fm/>

² Obama arrives in Afghanistan on surprise visit to sign pullout deal, *Dawn*, May 5, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/05/02/obama-arrives-in-afghanistan-on-surprise-to-sign-pullout-deal/>

³ "Obama, Karzai ink long-awaited strategic deal", *The Nation*, May 02, 2012 at <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/international/02-May-2012/obama-karzai-ink-long-awaited-strategic-deal>

them as illegal, violation of Pakistan's territorial sovereignty and counter-productive. He said Pakistan was interested in finding an alternative to drone attacks.⁴

Bangladesh

- **US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visits Bangladesh; Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee visits Bangladesh; Foreign Minister Dipu Moni visits New Delhi; Sheikh Hasina for strengthening cooperation between the trade bodies of Bangladesh and Russia for boosting bilateral trade and commerce; Second border haat opens; Report: Inward Remittances to Bangladesh fell**

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton came to Bangladesh on May 5, 2012 on two days official visit. Bilateral meeting was held between Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Hillary Clinton at the PMO. During the discussion Secretary Clinton urged all political actors in Bangladesh to settle their differences through dialogue and plan for holding the next general election in a free, fair and credible manner. She expressed concern about the disappearance of BNP leader Ilias Ali and the killing of a labour leader, and called for thorough and independent probe into the incidents. On the Grameen Bank issue, Hillary said the Bangladesh government should allow the organisation to operate freely. On Bangladesh-US security dialogue held last month in Dhaka, she said both the sides had very positive discussions on bilateral defence cooperation and shared the values of peace and stability in the region. Dipu Moni said at the joint press briefing that Bangladesh sought duty free and quota free access of its products to the US market and extension of the GSP facilities. Later both the countries signed the "Joint Declaration on Bangladesh-US Dialogue on Partnership" to hold annual dialogue on bilateral relations and priorities in Dhaka and Washington DC by turns.⁵

Secretary Clinton later paid a courtesy call on PM Hasina at the Prime Minister's Office. During the meeting, the two leaders discussed various issues of bilateral interests including US investment in Bangladesh.⁶

In another Indian development, India's Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee went to Bangladesh on May 6, 2012 on two days visit to attend the closing ceremony of the joint celebration programme marking the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. During his visit, he called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and several other government leaders. The Indian minister also paid a courtesy call on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office.⁷

⁴ Pakistan and US trying to resolve all issues: FO, *Dawn*, May 4, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/05/04/pakistan-and-us-trying-to-resolve-all-issues-fo/>

⁵ "Hillary spurs political actors to sort out differences for democracy, slates disappearances, hartal; annual US-Bangladesh talks pledged", *The Daily Star*, May 6, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=232912>.

⁶ "Zero tolerance for terrorism: Hasina assures Hillary", *The Daily Star*, May 6, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=232915>.

⁷ "Pranab flies in", *The Daily Star*, May 6, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=232937>.

Later, according to reports, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni flew to New Delhi on May 6, 2012 to co-chair the maiden Joint Consultative Commission meeting on May 7, in which the issues of Teesta water-sharing, extradition and implementation of land boundary accord are expected to be discussed.⁸

According to reports, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina underscored the need for strengthening cooperation between the trade bodies of Bangladesh and Russia for boosting bilateral trade and commerce. She expressed this view when Russian Ambassador to Bangladesh Alexander A Nikolaeb called on her at her office on May 3, 2012.⁹

In other developments, according to reports, the second border haat (weekly market) at Dolura in Sunamganj district opened on May 1, 2012. Set on the zero line along the north-eastern state of Meghalaya in India, the haat occupies an area of 70-square metres and is expected to serve the villagers living inside five-kilometre radius on both sides of the border. Items like fish, chicken, chanachur, juice, betel leaf and betel nuts, and bamboo-made materials will be traded here. A buyer would be able to shop here worth up to \$ 50 on each market day.¹⁰

Reports noted that Inward remittances to Bangladesh fell 2.43 percent to \$1.08 billion in March, 2012 compared to a month ago, but the overall growth in the first ten months of the current fiscal year reached near 11 percent. During the period, more than \$1 billion was remitted from abroad by Bangladeshi migrant workers every month, except September and November, according to data from the central bank. In March, 2012, remittances stood at \$1.1 billion.¹¹

