

# THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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**Editor:** Sanjeev Kumar Shrivastav

## Contributors

Anwesa Roy Chaudhury	Afghanistan, Pakistan
Gulbin Sultana	Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives
Pranamita Baruah	Japan, South Korea
Rajorshi Roy	Central Asia & Russia
Princy Marine George	Iran, Israel, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon
Prashnat Pradhan	Yemen
Amit Kumar	Defence Review
Shristi Pukhrem	Internal Security Review
Keerthi Kumar	UN Review

**Review Adviser:** S. Kalyanaraman

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**Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses**

1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg, New Delhi-110010

Telephone: 91-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191 Website: [www.idsa.in](http://www.idsa.in); Email: [twir@idsa.in](mailto:twir@idsa.in)

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## I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

### A. South Asia

#### Afghanistan

- **At least 20 people killed and 50 wounded in a suicide attack outside Kandahar airport; French President Hollande: French troops pullout from Afghanistan to begin from next month and to be completed at the end of 2012**

According to reports, in one of the bloodiest attacks in recent weeks in Afghanistan, a pair of suicide bombers struck outside the airport in Afghanistan's southern city of Kandahar on June 5, 2012, killing 20 civilians and wounding 50. General Abdul Hameed, Afghan army commander for the southern region told that four provincial governors from the south were at a meeting at the sprawling NATO base at the airport when the attack took place. A bomber on a motorcycle blew himself up in a parking lot near the base packed with truck drivers and other civilians waiting to get into the facility. A few minutes later, as people gathered at the site of the blast, another bomber on foot walked into the crowd and detonated his explosives.<sup>1</sup>

In another development, according to reports, French President Francois Hollande said on June 10, 2012 that France will begin its Afghanistan pullout next month and complete it by year-end, after four French troops were killed in a Taliban attack. Hollande announced that the withdrawal of French troops from Afghanistan, one of his presidential campaign pledges, "will begin in the month of July, will be carried out and be completed at the end of 2012." He also said that France would pay a "national homage" to the men killed in a suicide bombing and that five wounded soldiers would be repatriated rapidly. Meanwhile, French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian is due to reach Afghanistan on June 10, 2012 after he was told by the French president to head there, hours after the attack.<sup>2</sup>

#### Pakistan

- **Pakistan tests nuclear capable missile; Pakistan and China sign MoU's at SCO Summit**

According to reports, Pakistan on June 5, 2012, tested a fifth nuclear-capable missile since April 25, 2012. The Hatf VII cruise missile has a range of 700 kilometres, can carry conventional warheads and has stealth capabilities, the military said. It described the "low flying, terrain hugging missile with high maneuverability" as having "pinpoint accuracy" and "radar avoidance features".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Twin suicide bombings in Kandahar kill 20 civilians", *Dawn*, June 6, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/06/06/blast-in-kandahar-kills-20-afghan-civilians/>

<sup>2</sup> "France to begin Afghan pullout next month", *Dawn*, June 10, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/06/10/france-to-begin-afghan-pullout-next-month-2/>

<sup>3</sup> "Pakistan successfully test fires Hatf VII cruise missile", *Dawn*, June 5, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/06/05/pakistan-successfully-test-fires-hatf-vii-cruise-missile/>

In another development, according to reports, Pakistan and China signed three memoranda of understanding and an agreement on June 6, 2012 as President Asif Ali Zardari attended the 12th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Beijing. The MoUs encompass the supply of water from Tarbela to Islamabad, the establishment of a special economic zone in Zulfikarabad and the building of 6,000 apartments in I-15 sector on private public partnership basis, as well as an agreement for the de-silting of canals and barrages in Sindh.<sup>4</sup>

## Bangladesh

- **Bangladesh-Russia sign deals; PM sought more investment from Singapore and assistance from Germany; A ten-member Bangladesh media team visits India; Bangladesh's per capita income went up; Inward remittances rebounded in May; GDP growth for the next fiscal year has been set at 7.2 percent**

Reports noted that Bangladesh and Russia have signed two key deals for further collaboration between the two countries to develop the nuclear power sector in Bangladesh on June 5, 2012. State Minister for Science and Technology Yeafesh Osman and Director General of Russian State Energy Corporation (Rosatom) Sergey Kirienko signed the two MoUs in Moscow.<sup>5</sup>

In another development, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sought more investment from Singapore in Bangladesh's textile, power generation, tourism, infrastructure, oil and gas exploration, high-tech industries, hotels and holiday resorts. The prime minister made the request when Singaporean High Commissioner to Bangladesh Chan Heng Wing met her at her office on June 3, 2012.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sought more German assistance in Bangladesh's various sectors, including power, IT and health. Hasina made the plea when the outgoing German Ambassador to Bangladesh Holger Michael met her at her office on June 6, 2012.<sup>7</sup>

According to reports, a 10-member Bangladesh media team reached New Delhi on June 3, 2012 for a six-day trip to dispel misgivings about the adverse effects the controversial Tipaimukh Multipurpose Project would have on Bangladesh. The media team first met with India's Water Resources Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal on June 4, 2012 and was briefed by Water Resources Secretary Dhruv Vijay Singh about the Tipaimukh project. The group then flew to Guwahati in Assam and on June 6, 2012, it left for Silchar for two days to visit the Tipaimukh site.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "Boosting ties: Pakistan, China sign agreement, three MoU's", *The Express Tribune*, June 7, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/390037/boosting-ties-pakistan-china-sign-agreement-three-mous/>

<sup>5</sup> "Dhaka, Moscow ink Nuke power deals", *The Daily Star*, June 5, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=237069>.

<sup>6</sup> "Hasina seeks more investment from Singapore", *The Daily Star*, June 4, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=236925>.

<sup>7</sup> "Hasina seeks more German assistance", *The Daily Star*, June 7, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=237318>.

<sup>8</sup> "Media team in Delhi to visit Tipai site", *The Daily Star*, June 4, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=236950>.

