

# THE WEEK IN REVIEW

January 11 – January 17, 1 (3), 2016

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# I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

## A. South Asia

### Bangladesh

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Saudi prince meets Khaleda Zia; Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan addresses the assembly of the United Nations Trusteeship Council.**

Saudi Prince Turki bin Abdullah Aziz Al Saud and his brother Prince Badar bin Abdullah met Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Chairperson Khaleda Zia on January 12. President of Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Dr. Ahmad Mohamed Ali Al-Madani and Saudi Ambassador in Dhaka Abdullah HM Al-Mutairi and BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, among others, were present at the meeting. However, there was no formal briefing about the outcome of the meeting.<sup>1</sup>

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan at an assembly of the United Nations Trusteeship Council in New York on January 15 said Bangladesh government has taken a zero tolerance policy to combat extremism and terrorism. He shared various measures, taken by Bangladesh with the participation and cooperation of women, civil society, religious leaders, local elite, grassroots people and media, for combating extremism. He also reaffirmed Dhaka's commitment to providing all-out cooperation in curbing extremism and terrorism at both regional and international levels. Earlier on the day, Khan inaugurated the services of Machine Readable Passport (MRP) and Machine Readable Visa (MRV) at Consulate General offices of Bangladesh in Mexico and New York.<sup>2</sup>

### Sri Lanka

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Indian Foreign Secretary visits Sri Lanka; Sri Lanka endorses declaration to end sexual violence in conflict; Sri Lanka-Japan Policy Dialogue; Pakistani Commerce Minister arrives in Sri Lanka to open Pakistan Single Country Exhibition; British Minister of State for Asia at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Hugo Swire visits Sri Lanka; Sri Lankan Finance Minister attends Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank opening in Beijing; Sri Lanka forex reserves stable at US\$ 7.29 billion at the end 2015.**

Indian Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar made a visit to Sri Lanka from January 12-13, 2016. The main purpose of his visit was to pave the way for the India-Sri Lanka Joint Commission meeting which will be held in Colombo next month. He is also expected to make arrangements for the Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's visit to attend the Joint Commission meeting. Dr. Jaishankar called on Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena on January 13 at the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo. Commending the Sri Lankan President for his statesman-like approach towards national reconciliation, the visiting Indian official conveyed congratulations from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the President's one year in Office. Dr. Jaishankar

<sup>1</sup> "Saudi Prince Meets Khaleda", *The Daily Star*, January 13, 2016, at <http://www.thedailystar.net/city/saudi-prince-meets-khaleda-201142>.

<sup>2</sup> "Dhaka Reaffirms Zero Tolerance for Terrorism", *The Daily Star*, January 17, 2016, at <http://www.thedailystar.net/city/dhaka-reaffirms-zero-tolerance-terrorism-202954>.

also met with Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, and former President of Sri Lanka Ms. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mangala Samaraweera, Minister of Development Strategies and International Trade, Malik Samarawickrema, Leader of Opposition R. Sampanthan, and his counterpart Foreign Secretary Ms. Chitrangane Wagiswara. During his visit, Dr. Jaishankar reviewed various aspects of the bilateral relationship, including preparations for the forthcoming Joint Commission Meeting.<sup>3</sup>

The Sri Lankan Government endorsed the declaration of commitment to end sexual violence in conflict on January 12, 2016. The Foreign Ministry said that the Government of Sri Lanka, in manifestation of its firm commitment to uphold, promote and protect the human rights of all, and denounce sexual violence, has decided to endorse the declaration of commitment to end sexual violence in conflict.<sup>4</sup>

The national reconciliation and peace-building process in Sri Lanka was the focus of the discussions held in the first round of Sri Lanka- Japan Policy Dialogue at Senior Official Level of the two Foreign Ministries in Colombo on January 12, 2016. The convening of the Policy Dialogue was proposed in the Joint Declaration on a "Comprehensive Partnership" between Sri Lanka and Japan, issued during the visit of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe to Japan in October 2015. The Foreign Ministry issuing a statement said that the Dialogue focused on promotion of investment and trade, collaboration in the national development plan and cooperation in the national reconciliation and peace-building process in Sri Lanka. Both sides also had discussions on regional issues as well as global challenges affecting the two countries. Under the framework of the Policy Dialogue it was decided to hold three specialized Dialogues: a Dialogue on Maritime Security, Safety and Oceanic Issues, to be chaired by the Ministry of Defence; an Economic Cooperation Policy Dialogue & Consultation on National Development Cooperation, to be chaired by the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs and an Economic Policy Dialogue, to be chaired by the Ministry of Development Strategies & International Trade in the months of January, February and May of this year, respectively. The next round of the Policy Dialogue at the Senior Official Level of the two Foreign Ministries will be held in Tokyo, in early 2017. The Policy Dialogue was co-chaired by Mr. O.L. Ameer Ajwad, Director General of the East Asia & Pacific Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka and Mr. Kazuya Nashida, Director-General of the Southeast and Southwest Asian Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. The Japan side was also represented by Mr. Kenichi Suganuma, Ambassador of Japan to Sri Lanka, Ms. Asako Okai, Deputy Head of Mission of the Japanese Embassy in Sri Lanka, Mr. Takashi Ariyoshi, Director, Southwest Asia Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr. Shinichi Murata, Official, Southwest Asia Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr. Yasuhito Tamada, Director, International Economic Affairs Division, Global ICT Strategy Bureau, Mr. Kiyoshi Amada, Chief Representative of the JICA Sri Lanka Office and other Senior Officials. On the Sri Lanka side, Ms. Neelamani Aberatne, Addl. Secretary, Ministry of Special Assignments, Mrs. Nilanthi Sugathadasa, Addl. Secretary of the Ministry of Skills Development & Vocational Training, Mrs. Shirani Weerakoon, Addl. Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism

<sup>3</sup> "Indian Foreign Secretary Arrives in Sri Lanka for Talks", *ColomboPage*, January 12, 2016, at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_16A/Jan12\\_1452584752CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan12_1452584752CH.php). "Indian Foreign Secretary Reviews Bilateral Relationship with Sri Lanka", *ColomboPage*, January 13, 2016, at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_16A/Jan13\\_1452697429CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan13_1452697429CH.php).

<sup>4</sup> "Sri Lanka Endorses Declaration to End Sexual Violence in Conflict", *Colombo Gazette*, January 12, 2016, at <http://colombogazette.com/2016/01/12/sri-lanka-endorses-declaration-to-end-sexual-violence-in-conflict/>.

Development & Christian Religious Affairs, Mr. M. Dewasurendra, Addl. Secretary of the Ministry of Higher Education & Highways, Mr. J.M. Thilakarathna, Addl. Secretary of the Ministry of Transport & Civil Aviation and other Senior Officials of several Ministries participated in the Policy Dialogue.<sup>5</sup>

Pakistan's Federal Minister for Commerce, Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan went to Sri Lanka on January 14 on a two-day visit along with senior officials to formally inaugurate the Pakistan Single Country Exhibition 2016 in Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH) on January 15, 2016. The Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) is organizing the Exhibition in collaboration with the High Commission of Pakistan in Sri Lanka.<sup>6</sup>

British Minister of State for Asia at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Hugo Swire, who arrived in Sri Lanka on January 14, visited the North with Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe to participate in the National Thai Pongal day celebrations in Jaffna. While in Jaffna, the minister held talks with the Chief Minister of Northern Province C.V. Wigneswaran and discussed land issues and long-term political solution the ethnic issue. After meeting with the civil society leaders and human rights defenders in Jaffna and discussing the reconciliation process, Swire commented that he is positive about the government's efforts but faster progress is needed. Swire, accompanied by the British High Commissioner in Colombo James Dairies, also met with the families resettled after demining and observed the Thai Pongal rituals. The Minister visited the Kelaniya Temple and held discussion on religious affairs with the Chief Prelate of the temple. The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and British Minister of State Hugo Swire had talks on January 14 on issues faced by the Tamils. According to the TNA, Swire and the TNA discuss issues of accountability, constitutional reform and the day to day issues of the Tamil people. The TNA was represented by TNA Parliamentarian and spokesman M.A. Sumanthiran. British Minister of State for Asia at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Hugo Swire, addressing a press conference in Colombo before his departure, said the UK government will neither pressurise nor influence the Sri Lankan government on the formulation of a new Constitution but welcome the government's initiative in changes. The Minister said he is encouraged by the progress Sri Lanka has made under the President Maithripala Sirisena's government in human rights situation in Sri Lanka. Speaking at the Council for Business with Britain, Hugo Swire said that since the election of President Maithripala Sirisena last January, there has been a distinct and welcome change of atmosphere in the bilateral relationship between Sri Lanka and UK. He also pointed out the importance of establishing a non-residential Defence Attaché to support Sri Lankan military reform.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "Sri Lanka- Japan Policy Dialogue Focuses on National Reconciliation and Peace-Building Process in Sri Lanka", *ColomboPage*, January 14, 2016, at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_16A/Jan14\\_1452759354CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan14_1452759354CH.php).

<sup>6</sup> "Pakistani Commerce Minister Arrives in Sri Lanka to Open Pakistan Single Country Exhibition", *ColomboPage*, January 14, 2016, at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_16A/Jan14\\_1452782008CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan14_1452782008CH.php).

<sup>7</sup> "UK will not Influence Sri Lanka on Political Affairs or Constitutional Affairs", *ColomboPage*, January 16, 2016, at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_16A/Jan16\\_1452958247CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan16_1452958247CH.php). "TNA and Swire Discuss Issues Faced by the Tamils", *Colombo Gazette*, January 14, 2016, at <http://colombogazette.com/2016/01/14/tna-and-swire-discuss-issues-faced-by-the-tamils/>.

Minister of Finance, Ravi Karunanayake attended the opening ceremony of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) on January 17 in Beijing. Sri Lanka is a founding member of the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.<sup>8</sup>

Sri Lanka's gross official reserves stood at US \$7.292 billion as at end December 2015, marginally up from US \$ 7.281 billion reported in the previous month, data released from the Central Bank shows. The December 2015 foreign reserves are down from US dollars 8.21 billion at the end of 2014 mainly due to debt repayments and higher imports. The Dec 2015 reserves included US dollars 6.46 billion in foreign reserves and US dollars 760 million in gold. Foreign reserves improved after Sri Lanka raised US dollars 1.5 billion in a 10-year sovereign bond issue in late October. Sri Lanka's gross official reserves stood at US dollars 6.5 billion as at end October. The Central Bank tried to defend the rupee by selling dollars heavily before floating it on September 3. The rupee has fallen 8.8 percent so far this year and 6.3 percent since it was floated.<sup>9</sup>

## Maldives

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Foreign Secretary and Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of India visits Maldives; Pact with Maldives in 2014 gets Indian Cabinet approval; Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera and Finance Minister Ravi Karunanayake visit Maldives; Bangladesh army chief arrives in Maldives; Maldives condemns nuclear test by N. Korea; Hugo Swire visits Maldives; Modi Government has approved MoU between India and the Maldives in the field of health.**

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has discussed ways to further reinforce and strengthen the existing diplomatic and political relations between India and the Maldives with Foreign Secretary and Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of India, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on January 11, 2016. The President and the Indian Foreign Secretary spoke of supporting each other in the International Arena and in times of political distress. Further discussions were held regarding cross-border terrorism, health care and economic development in the Maldives. The President was accompanied at the meeting by Minister of Foreign Affairs Dunya Maumoon, Foreign Secretary of Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Ali Naseer Mohamed and Under Secretary at the President's Office Mohamed Naseer.<sup>10</sup>

The Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between Maldives and India on health sector related matters signed between the two countries in January 2014 during President Abdulla Yameen's visit to India, obtained Indian Cabinet approval on January 13. The MoU covers assistance to Maldives in developing human resources in healthcare sector, as well as greater cooperation in exchange and training of doctors and other health professionals, and medical and health research development. It also covers cooperation in management of healthcare sector and public health services, procurement of generic and essential drugs and assistance in sourcing of

<sup>8</sup> "Sri Lankan Finance Minister Attends Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank Opening in Beijing", *ColomboPage*, January 17, 2016, at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_16A/Jan17\\_1452969819CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan17_1452969819CH.php).