Sri Lanka

- **50 Indian companies have participated in 'India Investrade 2012; All-women delegation from the ASSOCHAM is visiting Sri Lanka; RCCI signs an MoU with the CCC; A high ranking U.S. official visits Sri Lanka; CCC signs a co-operation agreement with the Chamber for Promotion and Economic Development of the BRICS Countries**

According to reports, as many as 50 Indian companies have participated in 'India Investrade 2012: An exposition and Buyer Seller Meet on Realty Construction & Construction Materials' held at the BMICH in Colombo from 26-28 April, 2012. Minister of Economic Development Basil Rajapaksa was the chief guest at the inaugural programme of the exhibition along with the High Commissioner of India Ashok K. Kantha. This three day event was organized by the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Kolkata with the support of Indian Ministry of Commerce & Industry, and in association with Sri Lanka Ministry of Construction, Engineering Services, Housing and

⁸ "FM goes to Delhi tonight: JCC meeting tomorrow", *The Daily Star*, May 6, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=232935>

⁹ "PM urges Russia to expand trade", *The Daily Star*, May 4, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=232716>.

¹⁰ "2nd border haat opens today", *The Daily Star*, May 1, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=232380>.

¹¹ "Remittance inflow slows a bit", *The Daily Star*, May 4, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=232619>.

Common Amenities, Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka (FCCISL) and the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka (NCCSL).¹²

In another development, according to reports, an all-women delegation from the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) comprising of 15 women entrepreneurs from Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkatta is visiting Sri Lanka from 3 - 8 May, 2012, under the aegis of the SAARC Women's Initiative for Peace and Prosperity (SWIPP).¹³

Reports noted that Pakistan's Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) signed a Memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC) of Sri Lanka to encourage mutual understanding and promote business and friendly relations between the industrial, trade and business communities of Pakistan and Sri Lanka.¹⁴

According to reports, a high ranking U.S. official, Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) of State for Plans, Programs and Operations Walter D. Givhan visited Sri Lanka from April 26 to May 2, 2012. DAS Givhan, who serves in the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Political-Military Affairs and is responsible for providing executive leadership, management, and guidance for U.S. government global security assistance programs and policies, held meetings in Colombo and visited Kilinochchi and Vavuniya.¹⁵

In other developments, reports noted that the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC) has signed a co-operation agreement with the Chamber for Promotion and Economic Development of the BRICS Countries called "BRICS-PED" recently and the initiative "CCC - BRICS-PED Business Co-operation Project" was implemented on May 1st. The special agreement will initially promote an identified range of products and services between Sri Lanka and BRICS Countries and facilitate alliances on reciprocal basis.¹⁶

Maldives

- **Acting British High Commissioner meets President Waheed; President Waheed: Consequences of environmental neglect are not debatable anymore; Ambassador of Iran accredited to the Maldives meets President**

Reports noted that, Acting British High Commissioner Mr Robbie Bulloch paid a courtesy call on

¹² "Fifty Indian companies participate in Investrade 2012 realty conference", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, April 30, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201204/20120430fifty_indian_companies_participate_investrade_2012.htm.

¹³ "All-women business delegation from India to visit Sri Lanka", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, May 3, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201205/20120503all_women_business_delegation_india_visit_sl.htm.

¹⁴ "SL- Pakistan sign MoU for promotion of bilateral trade", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, May 2, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201205/20120502sl_pakistan_sign_mou_promotion_bilateral_trade.htm.

¹⁵ "High ranking U.S. official in Sri Lanka to assist demining", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, May 4, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201205/20120504high_ranking_us_official_sl.htm

¹⁶ "Sri Lanka and BRICS sign co-operation agreement", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, May 4, 2012 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201205/20120504sl_brics_sign_co_operation_agreement.htm

President Dr Mohamed Waheed on May 3, 2012. During the meeting, President Dr Waheed spoke on events which lead to the transition of power on 7 February and also highlighted work done by the government to resolve the political challenges faced following the transition of power.¹⁷

In another development, President Dr Mohamed Waheed has said that the toll on the global environment, from unsustainable policies and actions is very evident, and that the consequences of environmental neglect are at a point that it is not debatable anymore. The President made this remark while delivering his keynote address at the opening ceremony of the CANSO Asia-Pacific Conference 2012 held on May 2, 2012 at Kurumba Maldives.¹⁸

In other developments, reports noted that Ambassador of Iran accredited to the Maldives, Mohammed Nabi Hassani-Pour, paid a courtesy call on President Dr Mohamed Waheed on April 30, 2012. The meeting was held at the President's Office. At the meeting, discussions were held on the close bilateral relations between the two countries, and ways to further strengthen the mutual cooperation.¹⁹

B. East Asia

China

- **SCO FM meeting to be held in Beijing; China, ROK envoys meet on Peninsula issues; Beijing vows to resolve fishing boat clash; China calls for more energy co-op with Europe; China urges India to maintain peace on border; Iran's top security official visits China; Expert: China-US S&ED Dialogue productive**

According to a US Treasury official, the fourth-round China-US Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED) has yielded "encouraging progress" on an array of economic fronts, a US Treasury official said on Tuesday.