Reports noted that Bangladesh's per capita income went up to \$848 in the current fiscal year from \$816 last year, but is still way short of the \$1,006 needed to pull the country up to the middle-income bracket. The nation aims to reach the middle income country category by 2021, according to government's perspective plan.<sup>9</sup>

According to Bangladesh Bank, Inward remittances rebounded in May, rising by 6.21 percent to \$1.15 billion compared to a month ago, despite an economic crisis in Europe. Inward remittances fell 2.43 percent to \$1.08 billion in April, 2012. The overall growth in the first 11 months of the current fiscal year reached near 11 percent. During the 11-month period, Bangladeshi migrant workers sent home \$1 billion on average a month, except September and November, according to data from the central bank. However, remittances increased by 10.89 percent to \$11.77 billion in the first 11 months.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, the gross domestic product (GDP) growth for the next fiscal year has been set at 7.2 percent expecting that trade and agriculture will continue to thrive and the global economy will turn around by 2013. The country's GDP grew by 6.7 percent in 2010-11 and the provisional estimate was set at 6.3 percent for the outgoing fiscal year. Bangladesh now targets to take the growth to 8 percent by 2014-15.<sup>11</sup>

## Sri Lanka

- **President Rajapaksa visits London and Rome; UNP delegation visits China; Sri Lankan Army Commander visits China; Sri Lanka- China discuss business; Chinese Company is offered to construct the largest project under the Mahaweli River development Program; Government of Pakistan offers educational scholarship to Sri Lankan students**

According to reports, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa visited London to attend the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee celebrations.<sup>12</sup> During his stay in London, President Rajapaksa held talks with British Prime Minister David Cameron and briefed him on the development in the country.<sup>13</sup> Following his visit to London, President visited Rome and met Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Byron, Rejaul Karim, "Bangladesh's per capita income rises to \$848", *The Daily Star*, June 4, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=236919>.

<sup>10</sup> "Remittances rebound, rise 6.21pc in May", *The Daily Star*, June 5, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=237037>.

<sup>11</sup> "GDP growth target set at 7.2pc", *The Daily Star*, June 8, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=237405>.

<sup>12</sup> "MR in UK", *The Daily Mirror*, June 4, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/19145-mr-in-uk.html>.

<sup>13</sup> "MR meets British PM", *The Daily Mirror*, June 7, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/19235-mr-meets-british-pm.html>.

<sup>14</sup> "Sri Lankan President returns following trip to London and Rome", *Colombo Page*, June 9, 2012 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_12/Jun09\\_1339221218CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12/Jun09_1339221218CH.php).

Reports noted that a three-member UNP delegation, headed by Ranil Wickremasinghe, left for China on June 10, 2012 for seven days visit at the invitation extended by the Chinese Communist party.<sup>15</sup>

According to reports, China has assured Sri Lanka that it is prepared to provide military assistance in any emergency situation, catastrophe or otherwise. China has given this assurance to the Army Commander of Sri Lankan major general Jagath Jayasuriya when he met with General Liang Guanglie, China's Minister of National Defense at the People's Liberation Army (PLA) General Headquarters in Beijing on June 7, 2012. The Sri Lankan commander, who is visiting China at an invitation of PLA, and the Chinese Minister have pledged to boost military cooperation between their respective countries.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka and China have discussed ways to further strengthen the business links between the two countries at a recently held interactive meeting organized by the Sri Lanka - China Business Council of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce. The interactive session has focused on export opportunities and challenges in the Chinese market for Sri Lankan exporters. During the session, the Chinese official has highlighted promoting business and economic activities between the two countries, the role of the private sector in promoting exports and imports and opportunities for the Sri Lankan exporters in China.<sup>17</sup>

In other developments, according to Irrigation and Water Resources Management Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva, Sri Lankan government has handed over the contract to Sinohydro Corporation of China for the construction of the Moragahakanda Project, the largest project under the Mahaweli River development Program. The total cost of the venture is estimated to be US\$382 million. The construction work of the Moragahakanda reservoir is expected to be completed by the year 2014 with the help of local engineers. When completed the project will provide irrigation facilities to 81,422 hectares in the dry zone of Sri Lanka, provide potable and industrial water supply to Anuradhapura and Trincomalee towns and generate electricity by hydropower.<sup>18</sup>

While, the Government of Pakistan through its High Commission in Sri Lanka has awarded SL Rs 4 Million worth of educational scholarships to 165 bright Sri Lankan students of O/L and A/L under Jinnah Scholarship Programme 2012.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "Sri Lankan Opposition Leader leaves for China", *Colombo Page*, June 10, 2012 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_12/Jun10\\_1339304533CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12/Jun10_1339304533CH.php).

<sup>16</sup> "China assures military assistance to Sri Lanka in any situation", *Colombo Page*, June 8, 2012 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_12/Jun08\\_1339094756CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12/Jun08_1339094756CH.php)

<sup>17</sup> "Sri Lanka, China to further strengthen business links", *Colombo Page*, June 8, 2012 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_12/Jun08\\_1339172551CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12/Jun08_1339172551CH.php)

<sup>18</sup> "Sri Lanka signs US\$382 million deal with China to build dam", *Colombo Page*, June 8, 2012 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_12/Jun08\\_1339170347CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12/Jun08_1339170347CH.php)

<sup>19</sup> "Pakistan awards prestigious Jinnah Scholarship 2012 to 165 brilliant Sri Lankan Students", *Colombo Page*, June 9, 2012 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_12/Jun09\\_1339183421CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12/Jun09_1339183421CH.php).

