

INSIGHT SOUTHEAST ASIA

Looking Eastward From New Delhi



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We present to you a revamped edition of the Southeast Asia Newsreview. It now has a new name, a changed format, a mega size and will appear bi-monthly. With this issue we have introduced a Country Profile section, a Commentary section and a Book Review section. We will continue our regular sections on News Track and Photo Essay.

The months of May and June proved eventful for the region. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh undertook a historic three day visit to Myanmar from May 27 to 29, upgrading India's relations with Myanmar to the strategic level. Aung San Suu Kyi made her first trip abroad in 24 years to Thailand- to attend the World Economic Forum and thereafter to Europe (Switzerland, Norway, Ireland, and France). Unfortunately, around this time ethnic violence erupted in Myanmar's Rakhine State between the Rohingyas and Rakhine Buddhists which resulted in many dead, injured or displaced. The impact was felt in the neighbouring countries. Bangladesh turned back many Rohingya refugees. In India some Rohingya refugees sought refuge in makeshift camps in the capital New Delhi.

At the regional level, the South China sea dispute continued to disturb the peace in the larger East Asian region. Meanwhile, ASEAN continued its efforts towards a common position on the Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea. At the 2012 Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore (June 1 to 3), the Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono called for a new "geopolitics of cooperation" whereas the Chinese downgraded their representation at the forum fearing perhaps a cornering on the South China Sea issue.

The quest for an effective regional architecture continued in the region amidst contradictory trends. The US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta's assertion of a pivot towards Asia with plans for committing 60 per cent of its warships in Asia Pacific by 2020 coincided with China making waves in the South China Sea and US experiencing defence cuts.

India's Look East policy is entering a new phase as it looks not only at Southeast Asia for renewing its ties but farther afield to Australia, Japan and South Pacific. In the ASEAN region it renewed its commitment as Mr Gurjit Singh (India's Ambassador to Indonesia) took over on June 27 his concurrent role as India's Ambassador to ASEAN after Mr Biren Nanda left Jakarta to take over as India's High Commissioner in Australia.

As the US eased sanctions on Myanmar and named Derek Mitchell, its coordinator for Myanmar policy, as its Ambassador, things began to look up for Myanmar. The Australian Foreign Minister Carr concluding his visit to Myanmar on 8 June promised to double its aid to Myanmar by 2015. Meanwhile, Myanmar was expected to host the 3rd BIMSTEC Summit, sometime in the near future. Similarly Cambodia prepared for the ASEAN related meetings at Phnom Penh including the 45 AMM, the 19th ARF, the ASEAN+3 and the EAS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July. Would these multilateral engagements in LMCV countries effectively contribute to greater stability in the region?...only time will tell. On the bilateral level, the US decided to provide the Philippines a powerful land-based system to deter intrusions in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea). The domestic disquiet and the regional tensions can be countered not by structural tinkering alone but by sincerity of purpose.

Udai Bhanu Singh

AUSTRALIA

Area: 7,682 million sq.km

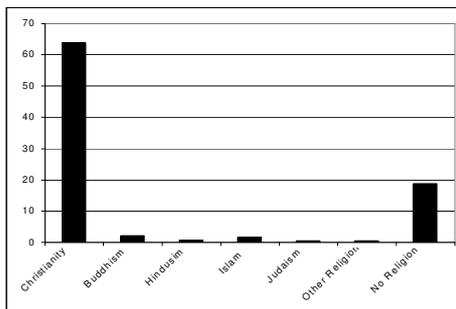
Number of States: 6

Head of the State: HM Queen Elizabeth II

System of Government: Federal System of Governance

Estimated Resident Population:
22,485,300 (2011 Census Edition)

Religious Composition in Percentage¹



Currency: Australian Dollar

GDP Growth (2010 – 11): 1.4%

Unemployment (2010 – 11): 5.1%

Military Expenditure (2011): \$ 26.7 million

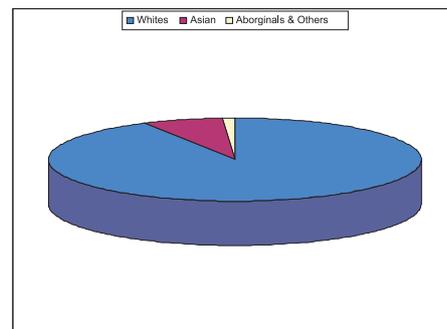
Capital City: Canberra

Number of Territories: 6

Head of Government: Prime Minister The Hon. Julia Gillard

Net Overseas Migration: 184,000 (2011 Census Edition)

Ethnic Composition in Percentage²



GDP (2010 – 11): A\$ 1.2 trillion

Inflation (2010 – 11): 2.8%

GDP Per Capita (2010 Estimate): \$41,000

Border Disputes: Land and maritime claim to Antarctica, unrecognised by United Nations, US and Russia among other countries; Involved in a maritime border dispute with East Timor over the Timor Sea.

Part of The Following International Organizations and Treaties: ADB, AG, ANT, ANZUS, APEC, APM, ARF, ASEAN (dialogue partner), BIS, BTWC, Commonwealth, CTBT, EAS, EBRD, ENMOD, FAO, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICCT, ICRM, ICSID, IDA, IEA, IFC, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, IRENA, ISA, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC, KP, MIGA, MTCR, NAM (guest), NEA, NPT, NSG, NTBT, OECD, OPCW, PC, PCA, PIF, SAARC (observer), SICA (observer), UN, UNCLOS, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNFCCC, UNHCR, UNRWA, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO, ZC³

Australia – India Relations: India is a policy priority in Australia's foreign policy. Ten ministerial visits have taken place between the countries since 2008. Strategic Partnership announced in 2009 to pursue deeper bilateral, regional and international cooperation. India was Australia's fourth-largest merchandise export market in 2008-09 and likely to become the third largest export market in the coming years. The Australia-India Council (AIC) and Lowy Institute hold annual lectures in Australia by eminent Indian scholars in order to strengthen Australia-India bilateral relationship focusing particularly on security and strategic issues.

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- ¹ “The People of Australia: Statistics from the 2006 Census”, Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2008, http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/research/_pdf/poa-2008.pdf, Accessed on: 6 July 2012.
- ² “Australian Demographics Profile 2012”, *indexmundi*, <http://www.indexmundi.com/australia/demographics_profile.html>, Accessed on: 6 July 2012.
- ³ “Australia”, *WorldStatesmen.org*, Undated, <<http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Australia.html>>, Accessed on: 6 July 2012.

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Capital: Bandar Seri Begawan

Geography:

Location: Southeastern Asia, bordering the South China Sea and Malaysia

Total area: 5,765 sq km

Land: 5,265 sq km

Water: 500 sq km

Number of districts: Four

Political System:

Chief of state: Sultan and Prime Minister Sir HASSANAL Bolkiah (since 5 October 1967) (the monarch is both the chief of state and head of government).

Government Type: constitutional sultanate (Malay Islamic Monarchy).

Constitution:

29 September 1959 (some provisions suspended under a State of Emergency since December 1962, others since independence on 1 January 1984).

Cabinet: Council of Cabinet Ministers appointed and presided over by the monarch; deals with executive matters. There also exists a Religious Council (members appointed by the monarch) that advises on religious matters, a Privy Council (members appointed by the monarch) that deals with constitutional matters, and the Council of Succession (members appointed by the monarch) that determines the succession to the throne if the need arises.

(Elections: none; the monarchy is hereditary. The Sultan appointed a Legislative Council with 29 members in September 2005; he increased the size of the council to 33 members in June 2011; the council meets annually in March. Elections: last held in March 1962 (date of next election NA).

Supreme Court: chief justice and judges are sworn in by monarch for three-year terms; Judicial Committee of Privy Council in London is final court of appeal for civil cases; Sharia courts deal with Islamic laws.

Society:

Total population: 408,786

Ethnic groups: Malay 66.3%, Chinese 11.2%, indigenous 3.4%, other 19.1% (2004 est.)

Religions: Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Taoism, indigenous religions.

Economy:

Currency: B\$ (Brunei Dollar)

GDP Real Growth Rate:

2.8% (2011 est.)

2.6% (2010 est.)

-1.8% (2009 est.)

GDP PPP:

US\$21.11 billion (2011 est.)

US\$20.5 billion (2010 est.)

US\$19.99 billion (2009 est.)

GDP PPP (Per Capita):

US\$49,400 (2011 est.)

US\$49,300 (2010 est.)

US\$49,300 (2009 est.)

Unemployment: 2.7 % (2010).

Inflation: 2.0 % (2011, est.) 0.4 % (2010).

Defence:

Military expenditure: 4.5% of GDP (2006).

Disputes: One of the claimants in the South China Sea dispute; dispute with Malaysia over Limbang district.

Foreign Policy:

Brunei will Chair the 2013 ASEAN Summit meetings.

Brunei Darussalam's foreign policy objective is to promote the country's national interests taking into account of its situation and role in the region and globally. Brunei adheres to the United Nations Charter, the ASEAN Charter, international law, universally recognised principles of sovereignty and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and is an active member of the UN, NAM, ASEAN and its affiliate institutions.

Relations with India:

Bilateral relations between India and Brunei were established in May 1984. Resident diplomatic missions were opened in mid- 1993. By virtue of their common membership of UN, NAM, Commonwealth, ARF, EAS and ADMM Plus etc. and as developing countries with strong traditional and cultural ties, Brunei and India enjoy a fair degree of commonality in their perceptions of major international issues. Brunei is supportive of India's 'Look East' policy and expansion and deepening of cooperation with ASEAN. In 2009- 10 Indian exports were worth 24.44 US \$ Million and imports were 428.65 US \$ Million. In 2010-11 (April-December) it was 18.42 US \$ Million and 130.47 US \$ Million respectively. The main import of India from Brunei in the last few years is crude oil.

Sources:

ASEAN website <http://www.aseansec.org/18619.htm>

CIA World Fact book <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bx.html>

Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India: <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=50047978>

NEW ZEALAND

Area: 267, 710 sq kms

System of Government: Parliamentary Democracy

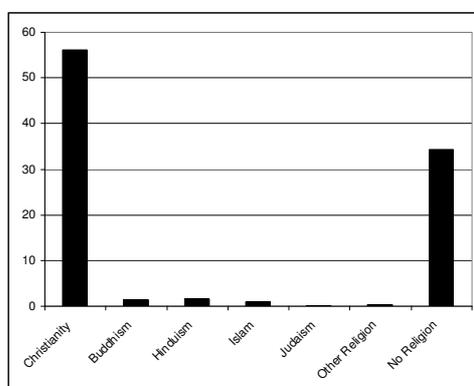
Head of the State: HM Queen Elizabeth II

Number of Island Territories: 2

Estimated Resident Population: 4,433,532 (2012)

Crude Birth Rate: 14.8/1000 (2010)

Religious Composition in Percentage¹



Currency: New Zealand Dollar

GDP Growth: 0.7 % (2011)

Unemployment Rate (2012): 6.7 %

Military Expenditure (2009-2010): NZ \$ 3299.90 Million

Source:

<http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0107838.html>

<http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Asia-and-Oceania/New-Zealand-LOCATION-SIZE-AND-EXTENT.html#b>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/nz.html>

http://www.stats.govt.nz/tools_and_services/tools/population_clock.aspx

http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/population/estimates_and_projections/NationalPopulationEstimates_HOTPMar12qtr/Definitions.aspx

http://www.ined.fr/en/pop_figures/developed_countries/developed_countries_database/

<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/new-zealand/gdp-growth>

Capital City: Wellington

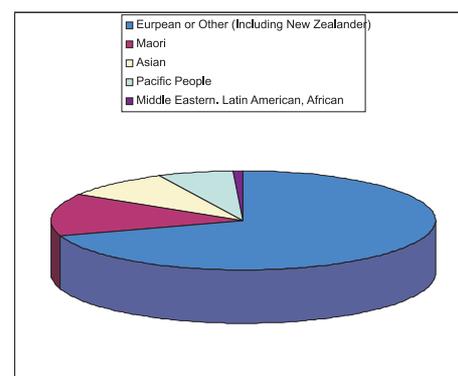
Head of the Government: Prime Minister John Key

Number of Dependencies: 3

Net Migration: 800 (2011)

Crude Death Rate: 6.5/1000 (2010)

Ethnic Composition in Percentage²



GDP (2011 Estimate): \$123.3 billion

Inflation: 1.6 % (2012)

Merchandise Trade (% of GDP 2009): 39.89 %

New Zealand Defence Work Force (2012): 13, 667

<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/new-zealand/inflation-cpi>

<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/new-zealand/unemployment-rate>

<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/new-zealand/merchandise-trade-percent-of-gdp-wb-data.html>

<http://www.interest.co.nz/news/53506/budget-2011-defence>

<http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/>

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ASEAN-Cambodia: Post-Phnom Penh Summit Perspectives

Udai Bhanu Singh*

Cambodia on taking over the ASEAN Chair from Indonesia, hosted the 20th ASEAN Summit at Phnom Penh on April 3-4, 2012. This is the second time that Cambodia has taken over the ASEAN Chair – the last being in 2002-2003. The ASEAN Charter in Article 31 provides for the Chairmanship of ASEAN which shall rotate annually, based on the alphabetical order. The “Member State assuming the Chairmanship shall chair.. the ASEAN Summit and related summits..”¹ The mandate of the ASEAN Chair is to work towards enhancing the objectives of ASEAN, “ensure the centrality of ASEAN”, to render timely response to crises, “represent ASEAN in strengthening and promoting closer relations with external powers”

Cambodia’s foreign policy is multifaceted and can be approached from many directions: the strategic approach, the economic approach, the diplomatic approach, the prestige approach and the legitimacy approach.² The strategic approach takes into account the country’s security, sovereignty and other vital interests. The economic approach takes into account the country’s economic interests in terms of developmental requirements and need for aid, trade and investment. The diplomatic approach involves Cambodia’s engagement at the multilateral (and bilateral) level after a long period of isolation. The prestige approach refers to the prestige that membership of an organisation like ASEAN confers on a nation emerging from conflict-torn past. The legitimacy approach connotes the ‘recognition of Cambodia by both the regional and international community.’³

Summit Theme

ASEAN’s strength as an organization and its structural problems have often been emphasized, especially in comparison to more successful organizations like the European Union. ASEAN was formed nearly 45 years back, in August 1967 but a strong cohesive sense of ASEAN Community is yet to emerge. Its founding fathers envisioned an organisation comprising all of Southeast Asia (10 countries then, 11 with East Timor now). But a beginning was made with only five States (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand). The LMCV countries (Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam) became members later. East Timor is yet to be granted membership. There is great deal of diversity among the Southeast Asian countries: members are at varying stages of political development and economic growth having different security priorities. On the one hand is a developed nation like Singapore, on the other is an LDC like Myanmar. But, with the passage of time, the economic gaps are constantly being bridged. According to Paul J. Bolt: “... some countries regret the inclusion of Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia into ASEAN, as they factionalise the organization and make it less able to accomplish goals..”⁴

An important element of this structure is the leadership of ASEAN as an organization. It has been pointed out that ASEAN follow the ‘Flying geese’ model of leadership in which the lead goose goes ahead and the others follow. Thus the ASEAN process depends on how quickly or

slowly the others are flying. However, the matter gets complicated when the ‘lead goose’ itself is perceived to be slow-moving. According to one point of view ASEAN leadership in the next three years is weak, being led by Cambodia, Brunei, and Myanmar. But, this perception itself is not fixed for all time and is subject to change.