Markets of China and other emerging economies play a big role in US and global recovery, as the United States is reorienting its growth strategy to focus on exports and competitiveness and European demand is expected to remain weak for some time, said US Under Secretary of the Treasury Lael Brainard.

Since early 2009, US exports to China have more than doubled and now exceed 130 billion US dollars a year, she noted in a speech to the Washington International Trade Association.

According to reports, the Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi will be hosting the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of SCO on May 11, 2012 in Beijing.²⁰

¹⁷ "Acting British High Commissioner calls on the President", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 3, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7304>

¹⁸ "Consequences of environmental neglect are not debatable anymore" – President Waheed, *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 2, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7292>

¹⁹ "Iranian Ambassador calls on the President", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, April 30, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7290>.

²⁰ "SCO FM meeting to be held in Beijing" *China Daily*, May 4, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/04/content_15214117.htm

Reports noted that representatives of China and Republic of Korea will be meeting in Beijing on May 10, 2012 to discuss issues related to six-party talks.²¹ Meanwhile, Beijing has announced that it is willing to work with Seoul to properly handle the clash between the Chinese fishing boat and ROK's Coast Guard.²²

After his successful European visit, the Chinese Vice-Premier Li Keqiang has asserted for more energy cooperation between China and the European Union.²³

In another announcement Beijing has expressed hope that China and India will continue to make joint efforts to maintain peace and stability in the border regions.²⁴

In other developments, according to reports, the Deputy Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Baqeri paid a visit to China.²⁵

Meanwhile, an expert has stated that the fourth round of China-US Strategic and Economic Dialogue was "productive" and made progress in a number of areas.²⁶

Japan

- **Japanese Prime Minister returns from four-day long US visit; Japan closes down the last of the active nuclear reactor for maintenance purposes**

Reports noted that Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, on May 3, 2012, returned from his four-day long US visit. Noda was the first Japanese Prime Minister to pay an official visit to Washington since the current ruling party-Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) came to power in September 2009. After returning, Noda termed his visit as "very productive."²⁷ During his visit, both Japan and the US emphasized on strengthening their bilateral ties in various aspects, including security, economic and energy fields. The joint statement "A Shared Vision for the Future" reflected Obama administration's increasing focus on expanding its engagement in Asia, as it stated that both the allies "are working with partners in the [Asia Pacific] region to strengthen institutions and foster networks that are open, inclusive and support internationally accepted

²¹ "China, ROK envoys meet on Peninsula issues" *China Daily*, May 4, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/04/content_15214084.htm

²² "Beijing vows to resolve fishing boat clash" *China Daily*, May 4, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/04/content_15205565.htm

²³ "China calls for more energy co-op with Europe" *China Daily*, May 4, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/04/content_15213900.htm

²⁴ "China urges India to maintain peace on border" *China Daily*, May 3, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/03/content_15203663.htm

²⁵ "Iran's top security official visits China" *China Daily*, May 2, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/02/content_15185712.htm

²⁶ "China-US S&ED Dialogue productive: expert" *China Daily*, May 5, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/05/content_15216661.htm

²⁷ "Noda returns from 'productive' US visit", *Yomiuri Daily*, May 3, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120502005575.htm>

rules and norms.”²⁸ An appendix to the joint statement insisted on forging Japan-US “dynamic defense cooperation” including joint training, surveillance and reconnaissance activities, and the shared utilization of facilities between Japanese Self Defense Force (SDF) and the US forces.²⁹

In another development, according to reports, Japan has recently closed down the last of the active nuclear reactors for the maintenance purposes. After 1970, this is the first time Japan has halted all its nuclear reactors. It is a historic decision considering that nuclear power has been a key source of energy for Japan and about 30% of Japan’s energy needs are generated by nuclear energy. Tokyo has decided to close down the nuclear reactors in the country due to concerns over the safety of the nuclear plants in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear crisis last year.³⁰