## Maldives

- **President Waheed returns from his UK visit; President meets his Sri Lankan counterpart; Maldives pledges to attract 10,000 Malaysian visitors annually**

According to reports, President Dr Mohamed Waheed and First Lady Madam Ilham Hussain arrived back in Male on June 10, 2012 on conclusion of their official visit to the UK to attend the Diamond Jubilee functions of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth.<sup>20</sup>

In another development, President Dr Mohamed Waheed met with President Mahinda Rajapaksa of Sri Lanka on June 6, 2012. Both presidents engaged in a cordial and productive exchange on a range of issues of mutual interest.<sup>21</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, the Maldives has pledged to attract 10,000 Malaysian visitors annually by 2014 through focusing on the potential of initiatives like sustainable tourism.<sup>22</sup>

## B. East Asia

### South Korea

- **The United States allows South Korea to extend its missile range up to 550 km; South Korea, Japan and the US reiterates the necessity to strengthen their defence cooperation**

During a recent bilateral talk between the US and South Korea, the US reportedly has allowed the South to extend its missile range up to 550 kilometers. South Korean missile currently has a maximum range of 300 kilometer. Extension of the missile range could now help South Korea to strike any target in North Korea with its missile launchers. According to the reports, South Korea initially demanded its missile range to be extended to 1000 kilometer. But the US response to that demand was lukewarm as it argued that such an extension might cause negative reaction from both China and Russia. So, both Seoul and Washington eventually agreed to extend it to 550 kilometers.<sup>23</sup>

In another development, during their recent meeting on the sidelines of the annual Asian Security Summit held in Singapore recently, South Korean Defence Minister Kim Kwan Jin, Japanese Senior Vice Defence Minister Shu Watanabe, and US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta reiterated the importance of their defence cooperation against possible provocations from North Korea in the

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<sup>20</sup> "President Waheed arrives in Male' ", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, June 10, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7526>.

<sup>21</sup> "President Waheed Meets Sri Lankan President", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, June 7, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=7519>.

<sup>22</sup> "Deputy Tourism Minister talks Malaysian tourism opportunities", *Minivan News*, June 4, 2012 at <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief/page/2>.

<sup>23</sup> "US allows S. Korea to extend missile range to 550 km: report", *Mainichi Daily*, June 4, 2012, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120604p2g00m0in087000c.html>

future. They agreed to hold such talks regularly among the defence chiefs of the three countries on the sidelines of the Asian Security Summit. They also agreed that North Korea's provocative actions would only isolate the country further posing serious threat international peace and security.<sup>24</sup>

## North Korea

- **Cambodian Foreign Minister arrives at Pyongyang for an official visit; North Korea threatens a 'merciless sacred war' against South Korean media groups; Two North Koreans arrested while allegedly trying to steal Ukraine rocket technology**

According to reports, Cambodian Foreign Minister Hor Namhong recently arrived at Pyongyang for an official visit. During this visit, Namhong was to urge North Korea to resume the disarmament talks which has been stalled since late 2008. Next month, some North Korean officials are to visit Cambodia for a regional conference.<sup>25</sup>

In another development, according to reports, North Korean military recently threatened a 'merciless sacred war' against certain media outlets of South Korea due to the latter's critical coverage of a mass children's festival that was recently held in Pyongyang. This is the latest in a series of threats aimed at South Korean conservative government and its media since the demise of North Korean leader Kim Jong il in December last year. Pyongyang has also demanded an apology from Seoul for its 'vicious smear campaign' against the festivals in the North.<sup>26</sup> However, while reacting to the North's threat, South Korean Unification Ministry accused Pyongyang of 'crossing the limit' with series of threats recently. Seoul has also urged Pyongyang to start repaying the South for past food aid.<sup>27</sup>

In a recent development, two North Koreans were apprehended and sentenced to eight-year imprisonment for their alleged attempt to steal rocket technology from the Yuzhnoye Design Bureau in Ukraine. The Bureau is reportedly in charge of rocket and satellite development. It was primarily responsible for manufacturing R-36M multi-warhead ICBM which had the 11,000 kilometer range during the Cold War era. The two North Koreans were reportedly looking for liquid fuel engine systems that could increase the range of a rocket. According to experts, if Pyongyang had succeeded in acquiring the technology, it could have helped them in building rocket that could reach the continental US.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> "Japan, ROK, US vow to press N. Korea", Yomiuri Daily, June 4, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120603002623.htm>

<sup>25</sup> "Cambodian FM arrives for North Korea trip", Mainichi Daily, June 5, 2012, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120605p2g00m0in005000c.html>

<sup>26</sup> "North Korea threatens specific attacks on South Korean media", Mainichi Daily, June 4, 2012, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120604p2g00m0in093000c.html>

<sup>27</sup> "Seoul accuses N. Korea of 'crossing the line'", Korea Herald, June 8, 2012, at <http://biz.heraldm.com/pop/NewsPrint.jsp?newsMLId=20120608000803>

<sup>28</sup> "North Koreans convicted of trying to steal Ukraine rocket technology: Yonhap", Mainichi Daily, June 6, 2012, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120609p2g00m0in028000c.html>

## C. Central Asia & Russia

### Central Asia

- **China signs a new gas deal with Turkmenistan; SCO anti-terror drills begin in Tajikistan; NATO concludes a reverse transport deal with Central Asian states; China pledges a US\$10 billion aid to Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states; SCO summit lays emphasis on post-2014 Afghanistan scenario; Russia is open to the idea of Uzbekistan joining the Customs Union; Bangladesh expresses its interest to join the TAPI pipeline project; Tajikistan requests Iran for crude oil; SCO leaders reject the use of force in Iran and Syria**

According to reports, China and Turkmenistan have agreed to increase Turkmen natural gas exports to China. China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC), builder and operator of the lengthy east-west gas pipeline, said June 7, 2012 that it signed the deal with Turkmenistan's state-run energy major Turkmengaz. The CNPC is slated to buy 65 billion cubic meters (bcm) of Turkmen gas per year. Earlier in the week, CNPC had said that the two companies had pumped a total of 30 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas from Turkmenistan since the transnational pipeline was inaugurated in 2009. Chinese imports surged three-fold in 2011 over the previous year.<sup>29</sup>

