

# THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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# CONTENTS

<b>In This Issue</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>I. COUNTRY REVIEWS</b>	
A. South Asia	2-5
B. East Asia	6-10
C. West Asia	10-11
D. Africa	12-13
<b>II. DEFENCE REVIEW</b>	13-14
<b>III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW</b>	15-17
<b>IV. UN REVIEW</b>	18-18

## I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

### A. South Asia

#### Afghanistan

- **Suicide attackers kill seven in Farah province of Afghanistan**

According to reports, suicide attackers dressed in police uniform entered a government compound in Farah province of Afghanistan and killed seven people and wounded twelve others. The assault underscored the major security challenges as Afghanistan heads to a NATO summit in Chicago on May 20, 2012 with a demand for \$4.1 billion a year to bankroll its security forces after Western troops pull out in 2014.<sup>1</sup>

#### Pakistan

- **US, Pakistan discuss reopening of NATO supply route; Pakistan invited for NATO Summit in Chicago; Zardari to attend Chicago Summit; Talks held between commanders on Pak-Afghan border security**

According to reports, negotiations are on between US and Pakistan to reopen NATO supply line. It has been almost six months since Pakistan blocked the line in retaliation for US airstrikes that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers.<sup>2</sup>

Reports noted that NATO has invited Pakistan to attend its Summit to be held on May 20-21, 2012 in Chicago. The Chief of NATO General Anders Fogh Rasmussen called President Zardari to invite him to the Summit.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, according to reports, Pakistani President, Asif Ali Zardari has agreed to attend the NATO Summit to be held in Chicago.<sup>4</sup>

In another development, according to reports, top commanders of Pakistan, Afghanistan and NATO led forces have met in Islamabad on May 13, 2012 to discuss Pak-Afghan border security issues. The meeting comes as an effort to ease tensions between the countries after killing of Pakistani soldiers in airstrike last year and shutting of NATO supply route by Pakistan.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Afghan suicide squad kills seven, wounds 12: official", *Dawn*, May 17, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/05/17/suicide-bombers-storm-afghan-governors-office-official/>

<sup>2</sup> "US Pakistan negotiate reopening NATO supply line", *Dawn*, May 14, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/05/14/us-pakistan-negotiate-reopening-nato-supply-line/>

<sup>3</sup> "NATO invites Pakistan to key summit in Chicago", *Dawn*, May 15, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/05/15/nato-invites-zardari-to-chicago-summit/>

<sup>4</sup> "Pakistan likely to attend NATO talks on Afghanistan", *BBC*, May 16, 2012 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-18077611>

<sup>5</sup> "Top Commanders discuss Pak-Afghan border security", *Dawn*, May 13, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/05/13/top-commanders-discuss-pak-afghan-border-security/>

## Bangladesh

- **Dipu Moni urges the UNHCR to resume repatriation process of the Myanmar refugees in Bangladesh; Exports fell by 4.60 percent in April, 2012; Bapex determines presence of around 150 million barrels of oil in old gas fields of Kailashtila and Haripur in Sylhet; A four-day-long conference between Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) held**

According to reports, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni has urged the UNHCR to resume repatriation process of the Myanmar refugees in Bangladesh. She made the request during a meeting with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres on May 13, 2012, on the sidelines of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Ministerial Meeting at Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, said a press release. Mr. Guterres, however, opined that there might be some differences in understanding between the UNHCR and the government of the countries concerned about different aspects of this refugee problem. To clarify the issues, he suggested that Bangladesh government may consider sending a team to Geneva or the UNHCR may send a team to Dhaka.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, according to reports, Bangladesh's exports fell by 4.60 percent to \$1.90 billion in April, 2012 compared to a month ago due to the ongoing debt crisis in the EU and readjustment of prices of finished goods by international buyers. The debt crisis has also dampened the demand for Bangladesh's main export earner readymade garments in the Eurozone. According to the reporters, this is one of the major causes that are pushing down the growth of exports from Bangladesh.<sup>7</sup>

Reports noted that Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration & Production Company Ltd (Bapex) has determined, through a seismic survey, presence of around 150 million barrels of oil in old gas fields of Kailashtila and Haripur in Sylhet. No less than 40 percent of this small reserve could be commercially produced, said Bapex Managing Director Mortuza Ahmad Faruque. This implies that around 700 barrels a day could be produced from the two fields under Sylhet Gas Field Company Ltd.<sup>8</sup>

In other developments, a four-day-long conference between Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) began on May 14, 2012 in Shiliguri of India.<sup>9</sup>

## Sri Lanka

- **Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines visits Sri Lanka; Minister of External Affairs, Prof. G.L. Peiris on four days official visit to Washington; Mahinda Rajapaksa visits**

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<sup>6</sup> "Resume Rohingya repatriation:Bangladesh requests UNHCR", *The Daily Star*, May 14, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=234057>.

<sup>7</sup> Mirdha, Refayet Ullah, "Exports fall further on EU debt crisis", *The Daily Star*, May 15, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=234186>.

<sup>8</sup> Khan, Sharier, "Oil found in two old gas fields: 3D seismic survey points to oil prospects in Titas field too", *The Daily Star*, May 18, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=234624>.

<sup>9</sup> "BGB-BSF meet begins in Shiliguri today", *The Daily Star*, May 14, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=234120>.