South Korea

● South Korea to strengthen its ties with Myanmar

According to reports, during South Korean Foreign Minister Kim Sung-hwan’s recent two-day visit to Myanmar, the two countries tried to explore new fronts in their bilateral ties. Kim is the first Korean diplomat to visit Myanmar in 27 years. South Korea, just like other global powers, is seeking to tap Myanmar’s huge resource reserves and growth potential, as the former pariah state is trying to bring about heavy reforms within the country and transform itself into a new regional growth center. At present South Korea seems to be primarily interested in diversifying its economic cooperation with Myanmar through business deals, development aids and personnel exchanges. Seoul is also trying to seek supply of energy and fuel sources beyond the volatile Middle East.³¹

North Korea

● North Korea reiterates the legitimacy of its nuclear and missile development programme; The US denies detection of any sign regarding North Korea’s readiness to conduct another nuclear test soon

According to reports, despite the UN Security Council’s recent joint statement demanding North Korea to refrain from conducting a third nuclear test (after similar tests in 2006 and 2009), Pyongyang has reiterated the legitimacy of its nuclear and missile development programme. While alleging that the joint statement is a “grave illegal action” of violating the sovereignty of the North and its right to use space and nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, Pyongyang has pledged to protect

²⁸ “Noda, Obama discuss defense relationship/Leaders pledge to strengthen alliance in areas of security and trade to cope with growth of China”, Yomiuri Daily, May 2, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120501005071.htm>

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ “Last N-reactor goes offline in Hokkaido”, Yomiuri Daily, May 6, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120505002979.htm>

³¹ “Seoul explores new fronts in Myanmar ties”, Korea Herald, May 3, 2012, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20120503001274>

³² “N. Korea stresses legitimacy of nuclear, missile development”, Mainichi Daily, May 6, 2012, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120506p2g00m0in056000c.html>

firmly its sovereignty and dynamically push forward the development of space for peaceful purposes and the industry of nuclear energy.³²

Meanwhile, the US state department has recently stated that so far, it has not found any sign indicating North Korea's possible intention to conduct a nuclear test soon. While hinting that Pyongyang's intention to conduct such test might be a rumour, Mark Toner, Deputy spokesman for the State Department stated that the North Korean leadership should refrain from conducting such test, as this would further isolate the state from the rest of the world.³³

C. Central Asia & Russia

Central Asia

- **Kyrgyzstan to send eight peacekeepers to Syria; Kazakhstan, Ukraine sign \$150M deal to produce armoured vehicles; Kazakhstan to provide Japan with nuclear fuel elements; Japan to set up rare earth joint venture in Kazakhstan; Malaysia offers 1,000 jobs for Kyrgyz residents; Turkey to provide assistance to Kyrgyzstan to develop its agriculture; China to finance refinery in Kyrgyzstan; Russia conducts war games in the mountainous region of Tajikistan; Tajikistan to restore electricity supply to Afghanistan; Tajikistan and Afghanistan border guards train to detect forged documents**

According to reports, Kyrgyzstan will send eight peacekeepers to Syria as part of the Kofi Annan six-point plan to quell the violence in the Middle Eastern state, which includes allowing UN peacekeepers into the country as well as a ceasefire by both sides.³⁴

Reports noted that Kazakhstan and Ukraine have signed a \$150 million agreement to jointly produce 100 armoured vehicles by next year.³⁵

In another development, Kazakhstan's uranium producer Kazatomprom will provide Japan with nuclear fuel elements next year. The plant will produce tablets and powders for nuclear power.³⁶

Reports noted that Japan plans to jointly establish a rare earth metal extraction venture in Kazakhstan with the aim of reducing China's dominance over supplies essential to Japanese industries.³⁷

³³ "No clear sign of N. Korea's nuke test: state Dept", Korea Herald, May 4, 2012, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20120504000286>

³⁴ "Kyrgyzstan to send eight peacekeepers to Syria", Central Asia Newswire, May 4, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=11943>

³⁵ "Kazakhstan, Ukraine sign \$150M deal to produce armored vehicles", Central Asia Newswire, May 3, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=11941>

³⁶ "Kazakhstan to provide Japan with nuclear fuel elements", Central Asia Newswire, May 3, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=11942>

³⁷ "Japan to set up rare earth joint venture in Kazakhstan", Central Asia Newswire, April 30, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=11907>

According to Kyrgyz ambassador to Malaysia, Malaysia has agreed to provide up to 1,000 job placements for Kyrgyz citizens in Malaysia's banking and tourism industries as part of a labour quota.³⁸

