

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

- **ISAF forces to train troops to avoid civilian casualties; Second round of security handover begins in Afghanistan**

According to reports, US led NATO forces in Afghanistan will retrain its troops by December 5 on how to avoid civilian casualties, following fresh accusations of civilian killings President Hamid Karzai's office said. The move comes with Nato already facing uncomfortable fallout after an air strike killed 24 Pakistani troops near the Afghan border on Saturday. Karzai's office quoted a letter from Commander General John Allen as saying he had issued orders "for all units to conduct retraining on our methods of employing force against insurgents while protecting Afghan civilians."¹

In another development, according to reports, foreign troops began the second stage of a security handover that aims to put Afghans in charge of the whole country by the end of 2014 with a ceremony on Thursday in a small town on the plains north of Kabul. This new phase of a years-long transfer programme will extend Afghan security coverage to half the population, and move beyond the largely showpiece areas chosen for the first stage.²

Pakistan

- **Probe report of NATO strike in Pakistan due next month; Karzai requests Pakistan not to boycott Bonn Conference; US denies NATO attack as deliberate**

Reports noted that a US led investigation team on the deadly NATO strike which killed 24 Pakistani soldiers, is due release its initial findings by next month. The team led by Brigadier General Stephen Clark will submit initial findings on the raid by 23rd December. Pakistan has reacted strongly to the strike and has also closed down supply routes to international forces and also asked US personnel to vacate an air base reportedly used by CIA drones.³

In another development, Afghan President Hamid Karzai telephoned Pakistan Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani to urge him to reconsider a boycott of the Bonn conference over a deadly Nato strike, officials in both countries said. Pakistan said it would skip the conference on

¹ "ISAF to retrain troops on civilian casualties: Kabul", *Dawn*, November 29, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/11/29/isaf-to-retrain-troops-on-civilian-casualties-kabul.html>

² "Second stage of Afghan security handover begins", *Dawn*, December 2, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/12/01/second-stage-of-afghan-security-handover-begins.html>

³ "Pakistan strike probe report due next month: US", *Dawn*, November 29, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/11/29/pakistan-strike-probe-report-due-next-month-us.html>

Afghanistan after a NATO strike on Saturday killed 24 Pakistani soldiers on the border. Pakistan has already closed the Afghan border to NATO convoys, a lifeline for 140,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan and ordered American personnel to vacate an air base reportedly used by CIA drones and ordered a review of the alliance.⁴

Meanwhile, according to reports, the top US military officer strongly rejected accusations from Pakistan that NATO deliberately killed 24 Pakistani soldiers last weekend. General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the US military's Joint Chiefs of Staff stated, "The one thing I will say publicly and categorically is that this was not a deliberate attack." Earlier, in comments widely published in Pakistani media on Wednesday, Pakistan's director general of military operations, Major General Ishfaq Nadeem, described the NATO cross-border attack as a deliberate, blatant act of aggression.⁵

Bangladesh

- **Foreign affairs and Economic Affairs advisors to the Bangladesh PM visit India; Bangladesh Army Chief visits India; German President Christian Wulff visits Bangladesh; Myanmar shows interest to import potato from Bangladesh**

According to reports, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's foreign affairs adviser Gowher Rizvi and economic affairs adviser Mashiur Rahman came to New Delhi on November 30, 2011 to discuss a range of issues including the Tipaimukh dam, which has drawn a lot of public attention in Bangladesh. During a meeting between Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the two advisers of Bangladesh PM India suggested Bangladesh to acquire a stake in it by making an investment and getting electricity in exchange. India also agreed to carry out a study on the project before starting the work.⁶

Meanwhile, aiming to strengthen defence ties with India, visiting Bangladesh Army Chief Gen Md Abdul Mubeen met India's top military hierarchy including Defence Minister AK Antony and the services chiefs on December 1, 2011. On a five-day visit to India since November 28, Gen Mubeen started his tour by reviewing the Passing out Parade (PoP) at National Defence Academy (NDA) in Khadakvasla, 40km from western Indian city of Pune.⁷ During his interaction with media during the visit, General Mubeen said that China is helping Bangladesh in infrastructure development and China-Bangladesh relations are not strategic and do not affect India-Bangladesh ties.⁸

⁴ "Karzai urges Pakistan to reconsider Bonn boycott", *Dawn*, November 29, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/11/29/karzai-urges-pakistan-to-reconsider-bonn-boycott.html>

⁵ "NATO attack on Pakistan not deliberate: US", *Dawn*, December 1, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/12/01/nato-attack-on-pakistani-troops-not-deliberate-us.html>

⁶ Bhattacharya, Pallab, "Tipaimukh Power Project: Delhi open to Dhaka's stake", *The Daily Star*, December 3, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=212684>.

⁷ Bhattacharya, Pallab, "Gen Mubeen meets India's top military hierarchy", *The Daily Star*, December 2, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=212606>

⁸ "Ties with China not at expense of India: Says Gen Mubeen", *The Daily Star*, November 30, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=212317>.

According to reports, the German president Christian Wulff came to Bangladesh on November 28, 2011 on a three-day state visit. During a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, visiting president said that his country would explore new areas of cooperation with Bangladesh in trade, investment and power. President Wulff also met President Zillur Rahman, Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia and representatives of civil society besides delivering a lecture at Dhaka University.⁹

In other developments, according to the Commerce Ministry of Bangladesh Government, Myanmar has shown interest to import potato from Bangladesh because of the low price of the item.¹⁰

Sri Lanka

- **India's Cabinet approves the reconstruction and repair of 49,000 houses for IDPs in North and East; Meeting held between Pakistan President and Sri Lankan Chief of Defence Staff; Pakistani exporters urges Sri Lanka to withdraw its decision of levying new tax on the import of agricultural products; Japan assures its commitment to Sri Lanka's post-conflict development; USAID: Political tensions between Sri Lanka and the United States would not have any bearing on the aid projects in the country; President reaffirms his support to Palestine; Additional UK funding of £150,000 for the reintegration of ex-combatants; GAZPROM is checking the viability of oil and gas exploration in northern Sri Lanka**

According to reports, the Union Cabinet of the Government of India has approved the reconstruction and repair of 49,000 houses for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Northern and Eastern Provinces and for Indian Origin Tamils (IOTs) in Sri Lanka under grant assistance from the Government of India on December 1, 2011.¹¹

Meanwhile, according to reports, Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari said his country greatly values the ties with Sri Lanka and called for further strengthening those ties based on mutual trust and shared interests in maintaining regional peace, security and stability. President Zardari made this comment on November 29, 2011 when he met with Sri Lankan Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Air Chief Marshal Roshan Goonetilleke at his official residence in Islamabad.¹²

⁹ "Germany wants stronger relations with Bangladesh: President Wulff says during meetings with Zillur, Hasina, Khaleda", *The Daily Star*, November 30, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=212280>.

¹⁰ "Myanmar to import potato from Bangladesh", *The Daily Star*, November 29, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=212132>.

¹¹ "Indian govt approves next phase of Indian Housing Project", *Official Website of Government of Sri Lanka*, December 03, 2011 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201112/20111203indian_housing_project.htm.

¹² "Pakistan President calls for strengthening relationship with Sri Lanka", *Official Website of Government of Sri Lanka*, November 30, 2011 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201111/20111130pakistan_president_calls_strengthening_relationship.htm

Reports noted that Pakistani exporters have urged the Sri Lankan government to withdraw its decision of levying new tax on the import of agricultural products as it would affect Pakistani exports to the country.¹³

Japan's Special Peace Envoy to Sri Lanka, Yasushi Akashi assured his country's commitment to Sri Lanka's post-conflict development when he met President Mahinda Rajapaksa at the President's House on November 28, 2011.¹⁴

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) said on November 29, 2011 that the political tensions between Sri Lanka and the United States Government would not have any bearing on the aid projects in the country.¹⁵

According to reports, in a message to mark International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, President Mahinda Rajapaksa reaffirmed Sri Lanka's support for the just struggle of the Palestinian People to achieve their inalienable rights, including the right to Statehood.¹⁶

Reports noted that British Deputy High Commissioner, Robbie Bulloch, visited the North where he announced additional UK funding of £150,000 for the reintegration of ex-combatants after their release from custody. This brings the total UK contribution to £650,000 this year (approximately LKR116 million). He also visited a demining project in Jaffna, which is being supported by £3 million of UK money (approximately LKR 535 million).¹⁷

In other developments, according to reports, Russian oil and gas giant GAZPROM has sent a four-member technical team to check on the viability of oil and gas exploration in northern Sri Lanka's Mannar Basin. According to Petroleum Industries Minister Susil Premjayantha another team was expected from the Indian Oil and Natural Gas Company (ONGC) shortly.¹⁸

¹³ "Lanka urged to withdraw new tax on agri products", *The Daily Mirror*, November 30, 2011 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/15113-lanka-urged-to-withdraw-new-tax-on-agri-products.html>.