ASEAN cohesiveness is further eroded by disputes among the ASEAN members themselves.

Table: ASEAN Chairs:

Year	Country Chair
2011	Indonesia
2012	Cambodia
2013	Brunei
2014	Myanmar

Cambodia-Thailand relations deteriorated in late April-early May 2011 with border clashes surrounding the Preah Vihear temple. In the exchange of artillery fire that took place 20 people died. Relations improved in July 2011 with the accession to power in Thailand of Yingluck Shinawatra as Prime Minister. In addition there was the International Court of Justice-ruling that both sides withdraw their forces from the demilitarized zone of 17 kms territory.⁵ However, conflict could reignite in the future over disputed sovereignty in the resource rich Gulf of Thailand.

Chinese President Hu Jintao was in Cambodia from March 30 to April 2 (just prior to the Phnom Penh ASEAN Summit) and the Cambodian official spokesperson of the foreign ministry hoped that “the visit would deepen and strengthen the relationship and cooperation between the two countries”. . It was the first such in the last twelve years. China has had growing economic involvement in Cambodia. China invested \$1.1 billion in Cambodia in 2011. Cambodia imported \$2.3 billion worth of Chinese goods. The ASEAN presidency under Cambodia is said to have come under Chinese influence. However, the local people have also opposed the infrastructure projects on human rights and environmental grounds.

During the Phnom Penh Summit a number of documents were adopted.

• **Phnom Penh Summit: Documents Adopted**

SNo	Document
1	Phnom Penh Declaration on ASEAN
2	Phnom Penh Agenda on ASEAN Community Building
3	ASEAN Leaders’ Declaration on Drug-Free ASEAN 2015
4	ASEAN Concept Paper on Global Movement of the Moderates

Prime Minister Hun Sen in his Opening Statement at the 20th ASEAN Summit on April 3, 2012 drew attention to the “Phnom Penh Agenda” (which spells out the priorities for 2012). The Cambodian Prime Minister spoke of implementing the ASEAN Masterplan on Connectivity with support from the Dialogue Partners. Some of the important proposed links are: Singapore-Kunming Rail link, the ASEAN Highway Network and the Greater Mekong “Subregion Economic Corridor (Ho Chi Minh City-Phnom Penh-Bangkok-Dawei link (which could provide India a viable alternative route to connect with ASEAN). He referred to the road map for ASEAN Community building (2009-2015) and the establishment of ASEAN

Economic Community by 2015. He also spoke about the free flow of skilled labour besides disaster management and food security. But, he avoided making a mention of the South China Sea issue. - something that tops the list of priorities in the Phnom Penh Agenda.

There were other issues which were raised during the Summit. ASEAN expressed alarm over the North Korean missile test which took place in celebration of Kim Il Sung’ birth centenary. It was seen as undermining the peace process in the Korean peninsula and violative of UNSC Resolution 1874 of 2009. The other important event which almost coincided with the summit was the opposition victory in Myanmar’s by-elections which heralded Myanmar’s transition and unleashed the “scramble for Myanmar” . This event was important for ASEAN as a regional organization which championed the cause of constructive engagement and to an extent convinced the West to do the same. Moreover, it was important to the LMCV countries, one of whose members (Cambodia) was hosting the ASEAN Summit and an LDC among them (Myanmar) was witness to momentous political transition at the same time.

• **Phnom Penh Agenda: Main points**

SNo	Important points
1	Implementation of of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), including the eventual conclusion of Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea, the conclusion of the Protocol to the Treaty on SEANWFZ, the official launching of ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR), and the conclusion of ASEAN Human Rights Declaration.
2	realize the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015 through the implementation of the ASEAN Framework for Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and by working along with Dialogue Partners and various regional and international institutions such as the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank and the United Nations (UN)
3	maintaining regional financial stability, by encouraging the ASEAN Finance Ministers to work closely with the Plus Three Partners to enhance the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM) mechanism.
4	comprehensive Mid-term Review of the IAI Work Plan II in 2012
5	implementation of the “Master Plan for ASEAN Connectivity” (MPAC), which was adopted in 2010.
6	implementation of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint in order to realize an ASEAN Community by 2015.
7	priority to disaster management
8	Increase agricultural productivity and production to secure food security,
9	Recognising the important role of women in regional development and optimising ASEAN mechanisms in that direction.

The reason why a reference to the South China Sea is missing in Hun Sen's Opening Statement could perhaps have something to do with the visit of Chinese President Hu Jintao to Cambodia from March 30 to April 2, 2012 prior to the ASEAN Summit. The Joint Statement issued on April 2 mentions the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), not the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC). Para 8 of the Joint Statement between the People's Republic of China and the Kingdom of Cambodia issued on April 3rd reads:

Both sides agreed that China and ASEAN countries shall continue to abide by the purpose and spirit of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), give full play to all the existing mechanisms including the Guideline for the implementation of the DOC, and ensure the success of the workshop on the 10th Anniversary of the signing of the DOC. China and ASEAN countries shall work hard to serve to practical cooperation, maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea, and make it a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation for China and ASEAN countries.

Thus, the South China Sea issue is only there for the record in the Phnom Penh Agenda but is missing elsewhere which indicates lack of seriousness in tackling this threat to security.

Conclusion:

Over the last almost 45 years ASEAN has not remained static: it is very active diplomatically holding more than one meeting a day throughout the year. Much has changed but much remain the same (it still works on consensus and retains 'the ASEAN way'). ASEAN membership has continuously expanded and so has its agenda. But in many senses it has become more narrow minded. ASEAN will be 64 years old in 2031, having been established on August 8, 1967. The question is How will ASEAN evolve? In order for it to serve its intended purpose it will have to take its smaller, weaker members like Cambodia along with it and contribute to their growth and prosperity.

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Possible Repercussions of ITLOS Verdict in Bangladesh-Myanmar Maritime Boundary Dispute for India

Riddhi Shah*

The ITLOS verdict in the Bangladesh/Myanmar maritime boundary is bound to have an effect on the arbitration proceedings between Bangladesh and India in 2014. The possible ramifications of the verdict on the Indian maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal are analysed

below.



Figure 1: Maritime Claims in the Bay of Bengal (as Relevant to the Bangladesh-Myanmar Dispute)²

The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) delivered its final verdict on March 14, 2012, ending the long drawn dispute between Bangladesh and Myanmar. Energy resource is a vital component of any nation's economy today and the same holds true for the states of Bangladesh, India and Myanmar. In 2005/06, 100 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of gas reserves were discovered by India in the Bay of Bengal (BoB). Shortly after India's discovery, Myanmar discovered 7tcf of gas reserves near the Rakhine coast resulting in a sudden contest between the three for staking claims in the BoB. India and Myanmar's continental shelf claims converged in the BoB and effectively left Bangladesh with less than 200 miles of EEZ and therefore no continental shelf¹.

While Bangladesh disagreed with India and Myanmar over the method to demarcate the baselines and on the use

¹ Sreeradha Datta, "Bangladesh's extended continental shelf: navigating the course with India and Myanmar", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 34, No. 5, September 2010, pp. 728-743

² Jared Bissinger, "The maritime boundary disputes between Bangladesh and Myanmar: motivations, potential solutions and implications", *Asia Policy* [Online], Number 10, July 2010, pp. 103 – 142, <kms1.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/.../AP10_D_Maritime.pdf>, Accessed on: 20 July 2012.

of the 'equidistant' principle for delimiting the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and continental shelf; India and Bangladesh also disagreed with each other over the New Moore/South Talpatty island. Bilateral talks for delineating maritime boundary had commenced between Bangladesh, India and Myanmar in 1974^{3,4}. After several unsuccessful rounds of talks and opposition from India and Myanmar to Bangladesh's attempt at exploring the Bay of Bengal for gas hydrates⁵; the Sheikh Hasina government decided to submit the dispute under the dispute settlement mechanism of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that Bangladesh, India and Myanmar had ratified in 2001, 1995 and 1996 respectively⁶.

While India, unlike Myanmar refused to submit the case to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), she did agree to refer the case to the Permanent Court for Arbitration (PCA)⁷. The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea verdict delimited:

1. The territorial sea boundary
2. The relevant coasts of the parties and their approximate length
3. The single maritime boundary between the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and the continental shelf
4. The boundary of the continental shelf beyond 200nm from the baselines of Bangladesh and Myanmar.
5. The 'grey areas'

The judgement is remarkable for being the first case in which an international court or tribunal has delimited a continental shelf boundary beyond 200 miles and for contemplating the issue of 'grey zone'.⁸ India has consistently used the 'equidistant' principle as the guiding principle for determining the EEZ. Bangladesh on the other hand has been averse to adopting this method. One of the chief reasons for Bangladesh's strong opposition to the use of the

³ Ibid.

⁴ Harun Ur Rashid, "Maritime boundary with India: Arbitration or bilateral negotiations", *The Daily Star*, 28 March 2012, <<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=227962>>, Accessed on: 20 July 2012.

⁵ Sreeradha Datta, "Bangladesh's extended continental shelf: navigating the course with India and Myanmar", pg.729.

⁶ Harun Ur Rashid, "Maritime boundary with India: Arbitration or bilateral negotiations"

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Robin Churchill, "The Bangladesh/Myanmar case: continuity and novelty in the law of maritime boundary delimitation", *Cambridge Journal of International and Comparative Law* [online], Vol. 1, Issue 1, 2012, pp.137 – 152, <https://mail-attachment.googleusercontent.com/attachment/u/0/?ui=2&ik=e95c63a69a&view=att&th=138a39c76dc70440&attid=0.1&disp=inline&safe=1&zw&saduie=AG9B_P-15Dant-F92fWdQ4HVitsP&sadet=1342774881843&sads=6J4qW6_JaHKWb7tTkn8pcewoyE&sadssc=1>, Accessed on: 20 July 2012.

‘equidistant principle’ to determine maritime boundaries has been the risk of losing 5000 square kilometres and the related hydrocarbon and fish resources in the Bay of Bengal⁹.

In 1974, Bangladesh passed the Territorial Waters and Maritime Zones Act that adopted the depth method to determine the base line. India and Myanmar, both took a strong stand against this development. The ITLOS verdict has put an end to this conflict over the method to be used to determine maritime boundaries. International courts and tribunals have for most part regularly used the ‘equidistant or relevant circumstances’ method for delimiting single maritime boundaries between overlapping EEZs and continental shelves of opposite or adjacent countries¹⁰. The verdict did not stray from this methodology and delimited the maritime boundaries between Bangladesh and Myanmar using the ‘equidistant’ method¹¹.

With regard to delimiting Bangladesh’s territorial sea boundary, the chief bone of contention between Bangladesh and Myanmar was whether St. Martin’s Island could be taken into consideration. Myanmar contended that the island must be considered to be a ‘special circumstance’ since it would be on the wrong side of an equidistance line drawn between the mainlands of the two countries. The ITLOS rejected this argument on the principle that an island could be given less than full effect in the delimitation of the territorial sea only when they were ‘insignificant maritime features’, which was not the case here by virtue of the island’s size, population and economic activity¹².

Furthermore, the tribunal recognised Bangladesh’s right to a 12nm territorial sea around St. Martin’s Island¹³. The ITLOS set out the approximate lengths of the relevant coasts of Bangladesh as 413 kilometres and for Myanmar as 587 kilometres¹⁴. As per the determined relevant coasts, the tribunal allocated approximately 111,631 square kilometres of relevant area¹⁵ to Bangladesh and 171,832 square kilometres of relevant area to Myanmar¹⁶. Although the tribunal has allocated area in BoB to Bangladesh, the area given is not permanent and

⁹ Sreeradha Datta, “Bangladesh’s extended continental shelf: navigating the course with India and Myanmar”, pg. 736.

¹⁰ Robin Churchill, “The Bangladesh/Myanmar case: continuity and novelty in the law of maritime boundary delimitation”,

¹¹ *Dispute concerning Delimitation of the Maritime Boundary between Bangladesh and Myanmar in the Bay of Bengal (Bangladesh/Myanmar)*, Judgment of 14 March 2012 (hereafter referred to simply as ‘Judgment’), available on the website of the ITLOS at <http://www.itlos.org/fileadmin/itlos/documents/cases/case_no_16/1-C16_Judgment_14_02_2012.pdf>, Para. 239, Accessed on: 20 July 2012.