According to reports, Turkey has pledged to continue to assist Kyrgyzstan's efforts in expanding its agriculture industry. This includes building a high-tech animal husbandry centre in the northern Chui province to improve cattle breeds in the country. The genetics centre will combine the efforts of Kyrgyz entrepreneurs with businessmen from Turkey and Germany.³⁹

In other developments, according to reports, Chinese investors have agreed to build a US\$ 50 million refinery in the northern Kyrgyz province of Chui. The annual processing capacity of the plant is expected to be 500 tons per year and construction is expected to start in the second quarter of 2012.⁴⁰

Russia's 201st military division is conducting war games in the mountains of southwest Tajikistan. Next month, the member states of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) will hold military drills in Tajikistan.⁴¹

Tajikistan is expected to resume electricity delivery to Afghanistan which was disrupted due to bad weather conditions. It supplies 230 MW of electricity to the country.⁴²

As part of a project by Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Tajik and Afghan border guards have undergone training to detect forged documents. Reports noted that this should help in combating large scale illegal migration through the porous borders of the two countries.⁴³

Russia

- **Russia to prevent a global strategic imbalance which can happen if a missile defence is introduced; Russia not considering pulling out of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty; Egypt's new Parliament ready to establish direct contact with Russia; Russia not to deploy its missile defence facilities outside its national territories; Outgoing President Medvedev signs a law on gubernatorial elections; As part of the political reforms in Russia political parties contesting elections will no longer need to get signatures; Russia's population**

³⁸ "Malaysia offers 1,000 jobs for Kyrgyz residents", Central Asia Newswire, May 1, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kyrgyzstan/viewstory.aspx?id=11919>

³⁹ "Turkey pledges assistance with Kyrgyz agriculture", Central Asia Newswire, April 30, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kyrgyzstan/viewstory.aspx?id=11912>

⁴⁰ "Chinese investors to finance refinery in northern Kyrgyzstan", Central Asia Newswire, April 28, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kyrgyzstan/viewstory.aspx?id=11905>

⁴¹ "Russian war games underway in Tajik mountains", Central Asia Newswire, May 2, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/tajikistan/viewstory.aspx?id=11926>

⁴² "Tajikistan to restore electricity deliveries to Afghanistan", Central Asia Newswire, May 2, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/tajikistan/viewstory.aspx?id=11924>

⁴³ "Tajik, Afghan border guards train to detect forged docs", Central Asia Newswire, April 28, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/tajikistan/viewstory.aspx?id=11902>

to grow 1.8% by 2020; Russia offeres Pyramid Radar for Missile Defence as part of its negotiations with NATO on an European Missile Defence Plan.

According to reports, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin has said that Russia will not allow any country of the world to create a missile defence system which could upset the strategic balance.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, Russia's Chief of the General Staff has said that Russia is not considering a pullout from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty at this stage.⁴⁵

Russian army chief of staff, General Nikolai Makarov has said that Russia has no plans to deploy its missile defence facilities outside of national territory.⁴⁶

Reports noted that Russian Deputy Foreign Minister and President's Middle East envoy Mikhail Bogdanov has said that Egypt's new parliament is ready to establish direct contacts with Russia.⁴⁷

According to reports, outgoing President Dmitry Medvedev has signed the law on gubernatorial elections according to which all top officials in the federal constituents of Russia will be elected in a direct, equal and secret ballot by all citizens, who live in the federal constituents.⁴⁸

In another development, outgoing President Medvedev has signed a bill into law that relieves parties of a procedure of collecting voters' signatures in their support while taking part in elections of all levels, except the presidential elections.⁴⁹

In other developments, according to reports, Russia's Health Minister Ms. Tatyana Golikova has said that Russia's population will grow by 1.8 percent by 2020. According to official estimates, Russia's population was 142,865,433 on January 1, 2011, and totaled 143,030,106 on January 1, 2012.⁵⁰

While, Russia's Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov has said that Russia can offer use of its massive Don-2NP radar system near Moscow as part of an agreement with NATO on a European missile defense plan to counter medium and long-range missiles.⁵¹

⁴⁴ "Russia to prevent strategic imbalance", ITAR-TASS, May 4, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/409764.html>

⁴⁵ "General says Russia is not considering pullout from INF treaty", ITAR-TASS, May 3, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/408984.html>

⁴⁶ "Russia not to deploy missile defense facilities outside of national territory", ITAR-TASS, May 3, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/408422.html>

