

Highlights from the local media of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

December 12th, 2016 | Volume: 2 - 5/12

[Sittwe deep water port inauguration ceremony to take place next month](#)

Mizzima|12th December
A deep-water port built in Myanmar's Sittwe on the Bay of Bengal by India is ready to be commissioned. An inauguration ceremony for the strategically important facility is expected to take place next month, according to the Nagaland Post quoting Vikram Misri, the Indian envoy to Myanmar. The Indian achievement beats a Chinese endeavour to create a deep-sea berthing infrastructure and an SEZ further down the Rakhine coast at Kyaukphyu. The two investments are being seen as the Asian competitors attempting to expand their spheres of naval influence in the Indian ocean region as in the case of Gwadar in Pakistan and Chabahar in Iran being built by China and India, respectively, the report said.

[Naveed Mukhtar named ISI chief](#)

The Express Tribune| 12th December
Pakistan Army on Sunday announced a new set of top-level transfers, appointing the Karachi corps commander, among others, as the military's new spymaster. "Corps Commander Karachi Lt Gen Naveed Mukhtar has been transferred and posted as director general (DG) Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)," the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a notification. He replaces Lt Gen Rizwan Akhtar, who in turn has been appointed as the president of the National Defence University (NDU) in Islamabad, the military's media wing added.

[Sri Lanka Navy accused of attacking Tamil Nadu fishermen](#)

ColomboPage|11th December
Fishermen from Tamil Nadu have accused the Sri Lankan navy of attacking them when they were fishing in the territorial waters of the island nation on Saturday. Eight Tamil Nadu fishermen were injured when they were allegedly attacked by the Sri Lankan Navy. An Indian fisheries official said the eight fishermen from Pudukottai district were fishing off Neduntheevu on Saturday evening when the naval personnel attacked them using iron rods and wires before chasing them away. The injured fishermen are reportedly being treated at a government hospital.

AFGHANISTAN

[US voices concern at Taliban safe havens in Pakistan](#)

Afghanistan Times|9th December

The United States has once again expressed its concern at "safe havens" Afghan Taliban groups, including the Haqqani network, are enjoying on Pakistan's soil. State Department Deputy spokesperson Mark Toner told reporters on Thursday the US had consistently conveyed its concerns to the highest levels of government of Pakistan. "We continue to encourage Pakistan and Afghanistan to cooperate in their counter-terrorism operations and efforts because that's only going to contribute to regional stability," he said.

[Terrorists' sanctuaries, sources of funding are outside Afghanistan: Atmar](#)

Afghanistan Times|9th December

The National Security Adviser, Mohammad Haneef Atmar said that the terrorists' sanctuaries and sources of funding are beyond Afghanistan's borders. "The terrorists' sanctuaries and sources of funding are beyond Afghanistan's borders, which enabled the continuation of this war," he said in an interview with the New York Times. "The terrorists' sanctuaries outside Afghanistan's borders must be destroyed and the sources and channels that fund this war against the government and people of Afghanistan must be stopped." He stated that the government genuinely appreciates the positive role and efforts of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the peace process in Afghanistan.

[Second largest Buddha's reconstruction to kick off in Bamyan](#)

Khaama Press | 11th December

The reconstruction of the second largest Buddha is expected to kick off in central Bamyan province as the local officials the decision to start the reconstruction work was taken during a 3-day meeting in Germany. Provincial governor Mohammad Tahir Zahir said the experts attended the meeting in Munich city of Germany that led to adoption of a final decision for the reconstruction of the eastern Buddhas.

[Air and ground raids underway in Uruzgan, 18 Taliban militants killed](#)

Khaama Press | 11th December

A major operation involving the air and ground forces of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) is underway in southern Uruzgan province with the local officials saying at least 18 militants were killed in the latest raids. The officials further added that the operations were launched two days ago and are still being conducted in the restive parts of the province to clear from the militants presence.