¹² Judgment, Para. 151.

¹³ Judgment, Para. 169.

¹⁴ Judgment, Para. 498.

¹⁵ The tribunal defines relevant area as ‘the area of overlapping entitlements of the parties that is relevant to this delimitation’. Judgment, Para. 477.

¹⁶ Judgment, Para. 499.

may be affected by the eventual boundary delimitation between India and Bangladesh¹⁷. The tribunal's ruling that "*The fact that a third party may claim the same maritime area does not prevent its inclusion in the relevant maritime area for purposes of the disproportionality test. This in no way affects the rights of third parties*"¹⁸ affirms this and leaves the door wide open to contestation between the two countries.

The starting point for Bangladesh's coastline was set from the southern tip of the Mandabaria Island, near the land boundary between India and Bangladesh^{19,20,21}. Mandabaria Island is located a little distance away from the disputed New Moore/South Talpatty Island. Both India and Bangladesh lay claim over the island that emerged in the wake of the Bhola cyclone in 1970 in the estuary of Haribhanga and Raimongal rivers in the BoB. Successful establishment of claim over the island would entail a further claim of 16,000 square meters of continental shelf that may potentially be rich in oil²².

Despite the fact that the island of New Moore does not come within the accrued area allocated to Bangladesh, it is too soon to jump to the conclusion that India would be granted sovereignty over the island in the future. Bangladesh had identified New Moore Island as one of the potential base points during the trial. The tribunal in concurrence with Myanmar refuted the use of the island as a relevant source of base point on account of the disputed sovereignty of the feature between India and Bangladesh^{23,24}. Thus, while the verdict has been careful to not trample on India's right to dispute Bangladesh's claim over the island, it does not prevent Bangladesh from doing the same.

To further complicate an already complex issue, the Jadavpur University's School of Oceanic Studies reported in March 2010 that the island had sunk due to the rising of the sea²⁵. As a result of this, the feature may not be qualified to be defined as an island any more. The absence of the island opens up the possibility of amicable resolution of maritime dispute between India and Bangladesh in the BoB. A viable solution could be to find a midpoint between the two countries based on principles acceptable to both.

¹⁷ Robin Churchill, "The Bangladesh/Myanmar case: continuity and novelty in the law of maritime boundary delimitation", pg. 145.

¹⁸ Judgment, Para. 494.

¹⁹ Judgment, Para. 266.

²⁰ Judgment, Para. 261.

²¹ Judgment, Para. 263.

²² Sreeradha Datta, "Bangladesh's extended continental shelf: navigating the course with India and Myanmar", pg. 735-736.

²³ Judgment, Para. 247.

²⁴ Judgment, Para. 266.

²⁵ Mark Magnier, "Sunk by global warming? Wave goodbye to this disputed island", *The Los Angeles Times*, 25 March 2010, <<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/mar/25/world/la-fg-disappearing-island25-2010mar25>>, Accessed on: 24 July 2012.

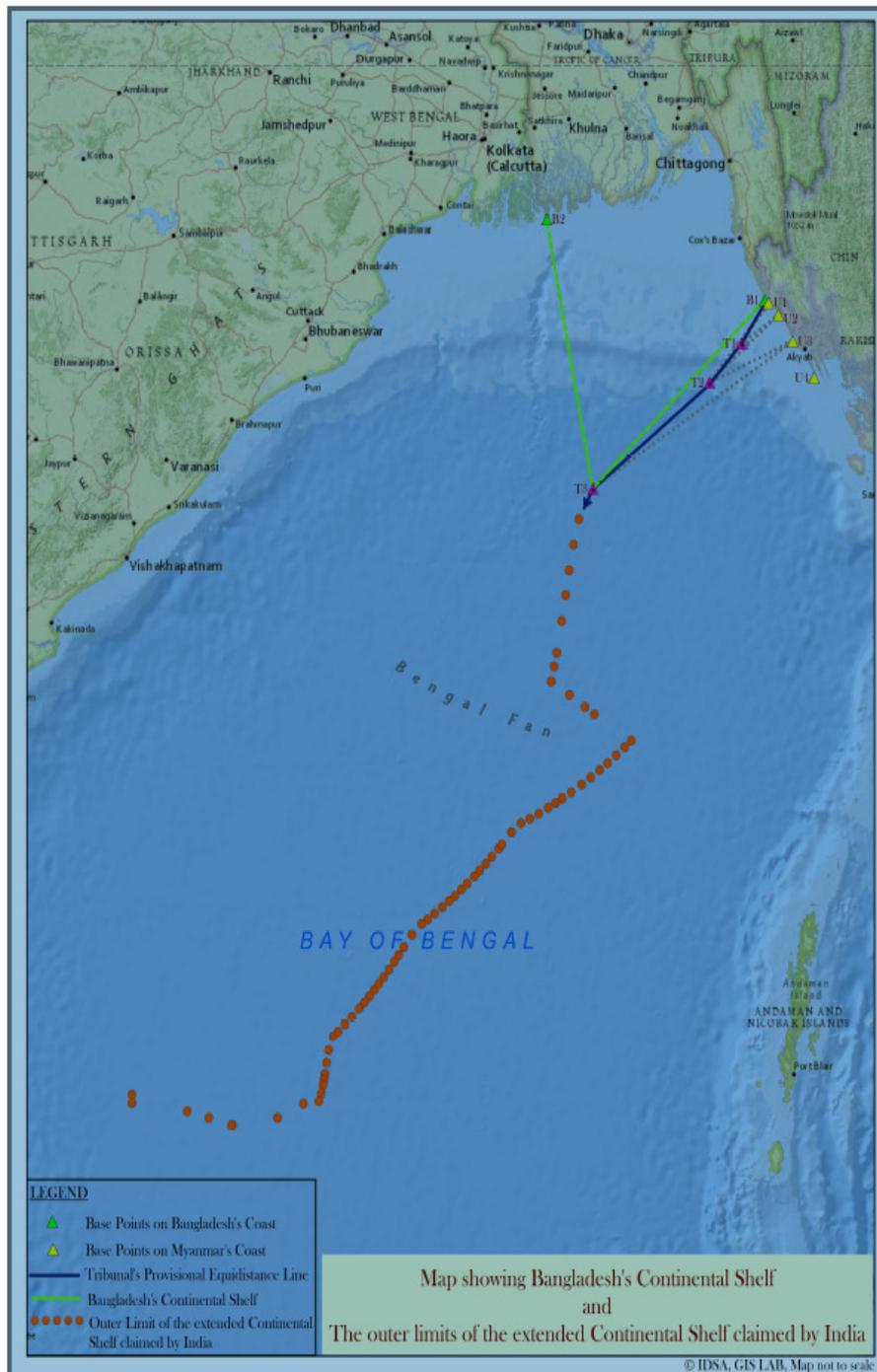


Figure 2: Bangladesh's Continental Shelf & the Outer Limits of the extended continental shelf claimed by India³⁰

On the issue of a continental shelf extending beyond 200 nm, Myanmar contended that Bangladesh was not entitled to one since Bangladesh's delimitation line terminated before 200 nm²⁶. The tribunal rejected this argument and ruled that both Bangladesh and Myanmar were entitled to a continental shelf extending beyond 200 nm²⁷. Accordingly, a maritime boundary was established using the equidistance method not only for the EEZ and the continental shelf of Bangladesh and Myanmar but also for the continental shelf beyond 200 nm/extended continental shelf^{28, 29}. The ITLOS additionally took into consideration the concavity of

²⁶ Judgment, Para. 351.

²⁷ Judgment, Para. 449.

²⁸ Judgment, Para. 239.

²⁹ Judgment, Para. 255.

³⁰ GIS Lab, IDSA.

Bangladesh’s coast while drawing the boundary in order avoid creating a cut-off effect of the maritime entitlement of Bangladesh^{31,32}.

In order to not prejudice India’s rights in the BoB in the process of delimiting the maritime boundary, the ITLOS does not provide the precise location of the area beyond 200 nm. The verdict simply states that the equidistance line delimiting the EEZ and the continental shelf of Bangladesh and Myanmar “continues in the same direction beyond the 200 nm limit of Bangladesh until it reaches the area where the rights of third States may be affected”^{33,34}.

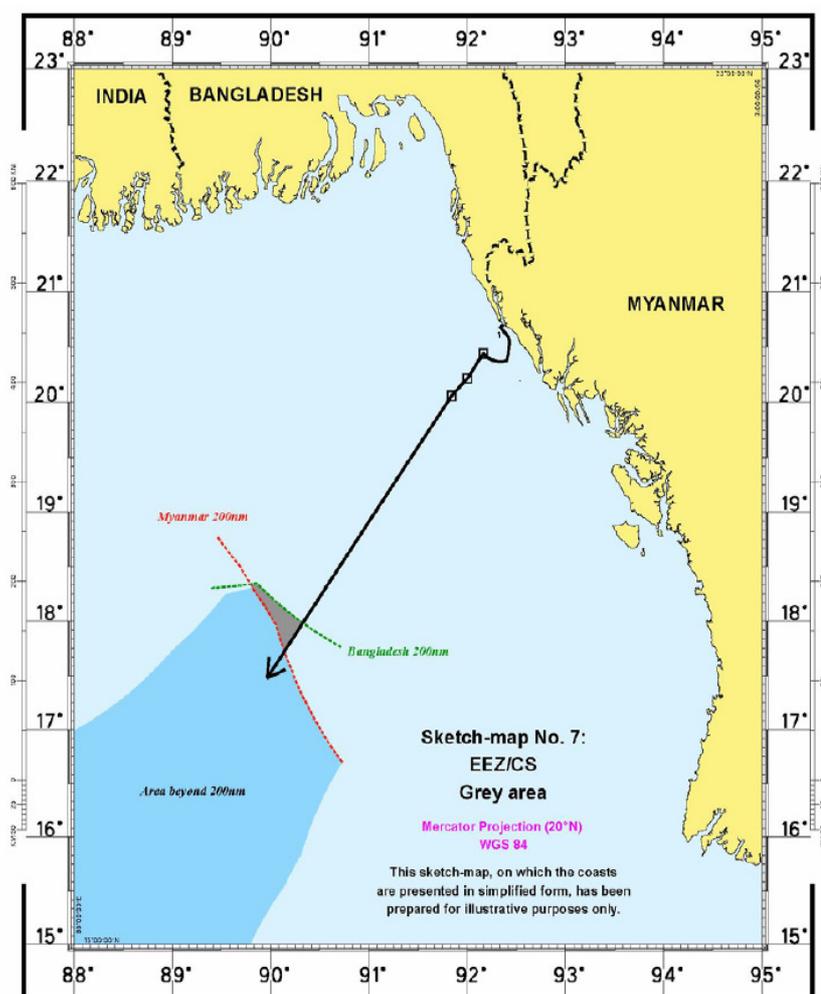


Figure 3: The “Grey Area” in the EEZs of Bangladesh and Myanmar³⁶

Based on the base points allocated by the ITLOS and the new maritime boundary between the EEZ and the continental shelf of Bangladesh and Myanmar, it is possible to make a rough map of Bangladesh’s continental shelf.

When plotted on the map, Bangladesh’s continental shelf ends where the outer limit of the continental shelf according to claims filed by India in the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf begins. On the other hand, the map in figure 1 displays essentially a “zone locked” Bangladesh³⁵. One can/may deduce from figure 1 that India

³¹ Judgment, Para. 293.

³² Judgment, Para. 461.

³³ Judgment, Para. 355.

³⁴ Judgment. Para. 462.

³⁵ Jared Bissinger, “The maritime boundary disputes between Bangladesh and Myanmar: motivations, potential solutions and implications”, pg. 107.

³⁶ *Dispute concerning Delimitation of the Maritime Boundary between Bangladesh and Myanmar in the Bay of Bengal (Bangladesh/Myanmar)*, Judgment of 14 March 2012, pg. 138.

like Myanmar may have believed that Bangladesh is not entitled to an extended continental shelf. Since the ITLOS verdict ensures equitable distribution of the area between Bangladesh and Myanmar, one can expect significant changes in the outer limits of the continental shelf claimed by India in the upcoming arbitration to avoid firstly overlapping of maritime entitlements and more importantly to ensure equitable allocation of the extended continental shelf to Bangladesh as well.

‘Grey Area’ refers to an area resulting from a delimitation line that is not an equidistance line that reaches the outer limit of one state’s EEZ and continues beyond it in the same direction until it reaches the outer limit of the other state’s EEZ³⁷. In this particular case, the ITLOS suggests ‘appropriate cooperative arrangements’ to resolve the issue³⁸. Such a ‘grey area’ is likely to arise after delimitation between India and Bangladesh since the conditions between India and Bangladesh are similar to those between Myanmar and Bangladesh.

The method or the agreements upon which Bangladesh and Myanmar resolve the issue of ‘grey area’ then can/may be used by India and Bangladesh to resolve the ‘grey areas’ that is likely to emerge. Both countries could avoid an ugly confrontation over their maritime boundaries during the arbitration by pursuing bilateral negotiations. It seems that India seems to be thinking along this line and has agreed to discuss maritime dispute; especially since the verdict is being hailed by many as a victory for Bangladesh³⁹.

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³⁷ Judgment, Para. 464.

³⁸ Judgment, Para. 476.

³⁹ “India ready to resolve maritime row with Bangladesh bilaterally”, *The Times of India*, 17 May 2012, <http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-03-17/south-asia/31204699_1_foreign-minister-dipu-moni-bangladesh-awami>, Accessed on: 22 July 2012.