⁴⁷ "Egypt's new Parliament ready to establish direct contact with Russia", ITAR-TASS, May 2, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/408010.html>

⁴⁸ "Medvedev signs law on gubernatorial elections", ITAR-TASS, May 2, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/407646.html>

⁴⁹ "No more signatures in support of parties taking part in election", ITAR-TASS, May 2, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/407745.html>

⁵⁰ "According to official estimates, Russia's population was 142,865,433 on January 1, 2011, and totaled 143,030,106 on January 1, 2012", RIA Novosti, May 5, 2012, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20120505/173254572.html>

⁵¹ "Russia Offers Pyramid Radar for Missile Defense", RIA Novosti, May 4, 2012, http://en.rian.ru/mlitary_news/20120504/173217749.html

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

- **Indian army conducts exercise 'Shoorveer' in Rajasthan; DRDO ready to put phase-I of the ballistic missile defence shield in place**

According to reports, the Indian Army carried out battle drills in synergy with the Air Force to fine tune war fighting concepts. The Army Chief General V K Singh witnessed the final stages of war exercise 'Shoorveer' in the desert area of Rajasthan. General Singh and other senior Army and Air Force officers witnessed the mechanised predominant battle manoeuvres in which T-90 tanks, infantry combat vehicles, long range artillery gun, air defence weapon system, electronic warfare system and surveillance equipment carried out battle drills. Fighter aircraft of the Air Force, including Sukhoi-30 and Jaguars along with attack helicopters MI-25, MI-17, Unmanned Air Vehicles also participated in the exercise which was based on the integrated theatre battle concept. More than 300 combat vehicles including main battle tank T-90, T-72, long range 150mm artillery guns, multi barrel rockets and about 60000 troops have taken part in this massive exercise in the desert state. Integrated air-land war-fighting machinery and the synergy between Army and IAF was the major highlight of the exercise, said Defence Spokesperson S D Goswami. IAF aircraft – Sukhoi-30, MIG-29, MiG-21 'Bisons', Cheetah, Chetak, MI-25 attack helicopters, transport aircraft such as IL 76 and AN-32 also took part in the exercise.⁵²

In another development, according to reports, DRDO chief V.K. Saraswat has said that the organisation is ready to put phase-I of the ballistic missile defence shield in place. India has developed a missile defence shield which can be put in place at short notice to protect at least two cities, bringing the country on par with an elite group of few nations. The shield, developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation, has been tested successfully and an incoming ballistic missile with the range of up to 2,000 km can be destroyed. The system is to be upgraded to the range of 5,000 km by 2016. DRDO chief V.K. Saraswat stated in an interview, "The ballistic missile defence shield is now mature... We are ready to put phase-I in place and it can be put in very short time,".⁵³

INTERNATIONAL

- **United States to double military aid to Philippines; Israel to receive fourth Dolphin submarine from Germany**

According to reports, the United States will double military aid to its ally the Philippines, which is engaged in a prolonged maritime standoff with China, according to the foreign department in Manila. The ramping-up of Washington's defense assistance will see military aid in 2012 jump to \$30 million as well as "real-time information sharing" on the Philippines' maritime territory,

⁵² "Army Chief witnesses Shoorveer exercise," May 03, 2012, at http://zeenews.india.com/news/nation/army-chief-witnesses-shoorveer-exercise_772978.html

⁵³ "Missile defence shield ready: DRDO chief," The Hindu, New Delhi, May 06, 2012, at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article3390404.ece>

Philippines foreign department spokesman Raul Hernandez noted. Stressing that this development was before the outbreak of the tensions with China in April, Hernandez said, "We have been making representations for this since last year". The increased aid was confirmed during the recent U.S. visit of Philippine Foreign Secretary Alberto del Rosario and Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin for talks with their U.S. counterparts Hillary Clinton and Leon Panetta.⁵⁴

In another development, according to reports, Vice Adm. Ram Rothberg, commander of the Israel Navy, and senior Defense Ministry representatives were in Germany on May 2, 2012, to prepare for receipt of Israel's fourth nuclear-capable Dolphin submarine. Israel's Walla website reported that Rothberg and a delegation led by retired Maj. Gen. Udi Shani, Director-General of Israel's MoD, were meeting with German counterparts in Kiel, home of the shipbuilding division of Thyssen-Krupp Marine Systems (TKMS). The German shipyard has been under contract with the government of Israel since 2005 for the fourth and fifth submarines of the Israeli Navy's planned six-submarine fleet. Under that 2005 deal, Germany agreed to underwrite one third of construction costs.⁵⁵