[Ghani calls on militant groups to join intra-Afghan talks for reconciliation](#)

Khaama Press | 11th December

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani called on anti-government armed militant groups to join intra-Afghan talks for reconciliation and refrain from the destructive activities that harm the nation. President Ghani was speaking during an event in Kabul to observe the Milad-un-Nabi, the birth of Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H). He said the welfare of the country is in peace and not war, emphasizing that Prophet Mohammad wanted injustice and oppression to be eliminated from the society.

BANGLADESH

[Bangladesh signs MoUs with China firms to build Payra Port structures](#)

bdnews24 | 8th December

The government has signed three Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with two Chinese firms for the construction of the main structure of Payra Port, a dam to protect the waterside and other buildings. The government expects to build the main structure of the third port of Bangladesh within 2023.

[No Japan advisory against Bangladesh travel anymore, says Finance Minister Muhith](#)

bdnews24 | 12th December

Japan has lifted its advisory against travel to Bangladesh, Finance Minister AMA Muhith told journalists at the Secretariat on Sunday. "I have met Japan's Finance Minister Taro Aso during my three-day state visit to that country. He said there was no need for a discussion because the government has already removed the advisory. "There is no longer any reservation in Japan about the situation in Bangladesh. So we'll just have to wait and see how this works out." He said he has informed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina about Japan's decision soon after his return.

[BD sets sights high on \\$1.0t investment](#)

The Financial Express | 12th December

The government now sets sights high on US\$ 1.0 trillion investment for elevating Bangladesh to a developed nation. To this end, an international projection will be arranged in Dhaka this month. Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) will organise the seminar titled 'New Economic Thinking for Bangladesh: 2030 and Beyond' on December 21, sources in the business circles said.

BHUTAN

[We can certainly do more](#)

Kuensel Online | 10th December

Thousands of Bhutanese participated in a mass cleaning campaign yesterday. Children as young as three were seen tagging along their parents and elders, picking up waste lying by the roadsides and drains. There were powerful people. There were powerless people, too. There were civil servants, bureaucrats, shopkeepers, labourers and expatriates, among others. All with a determination make places where they live clean, healthy and beautiful.

[His Majesty The King grants Nu 10M to ex-armed forces personnel of Thimphu](#)

Kuensel Online | 10th December

His Majesty The King granted Nu 10 million to ex-armed forces personnel of Thimphu dzongkhag, with the Command that the fund be used to build a lhakhang in Thimphu Dzongkhag, for the benefit of all armed forces personnel who have served successive Kings, as well as for the community.

MALDIVES

[President: Follow Islamic teachings of unity, equality](#)

Sun Online | 11th December

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has called out for Maldivians to learn lessons from the life of Prophet Mohamed and follow the Islamic teachings of unity. President Yameen made the appeal during a message he issued to the people of Maldives on occasion of the birth anniversary of the Prophet, marked on the 12th day of the Islamic month of Rabi' al-awwal.

[AG Office releases National Human Rights Framework, collection of legislature](#)

Sun Online | 11th December

Attorney General's Office, in collaboration with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), has released the National Human Rights Framework and collection of Maldivian legislature. National Human Rights Framework was released by chief guest of the function held this Saturday night, Minister of Economic Development – Mohamed Saeed; while the collection of Maldivian legislature was released by Chief Justice Abdulla Saeed.

MYANMAR

[China a sincere supporter of Myanmar's pursuit of peace and reconciliation](#)

Mizzima | 12th December

Conflicts between governmental forces and ethnic armed groups are once again escalating in northern Myanmar. Clashes recently erupted in the China-Myanmar border area and brought an influx of refugees to China's Yunnan Province. In fact, since independence in 1948, northern Myanmar has witnessed relentless conflicts, jeopardizing the life of ordinary citizens, China's security and the China-Myanmar relationship. Hence, Beijing firmly supports peace in Myanmar.

NEPAL

[Govt. will provide subsidy for private investors to establish industry: Minister Joshi](#)

My Republica | 11th December

Industry Minister Nabindra Raj Joshi has said the government was committed to providing subsidy to investors from private sector in establishing industry for economic prosperity of the country. Speaking at a program organized to mark 31st anniversary of Hetauda Cement Industry here today, Minister Joshi said the state had to suffer economic crisis for the failure to modernize state-owned closed industries.