**Qatar to participate in the 12th Doha Forum; Thirteen member Chinese Communist Party delegation was on goodwill visit to Sri Lanka; The cabinet of ministers of Sri Lanka approves proposal forwarded by President to amend the Citizenship Act No.18 of 1948 and the Immigration and Emigration Act No.20 of 1948**

According to reports, Sri Lanka and the Philippines have agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation in a number of spheres, including education, science and technology, tourism, trade, agriculture and reciprocal capacity building in expatriate labour. This was agreed upon during a meeting between Deputy Minister of External Affairs Neomal Perera and Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs (rank of Deputy Minister) of the Philippines Madam Erlinda F. Basilio, who visited the country on an invitation extended by the Deputy Minister from 14th to 15th May.<sup>10</sup>

In another development, according to reports, Minister of External Affairs, Prof. G.L. Peiris was on four days official visit to Washington from May 15-18, 2012. Prof. Peiris took part in a series of Capitol Hill meetings on the second of his four-day official visit to Washington, discussing with members of the House of Representatives Sri Lanka's progress in post-conflict reconciliation and development, as well as reform measures that are designed to ensure a lasting peace. Minister explained that the Sri Lankan government has developed a mechanism for implementation of LLRC recommendations accepted by the government, which will be directed out of the office of Sri Lanka's presidential secretariat.<sup>11</sup>

On the third day of his four-day official visit to the U.S. Minister Peiris met with Samantha Power, special assistant to U.S. President Barack Obama and senior director of Multilateral Affairs on the staff of the White House National Security Council (NSC) and Michael Newbill, the NSC director for South Asia.<sup>12</sup>

Minister then met the Secretary of State Hilary Clinton on May 18 for about 45 minutes. "The foreign minister presented a very serious and comprehensive approach to the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission's implementation and the plans that the government has, including plans to make it more public and accessible both to Sri Lankans and to those outside Sri Lanka, what the government intends to do in the implementation realm," the State Department said. Later Mrs. Clinton said "We are encouraged by the steps that Sri Lanka has taken".<sup>13</sup>

Reports noted that President of Sri Lanka, Mahinda Rajapaksa arrived at Qatar on May 19, 2012 on a special invitation from Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani to participate in

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<sup>10</sup> "Sri Lanka and the Philippines resolve to strengthen bilateral partnership", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, May 17, 2012 at [http://www.priu.gov.lk/news\\_update/Current\\_Affairs/ca201205/20120517sl\\_philippines\\_resolve\\_strengthen\\_bilateral\\_partnership.htm](http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201205/20120517sl_philippines_resolve_strengthen_bilateral_partnership.htm).

<sup>11</sup> "Visit Sri Lanka - Minister invites US legislators", *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, May 17, 2012 at [http://www.priu.gov.lk/news\\_update/Current\\_Affairs/ca201205/20120517visit\\_sl\\_invites\\_us\\_legislators.htm](http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201205/20120517visit_sl_invites_us_legislators.htm).

<sup>12</sup> "Sri Lanka's External Affairs Minister meets with top US security and trade officials", *Colombo Page*, May 18, 2012 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_12/May18\\_1337348202CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12/May18_1337348202CH.php).

<sup>13</sup> "Sri Lanka presents a 'serious and comprehensive approach' on implementation of LLRC recommendations", *Colombo Page*, May 19, 2012 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_12/May19\\_1337379344CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12/May19_1337379344CH.php).

the 12th Doha Forum and Enriching the Middle East Economic Future Conference.<sup>14</sup>

According to reports, thirteen member Chinese Communist Party delegation led by Deputy Secretary of Law and Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Government Wang Lequan came to Sri Lanka on a goodwill visit at an invitation extended by the governing Sri Lanka Freedom Party.<sup>15</sup>

In other developments, reports noted that the cabinet of ministers of Sri Lanka has approved a proposal forwarded by President Mahinda Rajapaksa to amend the Citizenship Act No.18 of 1948 and the Immigration and Emigration Act No.20 of 1948 with a view to formalizing the granting of Dual Citizenship by the establishment of the “Overseas Sri Lankans” Scheme.<sup>16</sup>

## Maldives

### ● **President Dr Mohamed Waheed briefed the cabinet on his recent visit to India; President Waheed thanks Indian President and PM**

President Dr Mohamed Waheed has briefed the cabinet on his recent visit to India, from 11 to 15 May on May 16. At the cabinet meeting held today, the President said that he decided for his first visit to be to India, since assumption of office, because of the close friendship both the countries have always shared. The President briefed the cabinet on the discussions held with his meetings with the President, Prime Minister, Minister of External Affairs, the Foreign Secretary, governor and Chief Minister of Maharashtra, top business leaders in Delhi and Mumbai during his visit to India. The President said that he ensured that the Indian leaders were clear on the current political and economical state of the Maldives. He also said that he had given assurance to the Indian leaders, that the Maldives was functioning in a very transparent environment, as required from a democratic country.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, in two separate letters to the President and the Prime Minister of India, President Dr Mohamed Waheed has thanked President Pratibha Patil and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, following his official visit to India from 11 to 15 May.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> “Sri Lankan President arrives in Qatar to attend Doha Forum”, *Colombo Page*, May 20, 2012, at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_12/May20\\_1337502608CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12/May20_1337502608CH.php).

<sup>15</sup> “Chinese Communist Party delegation to meet Sri Lanka Opposition Leader today”, *Colombo Page*, May 19, 2012 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_12/May19\\_1337406689CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12/May19_1337406689CH.php).

<sup>16</sup> “New scheme to grant dual citizenship to be established”, *Government of Sri Lanka Website*, May 18, 2012 at [http://www.priu.gov.lk/news\\_update/Current\\_Affairs/ca201205/20120518new\\_scheme\\_grant\\_dual\\_citizenship.htm](http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201205/20120518new_scheme_grant_dual_citizenship.htm).

<sup>17</sup> “President Waheed briefs cabinet on his recent visit to India”, *The President’s Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 16, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7417>.