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Supreme Court asks Army to decide on the trial proceedings; Soldier killed in militant ambush; Police killed two Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militants; The J&K government to start functioning from Srinagar marking the opening of Durbar**

According to reports, the Supreme Court asked the Army authorities to decide within eight weeks whether its personnel accused of fake encounter killings in Jammu and Kashmir should be tried by court-martial proceedings or by regular criminal courts. A bench of justices B S Chauhan and Swatanter Kumar said that if the Army authorities were not keen on court-martial proceedings, then the CBI can seek sanction from the Centre for prosecution of the Army officers. Supreme Court said the sanctions from the Centre are necessary for taking action against the eight Army officials allegedly involved in the Pathribal fake encounter.

The Apex Court has granted the army eight weeks to decide which recourse it wishes to take to proceed against the accused.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, reports noted that a soldier was killed when militants opened fire on an army patrol in the mountainous district police. According to a police officer, the militants fired upon an army

⁵⁴ "U.S. Doubles Military Aid to Philippines," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, May 04, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120504/DEFREG03/305040001/U-S-Doubles-Military-Aid-Philippines?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE> |

⁵⁵ "Israel To Receive Fourth Dolphin Sub," May 02, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120502/DEFREG04/305020005/Israel-Receive-Fourth-Dolphin-Sub?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|World%20News|p>

⁵⁶ "Decide on trial within 8 weeks: SC to Army", *Greater Kashmir*, May 1, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/May/2/decide-on-trial-within-8-weeks-sc-to-army-39.asp>

patrol near Kulna village in Palmar area killing a soldier of Territorial Army Noor Hussain (Sena Medal recipient).⁵⁷

According to reports, Army and Special Operation Group (SOG) of J&K Police claimed to have killed two local militants of Lashker-e-Toiba (LeT) in an encounter in Pattan area of north Kashmir district Baramulla. Giving the details of encounter, General Officer Commanding (GOC) Kilo Force, Major General Sarat Chand said that they got specific information about the movement of suspected militants in Nilllah village of Pattan. He said that a column of 29 Rashtriya Rifles and SOG went to the village and established a cordon of the area.⁵⁸

In other developments, reports noted that the Jammu and Kashmir government will start functioning from Srinagar marking the opening of Durbar in the summer capital. The shifting of men and machinery, associated with the move, from Jammu to Srinagar was completed on May 6, 2012. The Durbar Move is more than a century-old practice under which the Civil Secretariat, the seat of the state government, functions six months each in Jammu and Srinagar. Kashmir-based government employees associated with the Civil Secretariat and other departments, which shift their base twice every year between the two capitals.⁵⁹

North East India

- **150 still missing in Assam boat mishap; Home Minister P. Chidambaram: ULFA talks progress to be slow due to an anti-talk faction; 103 militants surrender in Manipur; People's Joint Action Committee for Bodoland Movement (PJACBM) plans agitation in support for Bodoland; Home Minister Chidambaram: There is no discrimination against the students from North-East; Injured anti-talk NDFB cadre arrested in Guwahati**

According to reports, rescue operations continued in the Brahmaputra in Assam, a day after a ferry capsized in the river killing nearly 70 people, but with at least 150 still missing the death toll was expected to rise. Abdul Aziz, a survivor, said there were over 300 passengers on the ferry. The Border Security Force (BSF) and the National Disaster Rescue Force (NDRF), which started rescue operations immediately after the incident along with local people, could bring ashore 80 people till Monday night. Some passengers managed to swim to the river bank.⁶⁰

In another development, according to reports, setting at rest all speculation, Union Home Minister, P Chidambaram said that the progress of talks with pro-talk ULFA faction would be slow because the leaders are treading very cautiously. Home Minister P. Chidambaram presenting the monthly report of his Ministry said that the Home Secretary held the talks and has reported to him that the

⁵⁷ "Soldier killed in militant ambush", *Greater Kashmir*, May 3, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/May/4/soldier-killed-in-militant-ambush-59.asp>

⁵⁸ "2 militants killed: Police", *Greater Kashmir*, May 5, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/May/6/2-militants-killed-police-56.asp>

⁵⁹ "Durbar opens today", *Greater Kashmir*, May 6, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/May/7/durbar-opens-today-54.asp>