<sup>9</sup> "Sri Lanka Forex Reserves Stable at End 2015 at US\$ 7.29 bn", *Colombopage*, January 11, 2016, at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_16A/Jan11\\_1452496921CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan11_1452496921CH.php).

<sup>10</sup> "President Discusses Ways to Strengthen Diplomatic and Political Relations with India", *The Presidency, Republic of Maldives*, January 11, 2016 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=16309>.

drug supplies, health promotion and disease prevention, traditional and complementary medicine, telemedicine and any other area of cooperation that the two countries agree upon.<sup>11</sup>

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera and Finance Minister Ravi Karunanayake made an official visit to the Maldives and met President Yameen. President Yameen, Minister Samaraweera and Minister Karunanayake discussed the bilateral relations between the countries and focused on areas and issues for further cooperation including the fight against terrorism. Minister Samaraweera, during the meeting, thanked President Yameen for the invitation to visit Maldives and assured him that the Sri Lankan government would work towards further strengthening the bilateral ties between the two countries. The meeting was held at President's Office and was attended by Maldivian Foreign Minister Dhunya Maumoon, Foreign Secretary Dr. Ali Naseer Mohamed and President's Office Under Secretary Mohamed Naseer.<sup>12</sup>

Chief of Army Staff of Bangladesh Army, General Abu Belal Muhammad Shafiul Huq came to Maldives on January 15 on an official visit. He was welcomed at Ibrahim Nasir International Airport upon arrival by Vice-Chief of Defence Force, Brigadier General Ahmed Shahid.<sup>13</sup>

Maldivian government has condemned the hydrogen bomb test conducted by North Korea. Maldivian Foreign Ministry released a statement on January 15 which says, "the recent nuclear test by DPRK is a clear act of defiance and provocation to its regional neighbours. The Maldives considers DPRK's nuclear weapons ambition not only as a hindrance to regional stability but also as a serious threat to international peace and security as a whole."<sup>14</sup>

The Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and MP for East Devon, Hugo Swire made a visit to the Maldives. During the visit, he met with President Abdulla Yamin Abdul Gayoom, the former President of the Maldives and the President of the current ruling party PPM, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom and different political party leaders in the Maldives including the opposition MDP and Adhaalath Party. At his meeting with President Yamin, both sides expressed their commitment to further strengthening existing bilateral ties between the Maldives and the UK. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dunya Maumoon, Foreign Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Ali Naseer Mohamed, and Undersecretary (Foreign Relations) at the President's Office, Mr. Mohamed Naseer were present at the President's meeting with Swire.<sup>15</sup>

The Modi government has approved for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Maldives which was signed in January, 2014 on cooperation in the field of Health. The MoU covers: Exchange & training of medical doctors, officials, other health professionals and experts; Assistance in development of human resources and setting up of health care facilities; Medical and health research development; Management of healthcare sector and public health services; Procurement of generic and essential drugs and assistance in sourcing of drug supplies; Health promotion and disease prevention; Traditional and; complementary Medicine; Telemedicine; and any other area of cooperation as may be mutually decided upon. This MoU will facilitate greater cooperation between the two countries, especially for assisting Maldives for

<sup>11</sup> "Pact with Maldives in 2014 Gets Indian Cabinet Approval", *SunOnline*, January 14, 2016, at <http://english.sun.mv/35722>.

<sup>12</sup> "President: Regional Countries Can Work Together to Stop Terrorism", *SunOnline*, January 14, 2016, at <http://english.sun.mv/35731>.

<sup>13</sup> "Bangladesh Army Chief Arrives in Maldives", *SunOnline*, January 16, 2016, at <http://english.sun.mv/35751>.

<sup>14</sup> "Maldives Condemns Nuclear Test by N. Korea", *SunOnline*, January 16, 2016, at <http://english.sun.mv/35744>.

<sup>15</sup> "Hugo Swire has Met with President Maumoon", *SunOnline*, January 17, 2016, at <http://english.sun.mv/35772>.

development of human resources and facilities for healthcare. Enhanced cooperation in the field of health will foster great friendship and relations between the two countries.<sup>16</sup>

## B. East Asia

### China

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **China reshuffles military headquarters to make military stronger; China asserts the importance of one-China Principle; Li Keqiang addresses the Board of Governors of AIIB; Foreign Minister of Switzerland visits China; Chinese army capable of defending its sovereignty; Xi Jinping will visit Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran; China releases first White Paper on China-Arab relations; China claims it informed Vietnam about test flight on Nansha Islands; China ready for role in Afghanistan reconciliation.**

In a recent attempt to make the Chinese military stronger, Beijing reorganized its four military headquarters – staff, politics, logistics and armaments – into 15 new agencies under the Central Military Commission (CMC). Under the new changes there are six new departments: joint staff, political work, logistical support, equipment development, training, and national defence mobilization and three commissions – discipline inspection, politics and law, and science and technology – as well as the general office and five more: administration, auditing, international cooperation, reform and organizational structure, and strategic planning.<sup>17</sup>

On January 16, the Chinese foreign ministry asked the international community to follow the one-China principle. Such announcements were made following that recent leadership election in Taiwan. The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei said that, “We hope and believe that the international community will adhere to the one-China principle, oppose 'Taiwan independence' in any form and support peaceful development of cross-Straits relations through concrete actions”.<sup>18</sup>

On January 16, the Chinese Premier Li Keqiang addressed the inaugural meeting of Board of Governors of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). During the meeting Li asserted that, “It is our hope that the AIIB will fully draw on the useful experience of existing multilateral development institutions, well identify its own role and cultivate its unique features”.<sup>19</sup>

During the recent visit of Didier Burkhalter, Foreign Minister of Switzerland to China, both China and Switzerland discussed ways to fight corruption and also ways to increase cooperation in areas of economy, innovation, people to people exchanges etc. The Swiss Foreign Minister met with the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on January 15.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> “MoU between India and Maldives for Health”, *PIB*, January 13, 2016, Release ID: 134423, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

<sup>17</sup> “China Reshuffles Military Headquarters”, *China Daily*, January 11, 2016 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/11/content\\_23035120.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/11/content_23035120.htm), accessed on January 18, 2016

<sup>18</sup> “China Urges Int'l Community to Adhere to One-China Principle”, *China Daily*, January 17, 2016 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/17/content\\_23118264.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/17/content_23118264.htm), accessed on January 18, 2016

<sup>19</sup> “Premier Li Keqiang Addresses AIIB Board of Governors”, *China Daily*, January 17, 2016 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/17/content\\_23123670.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/17/content_23123670.htm), accessed on January 18, 2016

<sup>20</sup> “China, Switzerland to Step up Anti-Corruption Cooperation”, *China Daily*, January 16, 2016 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/16/content\\_23111959.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/16/content_23111959.htm), accessed on January 18, 2016



As a response to Japanese media reports of Japan preparing to send ships to urge the Chinese naval ships to leave if they come closer than 12 nautical miles off the Diaoyu Islands, the Chinese Ministry of National Defence stated that the Chinese armed forces will safeguard China's sovereignty.<sup>21</sup>

The Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang announced on January 15, that the Chinese President will be paying state visit to Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran from January 19 to January 23, 2016.<sup>22</sup>

On January 13, China released its first White Paper on Arab policy. According to the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei, "The report aims to wrap up historical experience and hints at developing China-Arab relations and planning key fields and the direction of China-Arab friendly cooperation".<sup>23</sup>

China asserts that it had informed Vietnam about the test flights on Yongshu Jiao, which is one of the Nansha Islands. Hong Lei argued on that, "We are shocked and bewildered by the repeated arguments by Vietnam". China also asserts that its tests are in accordance to the international law.<sup>24</sup>

China's special envoy to Afghanistan Deng Xijun attended a meeting in Islamabad on January 11 along with officials from Pakistan, the United States and Afghanistan. During the meeting China asserted that it is willing to play a constructive role in the reconciliation process of Afghanistan.<sup>25</sup>

## C. Southeast Asia

### ASEAN

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **JAIF caravan held in Lao PDR; Tourism promotion in ASEAN.**

The second Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) Caravan was hosted by Lao PDR on January 14-15. It aimed at exploring and creating working relationships between relevant Ministries and JAIF public sector partners. Since Laos is the country chair of ASEAN now and received multiple benefits from the JAIF projects, it was only relevant to conduct the 2<sup>nd</sup> JAIF in Lao PDR. Laos has outlined eight priority areas for ASEAN as the chair including narrowing the developmental gaps, trade facilitation, enhancing connectivity, strengthening SMEs and so on. Senior level government officials, private sector representatives and other stakeholders participated in the JAIF caravan

<sup>21</sup> "Ministry of Defence Reiterates Position on Diaoyu Islands", By Wang Xu, *China Daily*, January 15, 2016 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/15/content\\_23110808.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/15/content_23110808.htm), accessed on January 18, 2016

<sup>22</sup> "Chinese President To Visit Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran" *China Daily*, January 15, 2016 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2016xivisitmiddleeast/2016-01/15/content\\_23109775.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2016xivisitmiddleeast/2016-01/15/content_23109775.htm), accessed on January 18, 2016

<sup>23</sup> "New Paper Points Way for Sino-Arab Ties", By Li Xiaokun and Wang Qingyun, *China Daily*, January 15, 2016 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/15/content\\_23094606.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/15/content_23094606.htm), accessed on January 18, 2016

<sup>24</sup> "China Reiterates It Told Vietnam of Test Flights", By Wang Qingyun, *China Daily*, January 14, 2016 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/14/content\\_23092532.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/14/content_23092532.htm), accessed on January 18, 2016

<sup>25</sup> "Beijing to Play Role in Afghan Settlement", By Wang Qingyun, *China Daily*, January 12, 2016 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/12/content\\_23054129.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/12/content_23054129.htm), accessed on January 18, 2016

and the event was jointly organised by the Lao PDR foreign ministry and JAIF Management Team (JMT) at the ASEAN Secretariat.<sup>26</sup>

Manila is all set to host the 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF), themed, “One Community for Sustainability”. The Entertainment City of Manila will be the primary place where most of the events of ATF 2016 will take place. Besides, Tourism Authority of Thailand organised ASEAN Friendship caravan in January where a group of people visited Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia and travelled back to Thailand. It was a 10 day event and the group’s 3400 km long journey across the region was funded by the Toyota Motors.<sup>27</sup>

## Southeast Asia

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Hun Sen trying to pacify the Cambodians; Malaysian infrastructure federation calls for early ratification of TPP; IS attack in Jakarta; Malaysia police arrested four suspects; Members of the 13<sup>th</sup> parliament in Singapore sworn in; US-Philippines defence talk.**

The Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen will face general election in 2018; however, it seems like he has already started his election campaign. The authoritative ruler, Hun Sen, who is ‘infamous’ for human rights violation and not allowing the opposition to work effectively in the country, has been trying to garner support by increasing salary in the garment structure and by relaxing inheritance tax. In 2013 the Cambodian People’s Party, the party of PM Hun Sen won narrowly and it was the youth population who deserted him. Hence, Hun Sen is now using internet platforms to reach out to the youths of the country. However, it would be difficult for Hun Sen to win the 2018 election. The party and government forces have beaten the opposition lawmakers and attempted to violate human rights in several occasions and those memories are still prominent in the minds of the common people of Cambodia. Additionally, the victory of the National League for Democracy (NLD) in Myanmar has also given a cause to the Cambodians to think twice before they again vote for Hun Sen.<sup>28</sup>

The Federation of Malaysian Infrastructures (FMM) advised the government to ratify the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement as soon as possible, as it will enable Malaysia to save USD 1.2 billion which, otherwise, goes to tariff expenditure. The TTP will remove 85 per cent of tariff from Malaysia’s trade with its new free trade partners including the US, Canada, Mexico and Peru. The FMM said that liberalised economies like South Korea, China etc. have performed well in the global market than the closed economies. It also mentioned that Malaysia should sign/ratify FTAs

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<sup>26</sup> “Lao PDR Takes the 2nd Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund Caravan”, *ASEAN Official Website*, January 14, 2016, at <http://www.asean.org/lao-pdr-takes-the-2nd-japan-asean-integration-fund-caravan/>, accessed on January 21, 2016.