Rohingya-Buddhist Clashes in Rakhine: The hopelessness of cyclical violence

Medha Chaturvedi*

In a country where democracy is only beginning to take roots, incidents of uncontrollable rioting along its borders can be very damaging. Myanmar has found itself dealing with the worst sectarian riots it has faced in decades, surrounded by an uncomfortable truth that for a democracy to build in a sustainable manner, all the people need to be involved. The ongoing riots and arson in Rakhine state in the northwestern part of the country has exposed the country's weaknesses internationally at a time when every effort by the Myanmar government was directed towards controlling the damage to its international reputation over two decades and more. Now, with a law and order problem having metamorphosed into a bloody communal violence and the resulting international attention it has received due to Bangladesh's refusal to take in asylum seekers who have been displaced on account of this bloodshed, Myanmar's fragile reforms process seems to have suffered a setback.

The Incident

The incident which sparked off these unprecedented riots was that of the gang rape and murder of a 27-year-old seamstress Ma Thida Htwe on May 29 in Rakhine, allegedly by three Rohingya Muslim youths. The three alleged perpetrators were arrested and while they were being taken for a trial, the local Rakhinese Buddhists demanded that they be handed over to them. The police refused and the angry locals started distributing pamphlets and organising public meetings against the "Kalars", as the Rohingya Muslims are referred to in a derogatory way. On 10 June, a bus headed to Yangon was stopped at Maungdaw town by the Rakhinese and 10 Rohingya Muslims were flogged to death. A cycle of revenge attacks ensued with the Rohingyas resorting to arson and burning down houses of the Rakhinese and vice versa.

The rioters took to the streets with swords, bamboo stocks and machetes and the violence quickly spread to nearby cities and towns including the capital of Rakhine, Sittwe forcing the government to impose an emergency and a dawn-to-dusk curfew on Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Sittwe, Thandwe, Kyaukphyu and Yanbye in the state. The military was deployed to control the situation.

Consequently, the Rakhinese were forced to take shelter in the local monasteries, while, scores of Rohingya families, mostly women and children, tried to escape from the riots into the bordering territories of Teknaf and Cox Bazaar in Bangladesh by crossing the Naf River in their rickety wooden trawlers. However, the Bangladesh government, citing high population pressure on the existing limited resources in an impoverished region, refused to take in these refugees and asylum seekers. Border security was heightened and about 1500 Rohingyas were returned from Bangladesh by their border guard forces despite pressure from the HRW and UNHRC.

Since June 10, more than 2,500 houses and nine monasteries, seven mosques and a school in different parts of the state were razed by incidents of arson. The officials claim that after

nearly a week of riots, the situation is under control now. According to official reports, some locals have already started rebuilding their homes and 37 refugee camps have been set up to house 32,000 victims so far.

International agencies like the UN evacuated their staff to safety and with limited information coming out of the state during emergency, the exact extent of damage can at best be speculated. According to an official press release by the Rakhine State Security and Border Affairs Ministry, at least 29 people were killed comprising 13 Rakhinese and 16 Muslims and 38 people were injured during these riots.

Reactions

President Thein Sein organised a hurried televised address to the country and said, “If we put racial and religious issues at the forefront, if we put the never-ending hatred, desire for revenge and anarchic actions at the forefront, and if we continue to retaliate and terrorize and kill each other, there’s a danger that these problems could multiply and move beyond Rakhine. If this happens, the general public should be aware that the country’s stability and peace, democratization process and development, which are only in transition right now, could be severely affected and much would be lost.” He declared a state of emergency in the state and imposed curfews to control the spillover effect of the riots. A martial-law like situation emerged as the military was sent in to control the condition. He also announced compensation for the victims, however, it was unclear if the compensation extended was only for the Rakhinese Buddhists or included the Rohingyas as well.

The EU congratulated the Myanmar government for handling the situation in a measured way. “We believe that the security forces are handling this difficult communal violence in an appropriate way. We welcome the priority which the Myanmar government is giving to dealing with all ethnic conflicts,” said Maja Kocijanic, spokesperson for EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton.

The US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressed deep concern and said, “The situation in Rakhine State underscores the critical need for mutual respect among all ethnic and religious groups and for serious efforts to achieve national reconciliation in Burma. We urge the people of Burma to work together toward a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic country that respects the rights of its diverse people.”

For Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, these riots could not have come at a worse time. She left on 13 June for her European sojourn after decades to accept her Nobel Prize for peace which she received in 1990. Her poorly timed visit is being silently criticized by political observers of the country. In a statement while in Europe, she emphasised the need for rule of law and said, “The present situation will have to be handled with delicacy and sensitivity and we need the cooperation of all people concerned to rebuild the peace that we want for our country.”

The implications of these riots

The impact of these riots must not be seen in isolation. The larger issue of the Rohingya-Buddhist animosity has to be factored in because the immediate trigger may have been the

rape of the Buddhist woman, but the aftermath has been bubbling under since 1982.

For a country struggling to come out of the label of being an oppressive regime with only majority interests at heart, these riots could not have come at a worse time. Myanmar, over the last one year has been carefully attempting to break that image and be identified as a democratic country which helped to ease the sanctions imposed on them by the West. In an effort to be seen as an inclusive government, President Sein has been trying to accomplish peace accords with the various ethnic armies which have been fighting. So far, a host of ethnic armies have inked peace agreements with the government while with the others, the government is still in talks. However, the Rohingya issue has always been its Achilles' heel.

The Rohingyas are a Sunni Muslim ethnic group which is not among the 135 recognised indigenous ethnic groups of Myanmar. They are of south Asian descent and speak a dialect of Bengali. In 1982, Gen Ne Win stripped the Rohingyas of their citizenship rights under a new law, effectively classifying them as illegal migrants. Bangladesh has refused to accept them as their citizens as majority of the group have lived in the Northern Rakhine state for centuries. Now, they are a stateless ethnic group who not only face repression at the hands of the government, but also by the local Buddhist community who treat them as a burden. In 1978, Over 200,000 Rohingyas escaped into Bangladesh from repressive military crackdown. Another 250,000 followed suit in 1991. After deliberations between the two countries, the erstwhile junta-led Myanmar government took back most of the 1991 refugees leaving about 28,000 who still live in UN-run refugee camps on the Bangladesh side of the border. However, since 1992, Bangladesh has also refused asylum to them. The Rohingyas have for long demanded their rights as most of them have been living in the country for many generations.

In Myanmar, almost 800,000 of them live in camps and shelters and spend their life in abject poverty. Due to the lack of citizenship rights for them, they cannot pursue education or employment and are subjected to humiliating laws pertaining to their living, matrimony and procreation and they undergo all forms of repression, from racial profiling to blacklisting for education and marriage. The problem is so acute that even the locals treat them as a threat to the civil life in the state and therefore, Rakhine state has remained on tenterhooks due to frequent skirmishes between the Rohingyas and the Rakhinese. Ironically, in the 2010 national elections, the Rohingyas were allowed to vote and yet, there have been many cases when they have been arrested on unlawful immigration charges in the country.

The “xenophobia” surrounding the Rohingyas is such that even the strongest advocate of ethnic reconciliation in the country, Suu Kyi, has remained largely evasive on this issue. Speaking for the Rohingyas could cause her popularity to decline as the majority Buddhist population considers them outsiders. The NLD has so far not made a conclusive statement on the issue. However, Suu Kyi, while addressing the ILO at Geneva during her tour was asked about this issue and she said that Myanmar needs very clear and precise law with regards to citizenship. “I think one of the greatest problems comes from the fear on both sides of the border—that is Bangladesh and Burma—that there will be illegal immigrants crossing all the time and this is due to the porous border. I think we need more responsible, incorrupt border vigilance,” she said implying the acceptance of the Rohingyas as illegal migrants.

This problem has always been a ticking time bomb in every sense. Not only does the exclusion of this community pose a threat to the process of national reconciliation, it also poses a serious law and order problems in Rakhine and other states too. Due to the state's denial to gainfully employ them, the youth remains in a state of frustration and is ripe for indoctrination by militant outfits. They are also vulnerable to human trafficking all over the South Asian region.

The cost of not handling this issue is much higher than the government of Myanmar has so far estimated. Considering that their concentration is in the Rakhine state, Kyakphue and Sittwe being two of the cities with a comparatively high Rohingya population, it might impact Myanmar's investment prospects adversely. Rakhine state has an international border with Bangladesh, access to the Bay of Bengal and consequently, all the countries in the BoB region, including India and the offshore oil and Natural Gas blocs where major exploration work by international companies is being carried out. In fact, Kyakphue port is the origin of the oil and gas pipelines being built by China National Petroleum Corp. that connects it to the Yunnan province. Therefore, having simmering tensions in the state may not be in the best interest of the country as that questions the safety of institutional infrastructure which supports investments.

The next census is due to take place in 2014 in the country and it is unlikely that the 800,000-strong Rohingya community would be included in it. This would only add to the unorganized sector and for a fractured economy like Myanmar's that is bad news.

Conclusion

The 1982 law left the Rohingyas at a disadvantage which needs immediate correction. Due to the excessive population pressure that Bangladesh faces, it has refused to take in any more refugees, In Myanmar, the Rohingyas are being treated as an obstacle in the process of democratization that the country is undergoing, which may not be the best approach. Such is the abhorrence for this group that according to some reports, some of the army personnel posed as Rakhinese to target the Rohingyas during the recent riots and due to the citizenship laws, such incidents go unchallenged.

To quote Jim Morrison, "People are strange when you're a stranger," how long can the government of Myanmar choose to ignore this issue and remain a stranger to its own people is the real question that the government needs to address.

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Cdr. Shishir Upadhyaya, *Combating Piracy in the Indian Ocean*, New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2011, pp. 140, 978-81-7049-409-6

Riddhi Shah

Piracy, long thought to be extinct in the world has resurfaced once more after almost a century in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). At the end of the 20th century, piracy first emerged in the Strait of Malacca. The number of attacks on the ships traversing through the Strait was 157 in 2004, half of the global total of 329. The Gulf of Aden became the next hot spot for piracy in the IOR. *Combating Piracy in the Indian Ocean* presents us with an overview of the naval security initiatives for combating piracy in the Strait of Malacca and the Gulf of Aden and the possible roles India can play in combating piracy in the IOR.

Cdr. Upadhyaya in the first chapter of his book briefly charts the history of piracy. He focuses on the 'Golden Age of Piracy' from the early 16th century to the late 17th century in West and Southeast Asia, followed by a short discussion on the emergence of piracy in the 21st century. Maritime terrorism, piracy and factors contributing to piracy are examined as a part of the maritime security scenario in the IOR in the second chapter. A complex picture involving all the parties namely, the pirates, the ship owners/industry, the states and the navies emerges at the end of this section.

More than half of the world's ships are FOC (Flags of Convenience) ships. Such ships are less likely to invest in onboard security measures since many choose to sail under a foreign flag to reduce operating costs in the first place. FOC states have been often accused of low security standards and seldom possess the capability to ensure the security of their ships. Added to these lax security standards is the fact that navies have no legal right to convoy ships owned by another state and consequently the task of providing security to approximately half of the world's ships is placed on the shoulders of handful of navies.

The definition of piracy as under the UNCLOS, the International Maritime Organization, the International Maritime Bureau, the salient discrepancies between them, the drawbacks of each definition and lastly the extant Indian laws on the subject have been examined in the book. UNCLOS, 1982 provides an acceptable definition of piracy under which a state may punish the person or persons held responsible without facing condemnation from another state but does not prescribe any punishment for the act. The IMO and IMB definitions were evolved to overcome this.

However, differences between the two have been responsible for causing confusion and preventing the development of policy responses. The Indian Penal Code has been found wanting in the area of piracy since laws that *per se* address the issue are absent. These concerns have been effectively addressed by the author and in the process of doing so, the gap in the legal framework and challenges to the same whilst dealing with piracy are exposed and highlighted.

Piracy in the Gulf of Aden is a part of a greater problem faced by Somalia. The country has been without a central government since 1991 and is one of the longest running failed state in the world. This lack of security on land has extended itself towards the seas. The number of attacks on ships by Somali pirates appears to have doubled each year. Whereas, piracy in the

Gulf of Aden is somewhat a current phenomenon, piracy in the Strait of Malacca has historically been a profitable way of life.

Piracy came back as a way of life during the Asian financial crisis due to widespread unemployment. Recognising the enormity and gravity of the dilemma, the book attempts to analyse piracy in both the regions in depth albeit in different ways. The modus operandi along with the trends in the attacks perpetrated by Somali pirates are outlined in order to provide an insight into the how pirates in the Gulf function.

The writer dwells at length on the security initiatives by the international community in the Gulf and very significantly the challenges they face. When dealing with piracy in the Strait of Malacca, the author in addition to the security initiatives in the region by the international community and the challenges they face has also provided information on the history of regional cooperation in the area, a critique of the current security arrangement and the scope for participation by the Indian navy in the regional security initiatives.

Information on the modus operandi of the pirates in the Strait of Malacca and likewise a history of cooperation along with a critique of the security arrangement and scope for Indian participation in the Gulf would have produced a holistic assessment and analysis of the subject. Facts show that India's trade by volume and value is heavily dependent on the sea. Moreover, India possesses the largest navy and coast guard in the region. By virtue of these facts, India is expected to play a bigger role than it currently does in combating piracy in the region.

The author is aware of this fact and highlights it in his book. India's role and experiences in combating piracy in the IOR and policy options for the nation are the focus of the last two chapters. India's experiences in combating piracy are accentuated chiefly through case studies in chapter five. A major back draw here has been the writer's focus merely on the successful operations carried out by the Indian navy. Shedding light on unsuccessful operations is equally necessary to ensure all rounded learning and the development of an objective outlook of India's actual capability and capacity for combating piracy.

Policy options for India have been recommended purely in the field of International Relations and for the private shipping industry. Even though the author has acknowledged the absence and need of laws within the Indian judicial system specifically addressing piracy, policy recommendations in the field of India's judicial domain have been neglected. The failure to illuminate the flaws, if any, within the Indian navy has had a direct bearing on the policy recommendations. Cdr. Upadhyaya lists no recommendations for the navy and in the process de-emphasizes the need to constantly enhance India's defences at sea.