<sup>18</sup> “President thanks Indian President and Prime Minister”, *The President’s Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 17, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7419>.

## B. East Asia

### South East Asia

- **Cambodia, Thailand to set up special economic border zone; Shan ethnic group in second round of peace talk with Myanmar; China, Philippines impose fishing ban in South China Sea; Indonesia turns down Russian 'black box' request; Crashed Russian jet was a replacement: Reports**

According to reports, the Thai-Cambodian Joint Trade Committee (JTC), on May 20, 2012, agreed to set up special economic border zones, aiming to increase trade volume by 30% annually. The Thai commerce minister agreed to assign the permanent secretary for commerce and the director general of the department of trade negotiations to speed up the task, which will also bolster trade along the border. The special economic zones could be initiated in Surin, Si Sa Ket, Ubon Ratchathani and Buriram. It is believed that such cooperation could be later expanded for other neighbouring countries.<sup>19</sup>

In another development, according to reports, ethnic Shan rebels have agreed in a second round of talks that there will be no more fighting between the guerrillas and government troops. It is the latest reported agreement between Thein Sein government and various ethnic rebels. Shan State Army leader Yawd Serk discussed enforcing a December ceasefire and eradicating drugs in eastern Myanmar. Myanmar President Thein Sein's government has reached ceasefires with several ethnic rebel groups, but fierce fighting continues with the Kachin minority in the country's north.<sup>20</sup>

Reports noted that the Philippines and China will both impose fishing bans in the South China Sea where the two countries have been involved in a tense territorial standoff. China had already announced its annual ban, which it says is aimed at curbing over-fishing, and includes the waters around the disputed Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal. On May 14, 2012, the Philippines refused to recognize China's measure, which runs from May 16 to August 1, 2012, as it encompasses waters it considers as its own. However, Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario said President Benigno Aquino welcomed the chance to replenish fish stocks and that the Philippines would issue its own ban. The standoff at the disputed shoal began when China blocked an attempt by the Philippines on April 8 to arrest Chinese fishermen who were allegedly taking government-protected marine species from the area. The two nations have since stationed non-military vessels at the shoal in an effort to assert their sovereignty over the area.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> 'Thai-Cambodian Joint Trade Committee agrees to set up special economic border zone', *MCOT*, May 20, 2012, [http://www.mcot.net/cfcustom/cache\\_page/366797.html](http://www.mcot.net/cfcustom/cache_page/366797.html)

<sup>20</sup> 'Burmese rebels agree to second round of talks', *The Independent*, May 20, 2012, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/burmese-rebels-agree-to-second-round-of-talks-7769386.html>

<sup>21</sup> 'Philippines, China impose fishing bans in disputed sea', *GMA Network*, May 14, 2012, <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/258186/news/nation/philippines-china-impose-fishing-bans-in-disputed-sea>

In other developments, the Indonesian government, on May 14, 2012, turned down a request to send the Sukhoi's black box recorder to Russia, stating that Indonesian investigators will determine the cause of the plane's deadly May 9 crash. Russian officials have requested that the black box, once it is found, be sent to Russia so local investigators could analyze the recorder's data. More than 70 Russian experts flew into Jakarta to help with clean up efforts and with Indonesia's investigation into the accident. The Russian-made Sukhoi Superjet 100 crashed into a slope of Mount Salak, in West Java, during an exhibition flight showing the new passenger plane to potential Indonesian buyers. At least 45 people on board – mostly Indonesian airline representatives and reporters – lost their lives in the crash.<sup>22</sup>

It has been reported that the Russian Superjet plane that crashed in Indonesia killing all on board was a replacement for another plane that had carried out the first part of a promotional tour. The SSJ-100 Superjet - the first new passenger plane produced by Russia since the collapse of the USSR - was making an exhibition flight in Indonesia on a promotional tour to drum up business. But the plane which crashed was not the same aircraft which carried out the first part of the promotional tour in Kazakhstan and Pakistan, said the spokesman for Sukhoi Civil Aircraft during a media interview. The Moskovskiy Komsomolets and Kommersant newspapers earlier reported that the plane had been replaced in the middle of the exhibition tour.<sup>23</sup>

## China

- **China promotes ties with Croatia; US falsely accusing Chinese military; Beijing refutes New Delhi's border accusations; China-US seek uninterrupted military ties; Chinese aircraft carrier completes 6<sup>th</sup> sea trial; Japan and China hold first maritime talks; China asserts closer ties with Australia; Phillipines asserts that the Island dispute may be resolved soon**

According to reports, Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, Wu Bangguo and his Croatian counterpart agreed that the two sides should work towards promoting bilateral exchanges.<sup>24</sup>

Beijing has recently announced that the Pentagon has been falsely accusing China's military expenditure to be non-transparent and also of cyberspace intrusions.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand Beijing has also refuted claims made by New Delhi that its armed forces had been overstepping the boundary.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> 'Indonesia turns down request to send Sukhoi black box to Russia', *The Jakarta Globe*, May 14, 2012, <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/indonesia-turns-down-request-to-send-sukhoi-black-box-to-russia/517888>

<sup>23</sup> 'Russian jet in Indonesia crash was replacement', *Strait Times*, May 14, 2012, [http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/World/Story/STIStory\\_798793.html](http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/World/Story/STIStory_798793.html)

<sup>24</sup> "China, Croatia vow to promote ties" *China Daily*, May 19, 2012 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/19/content\\_15338287.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/19/content_15338287.htm)

<sup>25</sup> "US falsely accuses China's military non-transparency" *China Daily*, May 19, 2012 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/19/content\\_15337824.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/19/content_15337824.htm)

<sup>26</sup> "China refutes India's border accusation" *China Daily*, May 18, 2012 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/18/content\\_15335236.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/18/content_15335236.htm)