In another development, according to reports, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has launched anti-terror military exercises in Tajikistan. Much of the war games, dubbed 'Peace Mission-2012', will play out in the mountainous terrain of the tiny impoverished nation through June 14, 2012. Around 2,500 soldiers of five of the SCO's six member states will participate in the drills. The exercises will utilize heavy armor and artillery as well as aircraft.<sup>30</sup>

Reports noted that NATO has signed transit agreements with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan to facilitate the removal of troops and military materiel out of Afghanistan. Unofficial sources have indicated that the deal is only for the transit of non lethal goods.<sup>31</sup>

China has pledged to provide up to \$10 billion in credit to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member countries. China's President Hu Jintao made that offer during a two-day SCO summit in Beijing.<sup>32</sup>

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states focused on security issues in Afghanistan and the region at the start of its two-day annual meeting in Beijing. During the summit Afghanistan joined the organization as an Observer state.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> "China signs new gas deal with Turkmenistan", Central Asia Newswire, June 8, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12179>

<sup>30</sup> "SCO anti-terror drills begin in Tajikistan", Central Asia Newswire, June 8, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12178>

<sup>31</sup> "NATO reaches reverse transport deals with Central Asian states", Central Asia Newswire, June 4, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12135>

<sup>32</sup> "China pledges \$10B to Shanghai member countries", Central Asia Newswire, June 7, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12167>

<sup>33</sup> "SCO summit focuses on post-2014 Afghanistan", Central Asia Newswire, June 6, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12162>

Russian President Putin has said that in the future it is possible for Uzbekistan to join the customs union.<sup>34</sup>

Bangladesh has voiced its interest in joining the trans-regional TAPI natural gas pipeline project. The pipeline would transport natural gas 1,056 miles from the Dauletabad field in Turkmenistan to India, via Afghanistan and Pakistan. Bangladeshi government sources said that it would have to be lengthened by another 440 miles to link up with the country's national gas network.<sup>35</sup>

Tajikistan has requested Iran to supply crude oil in order to meet its domestic requirements. It plans to convert the Iranian crude (which will be transported by rail via Afghanistan) into refined oil products at its own refineries.<sup>36</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, Leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) while meeting in Beijing have opposed any international use of force in Iran, saying such a move could threaten global security. All members have call for a dialogue to address these issues and have emphasized the potential role of the UN Security Council in restoring order in Syria.<sup>37</sup>

## Russia

- **Russia-China sign several documents following Putin-Hu Jintao talks in Beijing; South Stream construction to begin by the end of 2012; Gazprom ready to pay in advance for gas transit through Ukraine; Russia has registered three new political parties; Russia and Uzbekistan sign a declaration of strategic partnership; Prime Ministers of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan discuss ties after Russia joins the WTO; Russia urges the international community to organize an international meeting on Syria; Russia's Central Bank lowers both the US dollar and Euro's official exchange rates against the Russian rouble; The 5th Russia-Japan investment forum will open at Kazan; Duma to ratify protocol on Russia's entry to WTO on July 4; Hamid Karzai expects Russia to actively participate in Afghan affairs; Russian and Israeli diplomats discuss the Middle East settlement; Russia and US to hold discussions on Syria in Moscow; Putin signs law tightening punishment for rally violations**

According to reports, Russia and China have signed a joint statement on further development of relations of overwhelming equal trustful partnership and strategic cooperation. The document was signed following negotiations between President Vladimir Putin and China's Chairman Hu Jintao. The sides initial the Protocol to the International agreement on cooperation in construction in China of a nuclear power plant and on Russia's state loan to China. The two leaders witnessed signing of the Memorandum on mutual understanding between Russia's Ministry of Industry

<sup>34</sup> "Putin open to Uzbekistan joining customs union", Central Asia Newswire, June 5, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/uzbekistan/viewstory.aspx?id=12148>

<sup>35</sup> "Bangladesh wants in on TAPI pipeline", Central Asia Newswire, June 4, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/turkmenistan/viewstory.aspx?id=12134>

<sup>36</sup> "Tajikistan asks Iran for crude oil", Central Asia Newswire, June 5, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/tajikistan/viewstory.aspx?id=12150>

<sup>37</sup> "SCO Leaders Reject Force In Iran, Syria", Radio Free Europe, June 7, 2012, <http://www.rferl.org/content/sco-summit-rejects-force-iran-syria/24606443.html>

and Trade and China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technologies on improving cooperation in industry, between the Federal agency on tourism and the China National Tourism Administration of tourism on further expanding of cooperation in tourism. Itar-Tass and Xinhua signed an agreement on information cooperation amongst other documents that were isgned.<sup>38</sup>

In another development, Russian President Putin has said that the construction for the south stream gas pipeline project will start by the end of 2012. This comes in the background of the Turkish government having given the permission to let pass the pipeline through its exclusive economic zone.<sup>39</sup>

Reports noted that Gas major Gazprom is ready to make an advanced payment for the transit of Russian gas through the Ukrainian territory to form that country's financial reserve for pumping gas to its underground storage facilities. This will allow using around 2 billion dollars that Gazprom should pay Ukraine for the gas transit until the end of 2012.<sup>40</sup>

The Russian Justice Ministry has announced the registration of three more political parties under a new legislation ushered in earlier this year by then-President Dmitry Medvedev following a wave of protests over alleged vote fraud. The new parties - Young Russia, Cities of Russia and New Russia - increase the number of registered parties to 12. The new law also radically reduces the number of members required for registration to 500 people from 40,000 previously.<sup>41</sup>

Uzbekistani President Islam Karimov and Russian President Vladimir Putin have signed the Declaration of Enhanced Strategic Partnership between the two countries and the Memorandum of Understanding at their talks in Tashkent held on June 4, 2012. Under the memorandum, Uzbekistan will have to complete the talks by the end of the year and join the free trade zone between former Soviet republics.<sup>42</sup>

In another development, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has urged the international community to organize a special international meeting on the situation in Syria in order to talk to the conflicting parties into cessation of violence and initiating dialogue.<sup>43</sup>