<sup>27</sup> “HCM City Welcomes ASEAN Friendship Caravan”, *Vietnam Net*, January 16, 2016 at <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/travel/150167/hcm-city-welcomes-asean-friendship-caravan.html>, accessed on January 21, 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Prak Chan Thul, “Haunted by Close Call, Cambodia’s Long-Ruling PM Gears up for Distant Election”, *Reuters*, January 13, 2016, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-cambodia-politics-idUSKCN0UR13420160113>, accessed on January 21, 2016.

which would certainly give the country additional opportunities to be at par with other strong regional economies like Singapore and Vietnam.<sup>29</sup>

On January 13, 2016, a series of bombing hit the city of Jakarta with an immediate casualty of seven people including two civilians. Islamic State (IS) has claimed the responsibility of those seven explosions including one at the Starbucks. Despite its steady emergence in Southeast Asia, especially, in countries like Indonesia and Malaysia, this recent terror act was enough to evoke popular sentiment against the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the region. Indonesian police faced an angry mob while trying to send the body of one of the suicide-bombers, Ahmad Muhazan to his hometown, Indra Maya. Residents of the city claimed that Indra Maya should not be remembered as a city of a terrorist. In Central Java too, a group of young Indonesians, affiliated to Indonesia's largest Islamic youth movement, went to the streets and marched with posters like "Lets Reject the Caliphate." The Indonesian police have arrested a dozen people in connection with the explosions and are now investigating the matter. However, to what extent, they would be able to handle the issue of IS is questionable. Last year, during Shangri-La Dialogue, Singaporean Premier Lee Hsein Loong warned the region of a possible foothold of IS like the ones they have in Syria and Iraq. Terrorism expert, Rohan Gunarata, opined that Indonesia or Philippines might be good options for the IS from where they can spread their networks in the region.<sup>30</sup>

Malaysian Police have arrested four youths suspected of having links with the IS between January 11 and January 15 from Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. The police said, one of the suspects was planning for a suicide bombing inside the country and another one is having direct connection with the funding agency of IS. Three of them were detained in Turkey while they were trying to go to Syria and join IS. They were sent back to Malaysia. Later on, the Malaysian police arrested them in Kuala Lumpur on their arrival on January 11. The arrests came to light after the explosions in Indonesia happened on January 13. As hundreds of youths from Malaysia and Indonesia have left their countries to join the IS, the state authorities have tightened their control. For instance, the Malaysian police have detained over 120 people since 2014 under its terrorism laws. The most dangerous threat is posed by the returnees who have travelled through Middle East and West Asia and are well-equipped to carry out terror acts.<sup>31</sup>

Singapore got a new Parliament with 89 members and 2 non-constituency members from the opposition Workers Party on January 15. This is the thirteenth parliament and PM Lee Hsein Loong was the first who sworn in in the new Parliament. The Leader of the House, Ms. Grace Fu, said,

"To provide Singaporeans with quality living, our infrastructure and landscape must be refreshed, our economy must continue to be dynamic, and our social safety nets must be strengthened. We must build good homes for people to live in, provide an efficient transport system for commuters,

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<sup>29</sup> "FMM Calls for Ratification of the TPPA", *The Star Online*, January 15, 2016, at <http://www.thestar.com.my/business/business-news/2016/01/15/fmm-calls-for-ratification-of-the-tppa/>, accessed on January 21, 2016.

<sup>30</sup> Beauchamp, Zack, "Jakarta Bombings: Here's What We Know about ISIS in Indonesia", *Vox World*, January 14, 2016, at <http://www.vox.com/2016/1/14/10767986/jakarta-bombings-isis-indonesia>, accessed on January 22, 2016. And, Parameswaran, Prashanth, "Islamic State Eyes Asia Base in 2016 in Philippines, Indonesia: Expert", *The Diplomat*, January 14, 2016, at <http://thediplomat.com/2016/01/islamic-state-eyes-asia-base-in-2016-in-philippines-indonesia-expert/>, accessed on January 22, 2016.

<sup>31</sup> Ngui, Yantoultra and Fernandez, Celine, "Malaysia Arrests After Jakarta Attack Fuel Fears of Islamic State's Reach", *The Wall Street Journal*, January 16, 2016, at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/malaysia-arrests-suspected-islamic-state-militants-1452931418>, accessed on January 22, 2016.

continue economic restructuring to create good jobs for our workers, and educate our students to be ready to take on those good jobs”.

She also said,

“We welcome sincere, serious debate from Members as we discuss these vital issues affecting all Singaporeans, decide on the future that we want to create and launch the next chapter of our country’s story together.”

Grace Fu is the first women Leader of the House in the Singapore Parliament and the speaker is Mdm Halimah Yacob, who has become the speaker for second time.<sup>32</sup>

US Secretary of State, John Kerry and Defence Secretary, Ash Carter met their Filipino counterparts and discussed regional security issues. US State Department Spokesman John Kirby said,

“I can assure you that tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly the South China Sea, will be on the agenda. It’s a concern that we and our Philippine friends and allies share, and I suspect they’ll have a pretty robust discussion about it tomorrow”....

Philippines and US are security allies and do conduct regular joint exercises and patrols in the South China Sea. US military access to Philippines, possible future arms deals and larger US agenda in the Asia-Pacific were other discussing agenda in the meeting.<sup>33</sup>

## India-Southeast Asia Relations

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **India-CLMV Business Conclave in Tamil Nadu; MoUs between Madhya Pradesh and Singapore.**

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> India-CLMV Business Conclave, the Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman, mentioned that government of India will approve a project development fund of USD 75 million in February which will benefit the Indian firms to invest in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar. The business conclave was organised in Tamil Nadu. The minister said that the fund can be used for various activities including land acquisition, obtaining clearances or feasibility studies. Over the past decade, India’s trade with CLMV countries has grown ten-fold; from \$ 1.1 billion in 2004 to \$ 11.9 billion in 2014. Since, the CLMV countries are strategically located in the region, for India, it would be beneficial to gain more access there as the latter aims at integrating with the region. Rail, road and sea connectivity will also get a boost if trade and business flourish.<sup>34</sup>

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32 “Members of Singapore’s 13th Parliament Sworn in”, *Channel News Asia*, January 15, 2016, at <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/members-of-singapore-s/2428968.html>, accessed on January 22, 2016.

33 Ching, Nike, “South China Sea Tensions Top Agenda in US-Philippines Talks”, *Voice of America (VOA) News*, January 11, 2016, at <http://www.voanews.com/content/south-china-sea-tensions-top-agenda-in-us-philippines-talks/3141108.html>, accessed on January 22, 2016.

34 “India Aiming for Greater Integration with CLMV”, *Khmer Times*, January 13, 2016, at <http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/19861/india-aiming-for-greater-integration-with-clmv/>, accessed on January 21, 2016.

Madhya Pradesh has signed four Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with Singapore on January 14 including one on 1000 megawatt wind energy plant. The CM of Madhya Pradesh, Mr. Chauhan, mentioned that the state has 12000 acres of land where industries can be set up. The occasion was a business seminar in the state. Other MoUs were on capacity building, urban planning and food processing. Land, skilled manpower, power and water- all are available in Madhya Pradesh, added the chief minister.<sup>35</sup>

## D. Russia

### Russia: National

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Russia's new Security Strategy to be binding; Putin says Russia's GDP fell by 3.8 per cent in 2015 while inflation rose to 12.7 per cent; Rouble hits 13 month low against the backdrop of falling oil prices; Russian oil prices dropped by 50 per cent in 2015; Russia prepares stress scenario based on US\$ 25 per barrel oil price; Russia considering a privatization plan for 2016; Russia estimates gas deliveries to Europe will increase in the future while oil exports will decline; Russia cuts spending on International Space Station by US\$ 400 million; Russia rejects reports of South Stream project being revived.**

The Russian Security Council has said that the updated National Security Strategy approved by President Vladimir Putin on the last day of 2015 is binding on all government agencies. Deputy Security Council Secretary Vladimir Nazarov stated that 'the strategy is not a declaratory document. It is implemented on a planned basis. The provisions of the Strategy are binding for all state agencies and local authorities and are a basis for developing and amending documents pertaining to strategic planning and programming in ensuring Russia's national security and socio-economic development and the work of public authorities at all levels'. Nazarov noted that the Strategy is one of the most important documents of strategic planning, which determines the order of activities and measures to ensure the country's national security. The new version of the document contains the expanded list of Russia's national interests. These include strengthening the country's defence capabilities, promoting national accord and unity, raising the competitiveness of the national economy, preserving its cultural heritage and the traditional spiritual and moral values of the Russian society.<sup>36</sup>

President Vladimir Putin has said that the Russian GDP and industrial production fell by 3.8 and 3.3 per cent respectively in 2015 while inflation rose by 12.7 per cent during the same period. However, he also pointed out to the positive trend of Russia's 'foreign trade surplus remaining at the same level' and there being an increase in the export volume of value added products. Meanwhile, Central bank continues to hold US\$ 340 billion in gold and currency reserves and the two state reserve funds having US\$ 70-80 billion each. Russia's federal budget projected revenue of 13.738 trillion roubles (US\$ 196 billion) and expenditure of 16.099 trillion roubles (US\$ 229.9 billion) with a budget deficit of 2.36 trillion roubles (US\$ 33.9 billion) which is 3 per cent of the

<sup>35</sup> "Madhya Pradesh Signs Four MoUs with Singapore", *The Economic Times*, January 14, 2016, at [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2016-01-14/news/69765589\\_1\\_mous-madhya-pradesh-skill-training](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2016-01-14/news/69765589_1_mous-madhya-pradesh-skill-training), accessed on January 22, 2016.

