



**Defence minister Abdul Qadir asks Iraq Parliament for funds to recruit informers.**



**Iran's President Ahmadinejad pledges his support to Hamas leader.**



**Venezuelan Prez Hugo Chavez signs cooperation agreement worth \$3.2 bn with Cuba.**

# International

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**Hostages freed after negotiation**

**Prosperidad, Philippines:** Gunmen freed Sunday the 47 hostages they were holding at a jungle hideout in the southern Philippines after government negotiators agreed not to arrest the outlaws for the abductions or past murder charges, officials said.

The remote jungle encampment had been surrounded by troops and snipers. Vice governor Santiago Cane of Agusan del Sur province said the hostages left aboard two army trucks. The gunmen — former government-armed militiamen — then surrendered their assault rifles, grenades and ammunition. "Declaring officially that all hostages are free. Yes, at last," Cane told reporters. Relieved after three days in captivity, the mostly male hostages waved and smiled at journalists and army troops waiting at a nearby village.

**Berlusconi shocks EU meet**

**London, Dec. 13:** Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi shocked leaders at an EU summit by sending them doodles showing women's underwear through the ages. He passed round his etchings of bloomers and thongs as the leaders discussed climate change at the meeting in Brussels on Friday, the *Mail* on Sunday reported.

Mr Berlusconi's vulgar prank caused titters among some, but indignation among others who passed them back to him, the report said.

**Indian held for wife's murder**

**London, Dec. 13:** The estranged husband of a 28-year-old woman of Indian origin, who died after being left mutilated and near-death in northwest London on November 16, has been re-arrested and charged with her murder, reports our correspondent.

British-born Geeta Aulakh, a mother of two children, was found fatally injured by passers-by at Verulam Road in Greenford, north-west London, at around 7 pm on November 16. She was suffering from a head injury and one her hands had been severed. She was taken by ambulance to Charing Cross Hospital where she was pronounced dead.

## 'Zardari assets worth \$1.5 bn' Ops to go on, says Gilani

**Islamabad, Dec. 13** Pakistan's National Accountability Bureau (NAB) is set to submit details of President Asif Ali Zardari's illegal assets, worth 1.5 billion dollars before the Supreme Court on Monday. The *Dawn* quoted the NAB, as alleging that Zardari had accumulated these assets through 'illegal means'. However, Zardari denied that he owned any illegal assets.



Zardari

Sources said that Zardari's illegal assets had been confiscated by NAB, but they were de-frozen within days of the promulgation of the National Reconciliation Ordinance in 2007.

**26/11: headley was in LeT control unit**

**AMERICAN-BORN** terror suspect David Headley had not only actively played a role in conducting reconnaissance of targets in Mumbai but was also present in a control unit in Pakistan along with the masterminds of the attacks to guide 10 Lashker-e-Tayyaba terrorists to carry out strikes in the megapolis. Sources privy to the investigations of the terror suspect's trail in India said Headley was very much present in the room from where the 10 LeT terrorists were being guided to various locations during the 26/11 attacks.

The NRO was implemented. The NAB had filed nine cases against Zardari, which includes allegation that assets worth 66 million dollars were still held by a

Swiss Court after they were frozen in SGS-Cotecna pre-shipment inspection case.

So far, NAB has spent millions of rupees to investigate several cases filed against PPP leaders but failed to prove any of them.

According to Pakistan's High Commissioner in the UK, Wajid Shamsul Hassan, the NAB spent over 660 million rupees only on cases of PPP leaders tried in Swiss Court. — Agencies

**Islamabad/ Peshawar, Dec. 13:** Taking a U-turn, Pakistan Premier Yousuf Raza Gilani has said the military offensive against Taliban in the restive South Waziristan tribal region would continue and that he could not provide a time frame for completing it, hours after declaring that it has ended.

Mr Gilani initially said in Lahore on Saturday that the offensive against the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan in South Waziristan Agency "has ended" and there was now "talk of (an operation) in Orakzai Agency".

Hours later, the Prime Minister told the media in Karachi that the operation in South Waziristan would continue. "This operation has continued with great success and the strongholds of militants have been captured and a large quantity of weapons and ammunition has been recovered," he said, adding he could not give a time frame for completing the offensive.

If somebody had gained the impression that the military operation would be concluded, "it could have been in a different context," Mr Gilani said. The government would chase militants wherever they take refuge.