¹⁴ "Japan assures continued support to SL's development", *Official Website of Government of Sri Lanka*, November 29, 2011 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201111/20111129japan_assures_continued_support_sl_devpt.htm.

¹⁵ "US/SL tensions won't affect aid projects: Bednar", *The Daily Mirror*, November 29, 2011 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/15105-ussl-tensions-wont-affect-aid-projectsbednar.html>.

¹⁶ "Sri Lanka reaffirms Palestine's inalienable right Statehood", *Official Website of Government of Sri Lanka*, November 29, 2011 at http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201111/20111129sl_reaffirms_palestine_inalienable_right_stattehood.htm.

¹⁷ "Additional UK funding for re-integration", *The Daily Mirror*, December 2, 2011 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/15189-additional-uk-funding-for-re-integration.html>.

¹⁸ "Russians here to look for oil", *The Daily Mirror*, November 29, 2011 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/15088-russians-here-to-look-for-oil.html>.

Maldives

- **Vice President Waheed: Regional collaboration is crucial to deal with climate change within South Asian region; Maldives is the 118th state member of the International Criminal Court; 2012 will be a “Duty Free Year” for Maldives**

According to reports, Vice President of Maldives Dr. Mohamed Waheed has said that regional collaboration is crucial to key developments in security risks related to adverse and unusual affects caused by climate change within the South Asian region. The Vice President made this statement while speaking at “Security Implications of Climate Change” held by South Asia Network for Security and Climate Change (SANSaC) at Trader’s Hotel on December 1, 2011.¹⁹

In another development, reports noted that the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) became active in the Maldives from December 1, 2011 following a required 60-day period after depositing the Instrument of Ratification. The Maldives recently became the 118th state member of the International Criminal Court following a favorable vote in Parliament. It is the third South Asian country to join the ICC after Bangladesh and Afghanistan.²⁰

In other developemts, according to reports, President Mohamed Nasheed has said during his weekly radio address that the proposed budget in parliament for 2012 would allow the year 2012 to be a “Duty Free Year”.²¹

B. East Asia

South East Asia

- **Hillary Clinton visits Myanmar; Singapore’s new submarine operational; Indonesian army chief visits Singapore; Cambodia denies Thai allegations; Thailand, Laos urged to cancel Xayaburi dam plans**

In a significant development, the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton started her visit to Myanmar on 1 December. Considered a major breakthrough point in the US- Myanmar relationship, the visit aims to push for further reforms in Myanmar.²²

In another development, the RSS Archer, first of two state-of-the-art submarines has been declared operational by the authorities in Singapore. The Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen announced it on 2

¹⁹ “Regional Collaboration is Crucial to Key Developments in Security Risks Caused by Climate Change Affects,” Vice President, *President’s Office, Republic of Maldives*, December 1, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=6348>.

²⁰ “Rome Statute activated in Maldives”, *Minivan News*, December 1, 2011 at <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief>.

²¹ “President’s Weekly Radio Address: “2012 is going to be a Duty Free year”, *President’s Office, Republic of Maldives*, December 2, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=6353>.

²² “Hillary Clinton to push reform in historic Myanmar talks, *Times of India*, 1 December 2011, http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-12-01/us/30462881_1_naypyidaw-aung-san-su-kyi-myanmar

December at Changi Naval Base. It is said that the Archer-class submarines, fitted with the Air Independent Propulsion and advanced sonar systems, are stealthier than their predecessors, the ageing Challenger-class submarines.²³

In one of the significant moves to strengthen bilateral military ties, the Chief of Staff of the Indonesian National Army, Gen Promono Dhi Wibowo visited Singapore on December 2. The visit is expected to help enhance the mutual understanding and close ties between the armies and leaders of the two countries.²⁴

According to reports, the Cambodian government, on 27 November, denied allegations that it supported hiring of 5,000 hired Cambodian soldiers, which would help Thailand's Shinawatra government in case a coup rises. Ever since the reports regarding the alleged Cambodian support to Shinawatra in a possible coup has emerged, Cambodia has been trying hard to steer clear of it, making its non-involvement clear.²⁵

In other developments, reports noted that an international petition from over a hundred countries has called for Thailand and Laos's governments to cancel a massive hydropower dam project on the lower Mekong region. The proposed dam, if completed, would be worth \$ US 3.5 billion, and might create unmanageable environmental hazards in the region.²⁶

China

- **China urges Europe not to politicize its investment; China, Japan hold strategic dialogue; Leaders of China, EU urge better relations; China's aircraft carrier sets sail for 2nd trial; China backs Pakistan's sovereignty**

According to reports, Beijing has urged that China's investment in Europe should be politicized. Vice Foreign Minister Fu Ying urged that "successful investment should be reciprocal".²⁷

Meanwhile China and Japan held their 12th strategic dialogue. They pledged to improve and enhance the mutual trust.²⁸

²³ New state-of-the-art submarine now operational, *Asia One*, 2 December 2011, <http://news.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/Singapore/Story/A1Story20111202-314089.html>

²⁴ Indonesia army chief visits Singapore, *ChannelNewsAsia*, 2 December 2011, <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/singaporelocalnews/view/1169041/1/.html>

²⁵ Cambodia denies claims of soldiers hired to help Thai PM in case of coup, *Xinhua*, 28 November 2011, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90777/7658953.html>

²⁶ International petition calls for Thailand, Laos to cancel Xayaburi dam, *Voice of America*, 30 November 2011, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/asia/International-Petition-Calls-for-Thailand-Laos-to-Cancel-Xayaburi-Dam-134744578.html>

²⁷ "China urges Europe not to politicize its investment", *China Daily*, December 2, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-12/02/content_14205824.htm

²⁸ "China, Japan hold strategic dialogue", *China Daily*, December 2, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-12/02/content_14205694.htm

On the other hand leaders from China and the European Union have called for strengthening of cooperation in order to gain mutually beneficial development.²⁹

On the domestic front, China's aircraft carrier sailed for its second sea trial. According to the press release, before the test the carrier had completed all the refitting and test work.³⁰

In other developments, according to reports, the Foreign Minister of China Yang Jiechi said that Beijing supports consistently Pakistan's efforts at safeguarding its national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.³¹

Japan

- **Japan ready to export nuclear technology; Washington urges Tokyo to reduce oil imports from Iran; China proposes to resume talks with Japan on resolving sea boundary dispute on East China Sea; Japan proposes to setup an Asian disaster insurance plan**

According to reports, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda recently stated that Japan is ready to export nuclear technology if other countries need it. However, the export will be made on certain conditions, including peaceful use of the nuclear technology. It is worth noting that Japan's bilateral accord on civil nuclear cooperation with four other countries (Jordan, Russia, South Korea and Vietnam) which were signed before the Fukushima nuclear crisis, are due to be approved by the Japanese parliament within the first half of December. Till today, Japan has signed such accord with seven countries (the US, China, the UK, France, Australia, Canada and Kazakhstan) and the European Atomic Energy Community.³²

In a recent meeting with the lower house panel on foreign affairs, Japanese Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba reportedly stated that he is hoping to conclude similar bilateral accord with five other countries, including India, South Africa and Brazil, on which Japan began deliberation before the Fukushima crisis.³³

In the meantime, in a recent meeting at Japan's Ministry of Economy, trade and Industry, nuclear safety authorities of Japan, China, and South Korea have agreed to take steps to develop capabilities to share swift information on accidents and other safety matters. The three countries are to share information on nuclear plant problems, research and regulation for the management of severe accidents caused by natural disasters.³⁴