[China provides nearly Rs 16 billion grants for reconstruction](#)

RSS / The Kathmandu Post | 11th December

The Chinese government has provided nearly Rs 16 billion for the post-quake reconstruction activities in Nepal.

Spokesperson of the government and Minister for Information and Communications Surendra Kumar Karki shared this information adding that the Cabinet meeting on Sunday decided to accept the grants worth Rs 15.80 billion provided by China. The meeting of the Council of Ministers also decided to register the election (crime and punishment) bill at the Legislature-Parliament.

[Imports through Raxaul being disrupted](#)

My Republica | 12th December

Call it a premeditated move of sheer coincidence. With politics swirling around the border, imports and exports through Birgunj -- the key trading point for Nepal -- have again been disrupted. Locals on the Indian side of the border have stopped the movement of Nepali vehicles, accusing them of spreading pollution. Imports via the Birgunj customs point was affected on Sunday due to a dispute between Raxaul locals and the Indian Railways over the question of air pollution. The locals have obstructed the entry of trucks carrying raw materials into Nepal in order to pile pressure on Indian Railways.

PAKISTAN

[Industrial phase of CPEC to kick off soon](#)

The Express Tribune | 11th December

The industrial phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is going to kick off soon under which Chinese investors would be allowed to set up only high tech industries, which would not have any negative impact on Pakistan's existing industry, said CPEC Acting Project Director Hasan Dawood.

[Special force set up to guard Gwadar port's sea lanes](#)

Dawn | 12th December

The creation of the special maritime force had been necessitated by the operationalisation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which is expected to lead to a surge in maritime activity at Gwadar — the nodal point for CPEC — and the sea lanes. This has in turn increased the maritime susceptibilities there. A senior PN official said the TF-88 would comprise ships, Fast Attack Craft, aircraft, drones (unmanned aerial vehicles), and surveillance assets. Additionally, marines would be deployed at sea and around Gwadar for security operations.

[PPP makes its presence felt in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after a long time](#)

Dawn | 12th December

The procession was organised in honour of the new provincial president of PPP. It was perhaps the first show of PPP workers during the past five years because last time Senator Sardar Ali Khan was brought to his residence from Islamabad in a procession of workers but then the tradition was not observed when he was replaced by Khanzada Khan. Seeing the enthusiasm of workers, Mr Humayun Khan also vowed that he would visit house of every disgruntled activist to redress grievances of people and reorganise the party in the province.

SRI LANKA

[Sri Lanka Navy brings Hambantota port situation under control, Commander accused of attacking a journalist](#)

ColomboPage | 11th December

While Sri Lanka Navy took swift measures to disperse striking employees who staged a protest campaign at the Hambantota Port Sunday and held two ships from leaving the port, and brought the tense situation under control, the Navy Commander Vice Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne has been accused of attacking a journalist, who was covering the incident.

[Attempts to disrupt reconciliation and peace among communities will not succeed - Sri Lanka PM](#)

ColomboPage | 11th December

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe says a small group of people is trying to destroy the unity in the country by creating hatred between races and religions and their attempts to disrupt reconciliation and peace among the communities will not succeed under the unity government. Speaking at the inauguration of the 7th

annual international session of the Global Energy Parliament at the Temple Trees on Sunday, the Premier said the present government would not allow anyone to achieve political aims by inciting racism or religious hatred.

[Finance Minister says no privatization of public assets](#)

Colombo Gazette | 11th December

The Government says it will not privatize or sell off any of the public asset and there were no provisions made under the 2017 budget to this effect. Minister of Finance Ravi Karunanayake says the budget has made provision to convert the country into a manufacturing economy by converting the foreign debt into equity thereby reducing the debt burden of the people. The Minister said that stake holders representing all sectors of the economy in the post budget discussions have hailed the budget as a positive step towards transforming the economy into manufacturing economy as the budget provides concessions by way of tax holidays, concessionary and interest free loans to investors and the local producers to commercialize the agricultural sector too.

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