However in another development, Chinese and American official announced that it was important to maintain good relations.<sup>27</sup>

Reports note that the Chinese military has achieved another feat when the Chinese aircraft carrier returned to Dalian Harbour after its successfully sixth trial at sea.<sup>28</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, China and Japan held the first round of high-level consultation on maritime affairs.<sup>29</sup> China also announced that China and Australia should increase their friendship and cooperation and provide good environment for investment.<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile Phillipines announced that the Huangyan Island dispute might soon be resolved.<sup>31</sup>

## Japan

- **Japanese PM Noda attends the annual G-8 Summit; Japanese PM vows to relocate Futenma base; The 4<sup>th</sup> Uygur congress opened in Tokyo despite China's protest; Japan, China and South Korea hold summit talk in Beijing**

Reports noted that Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda left for the US on May 18 to attend the two-day long G-8 summit meeting that was to be held at the Camp David. In the Summit, the European debt crisis and the crisis in Syria were expected to be the two major issues of discussion. Japan has already decided to offer an additional \$60 billion to help boosting the IMF's resources to handle financial crises. Noda also expressed his willingness to acquire cooperation with other G-8 participant states in deterring North Korea from attempting another provocation after the North's long-range ballistic missile launch in April this year.<sup>32</sup>

Recently while addressing a ceremony at Okinawa to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the US reversion of Okinawa to Japan, Japanese PM Noda pledged to relocate the Futenma base. The Okinawa prefecture currently hosts about 75% of the US military bases in Japan. While insisting that the current security system was important as it was based on the Japan-US security alliance, Noda went on to state that the government would make "visible, concrete progress toward an early reduction in Okinawa's base-hosting burden while maintaining deterrence." He also urged the

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<sup>27</sup> "US, China seek uninterrupted military ties" *China Daily*, May 18, 2012 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2012-05/18/content\\_15325135.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2012-05/18/content_15325135.htm)

<sup>28</sup> "China aircraft carrier returns from 6th sea trial" *China Daily*, May 16, 2012 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/16/content\\_15313362.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/16/content_15313362.htm)

<sup>29</sup> "China, Japan hold first round of maritime talks" *China Daily*, May 16, 2012 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/16/content\\_15313349.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/16/content_15313349.htm)

<sup>30</sup> "Li calls for closer ties with Australia" *China Daily*, May 16, 2012 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/16/content\\_15301581.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/16/content_15301581.htm)

<sup>31</sup> "Island dispute may soon be resolved: Aquino" *China Daily*, May 16, 2012 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2012-05/16/content\\_15301982.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2012-05/16/content_15301982.htm)

<sup>32</sup> "Noda leaves for US to attend G-8 summit", *Yomiuri daily*, May 19, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120518005051.htm>

rest of Japanese citizens outside Okinawa prefecture to think seriously about the base issue and cooperate with Okinawans to share the base burden.<sup>33</sup>

Among other interesting developments, the fourth general assembly of the World Uyghur Congress was opened on May 14 in Tokyo, despite fierce protest by the Chinese government. During the four day long meeting, 125 leaders of the Uyghur groups were expected to decide their strategies for the next three years. Earlier, while criticizing the Uyghur group as separatist, Beijing had urged Tokyo to respect China's core interests and not to let the meeting to take place in Tokyo. In the meantime, Uyghur leader Rebiya Kadeer has appealed Beijing to listen to ethnic minorities' call for democratization in China.<sup>34</sup>

The leaders of Japan, China and South Korea held their summit in Beijing recently. The joint declaration released on May 14 titled "The joint Declaration on Enhancement of Trilateral Comprehensive Cooperative Partnership" insists on enhancing among them mutual political trust and strengthening of economic and trade cooperation. While emphasizing on the three countries commitment to realize a peaceful, stable and prosperous East Asia, the Joint Declaration also addressed enhanced trilateral cooperation for maritime search and rescue operation to ensure maritime safety. As for trilateral FTA, the three countries agreed to the necessity of immediately starting to prepare, including (completing) domestic procedures and (having) working level consultations" to launch the FTA negotiations this year itself. Interestingly the Declaration did not condemn North Korea's latest launch of the long-range ballistic missile in April this year, as three countries could not come to any agreement on that issue.<sup>35</sup>

## South Korea

### ● South Korean President meets Myanmar's iconic opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi

During his recent visit to Myanmar, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak met Myanmar's iconic opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and expressed his appreciation for her decades-long fight for democracy and human rights in Myanmar. Lee's visit seemed to be aimed at improving South Korea's ties with resource rich Myanmar to widen its access to those resources, market potential and geopolitical position.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> "Noda vows to relocate Futenma base/Okinawa marks 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of reversion" Yomiuri Daily, May 16, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120515006147.htm>

<sup>34</sup> "Uyghur congress starts 4-day meeting in Tokyo despite China's opposition", Yomiuri Daily, May 15, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120514004410.htm>

<sup>35</sup> "North Korea omitted from accord? Japan, China, South Korea issue joint declaration after summit meeting", Yomiuri Daily, May 15, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120514004892.htm>

<sup>36</sup> "Lee supports Myanmar reform", The Korea Herald, May 15, 2012, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20120515001174>

## North Korea

- **Indonesian President urges North Korea to continue dialogue with other countries**

During North Korean leader Kim Yong Nam's recent visit to Indonesia, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono urged Pyongyang to continue its dialogues with other countries to prevent any kind of misunderstanding. Kim, who is a president of the Presidium of North Korea's parliament, visited Indonesia soon after the UN imposed new sanctions on the North for its recent launch of a long-range missile while defying UN Security Council's resolutions against it.<sup>37</sup>