²⁹ "Leaders of China, EU urge better relations", China Daily, November 30, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2011-11/30/content_14185425.htm

³⁰ "China's aircraft carrier sets sail for 2nd trial", China Daily, November 29, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-11/29/content_14181807.htm

³¹ "China backs Pakistan's sovereignty", China Daily, November 29, 2011 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-11/29/content_14177936.htm

³² "Japan to export nuclear technology if wanted, Noda says", *Mainichi Daily*, December 2, 2011, at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/12/02/20111202p2g00m0dm031000c.html>

³³ "Japan's nuclear accords with 4 countries due to clear parliament", *Mainichi Daily*, November 30, 2011, at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/11/30/20111130p2g00m0dm082000c.html>

³⁴ "Japan, China, South Korea to share nuclear plant info more quickly", *Mainichi Daily*, November 30, 2011, at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/11/30/20111130p2g00m0dm021000c.html>

In a significant development, Washington has recently urged its allies, including Japan, to reduce their oil imports from Iran to pressurize Tehran to give up its pursuit for nuclear arms. At present, along with China, India, South Korea, and the EU, Japan is one of the major oil importers from Iran. In October 2011, Japan's oil shipments from Iran totaled 8.11 million barrels, accounting for 7.7% of its overall oil imports.³⁵

According to reports, China has recently expressed its interest in resolving the sea boundary dispute with Japan in the East China Sea on the basis of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This is seen by many as an attempt on China's part to make Japan acknowledge that the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea is a disputed territory between the two countries. The last round of bilateral talk on this issue was held in December 2003. Although Japan has persistently maintained that it has indisputable sovereign over those islands, it still plans to accept China's proposal as it has no objection in addressing the issue under the UNCLOS.³⁶

In other developments, according to reports, the Japanese government has recently proposed to jointly establish a large-scale insurance system for the whole Asia-Pacific region to cover developing countries struck by natural disasters. The scheme will be jointly developed by Japan, World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The funds for the purpose is proposed to be collected from countries and territories involved in this initiative and monetary contributions from Japan and other industrial countries. Japan hopes to bring the ASEAN member states as a part of the initiative. It is worth noting that Australia, New Zealand and some other members of the EU have already expressed interest in such initiative for the development of the South Pacific island countries.³⁷

C. Central Asia & Russia

Central Asia

- **US, Kazakhstan sign agreement for cooperation in nuclear security and safeguards; India seeks to acquire uranium mines in Kazakhstan; Kyrgyz coalition government collapses after new president sworn in; Tajik FM meets Afghan and Iran FMs during the Bonn conference; Estonian PM offers maritime transport and shipbuilding support to Ashgabat; Uzbek Senate limits presidential term to five years; Tashkent offers 15-year tax exemption to Pakistani entrepreneurs**

According to reports, the Kazakh Ministry of Industry and New Technology (MINT) signed an Implementing Arrangement with the US National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) which provides a framework to expand technical cooperation in containment and surveillance of nuclear materials, nuclear safety and waste management, nuclear forensics, and information management.³⁸

³⁵ "US urges Japan to reduce oil imports from Iran", *Mainichi Daily*, December 2, 2011, at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/12/02/20111202p2g00m0dm017000c.html>

³⁶ "China eyes resumption of talks with Japan on settling sea boundary", *Mainichi Daily*, November 28, 2011, at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/11/28/20111128p2g00m0dm038000c.html>

³⁷ "Japan to set up Asian disaster insurance plan/Scheme covers South Pacific states, ASEAN", *The Yomiuri Shimbun*, December 4, 2011, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T111203003462.htm>

³⁸ "US, Kazakhstan sign nuclear security agreement", *Universal Newswires*, December 02, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=10844>

In the meanwhile, reports noted that the Government of India is looking to acquire uranium mines in Kazakhstan in a bid to satisfy the country's growing energy needs, apart from seeking to secure nuclear mining assets in South Africa and possibly Australia, said RK Sinha, Director at the Mumbai-based Bhabha Atomic Research Center.³⁹

In another development, reports noted that Almazbek Atambayev who won the October 30, 2011 presidential elections, took over as **Kyrgyzstan's** president from Roza Otunbayeva. Outgoing Kyrgyz President Roza Otunbayeva, whose handing off power to Atambayev marks the first time a Central Asian leader has voluntarily relinquished power to a successor, in her last address to the nation apologized for failing to prevent the ethnic conflict that erupted in June 2010.⁴⁰

Reports noted that one of the important tasks that the new president emphasized was to repair damaged ethnic relations and a dangerous north-south political divide that have threatened to tip the country into more violence.⁴¹ However, the coalition government of Kyrgyzstan collapsed the very next day of the inauguration of the country's new president. Leader of the Socialist Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK) Chynybay Tursunbekov said he was pulling his faction out of the coalition over differences on judicial, political, and economic reforms.⁴² This leaves Atambayev to direct the country's parliamentary deputies to negotiate a new coalition. In the meanwhile, the government of Turkey has waived Kyrgyzstan's foreign debt of \$49.2 million extended to the latter in the early 1990s by the Export Credit Bank of Turkey to finance bilateral investment and commercial ventures.⁴³

Reports noted that an international ministerial meeting was held in Turkmenistan wherein high-level officials of the five Central Asian states and a range of other countries had met to develop a regional plan of action to implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.⁴⁴

According to reports, Estonian Prime Minister Andrus Ansip during his visit to Ashgabat extended his country's support to assist Turkmenistan in the areas of up-to-date production, maritime transport and shipbuilding, information and communication technology and networks. While Estonian firms are also willing to help upgrade the Caspian Sea port at Turkmenbashi, both countries focused on ways to strengthen collaboration in the fuel and energy sector.⁴⁵

³⁹ "India looking to buy uranium mines in Kazakhstan", *Universal Newswires*, November 29, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=10817>

⁴⁰ "Otunbayeva in farewell speech apologizes for ethnic violence", *Universal Newswires*, December 01, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kyrgyzstan/viewstory.aspx?id=10843>

⁴¹ "New president takes over in Kyrgyzstan", *The Telegraph*, December 01, 2011 at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/kyrgyzstan/8928224/New-president-takes-over-in-Kyrgyzstan.html>

⁴² "Kyrgyz government collapses in wake of presidential inauguration", *Universal Newswires*, December 02, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=10850>

⁴³ "Turkey forgives Kyrgyzstan's foreign debt", *Universal Newswires*, December 02, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=10849>

⁴⁴ "Ashgabat hosts regional counter-terror meeting", *Universal Newswires*, November 30, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=10827>

⁴⁵ "Estonia to aid Turkmenistan with maritime transport, shipbuilding", *Universal Newswires*, November 29, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/turkmenistan/viewstory.aspx?id=10818>

In a related development, senior-level Turkish business group – Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists of Turkey (TUSKON), met with their Turkmen compatriots in Dushanbe last week to figure out ways to expand bilateral cooperation in spheres of transport, trade, tourism, education, and health care.⁴⁶ Talks also focused on joint ventures and resuming direct flights to Turkey.