<sup>36</sup> "Security Council: Russia's New Security Strategy To Be Binding, Not Declaratory", *Itar-Tass*, January 12, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/848959>

GDP. The 2016 budget is based on the inflation rate of no more than 6.4 per cent. Russia's GDP is projected at 78.673 trillion roubles (US\$ 1.12 trillion) in 2016.<sup>37</sup>

The Russian Rouble fell to its lowest level against the dollar and euro since December 2014 amid a drop in oil prices and falling stocks. As such, the Rouble traded at 76 against the U.S. dollar and 83 against the Euro. Since the beginning of 2014, the Rouble has lost half of its value against the U.S. dollar.<sup>38</sup>

The average price of Russian oil dropped almost by 50 percent in 2015. In 2014, the average price of Russia's key export, the Urals crude oil, stood at US\$ 97.6 per barrel, while in 2015 it price fell by 47.5 per cent to US\$ 51.23. In December 2015, Urals oil traded at US\$ 36.42 a barrel, down from US\$ 42.11 in November. Deputy Finance Minister Maxim Oreshkin has said that Russia's 2016 budget projects the average price of Urals oil at US\$ 50 per barrel. With an oil price baseline of US\$ 40 per barrel, the country's budget deficit is expected to reach 1.5 trillion roubles (US\$ 19.8 billion).<sup>39</sup>

Economic Development Minister Aleksey Ulyukayev has said, on January 13, that a stress scenario based on US\$ 25 per barrel oil price is being prepared. He added that this scenario implies the rouble's exchange rate at more than 80 roubles per dollar. Meanwhile, President Vladimir Putin has urged the Russian government to closely watch the unfolding economic situation in Russia and be ready to meet any eventuality.<sup>40</sup>

First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov has said, on January 13, that the Russian government is considering an 'ambitious' privatization plan for 2016.<sup>41</sup>

Deputy Energy Minister Anatoly Yanovsky has said that Russia's gas deliveries to the European market are likely to increase in the future while oil exports are likely to decline. He added that the European Union remained the most important trade and economic partner for Russia. Mr. Yanovsky made these statements during the Gaidar economic forum meeting held on January 13.<sup>42</sup>

Russia's federal space agency Roscosmos will cut spending on servicing the International Space Station (ISS) in 2016-2015 by almost 30 billion roubles. Over the next decade, Russia will allocate 252.1 billion roubles (\$3.43 billion) for flight control, servicing the Russian segment of ISS and implementing a programme of scientific experiments. As such, Russia is expected to spend around 26.8 billion roubles (US\$ 360 million) per year on servicing the ISS.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> "President Putin Says Russia's 2015 GDP Drop Stands at 3.8%, Inflation Hits 12.7%", *Itar-Tass*, January 13, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/848652>

<sup>38</sup> "Ruble Hits 13-Month Low on Falling Oil Prices", *The Moscow Times*, January 11, 2016 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/ruble-hits-13-month-low-on-falling-oil-prices/555457.html>

<sup>39</sup> "Russian Oil Prices Drop 50% in 2015", *The Moscow Times*, January 11, 2016 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/russian-oil-prices-drop-50-in-2015/555454.html>

<sup>40</sup> "Russia Prepares Stress Scenario Based on \$25 per Barrel Oil Price — Minister", *Itar-Tass*, January 13, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/849286>

<sup>41</sup> "Russian Government Considering Ambitious Privatization Plan for 2016 — Deputy PM", *Itar-Tass*, January 13, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/849261>

<sup>42</sup> "Russia's Gas Deliveries To Europe Expected To Rise, Oil Exports To Decline — Ministry", *Itar-Tass*, January 13, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/849370>

<sup>43</sup> "Russia Cuts Spending on Servicing ISS by \$400 Million — Media", *Itar-Tass*, January 13, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/science/848667>

Russian Energy Ministry has stated that the status of South Stream gas pipeline project is unchanged and all related work is on hold. Earlier Bulgarian media had reported that work on the South Stream project will resume within a few weeks. On December 1, 2014 President Vladimir Putin had declared that Russia will not implement the South Stream project amid the current environment while Chairman of Gazprom's Management Committee Alexey Miller said the project was no longer relevant.<sup>44</sup>

## Russia: International

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Putin and Obama discuss global crises; Putin says granting asylum to Assad 'would be easy'; Russian and American officials meet in Kaliningrad; Russia and the U.S. confirm support for intra-Syrian negotiations; Egyptian Foreign Minister says Cairo supports Russia's actions in Syria; Russia plans to complete development of military facilities in Kuril Islands in 2016; Russian and Japanese Foreign Ministers discuss security situation in North East Asia; Russia-Japan trade fell by 30 per cent in 2015; Russian Foreign Minister calls on Seoul to display restraint and avoid fanning tensions in North East Asia; Russia criticises Ukraine's statement on launch of Minsk-3 process; Iran to prevent export of Turkish products to Russia that are disguised as Iranian exports; Russia sends 32 tons of aid to quake hit Tajikistan; Russia criticises organisers of 4<sup>th</sup> Nuclear Security Summit; Russia's losses due to European Union sanctions and counter-sanctions estimated at €25 billion in 2015.**

Russian President Vladimir Putin had a telephone conversation with his American counterpart Barack Obama on January 14 wherein they discussed the Ukrainian conflict, increased tensions in the Middle East, a resolution for the Syrian crisis and the threat of North Korea successfully testing a hydrogen bomb. They also dwelled on aspects of bilateral relations needed to fight the threat of terrorism in the Middle East, and called for a de-escalation of the standoff between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The Kremlin described the conversation as frank and business-like and stated that the call was initiated by the United States.<sup>45</sup>

President Vladimir Putin has said, on January 12, that granting asylum to Syrian President Bashar Assad in Russia would be much easier than sheltering U.S. intelligence leaker Edward Snowden. However, he also stated that this issue is 'premature' for the time being. Putin added that 'it is necessary to allow the Syrian population to speak up in an election before discussing the possibility of sheltering Assad. If this is done in a democratic way, maybe he won't have to go anywhere. And it won't matter whether he remains the president'. Putin also acknowledged that the Syrian leader had made 'a lot of mistakes' during the course of the conflict in Syria and the 'situation would not have escalated so quickly without outside actors providing money, arms and fighters'.<sup>46</sup>

President Vladimir Putin's aide Vladislav Surkov has met with the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland on January 15 in Kaliningrad. The meeting

<sup>44</sup> "Russia's Energy Ministry Rejects Reports South Stream Pipeline Project To Be Resumed Soon", *Itar-Tass*, January 11, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/848721>

<sup>45</sup> "Obama Calls Putin to Discuss Global Crises", *The Moscow Times*, January 14, 2016 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/obama-calls-putin-to-discuss-global-crises/555732.html>

<sup>46</sup> "Granting Assad Asylum Would Be Easy – Putin", *The Moscow Times*, January 12, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/granting-assad-asylum-would-be-easy---putin/555529.html>

took place behind closed doors without the presence of press. According to State Department spokesman Josh Kirby, the meeting was devoted to discussing the implementation of the Minsk agreements in Ukraine. Some reports claim that Surkov and Nuland had to meet near the Russian-Lithuanian border because Surkov is banned from entering the European Union.<sup>47</sup>

In a telephone conversation held on January 11, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry confirmed support for intra-Syrian negotiations. They also 'exchanged opinions on other topical international issues, including the implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures for the settlement of the crisis in Ukraine, the worsening of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the conflict in Yemen, the situation on the Korean peninsula after a nuclear test carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea'.<sup>48</sup>

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry has said, on January 13, that Cairo supports Russia's actions in Syria. He stated 'we believe in Russia's ability to tell terrorist organizations from other targets'. He also noted that this stance "was not the exclusive right of the international anti-terrorist coalition, which includes the United States, Germany and which Egypt has joined." Speaking about the recent contracts with Russia on arms supplies, Shoukry pointed to 'the existing strategic partnership between Egypt and the United States and added that there is no alternative to US military aid to Egypt. However, Egypt needs to diversify its relations'.<sup>49</sup>

Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu has said, on December 12, that Russia plans to complete the process of infrastructure development in the Kuril Islands by 2016. The work will be carried out within the framework of the Defence Ministry programme until 2020. As such, there are plans to build 392 buildings and facilities on the Iturup and Kunashir Islands of the Greater Kuril Ridge.<sup>50</sup>

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida have, on January 13, discussed the evolving security situation in Northeast Asia and the timetable of bilateral political contacts. Russian Foreign Ministry stated that 'the two sides exchanged opinion of the state of affairs in the Korean Peninsula and the security situation in Northeast Asia in general after the DPRK declared it had carried out a hydrogen bomb test'.<sup>51</sup>

Russian member of Duma, Sergey Naryshkin has met with Japan's ex-foreign minister Masahiko Komura in Moscow on January 13. It was pointed out that trade between the two countries fell by 30 per cent in the first ten months of 2015. However, Naryshkin expressed confidence that the Russian-Japanese cooperation still has a good potential for development. He stated 'our cooperation has an independent value that should not depend on the factors out of scope of bilateral cooperation'. Mr. Komura also held talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

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<sup>47</sup> "Putin's Aide Surkov Meets Nuland in Kaliningrad", *The Moscow Times*, January 12, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/putins-aide-surkov-meets-nuland-in-kaliningrad/555894.html>

<sup>48</sup> "Lavrov and Kerry Confirm Support For Intra-Syrian Negotiations", *Itar-Tass*, January 11, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/848812>

<sup>49</sup> "Cairo Supports Russia's Actions in Syria — Egyptian Foreign Minister", *Itar-Tass*, January 13, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/world/849287>

<sup>50</sup> "Russia Plans To Complete Development of Military Facilities In Kuril Islands in 2016", *Itar-Tass*, January 12, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/defense/848989>

<sup>51</sup> "Russian, Japanese Foreign Ministers Discuss Security in Northeast Asia", *Itar-Tass*, January 13, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/849220>



and handed over a personal message of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Russian President Vladimir Putin.<sup>52</sup>

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in a telephone conversation with his South Korean counterpart has urged Seoul to refrain from any action that might fan tensions in Northeast Asia. Mr. Lavrov also stressed for an 'early resumption of dialogue geared to identifying ways of a political and diplomatic settlement of the current crisis'.<sup>53</sup>

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova has said, on January 11, that Ukraine's statements on the launch of a 'new political process, termed as Minsk-3' are 'incompetent and fundamentally wrong'. She added that 'there is the package of documents adopted at the summit meeting of the Normandy Quartet in Minsk a year ago. Their impeccable observance is the main task facing all parties involved in the settlement process. The invention of new formats the Ukrainian official mentioned is an entertaining process, no denying that, but it is devoid of any sense when it comes to the implementation of the already assumed commitments. Such loose and subjective interpretation of the agreements signed by the leaders of the four countries merely hinder the settlement process'.<sup>54</sup>

Russian veterinary and phytosanitary regulator Rosselkhoznadzor has said, on January 11 that Iran will undertake all the possible measures to prevent export of banned Turkish products disguised as Iranian one to the Russian market.<sup>55</sup>

Russia's Ministry for Emergency Situations has sent more than 32 tons of humanitarian aid to quake hit Tajikistan. The consignment includes mobile electricity generating units, multi-bed tents, and blankets.<sup>56</sup>

Russian Foreign Ministry's spokesperson Maria Zakharova has criticised the organisers of the 4<sup>th</sup> Nuclear Security Summit (NSS). She stated 'the organisers have fundamentally changed the concept of the event by proposing to develop some kind of instructions for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism as well as the UN, Interpol and the Global Partnership. Apparently, such recommendations, whatever formal status they may have, will be an attempt to impose an opinion of a limited group of countries on the above-mentioned agencies and groups bypassing their own mechanisms of political decision-making. We consider unacceptable the creation of such a precedent of outside interference in the planning of work of the international agencies that have the expertise and rely on democratic procedures. In this connection, Russian President Vladimir Putin decided to terminate our participation in preparing for the 2016 summit. We believe that the central role in coordinating

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<sup>52</sup> "Russia-Japan Trade Falls by 30% in 10 Months of 2015 — State Duma Speaker", *Itar-Tass*, January 13, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/849133>

<sup>53</sup> "Lavrov Asks Seoul To Display Restraint, Avoid Fanning Tensions in Northeast Asia", *Itar-Tass*, January 13, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/849165>

<sup>54</sup> "Russian Foreign Ministry Slams Kiev's Statements about Launch of Minsk-3", *Itar-Tass*, January 11, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/848775>

<sup>55</sup> "Iran to Take Measures Against Export of Turkish Products Disguised as Iranian to Russia", *Itar-Tass*, January 11, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/848825>

<sup>56</sup> "Russian Ministry Consigns over 32 Tons of Aid to Tajikistan", *Itar-Tass*, January 12, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/society/848840>

efforts of the international community in the nuclear security field should be played by the IAEA, which has the necessary expertise'.<sup>57</sup>

First Deputy Minister of Economic Development Alexey Likhachev has said, on January 13, that Russia took a hit of €25 billion in 2015 due to the EU sanctions, while EU's losses stood at € 90 billion during the same period.<sup>58</sup>