## C. West Asia

### Iran

- **Iran discovers new oilfield in Caspian Sea; Russia sees further sanctions against Iran as "counterproductive"**

Reports noted that Iran has discovered an oilfield in the Caspian Sea, according to reports. The oilfield is said to be at a depth of 2,460 meters. The Oil Minister was quoted as saying that that capacity of the oil is yet to be explored.<sup>38</sup>

In another development, the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister has stressed that the introduction of new UN Security Council sanctions or any other coercive means would be counterproductive. Gennadiy Gatilov said that there is a need for a political settlement of the Iranian nuclear problem and this can be facilitated at the next round of the Iran - 5 + 1 group that is scheduled to take place in Baghdad on May 23, 2012.<sup>39</sup>

### Syria

- **Anti-regime demonstrations continue**

According to reports, despite a clampdown by security forces, demonstrations were held across a large number of Syrian cities and towns over the past week, calling for the overthrow of the regime and denouncing recent violence. Figures showed that demonstrations were held in more

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<sup>37</sup> "Indonesia urges N. Korea to continue talks, dialogue", The Korea Herald, May 15, 2012, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20120515001462>

<sup>38</sup> "Iran's new oilfield in Caspian Sea discovered at a depth of 2,460 meters", Islamic Republic of Iran News Network, May 17, 2012

<sup>39</sup> "Senior Russian diplomat says further sanctions against Iran "counterproductive"", Interfax news agency, May 14, 2012

<sup>40</sup> "Report on Syrian army's actions, "violations" of Annan plan, demonstrations", Al-Sharq al-Awsat website, May 12, 2012

than 600 locations across the country. Several people were reported killed by direct gunfire, artillery shelling, and raids by Syrian Army forces.<sup>40</sup>

## Lebanon

- **Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister: Arms smuggling taking place through Lebanese-Syrian border**

The Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister has said in an interview that Syria has credible and accurate information on arms smuggling taking place through the Lebanese-Syrian border. Faysal Miqdad noted that this is arming terrorist groups operating within Syria, and called on “neighbouring countries, including Arab states, not to overlook terrorism.”<sup>41</sup>

## UAE

- **UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan visits India**

Reports noted that UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan visited India on May 17-18, 2012 and discussed important bilateral issues with the Indian leadership. During his meeting with the External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna, both the leaders decided to set up a joint task force to further explore opportunities in investments. The task force will be headed by Commerce Minister Anand Sharma and Abu Dhabi Investment Authority Managing Director Sheikh Hamad bin Zayed al Nahyan. Krishna said the UAE leadership was keen to address the issue of investments so as to bring them on par with the multi-faceted relationship between the two countries. He also said that he had discussed about the third India-Arab Economic Conclave to be hosted in Abu Dhabi on May 21-22, 2012 and the proposed road show on investments in Abu Dhabi and Dubai so as to exchange information and clarify issues related to the investment climate in India.<sup>42</sup>

Both the leaders also discussed about India’s energy needs and the need to increase import more oil from the UAE. Krishna stated that UAE is a dependable oil supplier for India. The UAE minister assured India that his country would like to see more energy exports to India. He stated that he “would like to see more UAE energy exports to India especially when it comes to crude oil. There are talks between our officials looking at these avenues and even further. We would like to see UAE presence in downstream investments in India, including petrochemicals.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> “Syrian minister says “terrorists being armed” through Lebanese border”, Al-Manar Television website, May 17, 2012

<sup>42</sup> “India looks to UAE to meet its energy needs”, *The Tribune*, May 19, 2012, at <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2012/20120519/nation.htm#1>

<sup>43</sup> “Energy-deficient India turns to UAE for increased oil supply”, *The Business Standard*, May 18, 2012, at <http://www.business-standard.com/generalnews/news/energy-deficient-india-turns-to-uae-for-increased-oil-supply/10590/>

## D. Africa

- **UNDP express concern over mounting hunger in Africa; ECOWAS to send troops to Guinea-Bissau; African Union press for peace talks between Sudan and South Sudan; US announces food initiative for Africa; Plans on track to create an African Free Trade Area by 2014; G-8 pledge to support sustainable agriculture in Africa**

According to Sebastian Levine, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) policy adviser for Africa, Africa needs to boost agricultural productivity and address the accumulating hunger that affects 27 percent of its population if it wants to sustain its economic boom. The officer clarified that the African economies grew at an average of more than 5 percent during the past decade with many countries benefiting from surging commodity prices, as well as growth in services, construction and agriculture. However, the character of the growth has done little to reduce extreme poverty and hunger as more than 40 percent of African children under five are malnourished. Further, Africa continues to be a net importer of food despite an abundance of fertile land and water.<sup>44</sup>

Following a recent military coup in Guinea-Bissau, the Economic Community of West African States announced that it will be sending more than 600 soldiers to the country as part of a regional attempt to restore order. It read that the troops will arrive in Guinea-Bissau “to relieve the Angolan military personnel [and] support the restoration of constitutional rule.”<sup>45</sup>

According to reports, the African Union mediator Thabo Mbeki left for Khartoum after Sudan and South Sudan missed a U.N. Security Council deadline to resume the peace talks intended to resolve their disputes over oil transit fees, border and other issues. The peace effort came at a time when the U.N. and aid agencies warned of a growing humanitarian catastrophe due to the conflict. Separately, Johnnie Carson, U.S. assistant secretary of State on Africa, called on both sides to return to the negotiating table.<sup>46</sup>