The book offers a detailed picture of the gaps in the international and national legal system; and the initiatives taken along with the challenges facing the international community. The chapters on piracy in the Gulf of Aden and in the Strait of Malacca are definitely informative. Yet one is unable to discern the logic in the deliberate exemption of certain information provided when dealing with piracy in the Gulf of Aden and exempted from the chapter on piracy in the Strait of Malacca and vice versa. A compelling argument is made for India to become involved in combating piracy in the IOR but the book fails to deliver policy options for comprehensive development of India's capability for combating terrorism.

Thant Myint –U, *Where China Meets India: Burma and the New Crossroads of Asia* London:Faber and Faber Ltd, 2011, ISBN 978-0-571-23963-4, 358 pages.

Udai Bhanu Singh

As Asia's geography changes, Myanmar is fast emerging as the crossroads where two distinct civilizations of India and China are being drawn together in a new zone of strategic significance that has intimations of a new 'Great Game'. As a least developed country (LDC) which stood isolated under military rule for nearly half a century, Myanmar is startled by the unexpected attention. The author began writing this book in 2008 and traveled to upper Myanmar, north west China and north east India. Although few fully recognized or understood the implications of the changes occurring in Myanmar then, it can safely be said that Thant Myint-U was better placed at reading the tea leaves than many others. For instance, in his talk at the India International Centre (New Delhi) in January 2008 which Shyam Saran chaired, he chose to go back to Myanmar's history to find answers to the country's present-day challenges. He noted that its easily forgotten that for a long time Burma's main enemy was China and that the Americans had provided aid and development to the military government Myanmar's tragedy was that the moment it moved away from a policy of isolations, its relations with the West were ruptured, and it moved closer to Communist China.

Thant Myint-U could see that Myanmar's domestic developments are closely intertwined with external influences. At another gathering in New Delhi in October 2007, the author had aptly noted that we need to have an international consensus on whether we want regime change or better governance. Although, the book is divided into three parts where each part is around 100 pages long. Grandson of the first Asian UN Secretary General U Thant with rich experience in the United Nations himself, Thant Myint-U who secured his education at Harvard and Cambridge has continued his writing interest in Myanmar following his earlier book, *The River of Lost Footsteps*.

Assessment:

The book makes for easy reading: it relies less on academic pomposity and weaves in its research with a style that is a mix of a personal memoir and a travelogue. The end notes are not too numerous or distracting and have been safely stacked towards the end of the book (before the index) for the curious. As such the work is pitched as much at the general reader as the specialist seeking gems of wisdom. The book retains the old names- Burma, Rangoon, Akyab, Irrawaddy- it would have helped if a separate table giving old and their new place names was included in the book. The four maps included in the book provide a peep into the historical megatrends not only in respect of Myanmar but the larger Southern Asian region from first century BC, through the ninth century AD, and the seventeenth century and finally 2011. While these maps certainly give a much needed historical perspective, what is missing in the maps is a geostrategic perspective which maps detailing connectivity between countries of the neighbourhood would have provided. Only the last map depicts the Kyaukphyu-Kunming railway and pipeline. Many other roads, ports, airports etc would have been useful. Similarly concentration of ethnic groups on the border could have been shown in a map, to

explain cross-border linkages.

The author doesn't merely list the main politico-historical events. He has instead effectively woven the economic, social and cultural with the political and strategic. It is his grounding in history that provides us insights which seem both reasonable and well reasoned. He has also tried to bring out the link of India's northeast with Myanmar. He also notes the poor infrastructure development in the periphery which is as much a legacy of the Raj as later developments. The partition had left the northeast virtually landlocked and therefore the need to link up with the Indian Ocean remains. However, the absence of railway network in much of northeast and poor infrastructure become a factor in poor cross-border connectivity also. Thant Myint-U expresses doubts about the usefulness of the Kaladan Multimodal project, which is proposed to link Mizoram with Sittwe port. This opposition is a little difficult to understand. Part of the problem in the infrastructure development has been the excessive delay in the implementation of these projects by India. In a period of political flux in Myanmar, there is increasing possibility of opposition to projects by local populations, as China realized to its discomfiture in respect of the Myitsone dam in the Kachin inhabited area. What the four states of Northeast India need is more not less connectivity with Myanmar and Southeast Asia. There is need for building airports, roads and railways and utilizing the river connectivity as well. This requires the development of the Asian High Way and the Trans-Asian Railway network. Despite the obvious difficulties in the northeast, he tends to exaggerate the lawlessness and the role of the insurgents when he states while referring to Manipur that "the Indian security forces barely control more than the capital city of Imphal..." (p. 304) He explains how China through proactive economic engagement has successfully integrated its Yunnan province with that of Myanmar and how Assam has continued to be a troubled space because it has not. He ends the book aptly saying: "Progress in Burma would be a boon for the region. A peaceful, prosperous and democratic Burma would be a game-changer for all Asia." As a scramble for Myanmar is underway and the Indian Ocean acquires increasing salience, the book by Thant Myint-U is one book that would be sought by the expert and layman alike to help resolve the enigma that Myanmar has been.

April By-elections in Myanmar

Haokam Vaiphei*

On the eve of the April by-elections I took a trip to Moreh-Tamu on the Indo-Myanmar border and travelled up to Kalemmyo. People were amazed and excited to see the elections and its results. In my opinion democracy is one thing that their country needs the most. The 2012 Myanmar elections were held on 1 April 2012. The National League for Democracy (NLD) under the leadership of Aung San Suu Kyi ran in the seat of Kawhmu, where she and her party won 43 of the 44 seats they had contested for (out of a total of 45). Democracy



seems to be crucial for many citizens of Myanmar



Myanmar once a part of the British India and separated in 1937, is actually not new to democracy. The system of government after independence was parliamentary democracy, until the 1962 military coup under the leadership of General Ne Win laid the foundation of military rule giving shape to Myanmar as it is today. Despite the military stance, the forces of democracy under the leadership of Aung San Suu Kyi did not remain mute spectators. As was the case in 1988 during

the so called 8888 Uprising, the democratic forces challenged the military rule leading to serious repercussions.

Large popular pro-democracy demonstrations by millions of Burmese galvanized the people with hopes for change. Since then, harsh military rule has stamped out most vestiges of pro-democracy political opposition and terrified the population into submission. The regime remained isolated from most of the world, partly by choice and partly due to the unwillingness of several other states to support the military junta. Elections in May 1990 resulted in a landslide victory for the political opposition. However it was annulled by the military government inviting criticism towards the democratic regime and on the grounds of human rights.

The military conducted elections once again in November 2010. The change appears to be purely on the surface of the structure that is even now filled by the generals that have ruled Myanmar since 1962. A key part of the military's proclamation upon seizing power was a pledge to respect the people's wishes for free elections once law and order had been restored to Myanmar. Nonetheless the new generations of military leaders have found means to bargain with democracy. The recent elections are a clear testimony to the soft attitude of the new government.



The recently held elections could become the foundation for democracy, where people's voices would be given utmost significance. Hopes for installing a truly free government hadn't run this high in decades. 'We hope this will be the beginning of a new era', a beaming 66-year-old Suu Kyi said in a brief victory speech on April 2 (Monday), a day after the elections. Reducing the military's participation in government was one of the most important changes that needed to be made. Unlike the 2010 general elections, the government allowed foreign observers and journalists to witness the April 1st polls.



The White House in a statement on April 2 said "it is an indication that the government of Burma intends to continue along the path of greater openness, transparency, and reform". The junta finally ceded power last year, and although many of its leaders merely swapped their military uniforms for civilian suits, they went on to stun even their staunchest critics by releasing political prisoners, signing cease-fires with rebels, relaxing press censorship, allowing trade unions to operate

and opening a direct dialogue with Suu Kyi-whom they had attempted to silence for decades. Indeed, this is a small step in Burma's long struggle for democracy where so much more still needs to be done. There is no magical cure for the country's ills and for getting rid of the former dictators and ex-junta generals. But it is too early to predict what comes next and how the political landscape of the nation will change.

Yet one cannot cease to wonder about the consequences. The weekend vote for only a few dozen legislative seats may have sown the seeds of something far more significant — the possibility of Suu Kyi's party winning the next ballot in 2015 and taking control of Myanmar's government. This is a tantalizing dream for her supporters, however this may be unrealistic for a nation still heavily influenced by a feared military whose powers and influence remain enshrined in the constitution. The military and the retired generals who hold the nation's top posts still wield near-absolute power.

Suu Kyi and her party would occupy only a small minority of the 664-seat legislature; not enough to change a constitution engineered to keep the status quo by allotting 25 percent of parliament's seats to the army. There is speculation that the government is solely using Suu Kyi to impress Western nations and to achieve freedom from years of paralyzing economic sanctions. Still, her entry into the legislature is hugely symbolic, as is her party's overwhelming win.



Democracy has little appeal in everyday life since it does not provide a solution for economic problems any more than it does for the creation of conditions guaranteeing its successful functioning in the political sphere. One hopes that what appears to be a trend away from democracy in South and Southeast Asia will in the end turn out to be an evolutionary process that preserve the values of democracy in a structure that is most suited to the local environment.

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ASEAN

ASEAN Human Rights Declaration to be Discussed at Cambodia

The seventh meeting on the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) was held in Kuala Lumpur on June 22–23, where the AHRD draft to be submitted to the 45th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting and is to be approved at the ASEAN Summit scheduled to take place in November was finalized.¹ This declaration is one of the most significant documents to be drafted after the adoption of the ASEAN Charter in 2007.

The drafting process has been criticized by NGOs and civil society for the lack of transparency and public participation. Yuyun Wahyuningrum of the Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) claims that the Commission had rejected activists' requests to share the latest draft. On the other hand, I Gede Ngurah Swajaya, Indonesia's Permanent Representative to ASEAN stated that all available input was used and denied the allegations that the commission worked in secrecy. He maintained that dialogue with civil society groups was still possible before the upcoming summit in November.²

Code of Conduct for South China Sea Drafted

Officials of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) concluded drafting the core elements for the Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea. The draft will be submitted to the ASEAN foreign ministers for approval before negotiations begin with China. The COC is based on the Declaration of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea that was adopted in Phnom Penh in 2002 between ASEAN and China.

Soeung Rathchavy, secretary of state at Cambodia's Foreign Ministry said that the COC was important to not only maintain peace and stability in the region but also to boost friendship and cooperation between ASEAN and China. Currently, four ASEAN member states namely Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei are at loggerheads with China over claims of partial sovereignty in the South China Sea.³

¹ *The Association of the Southeast Asian Nations*, "The Seventh Meeting of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) on an ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) and the Second Regional Consultation of AICHR on the AHRD", 25 June 2012, <<http://www.asean.org/27044.php>>, Accessed on: 29 June 2012.

² *The Jakarta Post*, "Maintaining transparency key to ASEAN human rights declaration", 28 June 2012, <<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/06/28/maintaining-transparency-key-asean-human-rights-declaration.html>>, Accessed on: 29 June 2012.

³ "ASEAN concludes drafting key elements for COC in South China Sea", 25 May 2012, <<http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=810621&publicationSubCategoryId=200>>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

25th ASEAN – US Eminent Persons Group (EPG) Meeting

Manila, Philippines was host to the 25th ASEAN – US Eminent Persons Group (EPG) Meeting. The meeting is held annually in an attempt to strengthen cooperation between U.S. and the 10 member nations of ASEAN. The meeting was co-chaired by J. Stapelton, former US Ambassador to Singapore and former Ambassador Rodolfo Severino, the Philippines eminent person.

The objective of the meeting was to give recommendations for reinforcing the relationship between U.S. and ASEAN in the future. The participants discussed strategies for improving development and cooperation. Key elements of the US-ASEAN partnership such as opportunities to improve people-to-people ties, enhance trade and investment, deepen security cooperation, improving coordination in natural disasters and responding to the global challenges of climate change, energy and food security were reviewed.⁴

ASEAN Defence Ministers Reaffirm Commitment to Peace and Security

ASEAN Defence Ministers signed a joint declaration during the 6th ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia that reaffirmed their commitment towards enhancing regional peace and security⁵. Defence issues were discussed openly and the importance of maritime security was stressed. All parties supported the implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the East Sea (DOC) by ASEAN and China. In addition to this, emphasis was laid on working towards the Code of Conduct (COC) for peace, stability and security in the region.⁶

ASEAN-India

ASEAN Receives Letter of Credence by Ambassador of the Republic of India

The Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, received the Letter of Credence from the Ambassador of the Republic of India to ASEAN, H.E. Mr. Gurjit Singh, in a ceremony held at the ASEAN Secretariat on 27 June 2012 in Jakarta. Ambassador Singh succeeds H.E. Mr. Biren Nanda who completed his tenure as the Ambassador of the Republic of India to

⁴ Jerry E. Esplanda, “Asean, US open Manila meet on strengthening cooperation”, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 22 May 2012, <<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/37479/asean-us-open-manila-meet-on-strengthening-cooperation>>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

⁵ *Channel News Asia*, “ASEAN defence ministers sign joint declaration”, 29 May 2012, <<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/singaporelocalnews/view/1204326/1/.html>>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

⁶ *Vietnam.net*, “ASEAN regional security talks in Cambodia”, 26 May 2012, <<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/en/politics/22823/asean-regional-security-talks-in-cambodia.html>>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

ASEAN earlier in March. Ambassador Singh, who is based in Jakarta, is concurrently Ambassador of the Republic of India to Indonesia and accredited to Timor Leste.⁷

Malaysia can be India's gateway to Asean

Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak launched the Asean-India SME Conference on 21 June 2012. He said Malaysia was willing to facilitate the entry of Indian entrepreneurs into South-East Asia. The conference focused on methods by which entrepreneurs from both sides could collaborate to take advantage of the developing business opportunities. He also opened the inaugural SME week 2012 that is to take place during the final week of June every year at various locations nationwide.