## India-Russia Relations

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Indo-Russian joint military-transport aircraft project 'frozen'.**

The CEO of Ilyushin Company Sergey Velmozhkin has said, on January 13, that the joint Indo-Russian project for the creation of a military transport plane has been frozen. He stated 'the contract on Il-214 has not been concluded with the Defence Ministry yet. The preliminary design is practically ready. We'll offer it, but the decision depends on the customer. Experts confirm that there is a demand indeed for such aircraft. We hope to clarify the issue somehow by the middle of the year'.<sup>59</sup>

## E. The United State of America

### National

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Obama says the United States is the most powerful nation on Earth; Ten Yemeni detainees have been released from Guantanamo Bay; Training, awareness critical in human trafficking fight; Obama calls for swift action on the pending Trans-Pacific Partnership; Obama paints an optimistic vision for America in the years to come; White House had predictable reactions to President Obama's last State of the Union address.**

In his final State of the Union address to the nation, President Barack Obama said the United States is the most powerful nation on Earth. Obama said, "We spend more on our military than the next eight nations combined". He added, "Our troops are the finest fighting force in the history of the world. No nation dares to attack us or our allies because they know that's the path to ruin." When the world faces problems -- whether manmade or natural -- the people of the world do not look to Beijing or Moscow for leadership, the president said. "They call us," he said. The world is a dangerous place, but that's not the result of a weakening American military or the rise of other world powers, Obama said.<sup>60</sup>

The U.S. Defence Department says 10 Yemeni detainees have been released from U.S. detention centre in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and sent to the Middle East nation of Oman. "The Oman transfer

<sup>57</sup> "Moscow Slams Organizers Of Fourth Nuclear Security Summit", *Itar-Tass*, January 13, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/849199>

<sup>58</sup> "Russia's Losses Due To EU Sanctions and Counter-Sanctions Estimated at €25 bln in 2015", *Itar-Tass*, January 13, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/849336>

<sup>59</sup> "Russian-Indian Military Transport Aircraft Project Frozen — Manufacturer", *Itar-Tass*, January 13, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/defense/849185>

<sup>60</sup> Garamone, Jim, "Obama Points to U.S. Strength in State of the Union Address", *DoD News*, January 13, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/642812/obama-points-to-us-strength-in-state-of-the-union-address>

of 10 is the single largest transfer to a single country at one time under the current administration." Cmdr. Gary Ross said in an email to VOA. The mass transfer will raise the number of detainees transferred out of the camp this year to 14.<sup>61</sup>

The US Department of Defence reported that the signs of human trafficking could be all around Defence Department personnel: A subcontractor withholds passports and delays payment to its employees, or a company forces potential workers to pay a large fee to obtain a contract job on a DoD installation. Army Col. Joshua Burris, deputy chief of staff for Mission and Installation Contracting Command at Joint Base San Antonio-Sam Houston, Texas, and the executive director for DoD's Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2016 said that January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, and DoD is highlighting the issue and its efforts to fight trafficking. Burris said human trafficking is modern-day slavery, added that DoD has zero tolerance for violations. He said, DoD wants its service members, civilians, contractors and others associated with the agency to be able to recognize the signs of human trafficking and know how to report suspected violations.<sup>62</sup>

On January 12, in what may be his final prime-time address to both houses of Congress, President Barack Obama called for swift action on the pending Trans-Pacific Partnership, framing the deal as a way to open overseas markets to U.S. goods and level the playing field with China. "With TPP, China does not set the rules in that region; we do," Obama said in his State of the Union address. "You want to show our strength in this new century? Approve this agreement. Give us the tools to enforce it. It's the right thing to do." But the pending deal with 12 Pacific trading countries faces an uphill battle in Congress, where there is opposition from lawmakers of both parties who worry that American companies can't compete against Asian nations where wages are lower.<sup>63</sup>

President Barack Obama is on the road, meeting face-to-face with Americans following a lofty State of the Union address that painted an optimistic vision for America in the years to come, while acknowledging deep divides over a variety of issues. Following the speech widely broadcast on television and multi-media platforms, the president travelled to Nebraska where he first stopped at the home of an Omaha-area woman for a living room discussion. He met with Lisa Martin and her husband, Jeff. Lisa wrote to the president a year ago expressing concern about the environment. "I still have this sinking feeling of dread and sadness. Will my son be able to thrive on this planet?" she wrote in the letter, which was released by the White House.<sup>64</sup>

President Barack Obama ended his State of the Union address with the customary assessment that the nation is strong and used a portion of his speech to portray America's standing in the world as stronger than ever. "The United States of America is the most powerful nation on Earth. Period. It's not even close," Obama said. He highlighted the U.S.-led coalition airstrikes against Islamic State targets in Syria and Iraq, the role the U.S. played in getting the international deal on Iran's nuclear

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<sup>61</sup> Babb, Carla, "US Transfers 10 Guantanamo Bay Detainees", *VOA News*, January 14, 2016 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-transfer-ten-guantanamo-bay-detainees/3145328.html>

<sup>62</sup> Ferdinando, Lisa, "DoD: Training, Awareness Critical in Human Trafficking Fight", *DoD News*, January 15, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/643267/dod-training-awareness-critical-in-human-trafficking-fight>

<sup>63</sup> Arcega, Mil, "Obama Calls on Congress to Approve Pacific Trade Deal", *VOA News*, January 13, 2016 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/obama-calls-congress-approve-pacific-trade-deal/3145179.html>

<sup>64</sup> Salinas, Mary Alice, "Obama Engages Americans on Vision for America", *VOA News*, January 13, 2016 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/obama-engages-americans-on-vision-for-america/3145231.html>

program, the U.S. military operations that killed al-Qaida leaders and the U.S. efforts to help stop the spread of Ebola.<sup>65</sup>

The candidates running to take over the White House had predictable reactions to President Barack Obama's State of the Union address, with Republicans calling it boring and out of touch with events in the world and Democrats praising the president's record. Republican front-runner Donald Trump said the speech was lethargic and "hard to watch." Texas Senator Ted Cruz, who has been climbing in polls in the past two months, called Obama's speech "a state of denial."<sup>66</sup>

## International: Asia

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Olson expresses U.S. support for an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process; US announces the designation of ISIL-K as a Foreign Terrorist Organization; Navy sailors are back in U.S. hands; Indigenous forces in Iraq and Syria are making progress against the ISIL: Centcom Commander; Objectives are to destroy the ISIL "parent tumour" in Iraq and Syria: Carter; Coalition military forces continue to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria and Iraq; Kerry expresses gratitude to Iran as Sailors have been safely returned to U.S. hands; U.S. political leaders voiced relief; Seven Iranian prisoners the US agreed to swap were accused of violating economic sanctions; U.S. condemns the barbaric acts of terrorism in Iraq; Risk of worsening China-Taiwan ties viewed with concern in Washington.**

Ambassador Richard Olson, Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, travelled to Islamabad on January 11 to participate in a quadrilateral meeting with the Governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and China. In the meeting, Ambassador Olson expressed U.S. support for an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process as the surest way to end violence and ensure lasting stability in Afghanistan and the region.<sup>67</sup>

The Department of State has announced the designation of ISIL-K as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The consequences of the FTO designation include a prohibition against knowingly providing, or attempting or conspiring to provide, material support or resources to this organization. The Department of State took this action in consultation with the Departments of Justice and the Treasury. ISIL-K announced its formation on January 10, 2015. The group is based in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region and is composed primarily of former members of Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban.<sup>68</sup>

Ten U.S. Navy sailors who were traveling from Kuwait to Bahrain on January 12 when contact was lost with their pair of small craft are back in U.S. hands. Defence Secretary Ash Carter said in a statement on January 13 that "I want to personally thank Secretary of State John Kerry for his

<sup>65</sup> Hannas, Chris, "Obama Says His Criticized Strategies Show American Strength", *VOA News*, January 13, 2016 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/obama-says-his-criticized-strategies-show-american-strength/3143033.html>

<sup>66</sup> Hannas, Chris, "Republican Candidates Dismiss Obama's Address as Out of Touch", *VOA News*, January 13, 2016 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/republican-candidates-dismiss-obama-address-as-out-of-touch/3142949.html>; and, "Mixed Social Media Reaction to State of the Union", *VOA News*, January 13, 2016 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/mixed-social-media-reaction-to-start-of-the-union-/3144449.html>

<sup>67</sup> "Ambassador Richard Olson Travel to Pakistan", *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, January 11, 2016 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251094.htm>

<sup>68</sup> "Foreign Terrorist Organization Designation of ISIL - Khorasan (ISIL-K)", *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, January 14, 2016 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251237.htm>

diplomatic engagement with Iran to secure our sailors' swift return". Carter said, "Around the world, the U.S. Navy routinely provides assistance to foreign sailors in distress, and we appreciate the timely way in which this situation was resolved."<sup>69</sup>

Army Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, the commander of U.S. Central Command, spoke during a news conference at Centcom headquarters in Tampa, Florida, with Defence Secretary Ash Carter, on January 14 that Indigenous forces in Iraq and Syria, supported by a 60-nation coalition, are making progress against the ISIL. Austin said Anti-ISIL forces have made progress in Tikrit, Beiji, Ramadi and Sinjar in Iraq, and in Hawl, the Tishrin Dam area and along the Mara Line in Syria. He gave an example of one non-traditional way the coalition is supporting efforts across the board against ISIL. "A few days ago, we conducted a strike on bulk cash storage facility in Mosul," he said. "It was a good strike. And we estimate that it served to deprive ISIL of millions of dollars."<sup>70</sup>

On January 13, US Secretary of Defence Ash Carter laid out the campaign's three objectives to soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division headquarters and 2nd Brigade Combat Team at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. They will deploy to Iraq later this year as part of the counter-ISIL campaign. Carter said, those objectives are to destroy the ISIL "parent tumour" in Iraq and Syria by collapsing its two power centres, to combat the metastases of the ISIL tumour worldwide, and to protect the homeland. He said, the operational concept of the campaign is to enable local, motivated forces with a clear plan, American leadership, a global coalition, and a suite of capabilities ranging from airstrikes, special operations forces raids, cyber tools, intelligence, equipment, mobility and logistics, training, advice and assistance.<sup>71</sup> Meanwhile, U.S. and coalition military forces have continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria and Iraq.<sup>72</sup>

After the return of US Sailors, US Secretary of State John Kerry in a statement said that "I'm very pleased that our Sailors have been safely returned to U.S. hands." Secretary Kerry said, "As a former Sailor myself, I know the importance of naval presence around the world and the critical work being done by our Navy in the Gulf region. I'm proud of our young men and women in uniform and know how seriously they take their responsibilities to one another and to other mariners in distress." He added, "I want to express my gratitude to Iranian authorities for their cooperation in swiftly resolving this matter." "That this issue was resolved peacefully and efficiently is a testament to the critical role diplomacy plays in keeping our country safe, secure, and strong" Kerry said.<sup>73</sup>

On January 16, U.S. political leaders voiced relief at the news that Iran was releasing five detained Americans, although several Republican Party presidential hopefuls renewed attacks on President Barack Obama for approving a related nuclear deal with Tehran that lifts economic sanctions. U.S.