In another development, U.S. President Barack Obama announced a plan aimed at lifting 50 million Africans out of poverty in the next 10 years. Speaking at a food security forum in Washington, the president said ending hunger by making African farms more productive is a moral imperative. In this regard, the president emphasized that governments, private industries and organisations will work together to improve Africa’s food security. At the meeting, private companies from around the world have pledged more than \$3 billion toward the effort.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Katy Migiro (2012), “Africa must end hunger to sustain growth - U.N.”, *Reuters*, May 15, 2012, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/15/africa-growth-idUSL5E8GEI1420120515>

<sup>45</sup> “West African troops in Guinea-Bissau to restore order after coup”, *The Los Angeles Times*, May 17, 2012, at [http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world\\_now/2012/05/troops-arrive-in-guinea-bissau-to-restore-order-after-coup.html](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world_now/2012/05/troops-arrive-in-guinea-bissau-to-restore-order-after-coup.html)

<sup>46</sup> “African Union to press Sudan and South Sudan on peace talks”, *The Los Angeles Times*, May 17, 2012, at [http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world\\_now/2012/05/african-union-sudan-south-sudan.html](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world_now/2012/05/african-union-sudan-south-sudan.html)

<sup>47</sup> Kent Klein (2012), “Obama Announces Food Initiative for Africa”, *Voice of America*, May 18, 2012, at [http://www.voanews.com/content/obama\\_hosts\\_leaders\\_for\\_g8\\_nato\\_summit/720889.html](http://www.voanews.com/content/obama_hosts_leaders_for_g8_nato_summit/720889.html)

The East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) aim to create a free market of 525 million people with an output of \$1 trillion and announced that plans to create a 26-nation free trade area by integrating these three existing African trade blocs by July 2014 are on track. The three blocs opined that the only major sticking point is likely to be harmonising rules of origin.<sup>48</sup>

In other developments, reports noted that G-8 leaders pledged to lift millions of Africans out of poverty by promoting investments in sustainable agriculture. The group announced that it is committed to launch a New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition to accelerate the flow of private capital to African agriculture, implement new technologies and other innovations that can increase sustainable agricultural productivity, and reduce the risk borne by vulnerable economies and communities. However, civil society observers appeared skeptical about the endeavor's success.<sup>49</sup>

## II. DEFENCE REVIEW

### National

- **India's Minister of State (MoS) for Defence denies that China poses any threat to India despite border dispute; Indian National Defence University to be set up by 2017**

India's Minister of State (MoS) for Defence M M Pallam Raju said on May 19, 2012 that China posed no threat to India despite border dispute, but added that the country was equipping itself well to deter any adversary. "I think it is not a threat. We have a very healthy economic partnership with China, which is our neighbour. Of course, we do have differences on the perception of the border, which again at a very high level meeting of National Security Advisors we are thrashing these things out," he said. The minister was responding to a question from reporters on whether China was a constant threat to India and steps taken to counter it. He saw no reason for a conflict between the two neighbours. "We are having a strong deterrence posture. And we are strengthening it further. So, I am sure there will not be any reason for any conflict to happen...We are trying to be mutually beneficial to each other,". Meanwhile he pointed out "...As a nation with such a large population and with economic interest worldwide and as a growing economy, I think we have to have those strong deterrence capabilities to make sure that none of our adversaries take us for granted."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Duncan Miriri (2012), "Africa plan for \$1 trillion trade bloc on track", *Reuters*, May 18, 2012, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/18/africa-trade-idUSL5E8GIGXN20120518>

<sup>49</sup> "Africa: G-8 to Support Farming in the Continent", *All Africa*, May 21, 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201205210445.html>

<sup>50</sup> "China poses no threat to India: M M Pallam Raju," PTI, May 19, 2012, at [http://articles.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/2012-05-19/news/31778166\\_1\\_sri-lankan-navy-tamil-nadu-fishermen-m-m-pallam-raj](http://articles.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/2012-05-19/news/31778166_1_sri-lankan-navy-tamil-nadu-fishermen-m-m-pallam-raj)

In another development, reports noted that India's first and only Defence University will to come up by 2017 and the land acquisition process at Binola in Gurgaon district of Haryana has begun. Defence Minister AK Antony, in a written reply to questions from Lok Sabha members, said the Indian National Defence University (INDU) was accorded "in principle" approval by the Union Cabinet on May 13, 2010, and it will be set up at Binola. For this, the Haryana government has already issued notification to acquire land. "It is projected that the establishment of INDU and its constituents will be spread over seven years," he said. "An estimated expenditure of Rs 295 crore (at the rate of 2010) for setting up the university and Rs 162 crore (at current rate) for the acquisition of land is likely to be incurred," he added.<sup>51</sup>

## International

- **NATO summit in Chicago begins with messages of confidence and solidarity about the future of Afghanistan; U.S and Southeast Asian nations discuss security cooperation**

In a significant development, reports noted that the opening day of the NATO summit in Chicago started with messages of confidence and solidarity about the future of Afghanistan. After meeting with Afghan President Hamid Karzai for more than an hour on May 20, 2012, U.S. President Barack Obama expressed confidence saying that said "we are on the right track, and what this NATO summit reflects is that the world is behind the strategy that we've laid out. During their joint press conference, Karzai said that with the signing of the strategic partnership agreement at the beginning of the month, the two countries turned a new page in their relationship. Karzai stated, "And the new page is a page of two sovereign countries working together for the mutual interests – peace and security and in all other areas of concentration,". The strategic partnership agreement, which Obama signed with Karzai May 1, 2012, lays out the U.S. commitment to the country after American combat troops leave. One of the goals of the NATO summit is to firm up the contributions that other NATO members will make to the Afghan mission beyond 2014. Meanwhile, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated in his official opening remarks, "We will make clear our commitment to a long-term partnership with the Afghan people beyond 2014, so that Afghanistan never again harbors terrorists that can attack us at home and so that Afghans can look forward to a better future in a stable region,".<sup>52</sup>