Malaysia is furthermore prepared to increase its investment in India. Najib said the government's challenge was in finding ways to support the growth of small and medium industries in the country and added that Malaysia was currently the 27th largest foreign investor in India.⁸ The Government rewarded innovative SMEs, besides providing training and skill enhancing services, financial support and credit services as well as business matching services. Also present were International Trade and Industry Minister (Miti) Mustapa Mohamed and SME Corp Chief Executive Officer Hafsa Hashim.

Artists set for ASEAN Painters' Camp

ASEAN artists Osman Mohammad and Dr Hamid Zakaria, both seconded by the Brunei Art Forum, attended (along with other painters from ASEAN), the one-week Asean Painter's Camp in Darjeeling, West Bengal on July 11 to commemorate 20 years of ASEAN-India relations and India's 10th year as a summit partner.

To mark the milestone, ASEAN and India have set up several commemorative events that culminate into India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit in New Delhi at the end of the year. Furthermore, the commemorative events, themed "India-ASEAN" and "intra-ASEAN" connectivity, also include a visit to ASEAN ports by sail training ship INS Sudarshini in an attempt to trace the monsoon-route of the sea-farers of the gone-by era⁹.

⁷ "ASEAN Receives Letter of Credence by Ambassador of the Republic of India", *Association of Southeast Asian Nations*, 27 June 2012, <<http://www.aseansec.org/27048.php>>, Accessed on: 28 June 2012.

⁸ P.Aruna, "Malaysia can be India's gateway to Asean", 22 June 2012, <<http://www.asianewsnet.net/home/news.php?id=32308&sec=2>>, Accessed on: 23 June 2012.

⁹ Ernest Z. Bower and Prashanth Parameswaran "Can India Transition from Looking East to Acting East with ASEAN's Help? Commemorating Two Decades of ASEAN-India Relations", *Centre for Strategic and International Studies*, 13 June 2012, <<http://csis.org/publication/can-india-transition-looking-east-acting-east-aseans-help-commemorating-two-decades-asean>>, Accessed on: 14 June 2012.

14th ASEAN-India senior officials meeting in Cambodia

The 14th ASEAN-India senior officials meeting took place in Phnom Penh on May 27 to evaluate progress of ASEAN- India cooperation and the direction it may take in the future.¹⁰ The meeting was co-chaired by secretary of state at Cambodia's Foreign Ministry Soeung Rathchavy and Indian Ministry of External Affairs Secretary Sanjay Singh. The development of India-Myanmar-Laos-Vietnam-Cambodia highway and an extension of the India-Myanmar-Thailand highway to Laos and Cambodia was discussed.

The implementation of the ASEAN-India Partnership's plan for peace, progress and shared prosperity from 2010 - 2015 and the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area was deliberated and views were exchanged on other regional and international issues. The meeting was in preparation for the 45th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting, the post ministerial conferences, the 19th ASEAN Regional Forum, the East Asia Foreign Ministers Meeting on July 9-13 and the 10th ASEAN-India Summit to be held in Phnom Penh in November this year.¹¹

International meet on ASEAN-India Connectivity held 'Development of North East infrastructure required for a booming Look East Policy'

The International Conference on ASEAN-India Connectivity and Northeastern Region of India organized by the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi in collaboration with the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), Jakarta and the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Kolkatta was held in Imphal on 4 May at Hotel Classic., Ram Muivah, Principal Secretary of Works and the Chief Guest of the inaugural function of the conference said that Manipur is becoming an important spot in the international arena with the coming of Look East Policy. The Trans Asian Highway will be passing through the state. In order to reap the benefits of the Look East Policy infrastructural development is required. The road to Moreh, a town bordering Burma needs to be developed at the earliest, while bilateral trade between Burma and Manipur required improvement.

Plans and policies in Manipur and other North Eastern States should be chalked out to ensure better relationship between the people of the state/NE states and the South East Asian Countries. Connectectivity within the North Eastern states must also be improved. The inaugural function of the conference was also attended by Rajeev Singh, Secretary General of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Bishwajit Dhar, Director of Research and Information System for Developing countries as presidium members¹².

¹⁰ <http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=811366> &publicationSubCategoryId=200 Accessed May 30, 2012

¹¹ http://dangcongsan.vn/cpv/Modules/News_English/News_Detail_E.aspx?CN_ID=524749&CO_ID=30107 Accessed on 30 May 2012

¹² "International meet on ASEAN-India Connectivity held 'Development of NE infrastructure required for a booming Look East Policy'", *E-Pao*, 04 May 2012, <<http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=19..050512.may12>>, Accessed on 14 May 2012.

ASEAN-India car rally will kick off in November in Indonesia to India during the special ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit scheduled in New Delhi in the third week of December. The rally will be held to celebrate the 20th year anniversary of the ASEAN-India relationship.

The first car rally was held in 2004 across all countries of peninsular South East Asia, crossing a distance of over 8,000 km, starting in Guwahati, Assam, and ending in Singapore. It was organised by the CII, with the support of the Indian government. However this year, the rally is to begin from Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on November 25. Owing to the lack of road link between Indonesia and Singapore, the actual road rally is to commence on November 28 from Singapore and cover ASEAN countries Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar and enter India from the Moreh border in Imphal in Manipur. Within India, the rally will proceed from Moreh to Kohima and Bimapur in Nagaland and Guwahati, Assam. Here the flagdown march will take place on December 16. Some cars will then proceed to Delhi, where the Prime Minister, along with 10 heads of states of ASEAN countries, will flagdown the entire rally.¹³

Indonesia

Fundamentalism Raises its Ugly Head in Indonesia

Contradictory regulations between 2007 and 2006 of the gubernatorial decree and the joint ministerial decree on the construction of houses of worship may lead to the closure of at least 20 churches in Indonesia's Aceh province. Under the gubernatorial decree, a house of worship can only be built if it has secured the approval of 150 worshippers while the ministerial decree requires the approval of 90 worshippers and of 60 local residents of different faiths.¹⁴

Although these decrees by themselves are harmless, they have been transformed into a restrictive law for the people practicing different faiths after a local edit was issued that forbade Muslims from approving construction of houses of worships other than the mosques. In another instance, a Muslim mob threw stones and bags of urine on approximately 100 protestants, during an Ascension Day service on the border of Jakarta.

Besides a few indistinct public statements about non-violence, the increase in coercion of the minorities in Indonesia has hardly attracted the President's attention. This lack of attention appears to have further emboldened the extremist groups. Lady Gaga, an American pop-star's sold out concert was cancelled in May, when the Islamic Defenders Front a Muslim hardliner threatened to create chaos if she were to enter Indonesia.¹⁵

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ *Zee News*, "Indonesia: 20 Churches Face Demolition", 13 June 2012, <http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/indonesia-20-churches-face-demolition_781487.html>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

¹⁵ *The Economist*, "Indonesia's president is accused of turning a blind eye to religious violence", 9 June 2012, <<http://www.economist.com/node/21556618>>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

Riots in Papua, Indonesia

Riots rocked the Papua Province of Indonesia on June 14, 2012. Angry over the death of independence activist Mako Tabuni, the mob caused injuries and set fire to shops, cars and motorbikes. The police said that Tabuni was shot when he attempted to evade arrest and grabbed the weapon of an officer.

Tabuni had been suspected of recent spate of attacks in the province that led to the death of 16 people of which 7 were soldiers and police officers. New York based group, Human Rights Watch held the military responsible for the violence in the district to some extent. The group claimed that the government was not investigating these killings and was actively preventing journalists and human rights monitoring group from investigating the matter themselves.¹⁶

Indonesia Concerned About Over-Exploitation of Minerals

Indonesia, a major exporter of minerals has recently become concerned regarding the over-exploitation of minerals in the country and has begun reworking on rules to prevent the abuse of minerals. The government has decided to curb the exports of 14 mineral commodities and a 20% export tax has been levied on the same. The 14 mineral commodities include antimony, bauxite, chromium, copper, gold, iron ore, iron sand, lead, manganese, molybdenum, nickel, platinum, silver and tin.

The government is also planning on issuing regulations to control coal production and trading since majority of the coal produced is exported.¹⁷ Japan one of the nickel user, called on Indonesia to remove the restrictions. In 2011, Japan imported 1.95 million tons or 53% of its total nickel import from Indonesia. Restraining regulations along with a 20% tax hike is expected to raise the price of nickel by about 18 percent. Japan has threatened to drag the matter to the WTO if the restrictions over minerals were not watered down immediately.¹⁸

China Wants to Step Up Electronic Defence Cooperation With Indonesia

Chinese defense industrial group, China Electronics Technology Group Corporation (CETC) has offered to help Indonesia in the field of Defence Electronics. The cooperation would cover three stages and would include designing, developing, fabricating and assembling electronic equipment such as radars. CETC already has cooperation with the Indonesian

¹⁶ Jeffrey Pattirajawane, "Activist killing sparks riot in Indonesia's Papua", *Associated Press*, 15 June 2012, <<http://news.yahoo.com/activist-killing-sparks-riot-indonesias-papua-093858749.html>>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

¹⁷ *The Economic Times*, "Indonesia plans to curtail export of minerals", 21 May 2012, <http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-05-21/news/31800882_1_coal-production-iron-ore-mineral>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

¹⁸ *Bloomberg*, "Japan May Take Indonesia To WTO Over Curbs On Metal Exports", 12 June 2012, <<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-06-12/japan-may-take-indonesia-to-wto-over-ban-on-ore-shipments.html>>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

Defence Ministry and Military for guided missiles speed boats. Similar cooperation has been offered by CETC to Pakistan's National Electronic Complex of Pakistan (NECOP)-¹⁹

Indonesia to Send Peacekeeping Battalion to Darfur and Mindanao

A battalion of peacekeeping troops from the Indonesian Military will be sent to Darfur, Sudan to help maintain peace between the rebel and tribal fighting on the request of United Nations. This will be the first time that Indonesia will send peacekeepers to Sudan.²⁰

In addition to this, the Indonesian Military was preparing to send another peacekeeping team to Mindanao in Southern Philippine, under the command of United Nations. Here the Indonesian Taskforce will be participating in the United Nation's Monitoring Team. The Task Force includes 10 officers from the Army, the Air Force and the Navy; seven from the Foreign Ministry and three from the State Intelligence Agency.²¹

Laos

Vietnam-Laos Celebrate 35 Years of Friendship and Cooperation Treaty

Vietnam and Laos held a conference on "Building a border of peace and friendship between Vietnam and Laos" as a part of activities held to celebrate the 2012 Vietnam-Laos Year of Friendship and Solidarity: 50 years of the establishment of the Vietnam-Laos diplomatic ties and 35 years of the signing of the Friendship and Cooperation Treaty between the two countries. LFNC (Lao Front for National Construction) presented Lao State's Friendship Order to ten provinces of Vietnam that share a border with Laos.

The conference reviewed results of two years of implementation of the emulation agreement of VFF (Vietnam Fatherland Front) Central Committee and LFNC. Participants heard reports of the activities taking place on the two fronts during the conference. The reports highlighted coordination between the two fronts and the local governments of provinces along the border, in strengthening solidarity, mutual support and promoting socio-economic and cultural development between people in the border area.

The two sides will continue promoting peace and friendship, developing traditional solidarity, special relations and multifaceted cooperation between people on the both sides of the border during 2012-2014. Focus will also be developed on building residential areas with political

¹⁹ *China Defense Blog*, "China is offered to build Indonesia's costal C4I system", 16 May 2012, <<http://china-defense.blogspot.in/2012/05/china-is-offered-to-build-indonesias.html>>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

²⁰ Nani Afrida, "Indonesia to send peacekeeping battalion to Darfur", *The Jakarta Post*, 08 June 2012, <<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/06/08/indonesia-send-peacekeeping-battalion-darfur.html>>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

²¹ "Indonesia to deploy peacekeeping mission to Mindanao", 18 May 2012, <<http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=808408&publicationSubCategoryId=200>>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

stability and solidarity among ethnics groups in the localities and socio-economic development in boundary localities in order to ensure national defence and security along the shared border.²²

Railway Construction to Continue Between Laos and Thailand

Mrs Viengtong Siphandon, Deputy Minister of Finance of Laos signed an agreement with Mr. Acksiri Buranasiri, President of the Neighboring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency of Thailand to construct an additional 7.7 kms of tracks to the existing railroad connecting Thailand's Nong Khai province to Tha Naleng in Laos. Construction on the line had stopped when Laos had refused to finance the construction of the rest of the line to the Laotian capital while Thailand had agreed to finance the line for approximately 5kms of rail tracks after the border.

According to the new agreement, Thailand has decided to fund the project upto THB 1.65 billion. The track will be a one meter-wide Meter Guage system that could be adjusted to 1.46 meters to accommodate the planned high-speed railway system. The railway construction project is aimed at facilitating tourism and business and is expected to be completed by 2014²³.

Malaysia

Malaysia – US Strengthen Ties

United States Defence Secretary Leon Panetta met with Malaysian Defence Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi in a bilateral meeting at the end of the annual Shangri-la conference held in Singapore. In a press statement, Pentagon press secretary George Little confirmed that the two leaders had agreed to strengthen the bilateral military-to-military relationship. Little said “During the meeting, both leaders stated that with a renewed focus on Asia as part of the US defence strategy, they look forward to strengthening the US-Malaysia military-to-military relationship, including expansion of multilateral exercises”²⁴.

NGOs demand UN Sanctions Against Malaysia

21 NGOs from nine countries under a coalition led by Swiss Bruno Manser Fund called on the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to impose sanctions against Malaysia for not taking action under the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the UN

²² *Vietnam.net*, “Vietnam, Laos boost border cooperation”, 1 July 2012, < <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/en/politics/24112/vietnam-laos-boost-border-cooperation.html>>, Accessed on: 1 July 2012.