In other developments, according to reports, the Uzbekistan Senate has last week approved a bill to limit presidential term from seven to five years. The bill was initiated by President Islam Karimov to strengthen democratic principles of governance by increasing the role and importance of the country's parliament, which is regarded by many as a ruse to fight elections on the basis of the new rule while not counting the previous two decades of ruler-ship as part of the same.⁴⁷ Also, Uzbek officials confirmed that Tashkent will offer a 15-year tax exemption incentive to Pakistani entrepreneurs setting up in its specialized investment zones, while welcoming Pakistani entrepreneurs to set up and export their products to Russia and the other markets of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).⁴⁸

D. West Asia

Syria

- **Syria accuses Arab League for ignoring realities; Turkey announces economic and financial sanctions against Syria; Visiting Lebanese delegation discuss events in Syria; Syria and UNIDO discuss means of implementing cooperation programmes; Syria and Iraq discuss to enhance trade and investment ties; Syria suspends its membership in UfM; Syrian suspends Free Trade Zone Agreement with Turkey; ALBA countries reject foreign intervention in Syria's internal affairs; Syria and Iran discuss cooperation in housing sector**

According to reports, Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Mouallem lashed out at the Arab League for ignoring "terrorists" on Syrian territory in its decision to impose crippling sanctions, which it said marked a declaration of "economic war". These comments came even as UN-appointed investigators accused Syrian forces of crimes against humanity, while rights groups said at least eight more civilians were killed across the country. Mouallem told that the government had opened all avenues in talks with the Arab League to end bloodshed in the country, but said that "they have closed all these windows" of opportunity.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ "Tajiks host senior business delegation from Turkey", *Universal Newswires*, December 02, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=10845>

⁴⁷ "Uzbek presidential term to be cut to five years", *Universal Newswires*, December 05, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=10855>

⁴⁸ "Uzbeks offer 15-year tax exemption incentive to Pakistani investors", *Universal Newswires*, November 28, 2011 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/uzbekistan/viewstory.aspx?id=10806>

⁴⁹ "Syria lashes out at Arab League", *The Jordan Times*, November 29, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=43779>

In another development, in line with the Arab, Western and U.S. sanctions against Syria, Turkey announced financial and economic sanctions aimed at impacting the interests of the Syrian people. According to the Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, the measures included suspending the loan offered by the Turkish Export-Import Bank (Teximbank) to finance infrastructure projects in Syria. Davutoglu said Turkey would impose a freeze on Syrian government financial assets in Turkey in addition to all financial credit dealings with Syria to be stopped except for the current transactions.⁵⁰

Meanwhile, reports noted that President Bashar al-Assad received a delegation of the Muslim Scholars Gathering of Lebanon and discussed with them the events in Syria and their repercussions at the regional and international levels. The delegation expressed its denunciation of the plots against Syria that aimed to undermine its security and stability, stressing their complete rejection of the Arab League decisions targeted against the Syrian citizens.⁵¹

Further, Syria and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) discussed means of implementing the cooperation programmes between the two sides, particularly in the second phase of the industrial modernisation project in Syria and of the development of Agropolis Project. During the meeting, Minister of Industry, Adnan Salkho discussed with the UNIDO Director-General, Kandeh Yumkella the possibility of finding a funding by the international organisations and the donor bodies for those projects.⁵²

According to reports, Director of Investment Board of Syria Ahmad Diyab discussed with a delegation of Iraqi businessmen the aspects of enhancing trade and investment relations between Syria and Iraq. During the meeting, Diyab called on the Iraqi businessmen to benefit from the opportunities and incentives included in the decree No. 8, referring to a new decree that would give new incentives for investors in Syria. Head of the visiting delegation, Asaad Baki Haidar of Erbil-Drasco showed desire to reinforce trade and investment ties between the two countries.⁵³

However, according to the spokesman at the Syrian Foreign and Expatriates Ministry, Syria has decided to suspend its membership in the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) till the European Union reconsiders the measures taken against it. The spokesman added that representatives of the Egyptian-French co-presidency of the UfM have been informed of the decision.⁵⁴

Separately, reports noted that in response to the measures announced by the Turkish Foreign Minister, the Syrian government decided to suspend the Free Trade Zone agreement between

⁵⁰ "Turkey Announces Economic and Financial Measures against Syria", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, November 30, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/22/2011/11/30/385154.htm>

⁵¹ "President al-Assad Meets Delegation of Muslim Scholars Gathering of Lebanon", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, December 1, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2011/12/01/385181.htm>

⁵² "Syria, UNIDO Discuss Means of Implementing Cooperation Programs", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, December 1, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/24/2011/12/01/385432.htm>

⁵³ "Syria and Iraq to Enhance Trade and Investment Ties", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, December 1, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/24/2011/12/01/385251.htm>

⁵⁴ "Syria Suspend its Membership in UfM until EU Reconsiders Sanctions against It", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, December 2, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2011/12/02/385456.htm>

Syria and Turkey. The Syrian Government also studying the feasibility of taking other procedures that match with what has been declared by the Turkish Minister.⁵⁵

Further, at a session held in Geneva by the Human Rights Council to discuss Syria file, the ALBA countries condemned the political and media campaign against Syria, saying that this campaign aims at justifying the US and western countries' endeavours to interfere in Syria's domestic affairs, which was totally rejected by ALBA.⁵⁶

In other developments, according to reports, Syrian Minister of Housing and Construction Hala al-Nasser discussed with the Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Ali Nikzad means of bolstering bilateral cooperation in the housing and construction sectors. Al-Nasser highlighted the investment opportunities in the housing and construction sectors in Syria, adding that there were wide prospects for bilateral cooperation to establish housing units in the Syrian governorates. On his part, Nikzad underlined the importance of Syrian-Iranian relations and enhancing bilateral cooperation in the housing sector, expressing readiness for full cooperation with the Syrian side in this regard.⁵⁷

Jordan

- **Jordan urges more support for UNRWA; Jordan and Germany discuss bilateral ties, situation in Middle East; Foreign minister supports Jordan's GCC bid; Khasawneh's government wins vote of confidence; Jordan urges increased global efforts to make peace**

According to reports, Jordan called on the international community to increase support for United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), in order to alleviate the burden on host countries in light of the agency's worsening financial situation. Speaking on behalf of Prime Minister Awn Khasawneh, the Minister of Industry and Trade Sami Gammoh stressed that the agency's financial allocations should be in line with the increasing demand on its services. The minister reaffirmed that Jordan maintains its stance urging Palestinians and Israelis to return to the negotiating table, and stressed the need for Israel to halt its unilateral measures in the occupied territories. UNRWA Commissioner General Filippo Grandi said the agency remains concerned about the future financing of its general fund, especially now that the fund includes food aid.⁵⁸

In another development, warning that continued lack of peace would destabilise the region, Jordan King Abdullah said that bringing the Palestinians and Israelis to the negotiating table was in the best interest of Jordan and Germany and both would be working under the European coordination

⁵⁵ "Syrian Government Suspends Free Trade Zone Agreement with Turkey", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, December 3, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/24/2011/12/03/385503.htm>

⁵⁶ "ALBA countries reject any foreign intervention in Syria's domestic affairs", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, December 5, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/22/2011/12/05/386045.htm>

⁵⁷ "Syrian-Iranian Cooperation in Housing Sector Discussed", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, December 5, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/22/2011/12/05/385905.htm>

⁵⁸ "Jordan urges more int'l support for UNRWA", *The Jordan Times*, November 29, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=43773>

for the same. The King held talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin to discuss efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East and the challenges facing the region. The two leaders also discussed bilateral ties and means to develop them in all fields.⁵⁹

According to reports, foreign Minister Nasser Judeh told that Jordan's membership bid for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was on track as the Kingdom continued a gradual process towards joining the regional bloc. Judeh's comments came in response to reports quoting UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ben Zayed as indicating that GCC members have not reached a consensus over Jordan and Morocco's "full membership" to the council.⁶⁰

In a separate development, the government of Prime Minister Awn Khasawneh won the House vote of confidence, gaining the support of around 76 per cent of the total number of deputies present. Of the 117 MPs present, 89 deputies voted "yes", 25 voted "no" and three abstained.⁶¹

In other developments, according to reports, Jordan King Abdullah discussed with US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffery Feltman the latest developments in the Middle East and efforts geared towards realising peace. At the meeting, King Abdullah underlined the need for the US and the international community to increase their efforts to overcome obstacles hindering peace negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis on the basis of the two-state solution that leads to an independent Palestinian state within the pre-1967 borders.⁶²

Israel

- **Jordan urges Israel to stop unilateral actions; Israel approves 119 new settler homes; Israel resumes fund transfers to Palestine; UN demands full Israeli withdrawal from occupied Golan; US Defence Secretary urges Israel to negotiate with Palestinians**

According to reports, Jordan King Abdullah urged Israel to stop its unilateral actions, which pose real obstacles to peace efforts. During a meeting with Israeli President Shimon Peres in Amman, the King said Israel must cease all forms of settlement and refrain from any measures that could change the features of Jerusalem, or affect Islamic and Christian holy places in the Holy City. Both leaders also discussed ways to revive the Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations on the basis of the two-state solution, in accordance with international resolutions and in line with the agreed-upon terms of reference, in particular the Arab Peace Initiative.⁶³