Meanwhile, reports noted that the Central Bank of the Russian Federation has decreased both the euro's official exchange rate and the U.S. dollar's official exchange rate against the Russian rouble starting from June 7, 2012. The official exchange rate of the euro against the Russian rouble was

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<sup>38</sup> "RF, China sign several documents following Putin - Hu Jintao talks", ITAR-TASS, June 5, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/439219.html>

<sup>39</sup> "South Stream construction to begin at year end", ITAR-TASS, June 4, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/437596.html>

<sup>40</sup> "Gazprom ready to pay in advance for gas transit through Ukraine", ITAR-TASS, June 4, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/437952.html>

<sup>41</sup> "Russia Registers Three New Political Parties", RIA Novosti, June 4, 2012, <http://www.en.rian.ru/russia/20120604/173846778.html>

<sup>42</sup> "Putin, Karimov sign declaration of strategic partnership", ITAR-TASS, June 4, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/438323.html>

<sup>43</sup> "Russia urges to have special int'l meeting on Syria", ITAR-TASS, June 6, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/440064.html>

lowered by 55.67 kopecks to 40.9501 roubles for one euro while the dollar's official exchange rate against the rouble was dropped by 41.12 kopecks and reached 32.7889 roubles for one dollar.<sup>44</sup>

The 5th Russia-Japan investment forum will open at Kazan on June 6, 2012. The investment forum is a key event in bilateral Russia-Japan cooperation. Its principal purpose is to promote the development and strengthening of trade-and-economic relations and attract investments. Key issues to be discussed include expansion of cooperation in the fields of innovations, high-technology production processes, commercialization of scientific research and development, innovative projects in engineering, chemical and food industries, medicine, and pharmaceuticals.<sup>45</sup>

According to reports, the protocol on Russia's accession in the World Trade Organization will be ratified by the State Duma on July 4, 2016.<sup>46</sup>

According to reports, Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai at a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Beijing has said that he is interested in Russia's active participation in all Afghan affairs. Amongst the issues discussed were increased scholarships for the Afghan students, Russian companies potential participation in the Afghan economy, construction of the House of Russian Science and Culture in Kabul and assistance to Afghan security forces.<sup>47</sup>

Reports noted that Russian and Israeli diplomats have discussed a host of issues in Moscow ranging from the situation in the Middle East and North Africa and the state of affairs in the Middle East settlement. Russia also reiterated the need to create conditions for the resumption of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.<sup>48</sup>

According to reports, Russian and US diplomats will hold discussions on Syria in Moscow on June 8, 2012. This comes in the backdrop of Russia having made it clear that the future of Assad's regime should be decided by the Syrian people themselves and Russia will certainly not allow the approval of a Libyan scenario in the UN Security Council.<sup>49</sup>

Reports noted that President Vladimir Putin has signed a law tightening punishment for rally violations. The law sets differentiated rates of fines for breaching rally regulations, including the rules of rally organization, drinking alcohol and consuming narcotics in public places, blocking

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<sup>44</sup> "Central Bank lowers both US dollar's rate, euro's official exchange rates against Russian rouble", ITAR-TASS, June 6, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/440013.html>

<sup>45</sup> "Russia-Japan investment forum opens in Kazan Wed", ITAR-TASS, June 6, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/439791.html>

<sup>46</sup> "Duma to ratify protocol on Russia's entry to WTO July 4", ITAR-TASS, June 7, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/441137.html>

<sup>47</sup> "Karzai interested in RF active participation in Afghan affairs", ITAR-TASS, June 8, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/441841.html>

<sup>48</sup> "Russia, Israel diplomats discuss Mideast settlement", ITAR-TASS, June 8, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/441830.html>

<sup>49</sup> "Russia, US to hold consultations on Syria in Moscow", ITAR-TASS, June 8, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/441793.html>

roads and so on. The maximal punishment is set at 300,000 roubles for individuals and 600,000 for officials.<sup>50</sup>

## D. West Asia

### Iran

- **Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei: Western sanctions ineffective; Top Iranian official: SCO can provide global security**

According to reports, Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei has said that unilateral and multilateral sanctions on Iran have been ineffective and has not prevented the progress of the country. Speaking at a ceremony to mark the death anniversary of former Supreme Leader Ruhollah Khomeini, Khamenei said that the only effect of the sanctions is the deepening of enmity in Iran towards the West.<sup>51</sup>

In another development, the Director-General of the Iranian Presidential Office for International Affairs has said that the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) will be able to guarantee peace and security in the region. He pointed to China and India as economic powers, and Iran and Russia as possessing energy resources, and thus being able to adapt the SCO to be a "powerful economic, political and security pole in the world".<sup>52</sup> The remarks came prior to the SCO Heads of State meeting that was held in Beijing on June 6-7, 2012, in which President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad participated.<sup>53</sup>

### Syria

- **Turkey signals further sanctions on Syria amid continuing violence; President Assad addresses Syrian parliament; Italy warns of threat of genocide; Free Syrian Army accuses government of using chemical weapons**

According to reports, following the massacre of more than 100 people in Houla last week, the Turkish Prime Minister has said that his government may impose new unspecified sanctions against Syria. Turkey has also said it will push for stronger international sanctions on Syria, demand for a deadline on Kofi Annan's six-point peace plan, and propose a stronger UN observer presence in Syria. In efforts to improve visibility for the opposition Syrian national Council (SNC), the Turkish Foreign Minister met with SNC members; the SNC has called for the establishment of a buffer zone within Syria that will allow Syrian Army units to defect in large numbers along with heavy weapons and armour. Turkey is seeking an international or regional mandate for any such action since any such buffer zone would require military protection.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> "Putin signs law tightening punishment for rally violations", ITAR-TASS, June 8, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/442554.html>

<sup>51</sup> "Western sanctions ineffective - Iranian supreme leader", Islamic Republic of Iran News Network, June 3, 2012

<sup>52</sup> "Iran official says Shanghai bloc able to guarantee global security", Islamic Republic News Agency, June 3, 2012