"We will take military action wherever we get information about the presence of militants," he said. The military says about 600 militants and over 60 soldiers have died in fighting in Waziristan since a campaign was launched there against the Taliban in October. Troops have secured

**'India must revive talks'**

**Islamabad:** Pakistan PM Yousuf Raza Gilani on Sunday asked India to revive the dialogue process to resolve the bilateral issues, reports our Pakistan correspondent. "We call upon India to resume a dialogue to settle all contentious issues between the two countries," Mr Gilani said.



Gilani

Talking to reporters in Multan, PM Gilani said the dialogue standoff will only benefit the terrorists. "Pakistan wants friendly ties with all neighbouring countries including India," he added. Mr Gilani's comments came a day after he accused India of sponsoring insurgency in the troubled Balochistan province. The Pakistani authorities have been claiming "evidences" of the Indian involvement in terrorism in the country. The interior ministry, last day, said it had handed over the "evidences" to the foreign ministry to share it with India through the diplomatic and other channels.

most Taliban strongholds in the region but top militant leaders continue to be at large. — PTI



**British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Afghan President Hamid Karzai meet Afghan and British troops at the Kandahar airbase on Sunday.** — AP

**Taliban will be crushed, says Brown**

DC CORRESPONDENT LONDON

**Dec. 13:** British Prime Minister Gordon Brown made a surprise visit to Afghanistan this weekend and stayed with the soldiers overnight.

This was Mr Brown's third visit to Afghanistan in 2009 and he stayed overnight at Kandahar Airfield, the coalition headquarters for the region.

This is the first time that British Premier has stayed overnight either in Afghanistan or Iraq and became the first British PM since World War II to spend the night in a combat zone. "I wanted to be here with the troops to thank them for what they are doing. I wanted to see what it was like working with them," Mr Brown said.

The PM stayed in a prefabricated and corrugated shed, which was surrounded by concrete blast walls.

## Tigers killed in cold blood: Fonseka

**Colombo, Dec. 13:** Sri Lankan troops shot dead surrendering Tamil Tiger leaders on the orders of the defence secretary, the former army chief who is now running for president said on Sunday.

General Sarath Fonseka said Gotabhaya Rajapakse — the brother of the current president — instructed field commanders not to take prisoners in the days before the Tamil Tiger separatists were defeated in May.

"Gotabhaya Rajapakse spoke directly with (commander) Shavendra Silva and told him not to



Fonseka

**"Gotabhaya Rajapakse spoke directly with (commander) Shavendra Silva and told him not to accommodate any surrendering LTTE leaders and that they must all be killed."**

— Gen. Fonseka

accommodate any surrendering LTTE leaders and that they must all be killed," Fonseka told reporters at a meeting of opposition parties.

Fonseka said he was away in China and was unaware

that Rajapakse was giving direct orders to officers in the field during the final stages of battle against the Tigers, officially known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

He said he only learnt after

the war that senior Tiger rebels had used foreign mediators to organise a plan in which they would carry white flags and give themselves up.

Fonseka led the army's successful offensive to finally crush the LTTE and end the island's decades-long ethnic conflict, but he later fell out with President Mahinda Rajapakse and the defence secretary.

He resigned last month, accusing the government of sidelining him, and is now attempting to unseat President Rajapakse in elections on January 26. — AFP

## Progress on nuke treaty with US, says Kremlin

**Washington, Dec. 13:** Russia and the United States are making "substantial progress" on negotiations for a successor to an expired nuclear weapons treaty, according to a Kremlin statement.

President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev spoke in detail this weekend about the negotiations and agreed to extend the talks, according to the statement.

An Obama administration official confirmed the two

**mistaken identity**

The expired START treaty, signed by then-Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev and president George H.W. Bush, required each country to cut its nuclear warheads by at least one-fourth, to about 6,000, and to implement procedures for verifying that each side was sticking to the agreement.

presidents spoke by telephone Saturday about the

negotiations, but offered no further details. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the administration had not announced the discussion publicly.

The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, known as START, expired December 5. Both governments have spent several months negotiating a new pact that would further reduce the size of the nuclear arsenals on both sides. — AP

**FOR A GREENER WORLD**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

■ The Kyoto Protocol places restrictions on the emission of six greenhouse gases. Each of the six have a different global warming potential, but that potential is often expressed in terms of a carbon dioxide equivalent — the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that would cause the same amount of warming.