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<sup>69</sup> "Carter Hails Iran's Swift Return of 10 U.S. Sailors", *DoD News*, January 13, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/642838/carter-hails-irans-swift-return-of-10-us-sailors>

<sup>70</sup> Garamone, Jim, "Austin Expresses Confidence That Anti-ISIL Forces Will Win in Iraq, Syria", *DoD News*, January 14, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/643200/austin-expresses-confidence-that-anti-isil-forces-will-win-in-iraq-syria>

<sup>71</sup> Cronk, Terri Moon, "Carter, Dunford, Senior Commanders Meet to Accelerate ISIL's Defeat", *DoD News*, January 14, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/643196/carter-dunford-senior-commanders-meet-to-accelerate-isils-defeat>; and, Pellerin, Cheryl, "Carter: Lasting Defeat of ISIL Depends on Coalition Strength", *DoD News*, January 13, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/642976/carter-lasting-defeat-of-isil-depends-on-coalition-strength>

<sup>72</sup> "Coalition Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq", *DoD News*, January 17, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/643426/coalition-strikes-hit-isil-in-syria-iraq>

<sup>73</sup> "On U.S. Navy Sailors' Departure From Iran", Press Statement by John Kerry, Secretary of State, *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, January 13, 2016 at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/01/251139.htm>

Senators Ted Cruz and Rand Paul welcomed the prisoner swap, along with front-runner Donald Trump, who said the White House should have negotiated the prisoners' release much sooner.<sup>74</sup>

The seven Iranian prisoners the United States agreed to swap on January 16 for four Americans all were accused or convicted of violating economic sanctions against Iran aimed at forcing it to abandon any effort to build a nuclear weapon. The U.S. said six of the seven held dual U.S.-Iranian citizenship and several of them had lived in the United States for years before drawing the attention of U.S. authorities who were investigating trade deals with Iran that were banned by the sanctions.<sup>75</sup>

John Kirby, spokesperson, Bureau of Public Affairs, in a statement said that the United States condemns the barbaric acts of terrorism on January 11 in Iraq, including a suicide bombing and hostage-taking at a mall in Baghdad for which ISIL has claimed responsibility and two separate suicide attacks in Muqdadiah. Kirby said, "These attacks once again display the utter disregard ISIL has for the lives of innocent civilians. We stand united with the Iraqi people as they confront the scourge of violent extremism." He added, "The United States remains committed to working with Prime Minister al-Abadi, the Iraqi Security Forces, and our Coalition partners to support Iraqi-led efforts to degrade and destroy ISIL."<sup>76</sup>

Navy Adm. Harry B. Harris, the commander of U.S. Pacific Command, speaking to local government officials, private sector representatives and military leaders, emphasized Hawaii's importance in the future of the Indo-Asia-Pacific theatre during an annual meeting for the local Military Affairs Council, January 15. Harris recognized the council and state leaders for their support in communicating how joint military forces in Hawaii support the national security strategy and ongoing Pacific rebalance initiative. He said that there is no doubt that the United States economic future is firmly tied to the Indo-Asia-Pacific, and that everyone must work together to strengthen civil and military relationships and with other nations in the region.<sup>77</sup>

The Philippines has asked the United States to hold joint naval patrols, a defence ministry spokesman said on January 14, amid a territorial dispute with China in the South China Sea. Foreign and defence ministers from the United States and the Philippines met in Washington this week for the second time in more than three years to discuss trade and security, focusing on the South China Sea (SCS). "We are suggesting that we also patrol the area together," Peter Paul Galvez told reporters in Manila. "There is a need for a more collaborative presence in the South

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<sup>74</sup> "Prisoner Swap, Nuclear Deal Draw Fire in US, Iran", *VOA News*, January 16, 2016 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/prisoner-swap-nuclear-deal-draw-fire-united-states-iran/3149041.html>; and, Dockins, Pamela and Bredemeier, Ken, "Iran, US Swap Prisoners as Nuclear Deal is Finalized", *VOA News*, January 16, 2016 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/four-americans-freed-in-iran/3148775.html>

<sup>75</sup> Bredemeier, Ken, "7 Released Iranians All Linked to Trade Sanction Offenses", *VOA News*, January 16, 2016 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/seven-released-iranians-linked-trade-sanction-offenses/3149025.html>

<sup>76</sup> "U.S. Condemns Terrorist Attacks in Iraq", Press Statement by John Kirby, Spokesperson, Bureau of Public Affairs, *US Department of States*, Washington, DC, January 11, 2016 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251115.htm>; and, Ching, Nike, "Why Kerry Calls Terror Group 'Daesh,' not Islamic State", *VOA News*, January 15, 2016 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/why-kerry-calls-islamic-state-daesh/3148557.html>

<sup>77</sup> "Pacom Commander Credits Hawaii's Role in Indo-Asia-Pacific Rebalance", By Air Force Staff Sgt. Christopher Hubenthal, *DoD News*, January 1, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/643413/pacom-commander-credits-hawaiis-role-in-indo-asia-pacific-rebalance>

China Sea." U.S. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus underscored the importance of the U.S.-Philippine relationship, but declined to comment on the Philippine request for joint patrols.<sup>78</sup>

Adm. Harris emphasises Hawaii's importance in the future of the Indo-Asia-Pacific theatre; Philippines has asked the United States to hold joint naval patrols; NK says it will stop conducting nuclear tests in exchange for a peace treaty; Cooperation among the US, ROK, and China key to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula;

North Korea says it will stop conducting nuclear tests in exchange for a peace treaty with the United States and an end to joint military exercises between Washington and Seoul. The proposal, published in North Korea's state media on January 15, is similar to previous offers by Pyongyang that have been quickly rejected by the U.S. and South Korea.<sup>79</sup>

Cooperation among the United States, South Korea and China is key to international efforts to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, Christopher Hill, former U.S. assistant secretary of state, who led nuclear negotiations with North Korea said. While international talks over how to achieve the denuclearization have remained deadlocked for many years, Pyongyang appears to have made progress on its nuclear weapons program. Last week, the communist country conducted its fourth nuclear test. Christopher, told VOA on January 14 that the three countries should not "allow North Koreans to create any divisions" among them, saying the countries hold "keys" to resolving the issue.<sup>80</sup>

With all the other issues on his plate, probably the last thing President Barack Obama will want to deal with in his final year in office is a possible return to crisis in Taiwan-China relations. But after years of warming Taipei-Beijing ties that have been welcomed by Washington, this is a real prospect with the leader of Taiwan's independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) — an organization loathed by Beijing — looking set for victory in elections on January 9. While Tsai Ing-wen has said she will not provoke China if elected president, the risk of worsening China-Taiwan ties is viewed with concern in Washington at a time when it is trying to tamp down tension over growing Chinese military power and assertive pursuit of territorial claims elsewhere in Asia.<sup>81</sup>

## India-US Relations

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **'Make in India' initiative of the government would help in boosting manufacturing; Lockheed Martin India; US to review and expand areas of regional and global cooperation; Prominent Indian Americans attended the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas celebrations; US says, terrorist groups would try to undermine the Indo-Pak peace process; Indian Railway Minister concludes three day visit to US.**

<sup>78</sup> "Philippines Urges Patrols With US Amid Sea Dispute With China", *Reuters*, January 14, 2016 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/philippines-urges-patrols-with-us-amid-sea-dispute-with-china/3146194.html>

<sup>79</sup> "N. Korea Offers to Halt Nuclear Tests in Exchange for Peace Treaty", *VOA News*, January 16, 2016 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/north-korea-offers-to-halt-nuclear-tests-in-exchange-for-peace-treaty/3148838.html>

<sup>80</sup> Choi, Brent, "Cooperation Among US, S. Korea, China Key to Denuclearization, Envoy Says", *VOA News*, January 15, 2016 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/cooperation-united-states-south-korea-china-key-denuclearization/3148528.html>

<sup>81</sup> "Taiwan Poll Looms as Headache for Obama in Final Year", *Reuters*, January 13, 2016 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/taiwan-china-looms-headache-obama-final-year/3145173.html>

US-based defence major Lockheed Martin said on January 11 that it is encouraged about the recent liberalisation of India's FDI policy in the sector and is looking at increasing investments in the country. Phil Shaw, chief executive, Lockheed Martin India, said the 'Make in India' initiative of the government would help in boosting manufacturing in the country. During his visit to the US in September, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had met top Chief Executives including, Lockheed Martin Chairman and CEO Marillyn Hewson. The company already has manufacturing facilities near Hyderabad.<sup>82</sup>

US Department of State informed that Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Sarah Sewall will travel to India, from January 11–15. She will be accompanied in New Delhi by Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Nisha Biswal. While in India, Under Secretary Sewall will lead U.S. participation in the U.S.–India Global Issues Forum – the first since 2012 – to review and expand areas of regional and global cooperation. She will meet with civil society representatives to strengthen cooperation around common interests, including countering violent extremism, religious freedom, trafficking in persons, and transparency and governance. As the U.S. Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, Under Secretary Sewall will also travel to Dharamsala, India, to discuss issues of importance to the Tibetan refugee community.<sup>83</sup>

Dozens of prominent Indian Americans attended the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas celebrations hosted by the Embassy of India in Washington, DC, on January 8. The highlight of the evening was talks by prominent Indian American community leader Swadesh Chatterjee and technology leader Dr. Satyam Priyadarshy. In his opening remarks, Indian Ambassador to the United States Arun K. Singh pointed out that Indian Americans played a very important role during a key moment in India-US relations — in the run up to the 2008 civil nuclear agreement between the two countries. He added that “once the deal went through in 2008, between then and now, the political relationship between the two countries has been completely transformed.”<sup>84</sup>

The State Department spokesman John Kirby told reporters in Washington on January 15 that it should come as a shock to no one that terrorist groups would try to undermine the Indo-Pak peace process by carrying out attacks, as it encouraged the two countries to continue the dialogue. Referring to the attack on the Pathankot air base on January 2 by Pakistani terrorists, Kirby said, “Obviously, we don't want to see that happen and we are encouraged by the dialogue that has recently taken place between India and Pakistan, and we'd like to see that continue”. He said the US wants India and Pakistan to “continue to have a dialogue and to continue to look for ways to cooperate against a common threat.”<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> “US-Based Defence Major Lockheed Martin Looks At Increasing Investment in India”, *The Economic Times*, January 11, 2016, at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/us-based-defence-major-lockheed-martin-looks-at-increasing-investment-in-india/articleshow/50533676.cms>

<sup>83</sup> “Under Secretary Sewall Travel to India”, *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, January 11, 2016 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251099.htm>

<sup>84</sup> “Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas Celebrated at Embassy of India”, *The American Bazar*, January 14, 2016 at <http://www.americanbazaaronline.com/2016/01/14/pravasi-bharatiya-diwas-celebrated-at-embassy-of-india/>

<sup>85</sup> “Terror Outfits Will Attempt To Undermine Indo-Pak Peace Talks: US”, *The Indian Express*, January 16, 2016 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/terror-outfits-will-attempt-to-undermine-indo-pak-peace-talks-us/>; and, “Don't Let Terror Groups Undermine Peace Process: US To India and Pakistan”, *Press Trust of*



On the request of the World Bank, Indian Railway Minister, Suresh Prabhkar Prabhu, was on an official visit to Washington DC, USA from January 13-15, 2016, to deliver an address at the Plenary Session of World Bank Conference on Transport and Cities – Key Drivers for Meeting Climate Goals. Apart from this, his three day tour involved a number of Seminars, Conferences, Meetings and Events. Speaking at the World Bank Conference Plenary Session on "Transport and Cities: Key Drivers for Meeting Climate Goals", the Railway Minister highlighted the vital role of the Indian railways in providing low cost sustainable transportation. The Indian Railways has embarked on transforming its energy mix by using renewal energy sources like solar and wind energy, and is undertaking energy audits to improve efficiency to meet its sustainability targets. The Railway Minister also met the US Secretary of Transportation Mr. Anthony Foxx to discuss enhanced bilateral engagement in the transportation sector flowing from the Memorandum of Cooperation signed in April 2015 during the visit of Secretary Foxx to India. Railway Minister noted the immense possibilities for knowledge sharing, technology tie-ups and business cooperation between the two countries in the transportation sector. Both sides agreed to promote cooperation in a number of areas including railway safety and capacity building, through joint workshops and exchange of visits. In his meeting with the Chairman and President of the US EXIM Bank Mr. Fred P. Hochberg, he discussed the possibility of structuring an India specific financing model to take advantage of upcoming investment and business opportunities in India's rail sector. Both sides agreed to work on a road show of potential long-term investors having interest in India's infrastructure sector.<sup>86</sup>