⁵⁹ "Reviving Mideast negotiations in Jordan's best interest – King", *The Jordan Times*, November 30, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=43807>

⁶⁰ "Jordan's GCC bid on track", *The Jordan Times*, December 1, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=43853>

⁶¹ "Khasawneh's government wins vote of confidence", *The Jordan Times*, December 2, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=43900>

⁶² "King urges increased global efforts to make peace", *The Jordan Times*, December 5, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=43969>

⁶³ "King calls on Israel to cease unilateral actions", *The Jordan Times*, November 29, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=43775>

In another development, according to reports, Israeli settlement watchdog Peace Now revealed that Israel has approved construction of more than 100 homes in the West Bank settlement of Shilo, a move likely to bring fresh international condemnation. The approval came to light after the group petitioned Israel's supreme court in March 2011 to halt construction of an initial 50 housing units, prompting the court to request a government response. In reply, the defence ministry informed that it had approved a plan to build 119 housing units, including the 50 already under construction.⁶⁴

Meanwhile, according to reports, US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta urged Israel to go back to the negotiating table with Palestinians and to address the country's growing isolation in the Middle East. Panetta urged Israel to move forward to achieve peace with the Palestinians, and said that rather than undermining the Palestinian Authority, it is in Israel's interests to strengthen it by continuing to transfer Palestinian tax revenues and pursuing other avenues of co-operation.⁶⁵

In another development, the United Nations General Assembly renewed its demand for full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syria Golan to the June 4, 1967, line in implementation of relevant Security Council's resolutions. The UN's demand came during the adopting of a resolution entitled 'the Syrian Golan' which was submitted directly to the UN General Assembly under the item entitled "the Situation in the Middle East." 120 countries voted in favor of the resolution, while 7 countries voted against it and 53 countries, including the European Union countries, abstained.⁶⁶

In other developments, according to reports, nearly a month after it froze fund transfers over the Palestinians' admission to UNESCO, Israel said that it would resume sending millions of dollars in customs duties to the Palestinian Authority. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu approved the renewal of the transfer of tax monies to the Palestinian Authority.⁶⁷

Palestine

- **Palestine sets May 4, 2012 as date for elections; Palestine and Israeli opposition leader held talks in Jordan; Palestine PM opine global and regional politics not ripe for Palestinian statehood**

According to reports, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas fixed May 4, 2012 as the date for general elections meant to end a long-standing rift that has left people divided between rival governments in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Palestinians have been split since Hamas overran Gaza in 2007. Hamas controls Gaza, while Abbas' Palestinian Authority governs in the

⁶⁴ "Israel approves 119 new settler homes -NGO", *The Jordan Times*, November 29, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=43758>

⁶⁵ "US Defence Secretary Calls on Israel to Talk to Palestinians", *The Tripoli Post*, December 4, 2011, at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=7426>

⁶⁶ "The UN Renews Demand for Full Israeli Withdrawal from Occupied Golan, Comply with UNSC Resolution 497", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, December 2, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/22/2011/12/02/385448.htm>

⁶⁷ "Israel to resume fund transfers to Palestinians", *The Jordan Times*, December 1, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=43861>

West Bank. The comments followed Abbas' reconciliation talks in Cairo with Hamas chief Khaled Mishaal aimed at cementing a stalled unity deal signed six months ago.⁶⁸

In another development, Palestinian and Israeli officials said that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli opposition leader Tzipi Livni met in Amman for talks about the peace process. The Palestinian leader used the talks to stress his support for negotiations. Livni's Kadima Party issued its own statement on the meeting, saying the Israeli lawmaker had told Abbas to return to negotiations. She also criticised the Palestinian bid for UN membership and warned that reconciliation talks between Abbas' Fateh movement and Hamas would allow the Islamist group to "impose its agenda".⁶⁹

In other developments, according to Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, current political conditions within Israel, the Palestinian territories and across the world were not yet ripe to lead to concrete steps towards a Palestinian state, as leadership in Ramallah eyes a less than certain future. The former International Monetary Fund official said that with the EU preoccupied with the Eurozone crisis, the US nearing presidential elections, and the Arab Spring bringing sweeping change throughout the region, the Palestinian cause has been pushed to the background of policy makers' concerns.⁷⁰

E. Africa

Egypt

- **Islamists triumph in Egypt's election; Huge turnout for parliamentary elections in Egypt; Political parties appreciate smooth voting process; Concern over Egypt's fast depleting foreign reserves**

In a major development, according to reports, Islamists have prevailed over their liberal rivals in the opening phase of Egypt's first election since the fall of President Hosni Mubarak, with one in four voters choosing hardline Salafists. Islamist parties won 65 per cent of all votes cast for parties in the first round of parliamentary polls, while the main secular liberal coalition managed just 13.4 per cent. Among the Islamist vote, the moderate Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) of the Muslim Brotherhood won 36.6 per cent, followed by the hardline Salafist Al Nur Party with 24.4 per cent and the moderate Al Wasat with 4.3 per cent. The main liberal coalition, the Egyptian Bloc, won 1.29 million votes or 13.4 per cent.⁷¹

⁶⁸ "Palestinian president sets May 4 as date for elections", *The Jordan Times*, November 29, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=43780>

⁶⁹ "Abbas, Israeli opposition leader meet in Jordan", *The Jordan Times*, December 1, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=43859>

⁷⁰ "Politics not ripe for Palestinian statehood bid - Fayyad", *The Jordan Times*, December 5, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=43959>

⁷¹ "Islamists triumph in Egypt's election", *The Jordan Times*, December 5, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=43972>

Earlier, election monitors had announced that Egyptians turned out in big numbers on a mostly peaceful first day of voting for a new parliament, driven by optimism to build a new post-Hosni Mubarak era and the threat of fines if they stayed at home. However, they said it was too early to estimate overall turnout. No figures have been released, but the top election committee official said numbers were more than expected. The military rulers also reported a high turnout and extended voting hours to accommodate this.⁷²

In a related development, political parties and parliamentary candidates appreciated the smooth voting process in the elections' first phase that smashed expectations of thuggery and violence. The Supreme Council of the Armed forces (SCAF) managed to maintain tight security around polling stations in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior. While some reports of violations emerged, there were none about any violence.⁷³

In other developments, according to reports, highlighting the nation's dire finances, Mahmoud Nasr, a senior army financial official, said that Egypt's foreign reserves would plunge by a third to \$15 billion by the end of January 2012 and the budget deficit would grow, possibly leading to a review of sensitive subsidies. Reserves have tumbled since the uprising that toppled Hosni Mubarak as foreigners have fled and tourists vacated, hurting two of Egypt's main sources of hard currency.⁷⁴

Libya

- **UN calls for release of Libya's frozen assets; ICC team probing sexual crimes arrives in Libya; Tunisia calls on Libya over security at border post; UNSMIL mandate extended till March 2012**

Reports noted that in order to help the Libyan government overcome growing cash crunch, the United Nations Security Council attempting to find ways to pressure world government treasuries to overcome bureaucratic obstacles and free Libyan assets. Though the UN Security Council authorised the release of more than \$18bn in assets since easing sanctions in September 2011, barely \$3bn have reached the interim government. According to officials, Libya's interim leadership needs cash to pay for salaries and to keep public services running.⁷⁵

In another development, an investigation team from the International Criminal Court led by Ms Jane O'Toole arrived in Libya to probe sexual crimes committed by loyalists of the former Libyan leader, Muammar Al Gaddafi during the conflict that ended his 42-year reign. Earlier, ICC's chief

⁷² "Big turnout, scant violence in Egypt vote - monitors", *The Jordan Times*, November 29, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=43778>

⁷³ "Political parties hail smooth voting process", *The Daily News Egypt*, December 1, 2011, at <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/egypt-elections-2011/political-parties-hail-smooth-voting-process.html>

⁷⁴ "Army official sees Egypt foreign reserves plunging", *The Daily News Egypt*, December 1, 2011, at <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/economy/army-official-sees-egypt-foreign-reserves-plunging.html>