<sup>53</sup> "Iran president to visit China on 5 June to participate in SCO meeting", ISNA website, June 5, 2012

<sup>54</sup> "Turkey seen increasing pressure on Syria", Zaman website, June 3, 2012

Meanwhile, the Syrian President addressed the first legislative session of the Syrian People's Assembly on June 3, 2012. Assad referred to the international and regional role in the crisis, and the need to isolate "terrorism" from the political process. He added that his government is defending the country, and extended condolences for victims of the Houla massacre.<sup>55</sup> Opposition activists have responded saying that Assad is out of touch with events around him.<sup>56</sup>

Following the address, Assad appointed a new Prime Minister. He has tasked former Agriculture and Agrarian Reform Minister, Dr Riyad Farid Hijab, with forming a new government.<sup>57</sup>

Later in the week, reports emerged of the killing of more than 140 people in Marazaf town in Hamah.<sup>58</sup> The Italian Foreign Minister has warned of the threat of genocide in Syria, failing rapid intervention. Giulio Terzi was speaking ahead of a special meeting of the 55 Friends of Syria countries.<sup>59</sup>

Meanwhile, the Free Syrian Army (FSA) has said that government forces have used chemical weapons in several northern areas of Syria. The FSA commander said he received information from sources within the government about the possible use of banned weapons.<sup>60</sup>

## Lebanon

### ● Violence intensifies in Lebanese city of Tripoli

Following deadly clashes between pro- and anti-Syrian regime gunmen, media reports pointed to gunfire and rocket attacks in the northern Lebanese port city of Tripoli. The city has seen sectarian tensions rise since the beginning of the Syrian uprising, and demonstrations in support of the uprising have become a weekly event.<sup>61</sup>

## Israel/Palestine

### ● Palestinian premier hails boycott of Israeli products by South Africa

Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad has commended South Africa's decision to boycott products manufactured in Israeli settlements. He expressed hope that other countries would follow this move.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> "Syrian president says youths given 32 US dollars to kill", Syrian TV satellite service, June 3, 2012

<sup>56</sup> "Pan Arab TV talk show hosts opposition figures to discuss Al-Asad's speech", Al-Jazeera TV, June 3, 2012

<sup>57</sup> "Syria's Al-Asad appoints new prime minister", SANA news agency website, June 6, 2012

<sup>58</sup> "Al-Jazeera TV says 140 killed in Syria's Hamah", Al-Jazeera TV, Doha, June 6, 2012

<sup>59</sup> "Italy sees threat of genocide looming over Syria", La Stampa website, June 7, 2012

<sup>60</sup> "Free Syrian Army accuses army of using chemical weapons", Al-Jazeera TV, June 8, 2012

<sup>61</sup> "Rocket fire, sporadic gun shots rock Lebanon's Tripoli, one killed", The Daily Star website, June 9, 2012

<sup>62</sup> "Palestinian premier hails South Africa's boycott of Israeli products", Palestinian news agency Wafa website, June 3, 2012

## Yemen

- **Several al Qaeda militants and security forces killed in continuing battles**

According to the military sources, at least 11 al Qaeda militants and one soldier were killed in a fighting between them in Jaar and Zinjibar, in the Abyan province in south Yemen on June 10, 2012. Two more soldiers were also injured in ongoing battles as the army has been fighting al Qaeda militants to retake key towns in Abyan including the capital Zinjibar, which were seized in mid-2011. Sources have also informed that the militants were killed in artillery shelling and airstrikes targeting by the security forces on the militant positions and fighters in the two towns. Meanwhile, military reinforcements have deployed to Abyan to back the forces and tribal fighters to clear the militants from Abyan.<sup>63</sup>

According to reports, a car bomb exploded on June 6, 2012 killing three al Qaeda militants on a road linking between Lahj and Aden. According to the security sources, the car was blown off before the reach of its target which was, suspected to have been plotted by the militants to blow up a security checkpoint in Al-Ribat area of Lahj. Meanwhile, 10 Al-Qaeda militants and four soldiers including an officer were killed on June 6, 2012 in Zinjibar of Abyan governorate. In another incident in the same province, five al Qaeda militants were killed on June 5, 2012 when a car bomb hit the port town of Shaqra.<sup>64</sup>

## II. DEFENCE REVIEW

### National

- **India for “unhindered” freedom of navigation in international waters; Navy Chief assures Indian Navy is in good fighting shape**

According to reports, against the backdrop of disputes in the South China Sea involving China, Defence Minister AK Antony said on June 9, 2012 that India believes in “unhindered” freedom of navigation in international waters. The Defence Minister said that maritime disputes between nations should be settled through negotiations and discussion and without any third-party intervention. “India strongly believes in international waters and there should be unhindered freedom of navigation for all the countries,” he said. Underlining the importance of international laws on maritime issues, the minister said: “The freedom (for navigation in international waters) must be as per the expected procedure and international laws.” Last week, Antony had addressed the Asia Security Conference at Singapore and had voiced India’s position for freedom of navigation

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<sup>63</sup> “11 Militants in Fiercest Battles to Retake Key Areas in Yemen”, *Yemen Post*, June 11, 2012 at <http://www.yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=3&SubID=5532&MainCat=3>

<sup>64</sup> “Nearly 13 militants, four soldiers killed in Lahj, Abyan”, *Yemen Post*, June 6, 2012, at <http://www.yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=100&SubID=5517&MainCat=3>

in international waters. During the conference, the US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta had announced that Washington has decided to move majority of its warships into the Asia-Pacific region in the coming years.<sup>65</sup>

Meanwhile, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Nirmal Verma told media following the passing out parade at Indian Military Academy in Dehradun on June 9, 2012 that the Indian Navy is in good fighting shape and, in a few years, will be in a position to commission five ships each year to further boost the nation's naval strength and security. The Chief stated, "I can say that the Indian Navy is fighting fit with measures already taken and still being taken to further improve infrastructure and fleet strength. At present, 48 ships are in the process of being built and most of these are being built indigenously. We have already inducted 19 MIG 29K and more will be inducted in the future which will expand the reach and boost the strength of the Navy. We are also going to increase the strength of P-81 aerial surveillance aircrafts which will provide a fillip to the nation's capabilities."<sup>66</sup>

