



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

December 15th , 2017| Volume: 3 - 2/12

[Russia will open bank in Bangladesh](#)

The Financial Express | 14th December
A branch of a Russian Bank will soon be opened in Bangladesh to establish banking channel aimed at expanding cooperation in the private sector. This was disclosed by Ambassador of the Russian Federation Alexander I Ignatov today.

[Details of Jadhav's meeting with family to be worked out: FO](#)

DAWN | 15th December
New Delhi has accepted Islamabad's offer for a meeting between convicted Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav and his wife, mother and an Indian diplomat. Foreign Office spokesman Dr Mohammad Faisal, while speaking at the weekly media briefing, confirmed the receipt of Indian acceptance. The meeting would now take place on Dec 25. "The details and modalities of the meeting will now be worked out," the spokesman said. Pakistan had initially offered a meeting between Jadhav and his wife on "humanitarian grounds". However, India made the acceptance of the offer conditional to permission for his mother and an Indian diplomat to accompany her.

[India expects Sri Lanka to keep their security concerns in mind regarding Hambantota](#)

Colombo Page| 14th December
India says it continues to take up its security concerns with Sri Lanka and expects the Government of Sri Lanka to keep New Delhi's security concerns and sensitivities in mind with regard to development in the neighborhood. Ministry of External Affairs spokesman Raveesh Kumar responding to a question on Sri Lanka handing over the operational control of its southern Port of Hambantota to China, said India is confident about the strength of its ties with Sri Lanka regarding the regional developments. "Regarding Hambantota we are actually confident about the strength and enduring nature of our ties with Sri Lanka which are deep rooted and multi-dimensional."

[India Voices Support for Afghan-Controlled Reconciliation Efforts](#)

Pajhwok / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 14th December

Indian Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu has said his government desired Afghanistan to emerge united, democratic, peaceful, stable and prosperous nation, a media report said on Wednesday.

Naidu Reiterated New Delhi's "complete support" to the National Unity government (NUG) of Afghanistan in all its efforts, the Siasat daily reported. During a meeting with visiting Afghan Second Vice President Mohammad Sarwar Danish he said that India supported Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled reconciliation efforts which should comply with internationally accepted red-lines.

[Ghani Govt. Has to Deliver on Needed Reforms: Tillerson](#)

Pajhwok / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 14th December

The Afghan government has to continue to deliver on needed reforms, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said on Tuesday. "The Afghan government has to ... create the conditions to have an inclusive government that allows for participation of all ethnic groups, including the Taliban," he said in a town hall with State Department employees.

[IEC Has Crossed 'Challenging Phase': Abdullah](#)

Pajhwok / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 14th December

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) on Wednesday backed calls for holding Wolesi Jirga and district council elections on schedule, saying all organs involved should try to ensure the ballot was transparent, fair and timely.

Addressing a conference titled "Supporting women in political parties" here, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah said the Independent Election Commission (IEC) "has crossed the challenging phase."

BANGLADESH

[114 global orgs, 32 individuals ask Myanmar to address roots of conflict](#)

Promtho Alo | 15th December

Rohingya refugee. Photo: Syful-IslamA total of 114 global organisations and 32 noted individuals from across the globe issued a joint statement on Thursday, urging Myanmar to address the roots of the conflict. The statement released by Europe Solidaire Sans Frontiers aka ESSF on its website also called on the Myanmar authorities to prioritise protection of civilians in Rakhine state.

[Ex-Ctg mayor Mohiuddin passes away, janaza after Asr prayers](#)

The Daily Star | 15th December

The 73-year-old former mayor of Chittagong City Corporation breathed his last around 3:00am at Max Hospital in the port city, Mohiuddin's son Mahibul Hasan Noufel told our Chittagong staff correspondent. His namaz-e-janaza will be held after Asr prayers at Laldighi Maidan in the city today.

[Cleaner diesel import from next July](#)

The Financial Express | 15th December

The government is planning to start importing cleaner diesel from July next year as part of its effort to protect the environment. The fuel oil would have the sulfur content of 0.001 per cent, much lower than that of the existing 0.05 per cent, which is now being imported in the country, officials said. State-run Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), the lone importer of gasoil, is expected to import around 1.75 million tonnes of diesel during

the July-December period of 2018, a senior BPC official told the FE Thursday.

[Tofail requests duty-free access of Bangladeshi products to Ukraine market](#)

The Financial Express | 14th December

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed has asked Ukraine to provide duty and quota free access of Bangladeshi products to their market. The minister made the request at a meeting with Ukrainian first Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Development Stepan Kubiv on the sidelines of WTO's 11th ministerial conference (MC) in Buenos Aires.

BHUTAN

[PSL will revolutionise economy: PM](#)

Kuensil | 14th December

With a prayer ceremony, Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay launched the Priority Sector Lending (PSL) Guidelines 2017 at the of Simtokha Dzong yesterday in Thimphu. An outcome of the vision of His Majesty The King, the PSL guidelines provides loan schemes for the cottage and small industries (CSI) sector, which is divided into agricultural and non-agricultural activities. Agricultural activities include primary production and value-added activities such as processing, packaging, marketing and sales. Non-agricultural CSI comprises manufacturing and services.