⁷⁵ "UN Security Council Calls for Governments to Release Libya's Frozen Assets", *The Tripoli Post*, December 1, 2011, at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=7407>

prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo said that the court's investigators have evidence that Gaddafi ordered mass rapes and bought containers of sex drugs for troops to attack women during the revolt.⁷⁶

Separately, reports noted that expressing deep concern over repeated attacks against its territorial integrity and security by armed Libyans, Tunisia awaits urgent measures to place the Ras El Jedir border point under the responsibility of professional agents including the police, army and customs officials. It also expressed that the attacks must not jeopardise the brotherly relations between the two countries. The border post has been closed a number of times due to the recurrence of such incidents.⁷⁷

In other developments, according to reports, the UN Security Council has extended the mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) until the middle of March 2012, and expanded its tasks to include assisting the transitional government in its efforts to address the threat of arms proliferation. Earlier, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of UNSMIL, Ian Martin, told the Council that the interim Government faces a number of challenges, the most immediate of which is consolidating security.⁷⁸

Nigeria

- **Suspected Boko Haram members bomb banks, police stations in Bauchi; World Bank briefs on global migration and remittances**

According to reports, two police stations and two commercial banks were bombed by suspected Boko Haram members in Azare town, Bauchi State. The attacks claimed the lives of a policeman, a soldier and a security guard and four other civilians. While the police failed to make any arrest during the gunfight, Bauchi State Police Commissioner, Ikechukwu Aduba said the assailants fled towards Kano, Misau, Damaturu and Maiduguri in Yobe and Borno states.⁷⁹

In another development, according to a newly updated World Bank brief on global migration and remittances, remittance flows to Nigeria and other developing countries were expected to hit \$351 billion this year, while worldwide remittances, including those to high-income countries, would reach \$406 billion for the current calendar year. The top recipients of officially recorded remittances, estimated for 2011, are India (\$58 billion), China (\$57 billion), Mexico (\$24 billion), and the Philippines (\$23 billion). Other large recipients include Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Vietnam, Egypt and Lebanon.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ "ICC Probing Sexual Crimes by Al Qathafi Troops Against Libyan Women", *The Tripoli Post*, December 1, 2011, at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=7406>

⁷⁷ "Tunisia Calls on Libya to Increase Security at Border post", *The Tripoli Post*, December 2, 2011, at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=7415>

⁷⁸ "UN Security Council Extends Mandate of Support for Libya Mission", *The Tripoli Post*, December 3, 2011, at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=7420>

⁷⁹ "Assailants bomb banks, police stations in Bauchi", *Nigerian Guardian*, December 5, 2011, at http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=69776:assailants-bomb-banks-police-stations-in-bauchi&catid=1:national&Itemid=559

⁸⁰ "Remittance flows to Nigeria, others may hit \$351b this year", *Nigerian Guardian*, December 5, 2011, at http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=69719:remittance-flows-to-nigeria-others-may-hit-351b-this-year&catid=31:business&Itemid=562

Sudan

- **Sudan differs from halting South Sudan oil exports; UNAMID chief presses for peace in Darfur; EAC rejects Sudan's bid to join the regional bloc as South Sudan's application is deferred; Sudan army captures Tarogi area in South Kordofan; ICC seeks arrest warrant for Sudan's Defence Minister**

According to reports, the Sudanese government appeared to have reversed a decision it announced earlier by which oil exports from South Sudan passing through the north's pipelines would come to a halt. The foreign ministry spokesperson Al-Obaid Marawih told in Khartoum that South Sudan would still be able to export its oil through its territories until both countries reach an agreement on fees that should be assessed for using the pipelines and refineries. Marawih also denied any intention to block exports of oil from Sudan's southern neighbour.⁸¹

In another development, the UNAMID chief, Ibrahim Gambari once again called on regional and international partners of Darfur peace process to put more pressures on the rebel groups in order to join negotiating table and dissuade them from escalating violence in the western Sudan. He furthermore said he was concerned by the recent alliance between Darfur rebels and those in the South Kordofan and Blue Nile. In a briefing to the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Gambari warned that the renewal of violence in Darfur would damage the progress made since the signing of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD).⁸²

Meanwhile, in a major diplomatic blow to Khartoum's ambitions of joining the regional bloc, Sudan's request to be admitted to the East Africa Community (EAC) was officially rejected. The rejection of Sudan's application was contained in a communiqué issued at the conclusion of the EAC's head-of-states summit in Bujumbura, Burundi. Meanwhile, Sudan's president al-Bashir has reacted by hinting at a conspiracy to turn his country into a pariah state.⁸³

In a related development, the EAC's head-of-states summit deferred application of South Sudan to join the regional bloc for further scrutiny. According to the summit's final communiqué, South Sudan's application is to be deferred to the EAC's council of ministers to decide whether it undergo further scrutiny to decide whether it met the benchmarks.⁸⁴

In another development, the Sudanese army (SAF) claimed that it seized control of an area in South Kordofan State from the hands of the rebels Sudan People's Liberation Movement North (SPLM-N). In a statement, the country's media minister Kamal Ubayd announced that SAF regained control of an area he called Tarogi. Ubayd said that the "liberation" represents "an important victory", congratulating SAF for the efforts it made to secure it.⁸⁵

⁸¹ "Sudan denies halting South Sudan oil exports as China condemns move", *The Sudan Tribune*, November 29, 2011, at <http://www.sudantribune.com/Sudan-denies-halting-South-Sudan,40861>

⁸² "UNAMID chief calls to press rebels to achieve peace in Darfur", *The Sudan Tribune*, November 29, 2011, at <http://www.sudantribune.com/UNAMID-chief-calls-to-press-rebels,40864>

⁸³ "Sudan's bid to join EAC rejected as South Sudan's deferred", *The Sudan Tribune*, November 30, 2011, at <http://www.sudantribune.com/Sudan-s-bid-to-join-EAC-rejected,40873>

⁸⁴ *ibid*

⁸⁵ "Sudan army 'captures' area in South Kordofan, new images show destruction in Blue Nile", *The Sudan Tribune*, December 1, 2011, at <http://www.sudantribune.com/Sudan-army-captures-area-in-South,40881>

In other developments, according to reports, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Luis Moreno-Ocampo sought an arrest warrant for Sudan's defence minister Abdelrahim Mohamed Hussein for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in Darfur from August 2003 to March 2004. Hussein, who was Khartoum's interior minister at the time, is wanted for coordinating attacks against civilians in at least six villages in western Darfur.⁸⁶

South Sudan

- **South Sudan warns oil companies over illegal deals with Sudan; South Sudan and UNMISS discuss mechanisms for mandate implementation; South Sudan and Kenya to enhance economic cooperation**

Reports noted that South Sudan warned all foreign oil companies, the oil consortia and pipeline operators in the country not to cooperate with Sudan on crude oil-related matters, unless authorized. The directive was contained in a press release issued by the South Sudan's petroleum and mining ministry following reports of Sudan's apparent intention to confiscate 23 per cent of the south's entitlement oil allegedly as payment in kind for pipeline and transit fees.⁸⁷

In another development, a joint meeting of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the Government of South Sudan involved discussions on preparations of mechanisms for the implementation of the UN mandate in South Sudan. The meeting, co-chaired by the South Sudan vice president, Riek Machar, and special representative of the UN secretary general, Hilde Johnson, also discussed the deployment of UN forces. Johnson also informed about Russian government's decision to ground its helicopters in South Sudan following a recent incident in Eastern Equatoria state where a helicopter was reportedly shot at by unidentified gunmen.⁸⁸

In other developments, the Vice President of South Sudan, Riek Machar, said his country and Kenya should further their economic cooperation for the benefit of the two nations. Machar made these remarks while briefing the cabinet on the topics discussed during the half cabinet retreat, which was hosted and financed by Kenya in the coastal city of Mombasa. Both the Vice President of Kenya, Kalonzo Musyoka, and Prime Minister Raila Odinga have assured of Kenya's projects aimed at promoting economic cooperation.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ "ICC Now Seeks Warrant for Sudan's Defence Minister", *The Tripoli Post*, December 3, 2011, at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=7422>