## International

- **France to begin pullout from Afghanistan next month; Hike in Pakistan's 2012-2013 defense budget despite poor economic shape**

According to reports, the French President Francois Hollande on June 9, 2012 said that France will begin its pullout from Afghanistan next month and complete it by December 31, 2012, after four French troops were killed on the eve of key elections. Hollande said France would pay a "national homage" to the men killed in a Taliban suicide attack in eastern Afghanistan earlier in the day and that the five other wounded would be repatriated rapidly. It would be worth noting that the withdrawal of French troops from Afghanistan was one of Hollande's presidential electoral promises. Hollande said, it "will begin in the month of July, will be carried out and be completed at the end of 2012."<sup>67</sup>

In another development, reports noted that Pakistan's new defense budget increases funding for the Army and Air Force and slightly decreases it for the Navy. The fiscal 2012-2013 defense budget, in current U.S. dollars, allocates \$2.8 billion to the Army, an increase of \$128 million; \$1.2 billion for the Air Force, an increase of \$64 million; and \$562 million to the Navy, a \$1.4 million decrease from the previous year. The defense budget does not, however, usually include procurement funding and is comprised mainly of wages and running costs with increases fueled by ongoing counterinsurgency efforts.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>65</sup> "India for 'unhindered' navigational rights in intl waters," June 9, 2012, at <http://news.oneindia.in/2012/06/09/southchina-sea-india-for-unhindered-freedom-navigation-1015383.html>

<sup>66</sup> "Navy fighting fit, more upgrades soon, says Chief," The Pioneer, June 10, 2012, at <http://dailypioneer.com/nation/71901-navy-fighting-fit-more-upgrades-soon-says-chief.html>

<sup>67</sup> "France to Begin Afghanistan Withdrawal in July: President," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, June 9, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120609/DEFREG01/306090003/France-Begin-Afghanistan-Withdrawal-July-President?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

<sup>68</sup> "Pakistan Budget Up for Army, Air Force; Down for Navy," June 6, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120606/DEFREG03/306060006/Pakistan-Budget-Up-Army-Air-Force-59-Down-Navy?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|FRONTPAGE|s>

### III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

#### Jammu & Kashmir

- **Army Chief Gen Bikram Singh to visit Jammu and Kashmir; Village heads give in to militant threats; Police detain separatist leaders in Shopian**

Reports noted that in his first visit as Army Chief, Gen Bikram Singh will travel to Jammu and Kashmir later June to review the security situation in the state. The Army Chief will visit the state in the third week of June, 2012 where he will discuss the security situation with top commanders in Jammu and Kashmir. During the visit to the formations under the Northern Command Headquarters in Udhampur, the Army Chief will be briefed about the prevailing situation there. His visit is coming at a time when the violence levels in the state have come down significantly and demands are being made for the withdrawal of the controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA).<sup>69</sup>

According to reports, in a fresh challenge for the state government, more than a dozen elected members for Panchayats including some women tendered their resignation on 8 June, 2012 and publicized their non-affiliation with mainstream political parties through local newspapers. The development follows repeated threats being dished out by militants to the elected Panchs and Sarpanchs. A militant outfit Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) earlier this week warned elected rural body members to resign within a week's time. The threats appeared on outfit's posters pasted on the electricity poles, walls of mosques and shops in public places in different villages of Pulwama and Shopian districts in South Kashmir.<sup>70</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, Police on June 8, 2012, detained many separatist leaders including Shabir Ahmad Shah, Nayeem Ahmad Khan, Javaid Mir, Zafar Akbar Bhat, Yasmeen Raja and others in South Kashmir. They were returning to Srinagar after addressing a public gathering at Shopian.<sup>71</sup>

#### North East India

- **North-East ultras still active in Bangladesh; North-East Finance Ministers' meet convened in Delhi; NSCN (IM) men held with arms in Dibrugarh, Assam; All Assam Minority Students Union (AAMSU) organizes NH-31 blockade; President approves three High Courts in North-East; Clash in Garo Hills leaves one dead**

According to reports, though the Government of Bangladesh has launched a crackdown against

<sup>69</sup> "Army Chief to visit JK", *Greater Kashmir*, June 7, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jun/8/army-chief-to-visit-jk-68.asp>

<sup>70</sup> "Village Heads give in to militant threats", *Greater Kashmir*, June 8, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jun/9/village-heads-give-in-to-militant-threats-57.asp>

<sup>71</sup> "Police detain separatist leaders in Shopian", *Greater Kashmir*, June 8, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jun/9/police-detain-separatist-leaders-in-shopian-83.asp>

militants of North-East using the territory of the country as safe haven, the recent arrests of militants by personnel of the Border Security Force (BSF) proved that the militants still have a number of camps and bases in the neighbouring country. According to sources, the militant groups, particularly the groups of Manipur, still have camps in the Moulvi Bazar area, while, a number of other outfits including the hardline faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) are maintaining camps in the jungles in the Bangladesh-Myanmar border areas. Sources said that the militant groups of North-East also have some camps in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) area.<sup>72</sup>

In another development, reports noted that Union Finance Ministry has convened a meeting of the Chief Ministers and State Finance Ministers of the Northeastern States to discuss the financial situation of the States. The meeting to be chaired by Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee is slated to deliberate on the heavy burden imposed on the finances of the North-East States following implementation of the Sixth Pay Commission. The impact on the States has magnified manifold because of the reduction of State's share in Central taxes on account of economic slowdown.<sup>73</sup>