■ Carbon footprint is a measure of how much carbon an individual or an organization emits in a given period of time, or the amount of carbon emitted during the manufacture of a product.

■ Carbon intensity refers to how much carbon a country emits per unit of GDP.

■ Carbon sink is anything that absorbs carbon from the atmosphere. The world's oceans and forests are the biggest carbon sinks, but the term can also refer to a process, activity or mechanism that does the job.

■ Carbon leakage happens when an industry, faced with stiff restrictions on carbon emissions, relocates to countries where the emission regime is weaker.

## China asserts itself on global stage

HARDEV SANOTRA FC | COPENHAGEN

**Dec. 13:** As a nation that had generally kept a low profile, China is now asserting itself in more ways than one. In keeping with its huge economy and increasing diplomatic clout, the country is reaching out and making its presence felt at the Copenhagen conference. There is a new-found confidence missing in earlier international conferences.

Those who have covered such conferences know the difficulty in reaching out to Chinese delegates. Seeking answers to questions, generally lapped up Western delegates, used to be a problem with members from the Asian giant. Silence was often the answer.

Not anymore. China has come with a delegation of over 120 people headed by China's deputy climate negotiator Yu Qingtai, an articulate man who does not flinch at uncomfortable questions. He gives clear, precise replies in perfect English. "We have come with a delegation of over 100 people

because this is an important conference. We want to cover all the aspects of climate change debate," Yu told *Financial Chronicle* at the end of one session.

And it's no longer reticent about taking on the United States, something which had been left to the more vocal developing countries. "I was shocked to read the statement of the US special envoy which was extremely irresponsible," vice foreign minister He Yafei told reporters reacting to Todd Stern's comment that money for mitigation or adaptation steps should not go to China.

Given the fact that developed countries have done nothing but empty talk, they have no right to make any requests, said Xie Zhenhua, China's top climate negotiator. Earlier, Mr Yu said he would advise American leaders to "do some soul searching." These are not words that one would have normally heard from Chinese diplomats. If the gloves are off, it shows an assertive and confident China looking for a central role on the world stage.



**Archbishop Desmond Tutu hands over a petition signed by 5,12,894 people to United Nations climate chief Yvo de Boer on a stage in central Copenhagen December 13, 2009. Copenhagen is the host city for the United Nations Climate Change Conference.** — REUTERS

**No binding emission cuts: Ramesh**

■ **Continued from Page 1** He said India could not accept any binding emission norms and this had been agreed with China, Brazil, Singapore and South Korea had also agreed with India's position.

He said there were still very many differences, for instance between the US and the EU, and the US and China. There also continue to be differences between the position of the small island nations and Africa. He said the US was saying no to the Kyoto Protocol. "But if there's a failure in Copenhagen, it will not be because of India." He said the country had taken up discussions in a constructive manner, but there were no major clashes happening. If there were clashes, it was between the US and China.

He said India had agreed to a two-degree Celsius limit on global average temperature rise by 2050, but this implied that India would retain its right to "equitable atmospheric space", which means there should be no limit on India's expansion of electricity supply to the rural areas.

## An island powered by wind, sunlight

SAMSO, an island which is a train-cum-ferry ride away from Copenhagen, has a population of 4,200 islanders. Until about 1997, it used to import most of its energy requirement. Now, it derives all the energy it needs for lighting the island up from 21 massive wind turbines — 11 on land and 10 at sea — and gets 75 per cent of its heating energy requirement from solar power and biomass.

Large towns on the island, like Nordby and Marup, are connected to community heating systems for heating water and homes. An impressive solar heating installation, with some 2,500 square metres of solar panels, lies between Nordby and Marup, ensuring hot water supply.

Samsingers heat up their homes by burning straw in a central heating system, and power their vehicles with biofuel.

"They are actively involved. Many have invested in the future by buying shares in the wind turbine company or a district heating plant via a co-operative scheme," said Soren Hermansen, director



of the Samsø Energy Academy. Each wind turbine at sea produces enough energy to power 2,000 households. So, what do Samsingers do with the extra energy? The 10 wind turbines at sea send more clean electricity every year to the mainland grid than the Samsingers use on up and down transport by ferries. Of course, there are times when the wind dies down and the island has to borrow electricity from the mainland grid, but hey, when the winds return, they more than pay back. In effect, then, Samsø proudly claims to be 100 per cent 'carbon neutral'. MARIANNE DE NAZARETH