## II. DEFENCE REVIEWS

### National

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Tejas creates history with its first successful flight abroad; The School of Artillery conducts two days exercise Ex Sarvatra Prahar at Devlali.**

In a landmark development Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, indigenously designed and developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), landed in Bahrain. This is for the first time that LCA Tejas flown in foreign airspace. Tejas is in Bahrain to participate in the Bahrain International Airshow-2016 to be held from January 21 to January 23, 2016. In addition to Tejas, DRDO is also showcasing other indigenously developed defence systems to display the nation's prowess in the area of advanced defence technologies. The aim is to explore the potential for export of defence systems and equipment.<sup>87</sup>

The School of Artillery conducted "Ex Sarvatra Prahar" at Devlali on January 08 & January 11, 2016. During the exercise a plethora of equipment showcasing the Regiment of Artillery was employed and its firepower displayed. The exercise was conducted through a tactical situation requiring an appreciation of the operation and preparation of an Artillery fire plan in support of

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*India (PTI)*, January 16, 2016 at <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/dont-let-terror-groups-undermine-peace-process-us-to-india-and-pakistan-1266488>

<sup>86</sup> "Minister of Railways, Govt. of India Shri Suresh Prabhu Concludes His Three Day Visit to Washington DC, USA", *PIB*, January 16, 2016, Release ID :134540, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

<sup>87</sup> "Tejas Makes History at Bahrain," *PIB*, January 17, 2016, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=134544>

the operation. An array of new generation rocket and missile systems like Pinaka, Smerch and a model of Brahmos missile were also on display. Surveillance and Target Acquisition equipment like the Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, Surveillance Sensors and Weapon Locating Radars were also showcased during the exercise. The highlight of the exercise was Combat Free Fall by Special Forces team and Cheetah and Chetak helicopters flown by Army Aviators.<sup>88</sup>

## International

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Russia to deploy Kamov Ka-52 attack helicopters carrying the L370 Vitebsk electronic warfare system to Syria; First batch of a total of 20 A-29s to be delivered by the United States to the Afghan Air Force arrives in Kabul.**

Reports say that Russia will deploy Kamov Ka-52 attack helicopters carrying the L370 Vitebsk electronic warfare system to Syria to provide security for the Russian task force at Humaymin Air Base in Latakia province. The helicopters will also conduct combat search-and-rescue operations. Significantly, the deployment will provide an opportunity to test the Ka-52 in a war zone for the first time. The Vitebsk system includes radar and laser warning systems, as well as active electro-optic and radar jammers.<sup>89</sup>

Meanwhile, according to reports, four A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircraft meant for service with the Afghan Air Force (AAF) arrived in Kabul recently. The aircraft are the first batch of a total of 20 A-29s that are to be delivered incrementally by the United States to the AAF. As per the reports, four more aircraft will be delivered by the 2016, another four by the 2017; and the remaining eight by the end of 2018. The A-29 light attack aircraft is a versatile aircraft that brings a number of critical capabilities to the AAF. These include close air support, armed escort, and armed over watch." The A-29s are being provided to the AAF under the US Air Force (USAF) Light Air Support (LAS) programme.<sup>90</sup>

## III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEWS

### Jammu & Kashmir

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Protest erupts after body of missing youth found in Srinagar; Hurriyat chairman Geelani condemns Pakistan plan to make Gilgit its fifth province; PoK invites J&K leaders for meet in Islamabad; Constable disappears with four assault rifles in J&K.**

A violent protest erupted in Peerbagh area of Srinagar city after the body of a youth who had gone missing on January 12 was found on January 14. The body of Owais Bashir (20), a resident of Peerbagh, was found on January 14 morning from near a local Railway bridge, leading to protests by the residents, a police official said. He said the protesters indulged in stone-pelting on police

<sup>88</sup> "Sarvatra Prahar' at Devlali Field Firing Ranges," *PIB*, January 11, 2016, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=134367>

<sup>89</sup> "Russia to Deploy Ka-52 Helicopters to Syria," *IHS Jane's*, January 17, 2016, at <http://www.janes.com/article/57253/russia-to-deploy-ka-52-helicopters-to-syria>

<sup>90</sup> "First Four A-29 Super Tucanos Arrive in Afghanistan," *IHS Jane's*, January 17, 2016, at <http://www.janes.com/article/57278/first-four-a-29-super-tucanos-arrive-in-afghanistan>

personnel and blocked the Srinagar Airport road by putting obstacles. The security personnel fired tear gas shells to clear the road, but in vain."<sup>91</sup>

Pakistan government's plan to make Gilgit-Baltistan the fifth province of the country has drawn criticism from Hurriyat chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani. Calling Gilgit-Baltistan an integral part of J&K, he termed the plan a "violation of the UN resolutions" on Kashmir. He also called it a "betrayal" of Kashmir by Pakistan. "The entire state of J&K, falling on both sides of the ceasefire line, is a disputed territory... There is no constitutional or moral justification for deciding on any part of the territory without consent of its people. This is also a clear violation of UN resolutions on Kashmir," he said on January 13. He also cautioned Pakistan, saying that the "act will harm the disputed nature of J&K" and also serve as a certificate to India for its "occupation" of the state.<sup>92</sup>

In contrast to the past when Pakistan has refused to issue visas to mainstream leaders from Kashmir, the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) administration on January 14 invited two mainstream leaders, besides separatists, for a conference to be held in Islamabad on January 20 and January 21. PoK President Sardar Muhammad Yaqub Khan has invited Awami Ittehad Party chief and legislator Engineer Rasheed and CPI (M) legislator Muhammad Yousuf Tarigami, to attend a two-day roundtable conference to discuss the Kashmir problem. All top senior separatist leaders, including Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, and Aga Syed Hasan, have been invited.<sup>93</sup> Meanwhile, Hurriyat Conference (G) on January 16 decided not to attend the conference in Pakistan capital and slammed Pakistan administered Kashmir (PaK) president for inviting pro-Indian politicians to the conference.<sup>94</sup>

A Police constable from south Kashmir has gone missing with four service rifles, fuelling apprehension that he may have joined militants. Police sources said Shakoor Ahmad, the personal security officer of DSP Irshad Ahmad Rather, went missing along with two friends on January 15. They said Ahmad took away four service rifles along with him. He is a resident of Kundalan village in south Kashmir's Shopian district, a militant stronghold.<sup>95</sup>

## Northeast India

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Hardcore NSLA militant killed in Assam; Three KYKL militants arrested in Manipur; Meghalaya: Seven traders from Assam Kidnapped in Garo Hills.**

A hardcore National Santhal Liberation Army (NSLA) militant of the anti-talk faction was killed following an encounter with the police in Borbadha village in Assam's Kokrajhar district on January 13, police said. The militant has been identified as Ram Hemrom alias Lasar and a 7.65

<sup>91</sup> "Protest Erupts after Body of Missing Youth Found in J&K", *The Times of India*, January 14, 2016 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/srinagar/Protest-erupts-after-body-of-missing-youth-found-in-JK/articleshow/50576605.cms>

<sup>92</sup> Masood, Bashaarat, "Hurriyat Chairman Geelani Slams Pakistan Plan To Make Gilgit Fifth Province", *The Indian Express*, January 14, 2016 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/hurriyat-chairman-syed-ali-shah-geelani-slams-pakistan-plan-to-make-gilgit-baltistan-fifth-province/>

<sup>93</sup> Ashiq, Peerzada, "PoK Invites J&K Leaders for Meet in Islamabad", *The Hindu*, January 15, 2016 at <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/pok-invites-jk-leaders-for-meet-in-islamabad/article8109280.ece>

<sup>94</sup> "Hurriyat (G) not to Attend Kashmir Conference in Islamabad", *Rising Kashmir*, January 17, 2016 at <http://www.risingkashmir.com/news/hurriyat-g-not-to-attend-kashmir-conference-in-islamabad/>

<sup>95</sup> "J&K Constable Goes Missing with 4 Rifles", *The Indian Express*, January 17, 2016 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/jk-constable-goes-missing-with-4-rifles/>

pistol, two hand grenades, two rounds of live ammunitions and two blank cartridges were recovered from the encounter spot, the spokesman added. In another incident, police apprehended an ULFA linkman from Changmaibari under Nemuguri police station in Upper Assam's Sibsagar district, police said. The linkman has been identified as Babul alias Jan Dihingia and Rs 7.50 lakh in cash and an SUV has been recovered from his possession.<sup>96</sup>

In a joint operation launched by Assam Rifles troops and Imphal East police commandos in Tumukhong, three cadres of proscribed Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup were apprehended on January 12, PRO Assam Rifles (South) said in a release.<sup>97</sup>

In a sensational abduction case in North Garo Hills, seven traders belonging to Goalpara district of Assam were kidnapped at gunpoint by a group of militants in Kalwe Ading village under Kharkutta block on January 15. "Two groups of traders were returning from Dokongsi weekly market, when their vehicle was stopped by a group of six to seven armed militants near Kalwe Ading and were abducted", said Ramesh Singh, SP, North Garo Hills. There were around 12 traders in the vehicle. "The police and CoBRA commandos are on the job to find the whereabouts of the traders", added Singh.<sup>98</sup>

## Left-wing Extremism

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Two Maoists killed in Chhattisgarh; Jharkhand Maoist group denies Police claim of seizure of money; CPI (Maoist) floats new division; Four Maoists killed in Bastar encounter; Thirty Maoists surrender in Chhattisgarh: Police; Maoists killed two tribals in Odisha.**

Two suspected Maoists were gunned down in a joint operation by Gadchiroli police and their Chhattisgarh counterparts on January 11. Police said that in the first encounter in Sandra area of Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, Dalam commander Mangi, who carried a Rs 12-lakh reward on her head, was killed in the morning. An Insas rifle and six rounds were recovered from the spot. In the second encounter around noon about two km south of the first encounter spot, a Dalam member was killed, said police, adding that his identity is yet to be established. Police said that while the first rebel group they encountered had around 12 cadres, the second had 20.<sup>99</sup>

The Maoist organisation from which Jharkhand Police claimed to have recovered Rs.1.5 crore, on January 13 said no money was seized from it. Police on January 11 claimed recovering Rs.1.50 crore from four supporters of the organisation, Tiritiya Prastuti Committee (TPC). "The money that has been showed as recovered from us in Chatra district did not belong to us. The police move is

<sup>96</sup> "Hardcore NSLA Militant of Anti-Talk Faction Killed in Encounter", *The Economic Times*, January 13, 2016 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/hardcore-ns-la-militant-of-anti-talk-faction-killed-in-encounter/articleshow/50561206.cms>

<sup>97</sup> "Ultras Held", *The Assam Tribune*, January 14, 2016 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1416/oth056>

<sup>98</sup> Dey, Biplab Kr, "7 Traders from Assam Kidnapped in Garo Hills", *The Assam Tribune*, January 17, 2016 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1716/oth051>

<sup>99</sup> "2 Suspected Maoists Shot Dead", *The Indian Express*, January 12, 2016 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/2-suspected-maoists-shot-dead/>

aimed at defaming the organisation," the TPC said. The TPC, claiming itself to be a political organisation, demanded a probe into the issue. It also denied that its members were arrested.<sup>100</sup>