Meanwhile, according to reports, Army from the 5 J&K Light Infantry Battalion in a joint operation with the local police apprehended four hardcore NSCN (IM) cadres with arms and ammunition from Eastern Lodge in Paltan Bazar. The arrested self-styled cadres hailed from the Tirap district in Arunachal Pradesh.<sup>74</sup>

Reports noted that President Pratibha Patil has given her formal approval for setting up separate high courts in three North-Eastern states – Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya. A Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha last month, paving the way for the creation of separate high courts in the three states. Currently, six North-Eastern States – Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh – have benches of the Guwahati High Court. Sikkim has a separate high court. According to officials, the high courts are expected to start functioning in three months.<sup>75</sup>

According to reports, All Assam Minority Students Union (AAMSU), Dhubri District Committee, blocked the National Highway 31 at Gauripur and Makrihora in Dhubri in protest against the torture and killing of non-Bodo people in BTC areas. Expressing serious concern over the plight of non-Bodo people living in the BTC areas, the AAMSU has sought the Central Government's interference to solve the problem.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> "NE ultras still active in Bangla camps", *The Assam Tribune*, June 4, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun0512/at08>

<sup>73</sup> "NE FM's meet convened in Delhi", *The Assam Tribune*, June 4, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun0512/oth07>

<sup>74</sup> "4 NSCN-IM men held with arms in Dibrugarh", *The Assam Tribune*, June 6, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun0712/at08>

<sup>75</sup> "President okays three high courts in Northeast", *The Assam Tribune*, June 9, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun0912/at04>

<sup>76</sup> "Aamsu organizes NH-31 blockade", *The Assam Tribune*, June 6, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun0712/at09>

In other developments, reports noted that a woman was killed and properties were damaged in a clash between two tribal clans in West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya prompting the authorities to impose curfew in areas under Dalu police station. In the clashes, a house at Dapogkre and four at Gangbanga were reduced to ashes and many were injured. The clashes took place when the bid by one group to acquire a piece of land was resisted by the other involving hundreds of people.<sup>77</sup>

## IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **UN Secretary-General to look for other options to address Syrian crisis; India against military approach to resolve the crisis; ICC urges UNSC to ensure arrest of Sudanese leaders indicted for war crimes; Indian scientist re-elected to CLCS; UN: India's growth rate for 2012 at 6.7%; India and China to account for 57% of total world wide emissions by 2030; India asked to join air ticket levy initiative to pay for AIDS drugs**

According to reports, the UN Security Council has requested UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to put forward a range of options for resolving the Syrian crisis. The Secretary-General in his remarks to the media said that the six-point plan will remain at the centre of efforts to resolve the crisis and that it is up to the Council to find a common voice on the issue.<sup>78</sup>

Meanwhile, in an informal plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly on the situation in Syria, India warned against the adoption of a military approach to resolve the crisis. India's representative, HS Puri expressed apprehensions that growing militarization could wreck 'havoc' in the region and lead to a large-scale sectarian civil war. India also condemned all violence irrespective of who the perpetrators are.<sup>79</sup>

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council was urged by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to adopt measures to ensure the arrest of Sudanese leaders indicted for war crimes. He also added that the Sudanese government's refusal to arrest President Omar Al-Bashir constitutes 'a direct challenge to the Council's authority'. He further added that the Council, at a future date could evaluate other possibilities including asking UN member states or regional organizations to execute arrest operations.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>77</sup> "1 killed in Garo Hills clash", *The Assam Tribune*, June 9, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun1012/oth07>

<sup>78</sup> "At Security Council's request, Ban to explore a 'variety of options' for way ahead in Syria", *UN News Centre*, June 07, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42178&Cr=syria&Cr1=>

<sup>79</sup> "Military approach to Syrian crisis will fuel civil war: India", *The Times of India*, June 08, 2012 at [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-06-08/india/32123430\\_1\\_syrian-crisis-wreck-havoc-civil-war](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-06-08/india/32123430_1_syrian-crisis-wreck-havoc-civil-war)

<sup>80</sup> "Security Council urged to take steps to ensure arrest of Sudanese leaders for war crimes", *UN News Centre*, June 05, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42154&Cr=sudan&Cr1=>

In another development, eminent Indian scientist, Sivaramakrishnan Rajan was re-elected for a five-year term to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) that is tasked with facilitating implementation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The election saw eight candidates from the Asia-Pacific group contesting for five seats.<sup>81</sup>

According to UN's latest growth forecast for India in 2012, a 6.7 per cent growth was predicted as opposed to a 7.7 per cent rise predicted earlier this year. Owing to the challenging global economic situation, the UN said that the global growth will likely remain tepid in 2012.<sup>82</sup> Another UN report has forecast that India and China would account for more than half of transport-related emission worldwide by 2030, projected to increase by 57 per cent from the 2005 level.<sup>83</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, UNITAID, an agency of the UN that negotiated for cheap medicines from pharmaceutical manufacturers to treat deadly diseases is asking India to join its air ticket levy initiative under which a nominal amount on the cost of air tickets would fund UNITAID to buy drugs for patients in the developing world. It could prove to be a win-win situation for India as 80 per cent of the drugs bought by the agency are from Indian pharmaceutical firms and the aid would also cater to some Indian patients.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> "Indian scientist re-elected to UN entity on ocean affairs", *The Indian Express*, June 07, 2012 at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/indian-scientist-reelected-to-un-entity-on-ocean-affairs/958974/0>

<sup>82</sup> "UN cuts India's GDP growth to 6.7% in 2012", *Business Line*, June 08, 2012 at [http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/economy/article3504539.ece?wl\\_industry-and-economy](http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/economy/article3504539.ece?wl_industry-and-economy)

<sup>83</sup> "Chindia transport emissions to spike: UN", *The Indian Express*, June 07, 2012 at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/chindia-transport-emissions-to-spike-un/958988/0>

<sup>84</sup> "India should tax air tickets to pay for AIDS drugs: UN", *INBLive*, June 06, 2012 at <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/india-should-tax-air-tickets-to-pay-for-aids-drugs-un/264511-3.html>