²³ Luc Cintrinot, “Thailand and Laos Agree to Continue on Railway Construction”, *Travel Daily News*, 26 June 2012, < <http://traveldailynews.asia/news/article/49827/thailand-and-laos-agree-to>>, Accessed on: 1 July 2012.

²⁴ *NewStraitTimes*, “US-Malaysia ties to soar”, 9 June 2012, <<http://www.nst.com.my/nation/general/us-malaysia-ties-to-soar-1.92644>>, Accessed on: June 14, 2012.

Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) against Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud. The Malaysian authorities have been criticized for providing legal and political protection to Taib, one of the wealthiest politician in Southeast Asia and the chief offender in the large-scale destruction of Malaysia's rainforests.

The NGOs said "Malaysia's failure to charge Mr. Taib with criminal and other offences is contrary to its international duties and legal obligations as a party to UNCAC and UNTOC". This complaint has been validated by NGOs from Malaysia, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Norway, the United Kingdom, Nepal and Australia. A similar NGO coalition last year had provided detailed evidence of the crimes of the Taib family and had asked Malaysia's top prosecutors to arrest and prosecute Taib along with twelve of his family members but the Attorney General of Malaysia, the Inspector General of Police and the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission had failed to reply or comment on the NGOs' grievances.²⁵

Myanmar

Myanmar Protests: An Opportunity to Show More Reform

Protests in Myanmar outages gained momentum on 25th May over chronic power cuts after opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi gave the protest her blessing while the government's response added to the outrage. These demonstrations have been the largest since the 2007 monk-led uprising in which dozens were killed and hundreds arrested. Emergency measures were announced to boost electricity supplies. The government has promised to bring in six 2-megawatt generators from U.S. company Caterpillar Inc and two 25-megawatt gas turbines from U.S. conglomerate General Electric Co.

The state media contends that Myanmar plants have been generating about 1,340 megawatts while power demand has reached 1,850 megawatts and a few generators will not suffice to meet the public demands. Moreover, the former military government have been accused of enriching itself at public expense by selling natural gas to China at the cost of frequent power outages in Myanmar. These accusations have prompted the Chinese government into a defensive stance and Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei told reporters that Chinese companies had "respect for relevant Myanmar laws and rules", adding that protesters' anger was directed at Myanmar's overstretched power grid rather than China's energy imports.

Suu Kyi's asked the people of Myanmar to be "pragmatic" and to protest within the law. She said "The power blackouts today are the result of decades of mismanagement and it is quite impossible to work for a sufficiency of power supply for the nation overnight."²⁶

²⁵ *World Wire*, "NGOs demand UN sanctions against Malaysia over Taib crimes", June 4, 2012, <<http://world-wire.com/2012/06/04/ngos-demand-un-sanctions-against-malaysia-over-taib-crimes/>>, Accessed on: June 14, 2012.

²⁶ "Myanmar protests an opportunity to show more reform", *Reuters*, 25 May 2012, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/25/us-myanmar-protest-idUSBRE84Oo8U20120525>>, Accessed on 27 May 2012.

India eyes trade, connectivity during PM's Myanmar visit.

Manmohan Singh on 27 May became the first Indian prime minister in 25 years to visit Myanmar on a three-day official trip to boost trade and connectivity. The two countries signed a number of accords including a revised aviation agreement to scale up the number of flights. India might announce a fresh line of credit for development projects. A delegation of CEOs of major Indian companies led by Sunil Bharti Mittal of Bharti Enterprises and Rajya Vardhan Kanoria of Kanoria Chemicals and Industries Ltd. is also expected to visit Myanmar.

The India-Myanmar trade comprises pulses, meat products, timber and pharmaceuticals and it is currently pegged at just \$1.2 billion. New Delhi is looking at doubling it by 2015. In comparison, Myanmar's trade with China, its other giant neighbour, is \$4.4 billion.²⁷ An expert in South Asian studies with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Ye Hailin, told the *Global Times* daily that, India has been "searching the world" for energy resources, and "Myanmar could be India's next-door supplier".²⁸

Myanmar: UN Envoy Discusses State of Emergency with President

During the 2nd week of June, communal violence swept through western Myanmar killing 29 people and displacing an estimated 30,000. Damages were inflicted on both of the contending ethnic communities. When the situation spread to Sittwe, a seaport and the area's main urban center, army troops were called out to help quell the violence and a dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed. President Thein Sein declared an emergency for the state, giving the military full administrative powers to keep order.²⁹

UN chief Ban Ki-moon's special adviser on Myanmar met the country's president Thein Sein to discuss the state of emergency that had been declared in northern Rakhine state and the need for the Government "to continue to handle the situation transparently and with respect for human rights and the rule of law, consistent with President Thein Sein's recent statement. He also visited Maungdaw, a town near the border with Bangladesh where ethnic violence flared up. He was accompanied by Myanmar's Border Affairs Minister General Thein Htay

²⁷ "Myanmar could be India's next-door energy supplier: Chinese expert", *Daily News*, 25 May 2012, <http://india.nydailynews.com/article/70c955ec12a95ef27ffc83_db6cef91cd/myanmar-could-be-india-s-next-door-energy-supplier-chinese-expert#ixzz20lJWqcbd>, Accessed on: 26 May 2012.

²⁸ "India eyes trade, connectivity during PM's Myanmar visit", *Daily News*, 25 May 2012, <http://india.nydailynews.com/article/30df637bd318dc4b888f11_70986b3d7a/india-eyes-trade-connectivity-during-pm-s-myanmar-visit>, Accessed on: 27 May 2012.

²⁹ "Fear of influx from Myanmar puts Bangladesh border guards on high alert", *Daily News*, 11 June 2012, http://india.nydailynews.com/business/89aed34b5a0b4eb_ab8910c3c00ebf3db/fear-of-influx-from-myanmar-puts-bangladesh-border-guards-on-high-alert, Accessed on: 12 June 2012.

and 15 Muslim religious leaders from Yangon.³⁰ Mr. Nambiar's visit follows the one made by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in late April.³¹

Economic Reforms Announced in Myanmar

A "second wave of reforms" were announced on June 19 by President Thein Sein aiming to roll back decades of state control over Myanmar's sheltered and dysfunctional economy. In a nationally televised address, Thein Sein said the changes sought to improve public welfare and vowed to reduce the role of the state in an ambitious list of sectors: education, energy, forestry, health care, finance and telecommunications. The President invited more foreign participation in the economy, saying that alleviating poverty would require "international grants, aid, loans and technical expertise." A foreign investment law is to be passed during the next session of Parliament, scheduled to begin next month. Coca-Cola and General Electric have announced plans to do business in the country.³²

Suu Kyi makes history with UK parliament address

Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi became the second woman after Queen Elizabeth to address both houses of Britain's parliament on 21 June, a rare honor she used to ask for help to bring about democracy in her country. Thein Sein is to travel to London in the coming months for talks on reform, a move Suu Kyi said she supported despite the president's background in Myanmar's military junta.³³

The Philippines

The Scarborough Shoals Saga

China claimed that tension in Scarborough Shoals or Huangyan Islands as China refers to the area, have eased after the withdrawal of the Philippine ships. The Philippines Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario had officially declared the withdrawal of ships from the area by both nations. Six large Chinese vessels, twenty-three fishing boats and seventeen dinghies were soon spotted after the announcement by a Philippine Navy reconnaissance plane. The

³⁰ "UN envoy visits unrest-hit Myanmar", *Daily News*, 13 June 2012, <<http://india.nydailynews.com/newsarticle/4fd8bc7eb1e35d591800001a/un-envoy-visits-unrest-hit-myanmar>>, Accessed on: 14 June 2012.

³¹ "Myanmar: UN envoy discusses state of emergency with President", UN News Centre, 12 June 2012, <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42205&Cr=myanmar&Cr1=>>>, Accessed on: 13 June 2012.

³² Thomas Fuller, "Myanmar President Announces Economic Reforms", *The New York Times*, 19 June 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/20/world/asia/myanmar-president-announces-new-reforms.html?_r=1>, Accessed on: 20 June 2012.

³³ Mohammed Abbas and Matt Falloon, "Suu Kyi makes history with UK parliament address", *Reuters*, 21 June 2012, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/21/us-britain-myanmar-idUSBRE85KoUI20120621>>, Accessed on: 22 June 2012.

withdrawal of the two Philippine vessels from the area ended the more than more than two standoff between China and Philippine. The dispute had begun in April after Chinese vessels blocked Philippine patrol ships trying to arrest Chinese fishermen caught poaching sharks and collecting rare clams and corals in the shoal³⁴.

US to Help Enhance PH Military

The United States Senate passed a unanimous resolution calling for increase in defence and security cooperation with the Philippines, including the “rotational presence” of American troops in the country. The resolution was approved during the three-day official working visit of President Benigno S. Aquino III to Washington. This announcement comes at the time of rising tensions between Philippines and China over the disputed areas of Scarborough Shoals and may indirectly be the result of the Mutual Defense Treaty signed between Philippines and the US in 1951 that calls for the two nations to support each other if either of them were under attack by a third party.³⁵

Philippines Communists Ready for Formal Peace Talks

Communist rebels in Philippines, running one of Asia’s oldest insurgencies have agreed to resume formal peace talks that had come to a halt by the rebels demand for the release of their detained comrades and a string of deadly rebel attacks. Communist negotiators met their Philippine counterparts at the Norwegian capital Oslo. Discussion during the week focused once again on the rebel’s demand for release of their comrades by Manila and immunity from arrest for its advisers. The group has agreed to implement joint ceasefire that the government has ordered but has forwarded no dates as yet.³⁶

Philippines-Canada Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation Launched

Philippines Foreign Affairs Secretary Alert F.del Rosario signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird that formally launched the Philippines-Canada Joint Commission for Bilateral Consultation (JCBC). The two officials highlighted the half million Filipinos that resided in Canada and served as a link between the two. Minister Baird expressed the hope for greater engagement on a wide range of issues through the JCBC.³⁷

³⁴ Jerry E. Esplanada, “China ‘relaxed’ with no PH ships in Scarborough Shoal”, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 29 June 2012, <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/42045/china-‘relaxed’-with-no-ph-ships-in-scarborough-shoal>, Accessed on: 30 June 2012.

³⁵ Roy C. Mabasa, “US Boosts PH Defense”, *Manila Bulletin Publishing Corporation*, 8 June 2012, < <http://www.mb.com.ph/articles/361449/us-boosts-ph-defense>>, Accessed on: 24 June 2012

³⁶ *Inquirer News*, “Communists ready to resume talks with Philippines”, 17 June 2012, <<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/214067/communists-ready-to-resume-talks-with-philippines>>, Accessed on: 24 June 2012.

³⁷ *Official Gazette*, “DFA Secretary, Canadian Foreign Minister hold talks, launch Philippines-Canada Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation”, 22 June 2012, <<http://www.gov.ph/2012/06/22/dfa-secretary-canadian-foreign-minister-hold-talks-launch-philippines-canada-joint-commission-for-bilateral-cooperation/>>, Accessed on: 24 June 2012.

Singapore

US Shifts Focus to Asia

US Defence Secretary, Leon Panetta, outlined America's new strategy that shifts focus towards the Asia-Pacific region at the annual Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. About 60% of the American fleet will be stationed in the Asia-Pacific region by 2020. Panetta assured that US budget problems and cutbacks would not hinder the process although the transition may take years to complete. The region is to receive a higher number of ships with greater technological capabilities.

Enhanced high-tech submarines and fighter aircraft in addition to new electronic warfare and communications systems are to be deployed in the region. Panetta issued broad warnings about the use of force in the South China Sea to block access and praised China and Taiwan's efforts to improve their relationship across the Taiwan Strait. He further acknowledged to looking forward to visiting China this year to deepen military ties between the two nations.³⁸

U.S. Littoral Ships to be Managed by Singapore

Plans for the rotation of four U.S littoral ships to be managed by Singapore were finalised at a bilateral U.S. – Singapore meeting by the U.S. Defence Secretary Leon Panetta and Singapore's Minister for Defence Ng Eng Hen at the Shangri-La conference. The ships will merely be managed by Singapore and not based in the country. America's relationship with Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and Singapore among others would benefit from the port calls the ships are to make. The littoral ships have a broad range of capabilities and can be used for humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and as a warship.³⁹

India Concerned Over China's Military Spending

At the 11th Asia security meet organised by the International Institute for Strategic Studies in Singapore, India's Defence Minister A K Antony, expressed concern over China's high and opaque defence spending that reached \$106 billion this year. Antony also delivered a lecture on maritime freedom.

Contentious issues relating to maritime dispute, according to Antony, must be resolved within the framework of accepted principles of international law through dialogue and consensus building. Antony later added "Large parts of the common seas cannot be declared exclusive

³⁸ ZeeNews Bureau, "US to deploy 60% of Navy fleet to Pacific by 2020", 02 June 2012, http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/us-to-deploy-60-of-navy-fleet-to-pacific-by-2020_779288.html, Accessed on: June 13, 2012.

³⁹ Karen Parrish, "Dempsey Details Plans 'Singapore-Managed' Ships", *American Forces Press Service*, 04 June 2012, <http://www.defpro.com/news/details/36017/?SID=c2bdf3de3f82c6684ed1a0fef38eaa95>, Accessed on: June 14, 2012.

to any one country or group. We must find the balance between the rights of nations and the freedom of the world community in the maritime domain”.⁴⁰

Thailand

Thailand to Strengthen Alliance with US

Following the twist in Washington’s focus towards the Asia-Pacific region, Thailand and United States are looking forward to revitalizing the US-Thai Alliance. The proposal was launched during the visit of the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey. Cathrin Dalpino, a former diplomat who holds the Warburg Chair of International Relations at Simmon College and has been commissioned by the US National Bureau of Asian Research outlined her ideas at a seminar co-hosted by the National Defence Studies Institute and Thammasat University.