The CPI (Maoist) have reportedly set up another division in the Andhra Odisha Border (AOB) to regain their hold in the Srikakulam region in Andhra Pradesh, and Gunupur and Gudari forest areas and Rayagada in Odisha. The new division has been christened as the Odisha-Srikakulam division, sources claimed. With the new division, the Reds are now concentrating on Palakonda and Bhamini forest areas which were once bastions of Naxal activity. "They plan to revive their old stronghold areas in north Andhra where they have been losing ground. Following the new force's arrival in AOB from Chhattisgarh, Naxals are now trying to use terror tactics to gain control," a senior police officer involved in the anti-Naxal operation in Visakha district said. Intelligence sources feel that Naxals are now concentrating on setting up revolutionary people's committees (RPCs) in the AOB areas. As part of this, commander Sunil, brother of Maoist Anand, has been visiting the Araku and Odisha border areas to strengthen the Naxal movement. They are even focussing on Gurtedu area, which was also once a stronghold area of the Maoists, they added.<sup>101</sup>

Four Maoists were killed in an encounter with Bastar police's special anti-Maoist unit-the District Reserve Guard (DRG) in the restive Bastar region of Chhattisgarh on January 15, the police claimed. "A small team of the DRG Bijapur district, numbering about 50 men, had a successful encounter with the Maoists at village Pedda Jojer under Gangaloor police station limits of Bijapur on January 15. The DRG team managed to recover dead bodies of four Maoists along with four Bharmars (locally made guns), local grenades and Maoist dump," informed Bastar range Inspector General (IG) of Police, Mr. SRP Kalluri.<sup>102</sup>

As many as 30 Maoists, including a woman cadre, surrendered before police in the insurgency-hit Bastar district of Chhattisgarh on January 16, police said. Bastar Superintendent of Police R N Das told *PTI* that these ultras decided to return to the mainstream as they were impressed by the rehabilitation policy of the state government and also because of the constant movement of the security forces in the internal regions of Bastar. Nineteen cadres of Darbha division committee and 11 members of East Bastar division surrendered before senior police officials in Bastar district headquarters, he added.<sup>103</sup>

The Maoists have reportedly murdered two tribal civilians within 24 hours in Koraput district of Odisha. The victims included a former nayab sarpanch, Krishna Miniaka and Rohini Nachika, who were killed by Maoists on January 15 and January 14 respectively. The Naxals alleged that both Miniaka and Nachika were police informers for which they had been punished with death. However, senior police officials denied the allegations. After a lull of more than a year, Maoists of

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<sup>100</sup> "Jharkhand Maoist Group Denies Seizure of Money from It", *Business Standard*, January 13, 2016 at [http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/jharkhand-maoist-group-denies-seizure-of-money-from-it-116011300556\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/jharkhand-maoist-group-denies-seizure-of-money-from-it-116011300556_1.html)

<sup>101</sup> "CPI Maoists Float Another Division", *The Times of India*, January 14, 2016 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/visakhapatnam/CPI-Maoists-float-another-division/articleshow/50572756.cms>

<sup>102</sup> Dahat, Pavan, "Four Maoists Killed in Bastar Encounter", *The Hindu*, January 15, 2016 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/four-maoists-killed-in-bastar-encounter/article8111181.ece>

<sup>103</sup> "30 Maoists Surrender in Chhattisgarh", *Business Standard*, January 16, 2016 at [http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/30-maoists-surrender-in-chhattisgarh-116011600012\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/30-maoists-surrender-in-chhattisgarh-116011600012_1.html)

Andhra Odisha Border Special Zonal Committee (AOBSZC) along with cadres from Chhattisgarh have recently started their violent activities in the Koraput district of Odisha.<sup>104</sup>

## Radicalisation & Terrorism

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **India to seek UN ban for terrorists; Indian youth planning to join ISIS held in Syria; Laser walls for vulnerable areas of India-Pakistan border soon.**

India will soon approach the UN with a list of 12 names, including Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) commander Abdul Rauf Ashgar, urging the global body to ban him and other fugitives belonging to Indian Mujahideen (IM) and Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) for their involvement in past terror attacks. Ashgar, 42, is the younger brother of JeM chief Maulana Masood Azhar, who is suspected to be the mastermind behind the recent attack at a Pathankot air base. Home minister Rajnath Singh will give his final approval to the 12-name list that will then be communicated to the UN through the external affairs ministry, said an official. The others who will be named include IM commander Riyaz Bhatkal, Ansar-ut-Tawahid chief AS Armar, his brother Mohammad Shafi Armar, and Azamgarh resident Mohammad Sajid.<sup>105</sup>

Syria has taken four Indian youth in its custody, who were planning to join the terrorist outfit ISIS, and asked the Indian authorities to verify their details. Syrian Deputy Prime minister Walid Al Moalem, who was on a three-day visit to India, said the four youth had entered Syria and were taken into custody in Damascus.<sup>106</sup>

More than 40 vulnerable unfenced stretches along the India-Pakistan border will be covered by laser walls soon with the Home Ministry giving it a top priority to check any infiltration of terrorists in the wake of the Pathankot attack. All these riverine stretches located in Punjab will be covered by the laser wall technology developed by Border Security Force to completely eliminate the chances of breach of the international border by Pakistan-based terror groups, a Home Ministry official said. As of now, only 5-6 out of around 40 vulnerable points are covered by laser walls. This beam over the river sets off a loud siren in the case of a breach.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>104</sup> "Two Tribals Killed by Maoists", *The Hindu*, January 17, 2016 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/two-tribals-killed-by-maoists/article8115117.ece>

<sup>105</sup> Tripathi, Rahul, "India to Seek UN Ban for 12 Terrorists Including JeM Chief Abdul Rauf Ashgar", *The Economic Times*, January 13, 2016 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-to-seek-un-ban-for-12-terrorists-including-jem-chief-abdul-rauf-ashgar/articleshow/50554586.cms>

<sup>106</sup> "Four Indian Youth Planning To Join ISIS Held in Syria", *The Economic Times*, January 14, 2016 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/four-indian-youth-planning-to-join-isis-held-in-syria/articleshow/50572961.cms>

<sup>107</sup> "Laser Walls For Riverine Areas of India-Pakistan Border Soon", *The Economic Times*, January 17, 2016 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/laser-walls-for-riverine-areas-of-india-pakistan-border-soon/articleshow/50610265.cms>

## IV. UNITED NATIONS REVIEWS

### India and the UN

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **India to increase humanitarian assistance to Syria; India to request 1267 Committee to impose sanctions on Pak terrorists; As G77 gets a new head, India urges the need to focus on the developing countries; India low on the Global Innovation Index; WFP to help India achieve SDG goal to curb hunger; India to grow at 7.5 per cent in 2016; Pak rakes up Hyderabad at UN.**

India is considering to have a set up in Jordan to support humanitarian work in war-torn Syria. This was revealed during the visit of the Syrian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Walid Al-Moallem. The Minister also hoped that India could contribute to the long term plan of recovery of Syria.<sup>108</sup>

India is poised to approach the Security Council to impose sanction on 12 Pakistan-based terrorists, including Abdul Rauf Ashgar of the Jaish e Mohammed (JEM), Indian Mujahideen (IM) commander Riyaz Bhatkal, Ansar-ut-Tawahid chief AS Armar, his brother Mohammad Shafi Armar, and Azamgarh resident Mohammad Sajid.<sup>109</sup> IM members who have fled India are based in Pakistan are to be included in the list.<sup>110</sup> China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei has said that China will consider the request on its merits.<sup>111</sup> India also urged the General Assembly to support the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism.<sup>112</sup>

At the ceremony to transfer the Chairmanship of the G77 from South Africa to Thailand on January 12, India's Permanent Representative Syed Akbaruddin said that in the fulfilment of the SDGs and the Addis Ababa Action Plan on Financing for Development, the objectives and priorities of developing countries must be the focus of attention.<sup>113</sup>

The Global Innovation Index of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) for 2015 ranked India at 81 out of 141 countries, with Switzerland topping the list. A report of India's

<sup>108</sup> "India Eyes Safe Zone in Jordan for Humanitarian Work in Syria", *The Hindu*, January 11, 2016, at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-eyes-safe-zone-in-jordan-for-humanitarian-work-in-syria/article8093309.ece>

<sup>109</sup> "India to Seek UN Ban for 12 Terrorists Including JeM Chief Abdul Rauf Ashgar", *The Economic Times*, January 13, 2016, at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-to-seek-un-ban-for-12-terrorists-including-jem-chief-abdul-rauf-ashgar/articleshow/50554586.cms>

<sup>110</sup> "India Readies List of Pakistan-Based Terrorists It Wants Subjected to UN Sanctions", January 12, 2016, at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-3396330/India-readies-list-Pakistan-based-terrorists-wants-subjected-sanctions.html>

<sup>111</sup> "Will Adopt 'Unbiased' Approach To India's Move for UN Ban on Jaish: China", *NDTV News*, January 13, 2016, at <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/will-adopt-unbiased-approach-to-indias-move-for-un-ban-on-jaish-china-1265518>

<sup>112</sup> PMI, "Informal Meeting of the Plenary for a Briefing by the Secretary General on his Priorities for 2016: Remarks by Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin, Permanent Representative", January 14, 2016, at <https://www.pminewyork.org/pages.php?id=2364>. Also see, "India urges UN member states to come together to counter terrorism", *The Indian Express*, January 16, 2016, at <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/india-urges-un-member-states-to-come-together-to-counter-terrorism/>

<sup>113</sup> "Ceremonial Meeting of the Group of 77 Handing over ceremony of Chairmanship from Republic of South Africa to Kingdom of Thailand - Remarks by Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin, Permanent Representative", January 12, 2016, at <https://www.pminewyork.org/pages.php?id=2363> "Priorities of developing Nations Must Be Centre of Attention: Akbaruddin", *The Hindu*, January 13, 2016, at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/priorities-of-developing-nations-must-be-centre-of-attention-akbaruddin/article8101929.ece>

Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks revealed that in the time period of 2006-15, of the 67, 342 patents granted in India, only 10,615 were granted to Indian companies with the CSIR been granted the maximum patents. This reinforced the need for India to spruce up innovation alongside its Make in India campaign.<sup>114</sup>

The World Food Programme of the UN is to partner with Indian government and businesses to help achieve the SDG of zero-hunger by 2030. Executive Director of the WFP Executive Director Ertharin Cousin visited India for this purpose. The WFP already supports the implementation of the Food Security Act of India as well as other central schemes that the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), Mid-Day Meal programme and Integrated Child Development Services.<sup>115</sup>

India is set to grow at 7.5 per cent, lower than the 8.2 per cent prediction of last year during the year 2015-16. These are the latest estimates from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The Government of India has also lowered its forecast from to 7-7.5 per cent from 8.1-8.5 per cent.<sup>116</sup>

Pakistan has written a letter to the Security Council to keep the issue of Kashmir, as well as the accession of the state of Hyderabad to India in 1948 open for discussion. The letter of Pakistan's PR Maleeha Lodhi of January 7 was made public on January 13, 2016.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> "Inventions and Innovations in India Are Very Less When Compared to the World's Other Nations", January 15, 2016, at <http://www.worldnewsbyday.com/inventions-and-innovations-in-india-are-very-less-when-compared-to-the-worlds-other-nations/>. Also see "Companies must Invent in India before Making In India, Say Nobel Laureates", January 11, 2016, at <http://www.firstpost.com/politics/companies-must-invent-in-india-before-making-in-india-say-nobel-laureates-2578330.html>

<sup>115</sup> "UN Food Relief Agency Boosts Efforts to End Global Hunger By 2030 with New Partnerships in India", *UN News*, January 14, 2016, at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=52999#.VrrF5xh97IU>

<sup>116</sup> "United Nations Downgrades India GDP Forecast for 2016 to 7.5% from 8.2%", January 14, 2016, at <http://www.india.com/news/world/united-nations-downgrades-india-gdp-forecast-for-2016-to-7-5-from-8-2-862240/>.

<sup>117</sup> "Pak Rakes up Hyd Accession to India at UN", January 17, 2016, at <http://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/National/2016-01-17/Pak-rakes-up-Hyd-accession-to-India-at-UN/200611>