⁸⁷ "S. Sudan warns oil companies over illegal deals with Sudan", *The Sudan Tribune*, December 1, 2011, at <http://www.sudantribune.com/S-Sudan-warns-oil-companies-over,40880>

⁸⁸ "South Sudan and UNMISS discuss mechanisms for mandate implementation", *The Sudan Tribune*, December 1, 2011, at <http://www.sudantribune.com/South-Sudan-and-UNMISS-discuss,40877>

⁸⁹ "Machar says South Sudan and Kenya further economic cooperation", *The Sudan Tribune*, December 2, 2011, at <http://www.sudantribune.com/Machar-says-South-Sudan-and-Kenya,40889>

South Africa

- **Angola and South Africa strengthen cultural cooperation; President speaks of ‘greening’ the economy at COP17; Selebi loses appeal against 15-year jail term**

Reports noted that the Republics of Angola and of South Africa strengthened cooperation in the cultural field, with the signing of an agreement between the two countries. The Angolan minister of Culture visited South Africa at the invitation of her South African counterpart. During her stay in South Africa, minister Rosa Cruz e Silva attended the activities aimed at ratifying the Charter of the African Cultural Rebirth, demanded by the African Union.⁹⁰

In another development, addressing the World Economic Forum Green Partnership Dialogue at COP17 in Durban, President Jacob Zuma said that government was planning to invest in mass transport systems as a way of “greening” the South African economy. He announced that by 2014, the state-owned commuter rail company, Prasa [Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa], would invest R20-billion in new trains, most of which would be manufactured locally. He said that these measures were part of government’s New Growth Path, which seeks to reduce emissions by focusing on renewable and nuclear energy, green transport and the built environment.⁹¹

In other developments, according to reports, marking the end of a lengthy trial that revealed the workings of an organised crime network involving bribes, corruption and a R50000 suit, former Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. Selebi appealed his conviction by high court Judge Meyer Joffe, who found him guilty of corruption and sentenced him to 15 years in prison. In an unanimous decision, the appeal court rejected the defence’s submission that the annotated cheques were for an ill policeman Agliotti was helping to support.⁹²

Somalia

- **Top al-Shabaab leader arrested by KDF; Somali pirates release tanker and 21 of its crew members, seized in April 2011; Ethiopia opens Bur Amino camp for Somali refugees; Intensified fighting took place in Southern Somalia**

In a major development, the Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF) have arrested a top leader of the Al Shabaab militia who continued to suffer heavy losses following the military onslaught. The militia leader is being grilled by the joint forces leading the operation in Somalia in a bid to get more details about the militia and its networks in the country. The Department of Defence spokesman Colonel Cyrus Oguna also revealed that KDF has changed tactics in its operations and had sealed off regions where the militias were seeking refuge.⁹³

⁹⁰ “Govt and South Africa Strengthen Cultural Cooperation”, *AllAfrica.com*, December 4, 2011, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201112050193.html>

⁹¹ “Zuma speaks of ‘greening SA economy’ at COP17”, *Mail and Guardian*, December 4, 2011, at <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-12-04-zuma-speaks-of-greening-sa-economy-at-cop17>

⁹² “Still guilty: Selebi loses appeal against 15-year jail term”, *Mail and Guardian*, December 2, 2011, at <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-12-02-supreme-court-judges-set-to-rule-on-selebis-appeal>

⁹³ “Top Shabaab Leader Held By Military”, *AllAfrica.com*, December 4, 2011, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201112050682.html>

Reports noted that Glory Ship Management announced that the pirates who seized the Singapore-registered MT Gemini releases tanker and its 21 crew members but instead took four South Koreans ashore. According to reports, the released crew members were in good health. Among the released crew members 13 were Indonesians, five Chinese and three from Myanmar. The pirates had seized the MT Gemini traveling from Indonesia to Kenya and its more than 28,000 tonnes of crude palm oil off the coast of Kenya on April 16, 2011.⁹⁴

In another development, Andrej Mahecic, spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said that hundreds of refugees in southern Ethiopia have been relocated from an overcrowded transit centre to a new camp, the fifth one in the area for Somalis fleeing conflict and drought in their homeland. The Bur Amino camp in Ethiopia's Dollo Ado region was opened and has received the first group of some 400 Somali refugees so far.⁹⁵

In other developments, at least four people were reported killed and others wounded in an intensifying battle between soldiers loyal to the Kenyan government and Al-shabab fighters in Jubba region of southern Somalia. Reports noted that both warring sides sustained heavy casualties in the battle. The combat erupted after Al-shabab fighters launched an ambush attack on Kenyan military convoys from Qoqani township to Tabta village near Afmadow district in lower Jubba region of Somalia.⁹⁶

Cote D'Ivoire

- **ICC charges former leader with crimes against humanity; Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea discuss reconciliation efforts**

Reports noted that Côte d'Ivoire's former leader Laurent Gbagbo was charged with four counts of crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court (ICC), for acts allegedly committed after a disputed presidential run-off election between the former president and his challenger Alassane Ouattara which descended the country back into civil war.⁹⁷

In another development, Ivory Coast President Alassane Ouattara arrived in Conakry to discuss reconciliation efforts with his Guinean counterpart Alpha Conde in their troubled countries.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ "Somali pirates release tanker – but hold on to four hostages", *Mail and Guardian*, December 1, 2011, at <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-12-01-somali-pirates-release-tanker-but-hold-on-to-four-hostages/>

⁹⁵ "Ethiopia Opens Additional Camp for Somali Refugees - UN Agency", *AllAfrica.com*, December 2, 2011, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201112021600.html>

⁹⁶ "Four Dead in an Intensifying Southern Region Fighting", *AllAfrica.com*, December 4, 2011, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201112050691.html>

⁹⁷ "Laurent Gbagbo charged with crimes against humanity", *Mail and Guardian*, November 30, 2011, at <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-11-30-gbagbo-charged-with-crimes-against-humanity-at-the-hague>

⁹⁸ "Country and Guinea Discuss Reconciliation Efforts", *AllAfrica.com*, December 1, 2011, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201112021256.html>

II. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Chief Minister Jammu & Kashmir Omar Abdullah claims AFSPA revocation is in its decisive phase; National Conference block President shot; Police arrests two militants in Srinagar**

According to reports, reiterating his stand on AFSPA, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said that with the onset of peace in J&K the partial revocation of the Act has become inevitable and talks in this direction have reached a decisive stage. Omar Abdullah said addressing a large public gathering at Rafiabad in district Baramulla of North Kashmir that there has been a good development over the issue of partial revocation of AFSPA with Centre.⁹⁹

However, reports noted that unidentified gunmen shot at and injured the National Conference (NC) block president for Eidgah at Safakadal in old city. Police said Ghulam Muhammad Lone son of Abdul Salam Lone of Lattar Masjid Safakadal was attacked by gunmen outside his home.¹⁰⁰

In other developments, according to reports, J&K Police claimed to have arrested two militants from Dignibal, Zakoora, Srinagar recovering grenades from their possession. According to police spokesman, the arrested have been identified as Aijaz Ahmad Hamdani son of Khurshid Ahmad of Botakadal Srinagar and Javid Ahmad Sheikh Son of Ghulam Muhammad Sheikh of Soura Srinagar.¹⁰¹

North East India

- **United Naga Council lifts the economic blockade in Manipur; IED blast in Imphal leaves one dead; Situation in Manipur remained gloomy; Noted Assamese writer Indira Goswami dead; Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) to be declared a banned organization; A policeman and his daughter shot by Garo National Liberation Army; ULFA claim refuted in the Oil India Limited fire in Tipling, Assam; Centre takes note of mega dam protests**

According to reports, the United Naga Council (UNC) has resolved to lift the economic blockade on the National Highways in Manipur from November 29, 2011. Decision was taken in an emergency presidential council meeting of UNC at Tamenglong. The meeting of UNC took the decision to lift the blockade from 6 am of November 29 giving due regard to the assurance given by Union Home Minister P Chidambaram to the UNC delegation on November 22, 2011 at North Block that Government of Manipur will not be allowed to take any unilateral decision on Sadar Hills issue without consulting the Nagas. The meeting also took into consideration the official