In another development, according to reports, the U.S. and Southeast Asian nations embarked on three days of talks on May 20, 2012 which would include security cooperation, shortly after a Pentagon report raised concerns about China's military build-up. The Philippines, hosts of the discussions and an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member, is engaged in a month-long maritime stand-off with China over a disputed shoal in the South China Sea. "Eminent persons" and senior officials from the United States and ASEAN would meet from May 20-22 in Manila, U.S. embassy and Philippine foreign department statements said.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> "India's Defence Varsity to be set by 2017," May 21, 2012, at <http://www.igovernment.in/site/indias-defence-varsity-be-set-2017>

<sup>52</sup> "Obama: Summit Reflects NATO Commitment to Afghanistan," May 20, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120520/DEFREG02/305200010/Obama-Summit-Reflects-NATO-Commitment-Afghanistan?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

<sup>53</sup> "ASEAN, U.S. Talk Security Amid China Stand-Off," May 20, 2012, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120520/DEFREG03/305200004/ASEAN-U-S-Talk-Security-Amid-China-Stand-Off?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

### III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

#### Jammu & Kashmir

- **Restricted release of Interlocutors Report on May 16; Open fire in Kashmir University; Union Home Secretary to visit J&K on May 16 and 17; Grenade blast at Sangam leaves three injured; Union Home Secretary reviews security situation; Hizbul Mujahideen militant arrested in Doda; Fourteen persons injured in grenade attacks**

Reports noted that the interlocutors' report on Jammu and Kashmir which has been hanging fire for over six months after it was submitted to Home Minister P Chidambaram will finally be made public albeit symbolically. According to Home Ministry sources, it has been decided to place five copies of the report in Parliament library on the May 16, 2012. The reports of government finally preparing to make the report public had gained currency after the three interlocutors met the Home Minister recently. After the meeting, the Ministry officials were veering around the idea to upload it on the MHA's official website since it has already been published in detail in some of the newspapers.<sup>54</sup>

According to reports, three civilians were injured in a grenade explosion at Sangam on Srinagar-Jammu highway in this south Kashmir district. Police said that unidentified persons lobbed a grenade towards soldiers manning the highway. However the device missed the target and exploded with a big bang injuring three pedestrians.<sup>55</sup>

Reports noted that the issue of revocation of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from some parts of Jammu and Kashmir remained the focus of meetings between visiting Union Home Secretary and State Government. The Home Secretary was on a two day visit (May 16-17, 2012) to assess the ground situation in the state and to take a review of the hiccups in cross-LoC trade. The detailed report about eviction of forces from industrial estates and other buildings was submitted to Home Secretary by the state government. Meanwhile, Home Secretary also discussed the issue of AFSPA with Governor N N Vohra along with other law and order and security issues.<sup>56</sup>

According to reports, Police has claimed to have apprehended a Hizbul Mujahideen militant from Nalwa area of district Doda. Police also claimed that the person was missing since 2002 and had crossed over to Pakistan Administered Kashmir for arms training. The recoveries from him included a Chinese pistol with two Magazines and 30 Rounds, one wireless set, one satellite phone and two hand grenades.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> "Restricted release on May 16", *Greater Kashmir*, May 14, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/May/15/-restricted-release-on-may-16-84.asp>

<sup>55</sup> "3 injured in Sangam grenade blast", *Greater Kashmir*, May 14, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/May/15/3-injured-in-sangam-grenade-blast-73.asp>

<sup>56</sup> "Union Home Secretary reviews security situation", *Greater Kashmir*, May 16, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/May/17/union-home-secretary-reviews-security-situation-65.asp>

<sup>57</sup> "HM militant held in Doda", *Greater Kashmir*, May 16, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/May/17/hm-militant-held-in-doda-88.asp>

In other developments, according to reports, a day after Kashmir's police chief SM Sahai declared that militants won't be allowed to disturb peace in Srinagar, 14 people including 10 civilians were injured, four of them critically in two grenade attacks that rocked Sopore and Batamaloo areas of the Valley. All the 14 fourteen persons were injured in Sopore grenade attack and police sources noted that Lashker-e-Toiba (LeT) was behind it.<sup>58</sup>

## North East India

- **Shutdown brings normal life to a standstill in Meghalaya; The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) asks the State Governments of the North East region to take all necessary steps to prevent the Maoist rebel groups; NSCN (IM) not to attend reconciliation meet; Assam-Meghalaya border villages to stop any help to militant outfits; Kuki State Demand Committee (KSDC) suspends economic blockade in Manipur; Cops and ultra held with arms; Students storm political offices in Manipur**

According to reports, normal life came to a standstill in the eastern part of Meghalaya on May 14, 2012 during a 12-hour shutdown called by three organisations over the alleged enrolment of bogus voters in the state's electoral rolls. Almost all government establishments, including financial and educational institutions, remained closed in all the four district headquarters of East, West Khasi, Jaintia Hills and Ri-Bhoi. National Highways No. 40 and 44, the lifelines for landlocked Mizoram, Tripura and parts of Manipur and southern Assam, were also affected by the shutdown.<sup>59</sup>

Meanwhile, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has asked the State Governments of the North East region to take all necessary steps to prevent the Maoist rebel groups from establishing their roots in the region. However, the Centre would send additional a force to deal with Maoists only if it is felt necessary. The Government of Arunachal Pradesh informed the MHA that no local youth of the state joined the Maoists but sometimes, Maoist elements from Assam sneak into the state. The MHA has asked the Government of Arunachal Pradesh to deal with any Maoist element who manages to sneak into the state strongly. MHA is of the view that at present, the strength of the armed groups of the Maoists in the North East is not much and the State Police forces are fully capable of dealing with the situation. Recently, the Assam Police managed to bust a hideout of the Maoist rebels near Sadiya and killed four rebels. The Centre would consider sending additional forces to deal with Maoists only if is required.<sup>60</sup>