Her recommendations include: intensifying high-level exchange visits, establishing a bilateral dialogue on the impact of China’s rise, developing U-Tapao airport as a regional hub for humanitarian and disaster relief, expanding the membership of the Cobra Gold annual joint military exercise and finally liberalizing bilateral and regional trade. Ms. Dalpino contends that the US-Thai Alliance could become one of the chief elements of US engagement within Asia, in the midst of the swiftly changing Asian security environment and the broader US strategic rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific region.⁴¹

Protests against Reconciliation Bill in Thailand

Thailand was witness to one of the largest demonstrations in recent times on 31 May 2012 over the Reconciliation Bill that the current Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, Thaksin’s sister was hoping to introduce in the parliament.⁴²

The bill would grant amnesty to the former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra from a broad range of crimes committed from 2005 – 2011; undo the orders of the coup government, including the Assets Scrutiny Committee that investigated the ousted former Prime Minister and allow him to claim \$ 1.5 billion in confiscated assets.⁴³

⁴⁰ IANS, “Antony in Singapore, says India is concerned over China’s military spending”, *The Times Of India*, 2 June 2012, http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-06-02/india/31983420_1_maritime-security-issues-maritime-domain-sitanshu-kar, Accessed on: June 13, 2012.

⁴¹ *Bangkok Post*, “Thailand-US move to strengthen alliance”, 8 June 2012, <<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/world/297150/thai-us-rush-to-strengthen-alliance>>, Accessed on: 21 June 2012.

⁴² *FirstWorld Post*, “Protesters bring Thailand’s parliament to a halt”, 2 June 2012, < <http://www.firstpost.com/world/protesters-bring-thailands-parliament-to-a-halt-329580.html>>, Accessed on: 21 June 2012.

⁴³ *The Wall Street Journal*, “Thailand’s Elites Reconcile”, 5 June 2012, < http://online.wsj.com/article/SB100014240527023039182045774459329_92243826.html?mod=googlenews_wsj>, Accessed on: 21 June 2012.

Yellow Shirt opponents of the People's Alliance for Democracy galvanized into action at the possibility of Thaksin's return. Protests outside the Parliament prevented the MPs from entering the building and have led to the indefinite adjournment of the debate on the bill.⁴⁴

Thailand Limits Visiting Suu Kyi to Protect Relations with Myanmar from Damage

Thailand attempted to exercise restraint over Myanmar's visiting opposition leader Aug Sang Suu Kyi, amid growing apprehension of damage to relations with Myanmar. San Suu Kyi's visit sparked off fears of angering the Myanmar government and complicating the already delicate situation on the border, where reconciliation with the ethnic groups is being actively sought by the new administration in Myanmar.

Although the Thai government accepted her last-minute request to visit the camp, her request for a public address system was declined. She was also barred from meeting leaders of ethnic minority groups. Irreparable damage may already have been done. U Thein Sein, Myanmar's president, cancelled his visit to Thailand bringing to a grinding halt the planned signing of an agreement of a joint economic zone that the two countries were developing.⁴⁵

PM Shinawatra Hopes for Better Cooperation with Australia

Thailand's Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra visited Australia in May 2012. Yingluck, acknowledged the three-fold increase in the trade value between the two countries since the implementation of the Thailand-Australia Free Trade Agreement (TAFTA) in 2005⁴⁶. Inside the Australian Parliament building in Canberra she insisted that 60 years of established diplomatic relations between Australia and Thailand had now developed into warm bilateral friendship and hoped that these years would in turn lead to further cooperation, development of peace and prosperity in the region.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Grant Peck, "Thaksin May Return to Thailand", *Iolnews*, 31 May 2012, <http://www.iol.co.za/news/world/thaksin-may-return-to-thailand-1.1308807#.T-Q_uRdo2KK>, Accessed on: 21 June 2012.

⁴⁵ *The New York Times*, "Fearing Harm to Myanmar Ties, Thailand Limits Visiting Opposition Leader", 2 June 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/03/world/asia/burmese-opposition-leader-visits-thailand.html?_r=1>, Accessed on: 21 June 2012.

⁴⁶ *The Nation*, "PM's visit to Australia a boon to Thailand: HSBC", 25 May 2012, <<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/business/PMs-visit-to-Australia-a-boon-to-Thailand-HSBC-30182824.html>>, Accessed on: 21 June 2012.

⁴⁷ *BorneoPost*, "Thailand, Australia to boost regional cooperation", 29 May 2012, <<http://www.theborneopost.com/2012/05/29/thailand-australia-to-boost-regional-cooperation-new/>>, Accessed on: 21 June 2012.

Vietnam

Tensions Mount Between China and Vietnam

Vietnam National Assembly on 21st June 2012 approved a maritime law claiming sovereignty and jurisdiction over the Paracel and Spratly Island in South China Sea. While Vietnam insisted that the law was simply a continuation of a number of provisions in the existing laws, China viewed the act as violation of its sovereignty. In return, Beijing on the same day announced the elevation of the administrative status of Xisha (Paracel) and Nansha (Spratly) Islands from a county to a prefectural-level district.⁴⁸

China additionally deployed four well-armed surveillance ships, one with a helicopter on board to patrol the South China Sea and warned of opposing any 'provocation' by Vietnamese air patrols over the disputed islands.⁴⁹ Tensions further arose between the two when Chinese National Offshore Oil Corporation's (CNOOC) extended an invitation on its website for international bids for nine oil and gas lots that fall within the area of the Vietnamese Continental Shelf. The blocks put up on bid overlap lots 128 to 132 and 145 to 156, where Vietnam's National Oil and Gas Group PetroVietnam has been operating for considerable time.⁵⁰

Australia

Australia: Cases of India and Pakistan Different

In December 2011, Julia Gillard, leader of the Labor Party in Australia cleared the way for Australian uranium to be exported to India. This was the first Australian country-to-country agreement to sell uranium outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The supply will be demand based and of commercial nature.⁵¹ Islamabad, after the approval of uranium sale to India, hoped for access to the yellow cake.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard said that Australia will not agree to export uranium to Pakistan, since it did not have an exemption from the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Tim George, the outgoing

⁴⁸ *Platts*, "China and Vietnam: South China Sea Dispute", 29 June 2012, < <http://www.platts.com/newsfeature/2012/chinavietnam/index>>, Accessed on: 1 July 2012.

⁴⁹ *Business Standard*, "China warns Vietnam against air patrols over disputed islands", 28 June 2012, < <http://www.business-standard.com/generalnews/news/china-warns-vietnam-against-air-patrols-over-disputed-islands/25964/>>, Accessed on: 1 July 2012.

⁵⁰ *Bernama*, "Vietnam Protests Chinese Company's Int'l Oil Bidding", 28 June 2012, < <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v6/newsworld.php?id=676465>>, Accessed on: 1 July 2012.

⁵¹ *The Economic Times*, "Australia's uranium supply to India will be demand based: Energy Minister Martin Ferguson", 17 May 2012, <http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-05-17/news/31749369_1_uranium-sale-nuclear-non-proliferation-treaty-australian-uranium>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012

High Commissioner said that the offer of sale of uranium was meant to boost trade and enhance Australia's relationship with India, adding that Australia had also been pursuing a policy of strengthening relationship with Pakistan.⁵² During a meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Julia Gillard in Chicago, it was revealed that Australia under the Australia-Pakistan Development Partnership Programme had decided to provide Pakistan with over \$200 million in financial assistance.⁵³

Australia: Sanctions on Burma to be Lifted

Australia will lift the remaining travel and financial sanctions against Burma. In April this year, Australia had eased travel and financial restrictions on approximately 260 Burmese nationals including the Burmese President Thein Sein. Australia, Burma's largest bilateral aid donor has also promised to double the aid to \$100 million a year by 2015. Foreign Minister Bob Carr after visiting the country in June said "In meetings over the past two days, I've gained a first-hand appreciation of the reform effort under way" and that "The point has been reached where lifting sanctions is the best way to promote further progress". The arms embargo is to remain in place.⁵⁴

Syria's Charge d'Affairs Expelled from Australia

Jawdat Ali, Syria's highest diplomat in Australia was expelled as a protest against the massacre of an estimated 100 people in Syria. Senator Carr said that the massacre of civilians was a hideous and brutal crime and that the atrocities committed on the residents of the village of Haoula were condemned by Australia. Australia has imposed an arms embargo on Syria and put travel and financial restrictions on 106 individuals and 28 entities. The European Union and the United States have also imposed sanctions on Syria.⁵⁵

Afghan Forces to Receive \$300 million from Australia

The Afghan National Security Forces are to receive \$100 million annually from Australia, once they take responsibility of their nation's security. The Australian government is furthermore prepared to maintain a substantial development assistance program in

⁵² *The Hindustan Times*, "Pakistan not to get Australian uranium: Envoy", 18 May 2012, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/Pakistan/Pakistan-not-to-get-Australian-uranium-Envoy/Article1-857643.aspx>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

⁵³ *FIRSTPOST.WORLD*, "Australia to give \$200 million aid to Pakistan", 21 May 2012, <<http://www.firstpost.com/world/australia-to-give-200-million-aid-to-pakistan-316151.html>>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

⁵⁴ *BBC News*, "Australia to lift Burma sanctions and double aid", 8 June 2012, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-18363499>>, Accessed on: June 18, 2012.

⁵⁵ Philip Hudson, "Australia expels Syria's Charge D'Affairs Jawdat Ali", *Herald Sun*, 29 May 2012, <<http://www.news.com.au/breaking-news/australia-expels-syrias-charge-daffairs-jawdat-ali/story-e6frkuo-1226372710622>>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

Afghanistan beyond 2014 to help provide services such as education and health and if requested, an ongoing Special Forces presence after the Afghans take control. Australia has already committed \$200 million to the Afghan National Army Trust Fund over a period of five years in 2009 and is the third largest contributor of Special Forces elite troops in Afghanistan.⁵⁶

New Zealand

New Zealand Signs Agreement with NATO and US

June has proved to be an important month for New Zealand. She signed a NATO partnership deal to boost cooperation in areas like terrorism, military training, disaster relief and intelligence⁵⁷. The partnership called the Individual Partnership Cooperation Programme, formalised the ties between NATO and New Zealand after nearly two decades of 'gradual' engagement.⁵⁸ Hard on the heels of this partnership, New Zealand signed an agreement with US to expand defence cooperation and boost ties between the two nations. The US - New Zealand deal, entitled the Washington Declaration also includes cooperation on areas of maritime security and disaster relief. It, furthermore, promises regular strategic dialogue and information sharing.⁵⁹

New Zealand to Withdraw Troops from Afghanistan Earlier Than Planned

New Zealand troops will withdraw from Afghanistan in 2013 instead of 2014 as planned. According to the Defence Minister Jonathan Coleman, the early withdrawal of troops reflects the outstanding work that New Zealand PRT personnel had put in to prepare the province of Bamyan for transition to local control. The ISAF leadership, senior Afghan ministers and other partners have agreed to the plan for the early withdrawal of New Zealand troops. A specialist team will visit Bamyan in the coming weeks in order to draw up a detailed plan of departure.

Training of the new Provincial Quick Reaction Force along with work on New Zealand-funded agricultural projects, the new solar energy plant and the Japanese-funded sealing of the airport runway will have been concluded by then. Additionally, the New Zealand government had

⁵⁶ *The Hindu*, "Australia pledges \$300 mn to Afghan forces", 16 May 2012, <<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article3424728.ece>>, Accessed on: 18 June 2012.

⁵⁷ *BBC News*, "New Zealand signs Nato partnership deal", 5 June 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-18327685>, Accessed on: 23 June 2012.

⁵⁸ *NATO Source*, "New Zealand signs formal partnership agreement with NATO", 4 June 2012, <http://www.acus.org/natosource/new-zealand-signs-formal-partnership-agreement-nato>, Accessed on: 23 June 2012.

⁵⁹ *BBC News*, "New Zealand and US to expand defence ties", 20 June 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-18516400>, Accessed on: 23 June 2012.

also agreed to contribute to the international effort in Afghanistan. A small number of training officers would be made available to the Afghan National Army Officer Academy and a three year commitment of US\$2 million per year would also be made to Afghan National Security Force rule of law projects in Bamyan⁶⁰.

New Zealand Struck Off Prestigious European Union “White list”

New Zealand and Russia weak money laundering and terrorism financing controls have resulted in the country’s removal from the European Union banking and corporate “White List”. The Russian Federation has also be removed from the list. Although EU has not formally announced this decision, Latvia an EU member state, publicly denounced New Zealand in a letter to Fairfax Media.

Latvia’s decision was based on a report by the EU’s committee on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, which maintained that the laws of New Zealand could not be compared to those of the EU any longer. Being delisted means that banks and institutions in Latvia and EU will not be able to make simplified searches for banks and financial institutions registered in New Zealand and that the European institutions would not be able to accept and acknowledge customer identification and analysis performed in New Zealand⁶¹.

⁶⁰ *Nzherald.co.nz*, “Kiwi troops leave Afghanistan early”, 22 May 2012, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10807539, Accessed on: 23 June 2012.

⁶¹ *Michael Field*, “New Zealand removed from EU ‘white list’”, 17 May 2012, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/6938888/New-Zealand-removed-from-EU-white-list>, Accessed on: 23 June 2012.

ABOUT US

The Southeast Asia and Oceania Centre focuses on policy-relevant research in respect of the ten ASEAN states, East Timor and Oceania, including Australia and New Zealand. The Centre studies India's bilateral and multilateral relations with states of the region with a view to providing contemporary relevance to India's Look East policy. It has a futuristic approach and examines the emerging trends in the regional security architecture. The Centre studies the potential for India's enhanced defence cooperation (including maritime issues) and cooperation in non-traditional security issues with the region. It examines internal developments of countries in this region, especially political transition and the role of the military, and their implications for India. The Centre seeks to promote Track-II institutional linkages with the region.

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