⁹⁹ "AFSPA revocation in decisive phase: Omar", *Greater Kashmir*, November 30, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Dec/1/afspa-revocation-in-decisive-phase-omar-48.asp>

¹⁰⁰ "NC block president fired upon", *Greater Kashmir*, December 2, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Dec/3/nc-block-president-fired-upon-49.asp>

¹⁰¹ "2 militants held: Police", *Greater Kashmir*, November 29, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Nov/29/2-militants-held-police-55.asp>

communication from the Ministry of Home Affairs on November 24 with a request to lift the blockade. The UNC also said that the stand to lift the blockade was taken considering the appeal made by the church and civil society organisations. The UNC, however, warned they will resume the blockade if the authority failed to translate the assurance into action.¹⁰²

However, according to reports, an explosion outside a festival venue in Imphal, Manipur killed one person. A police spokesperson said the bomb exploded near the entry gate of the ongoing Sangai Tourism Festival. The carrier of the bomb was apparently riding a cycle rickshaw when the blast took place. The blast comes ahead of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's daylong visit to Imphal on December 3 when he is scheduled to launch and inaugurate several development projects. The prime minister is also expected to address a public meeting.¹⁰³

Meanwhile, according to a Manipur minister, state of affairs remains grim in Manipur even though a crippling 121-day economic blockade has been temporarily lifted. Minister noted that the withdrawal of the national highway blockade will come as a respite for Manipuris, but the state government needs to go a long way in resolving ethnic issues between the Kuki and Naga tribes in the state. Though the economic blockade had been lifted but the 121-day blockade has plunged the strife-torn northeastern state into a severe economic crisis.¹⁰⁴

Noted Assamese writer Indira Goswami died at a hospital in Guwahati after prolonged illness. She was 69. Winner of India's highest literary award Jnanpith, Goswami acted as a facilitator to broker peace between the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and New Delhi. But she gave it up in 2005.¹⁰⁵

Reports noted that with the Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) continuing with its atrocities, the Centre has decided to declare the outfit as a banned organization in India. The decision to ban the outfit was taken by the Centre after receiving inputs from the State government and other agencies. The official said that the Centre can ban any organisation on its own if they posed a threat to the country's security. But in this case, the Centre has sought the State government's view asking whether the GNLA should be banned or not.¹⁰⁶

According to reports, alarmed by the turmoil over the Subansiri Hydroelectric Project, the Ministry of Water Resources has decided to convene a meeting with the Governments of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh this month. Minister of State for Water Resources, Vincent H Pala said that the Centre has taken note of the agitation over the dam project and the hurdles created in execution

¹⁰² "UNC lifts economic blockade on Manipur", *The Assam Tribune*, November 28, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=nov2911/oth05>

¹⁰³ "Blast in Imphal, one killed", *The Assam Tribune*, November 30, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=nov3011/at016>

¹⁰⁴ "Situation in Manipur remains grim: Minister", *The Assam Tribune*, December 1, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=dec0111/at038>

¹⁰⁵ "Mamoni Raisom Goswami dead", *The Assam Tribune*, November 29, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=nov2911/at048>

¹⁰⁶ "GNLA to be banned", *The Assam Tribune*, December 1, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=dec0211/oth05>

of the hydroelectric power Project in Assam. Agitation over construction of big dams in Arunachal Pradesh has gathered momentum in Assam and disruption of project work has troubled the Centre.¹⁰⁷

In other developments, reports noted that a police constable and his daughter in Meghalaya sustained bullet injuries after suspected rebels of the Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) opened indiscriminate fire. Goelson Marak, an armed branch constable and his five-year-old daughter Kadime Sangma sustained bullets on their legs when the rebels fired indiscriminately at the house in Rimrangpara village Meghalaya's West Garo Hills district.¹⁰⁸

III. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **India presses for UNSC reforms; India will closely work with BASIC on climate negotiations; UN mission in Libya extended till March 2012; UN Security Council condemns attacks on UK embassy in Iran; India asks Israel to stop building settlements in occupied Palestinian territories; India re-elected to key UN Committee; Arms embargo against DRC rebel groups extended; Council congratulates people's participation in DRC elections; Council welcomes new political agreement in Yemen**

Reports noted that making a pitch for urgent reform of the UN Security Council, India said that the common refrain among countries is that the world can no longer be subjugated to the mercies of a 'woefully inadequate system' that was established more than half a century ago. India's representative Hardeep Singh Puri stated that expansion and reform is 'essential' and must be pursued with 'renewed vigour and urgently enacted'.¹⁰⁹

Meanwhile, according to reports, in this year's UN climate negotiations, India will work closely with BASIC group and other like-minded countries to ensure that its three agenda issues – equity, intellectual property on green technologies and unilateral trade barriers become central to the Durban climate talks. India will push for an unconditional acceptance of the second phase of Kyoto Protocol by the rich countries and would not undertake any legally binding targets at this stage of its development.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ "Centre takes note of mega dam protests", *The Assam Tribune*, December 2, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=dec0311/at07>

¹⁰⁸ "Policeman and daughter shot at", *The Assam Tribune*, December 3, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=dec0311/at044>

¹⁰⁹ "UNSC reform will enhance Council's credibility, says India", *Hindustan Times*, 29 November, 2011 at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/Europe/UNSC-reform-will-enhance-Council-s-credibility-says-India/Article1-775557.aspx>

¹¹⁰ "India to work in tandem with BASIC group at Durban talks", *Times of India*, 30 November 2011 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/developmental-issues/India-to-work-in-tandem-with-BASIC-group-at-Durban-talks/articleshow/10936497.cms>

In another development, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) until 16 March, 2012. The mission was originally mandated to support the National Transitional Council in its reconstruction efforts after the end of the conflict. With the extension, the mission will perform additional functions of coordinating and consulting with the transitional government of Libya, assisting and supporting Libyan national efforts to address the threats of proliferation of all arms and related material.¹¹¹

Meanwhile, the Council strongly condemned the against the UK embassy in Tehran which resulted in intrusions into diplomatic and consular premises and caused serious damage. The Council also recalled the responsibility of the host country in taking all appropriate steps to protect diplomatic and consular premises.¹¹²

In a statement at the UN Security Council on the 'Situation in the Middle East', India's envoy to the UNSC, Hardeep Puri asked Israel to stop settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories and asked it to release the tax revenue to the Palestinian Authority.¹¹³

According to reports, India was re-elected to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), a body under the UN Human Rights system, for a three-year term beginning January 20, 2012.¹¹⁴

In the interim, the arms embargo and other sanctions placed against armed rebel groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo were extended by another year till 30 November, 2012.¹¹⁵

In other developments, the Security Council congratulated the people of Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) for their participation in the country's presidential and legislative elections and called it a demonstration of their commitment to democracy.¹¹⁶ In another development, according to reports, the Security Council welcomed the new political agreement in Yemen and the mechanism to implement it. It also stressed that the deal must be strictly implemented to end unrest and restore stability in the country.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ "Libya: Security Council extends mandate of UN support mission", *UN News Centre*, 02 December 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40610&Cr=libya&Cr1=>

¹¹² "Security Council strongly condemns attacks against UK embassy in Iran", *UN News Centre*, 29 November 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40556&Cr=iran&Cr1=>

¹¹³ "India ask Israel to stop settlement activities", *IBN Live*, 01 December 2011 at <http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/india-ask-israel-to-stop-settlement-activities/920841.html>

¹¹⁴ "India re-elected to key UN Committee", *Deccan Chronicle*, 01 December 2011 at <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/channels/nation/north/india-re-elected-key-un-committee-619>

¹¹⁵ "Security Council renews arms embargo and sanctions in DR Congo", *UN News Centre*, 29 November 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40563&Cr=democratic&Cr1=congo>

¹¹⁶ "DR Congo: Security Council welcomes holding of elections, urges calm", *UN News Centre*, 02 December 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40615&Cr=democratic&Cr1=congo>

¹¹⁷ "Welcoming accord in Yemen, Security Council urges timely implementation", *UN News Centre*, 28 November 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40543&Cr=yemen&Cr1=>