According to reports, the NSCN-IM has said that it has decided not to attend the reconciliation meeting to be held at the highest level from May 21, 2012 at Chiang Mai, Thailand, till a clarification is made on the recent political development involving the NSCN (Khole-Kitovi). A press note issued by Chief Principal Secretary, Samson Jajo of the NSCN-IM said the decision was taken at a

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<sup>58</sup> "14 persons injured in two grenade attacks", *Greater Kashmir*, May 19, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/May/20/14-persons-injured-in-twogrenade-attacks-49.asp>

<sup>59</sup> "Shutdown brings normal life to standstill in Meghalaya", *The Assam Tribune*, May 15, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may1512/at044>

<sup>60</sup> "MHA asks NE States to check Maoists", *The Assam Tribune*, May 15, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may1612/at06>

joint council meeting of the steering Committee and Council of Kiloners on May 14, 2012. The joint council meeting felt that the recent political development whereby the Khole-Kitovi group had intimated to the Government of India through the MHA Joint Secretary Shambhu Singh to seek settlement within the boundary of the so-called Nagaland state is a calculated-deliberate step to sabotage the hard earned 14 years negotiations being held at the highest level of the GoI and the NSCN.<sup>61</sup>

However, according to reports, eighty-four villages located on a remote stretch of the Assam-Meghalaya border have decided to desist any help to militants who frequent the area. The villages, mostly inhabited by the Khasi, Garo, Rabha and Jaintia communities, are frequented by cadres of militant outfits like the anti-talks faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and the Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) for food and shelter while on their way to Meghalaya from Assam and from Meghalaya to Assam. Community elders of the villages met at a meeting in Kinan village on 16 May, 2012 and decided to stop all help to the cadres of the militant outfits.<sup>62</sup>

In another development, reports noted that the Kuki State Demand Committee (KSDC) which had imposed a 72 hour statewide bandh till 6 pm of May 15, 2012 has decided to temporarily suspend its decision to continue with an economic blockade on the two National Highways in Manipur. The blockade was slated to begin from 6 pm of May 15 till May 19, 2012. The decision to temporarily suspend the economic blockade has been taken considering the problems which the public would face if the blockade was enforced, according to KSDC sources.<sup>63</sup>

Nalbari police reportedly, recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunition from two different places of Nalbari district. The police in this connection arrested three police personnel and a militant of the pro-talk faction of the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB).<sup>64</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, representatives of Manipur's six powerful student bodies on May 19, 2012 stormed the political party offices in Imphal over their alleged inaction into the mysterious deaths of Manipuri students in Bangalore and Chennai. The police managed to control the situation by detaining 17 student leaders including presidents of All Manipur Students' Union Th Suresh and Kangleipak Students Association Y Pradip. The students were rounded up on their way to lock up the office of CPI Manipur unit at Irawat Bhavan after they stormed the offices of BJP at Keishampat, Congress at BT Road and MPP at Polo ground.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> "NSCN-IM not to attend Chiang Mai meet", *The Assam Tribune*, May 15, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may1612/oth06>

<sup>62</sup> "Assam-Meghalaya border villages too shun militants", *The Assam Tribune*, May 17, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may1712/at042>

<sup>63</sup> "KSDC suspends economic blockade in Manipur", *The Assam Tribune*, May 16, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may1712/oth07>

<sup>64</sup> "3 cops, ultra held, ammo recovered", *The Assam Tribune*, May 17, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may1812/oth06>

<sup>65</sup> "Students storm political parties' offices in Manipur", *The Assam Tribune*, May 19, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may2012/oth07>

## IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **UN extends mandate of its mission in Abyei; UNSC imposes ban on military officers in Guinea-Bissau; UNSC condemns attacks against peacekeepers in DRC; Council members visit West African countries**

According to reports, the mandate of the UN peacekeeping force for Abyei was extended by six months and the UN Security Council also demanded that the two countries finalize the establishment of an administration for the area in accordance with an agreement signed last year. The Council welcomed the withdrawal of South Sudanese military and police personnel from Abyei and demanded Sudan to withdraw its forces immediately.<sup>66</sup>

Meanwhile, the UNSC imposed travel ban on five military officers who staged a coup against the civilian government in Guinea-Bissau last month. The Council also demanded the military leadership to take immediate steps to restore and respect constitutional order. It is likely that the Council will review the measures contained in the resolution and strengthen it through additional measures such as an arms embargo and financial measures.<sup>67</sup>

In other developments, the Council strongly condemned attacks on the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo in which 11 Pakistani peacekeepers were seriously wounded.<sup>68</sup>

According to reports, last week, the 15 member states of the UN Security Council left for an official mission to West African countries, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire to assess the developments in the countries.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> "Urging progress on Abyei, Security Council extends mandate of UN peacekeeper force" *UN News Centre*, May 17, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42030&Cr=abyei&Cr1=>

<sup>67</sup> "Security Council imposes travel ban on Guinea-Bissau coup leaders", *UN News Centre*, May 18, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42044&Cr=bissau&Cr1=>

<sup>68</sup> "Security Council strongly condemns attack on UN peacekeepers in DR Congo", *UN News Centre*, May 14, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41995&Cr=democratic&Cr1=congo>

<sup>69</sup> "Security Council to visit Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone", *UN News Centre*, May 17, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42028&Cr=west+africa&Cr1=>