⁶⁰ "150 still missing in Assam boat mishap", *The Assam Tribune*, May 1, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may0112/at04>

talk is making progress but it will be slow progress because there is an anti-talk faction. So the pro-talk leaders are proceeding with great caution. The Home Minister was referring to the last round of tripartite talks with ULFA held on April 9, 2012. The Government of India and ULFA leaders have so far held three rounds of formal dialogue and substantive discussions on the charter of demands submitted by the outfit are yet to begin.⁶¹

Meanwhile, according to reports, one hundred three militants belonging to 12 underground organisations in Manipur laid down arms during a 'home coming' ceremony at IG of Assam Rifles (South) headquarters, near Imphal. The hardcore militants of proscribed outfits including United National Liberation Front, People's Liberation Army, Kangleipak Communist Party, Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup, People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak, United People's Party of Kangleipak, People's United Liberation Front, Kuki National Liberation Front, NSCN(K), UNPC, KRPA and KRF, handed over 103 weapons including 9 AK 47 rifles, three Lathodes, 25 Carbines, 59 pistols, three 303 rifles and one each M-16 and M-21 rifles to Manipur Chief Minister O Ibobi Singh and Home Minister Gaikhangam.⁶²

However, reports noted that with other communities backing the demand for a Bodoland in Assam, a 36-hour State-wide strike has been called from May 7, 2012. Forty-five groups representing tribal and non-tribal communities have joined the movement. People's Joint Action Committee for Bodoland Movement (PJACBM) has called for a 36-hour strike on May 7. On May 18, there will be district demonstrations. On May 25 national highways will be blocked for 12 hours.⁶³

According to reports, Home Minister P. Chidambaram said that it was incorrect that northeast students were more vulnerable to discrimination than those from other regions. Addressing the Rajya Sabha, he also said that the government was obliged to provide them security. The issue was raised in the upper house of the parliament following the deaths of three northeast students last month. Two of them, from Assam and Manipur, committed suicide in Delhi and the third, also from Manipur, died under mysterious circumstances in Bangalore. Chidambaram said state governments were responsible for providing safety and security to people residing in their regions.⁶⁴

In other developments, according to reports, the Guwahati police arrested a cadre of the anti-talk faction of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) from a rented house. According to senior superintendent of police (City) Apurba Jiban Baruah, the cadre was arrested from a house in the Gorchuk area of the city during an operation based on specific information.⁶⁵

⁶¹ "ULFA talks progress to be slow: PC", *The Assam Tribune*, April 30, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may0112/at08>

⁶² "103 militants surrender in Manipur", *The Assam Tribune*, April 30, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may0112/oth05>

⁶³ "Bodoland gets more support, strike from May 7", *The Assam Tribune*, May 3, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may0312/at046>

⁶⁴ "No discrimination against students from NE: Chidambaram", *The Assam Tribune*, May 4, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may0412/at054>

⁶⁵ "Injured anti-talk NDFB cadre arrested in Guwahati", *The Assam Tribune*, May 7, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may0712/at042>

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **UN Security Council calls Sudan and South Sudan to end hostilities; India calls for reforms in UNSC working methods; India presses for early adoption of convention on terrorism**

In the light of the prevailing situation in the border area between Sudan and South Sudan, the UN Security Council called on the two countries to end hostilities and resume negotiations to resolve all outstanding issues. The Council also said it intends to use 'appropriate measures' if parties do not comply.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, at the 8th round of Intergovernmental Negotiations on UNSC reform, India's representative to the UN, Hardeep Singh Puri said that the Council's working methods need to be improved to reflect the changing times and should concentrate on international peace and security and not encroach upon the mandate of the General Assembly. He made a case for the participation of non-members in the subordinate organs of the UNSC. The participation of troop and police contributing countries in decision-making of peacekeeping operations was also suggested.⁶⁷

In other developments, while stressing on a greater international cooperation to tackle terrorism, India urged for an early adoption of the long-pending Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ "Security Council may take further action if Sudan-South Sudan fighting continues", *UN News Centre*, May 02, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41903&Cr=sudan&Cr1=>

⁶⁷ "UNSC needs to concentrate on global peace security: India", *Daily News and Analysis*, May 05, 2012 at http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_unsc-needs-to-concentrate-on-global-peace-security-india_1684864

⁶⁸ "India presses for early adoption of CCIT at UNSC Forum", *OutlookIndia.com*, May 05, 2012 at <http://news.outlookindia.com/items.aspx?artid=761650>