[Awareness campaign held on cervical and breast cancer in T/gang](#)

Kuensil | 14th December

It was a cold winter morning in 2013 when doctors at the Mongar regional referral hospital told Jigme Choden, a farmer from Rongthong village in Trashigang, that she has cervical cancer. Soon after the doctor gave the results of stage I cancer, the mother of six broke down. She was 48 then. "The word cancer came as a shock to me and I thought that I would die any moment," she said. "I felt numb. I couldn't understand how I got the disease."

MALDIVES

[Malaysian PM to visit the Maldives on Tuesday](#)

Sun Online | 14th December

The Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Sri Mohammad Najib bin Tun Haji Razak and First Lady Datin Rosmah Mansor is set to undertake an official visit to the Maldives from the 19th to the 20th of this month at the invitation of President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom and First Lady Madam Fathimath Ibrahim. Bilateral deliberations are set to take place to enhance the existing ties and development partnership between the two countries. A number of memorandums of understanding are also to be signed during the Prime Minister's visit.

MYANMAR

[European companies were more reluctant to invest in Myanmar, according to EuroCham](#)

Mizzima | 15th December

EuroCham Business Confidence Survey and Business Guides were launched at Melia Hotel in Yangon on

Thursday. According to Filip Lauwerysen, executive director of EuroCham Myanmar, there was a significant drop in market entry from European companies, partly because of the Rakhine crisis.

[Dublin councillors revoke Suu Kyi award in protest](#)

Mizzima | 14th December

Dublin councillors on Wednesday voted to revoke an award given to Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi to protest her handling of violence against Rohingya Muslims in her country, Irish media reported. The vast majority of councillors backed the move to revoke the Freedom of the City of Dublin award, with 59 votes in favour, two against and one abstention, broadcaster RTE said.

NEPAL

[Saudi Arabia to support Rs 3b in reconstruction](#)

MyRepublica | 15th December

Saudi Arabia has agreed to provide a loan assistance of US\$30 million to help speed up Nepal's reconstruction efforts. This was agreed at meetings between the representatives of the Fund for Development of the Saudi government and the officials of National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), according to a press statement issued by the NRA on Thursday.

[India welcomes successful conduct of polls](#)

MyRepublica | 15th December

India on Thursday welcomed the conduct of parliament election and the first ever provincial elections in Nepal. "We congratulate the government and people of Nepal. India has age old unique time tested ties of friendship with the country. We look forward to working with the next democratically elected government in Nepal to advance our close and multifaceted partnership all across sector," spokesperson at Indian Ministry of External Affairs Raveesh Kumar said during a weekly media briefing on Thursday.

PAKISTAN

[Pakistan could lose territory to terrorists: US](#)

DAWN | 15th December

Shifting between soft persuasions and tough advice, the United States is now saying that Pakistan could lose control of its territory if it does not sever ties with the Haqqanis and other terrorists. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson — who issued the advice at a Washington think-tank earlier this week — also said the militants who were focusing on Kabul might one day decide that Islamabad was a better target.

[I can unite Zardari, Imran whenever I want: Qadri](#)

The Express Tribune | 15th December

Chief of Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) Dr Tahirul Qadri claimed on Thursday that whenever he wants, he can make Pakistan People Party (PPP) Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari and Pakistan Tehreek-e- Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan sit together at a single table. Qadri made the claim while addressing the all Pakistan lawyers convention at his party office. During the meeting a five-point resolution was also unanimously approved by the lawyer community and the PAT chief.

[Senate panel seeks answers to deportation of Turks](#)

The Express Tribune | 15th December

The Senate Committee of Interior on Thursday summoned the secretaries of foreign affairs, interior, civil aviation and education departments as well as a prime minister's representative to explain how and why the Turk citizens affiliated with Pak-Turk schools were sent back to their country. The matter of the Turk citizens, who were residing in Pakistan on valid visas, was raised by Senator Muhammad Khan Saif during a meeting on Thursday. Committee Chairman Senator Rehman Malik presided over the meeting.

SRI LANKA

[Sri Lanka setting Guinness record for World's tallest Christmas tree shows national coexistence - PM](#)

Colombo Page| 14th December

Sri Lanka, a Buddhist majority country, setting the Guinness record for World's tallest Christmas tree shows national coexistence, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe says. Prime Minister made this observation when he was presented with the certificate of the Guinness record for the World's Tallest Christmas Tree at the Temple Trees. Speaking at the event, the Premier said the place where the Tallest Christmas Tree was built was a military camp few years ago but today it is known as a symbol of peace. He pointed out that a majority of Sri Lankans are Buddhists and the team that built the tree included people of all religions.

[Sri Lanka Police and Central Bank sign MoU to cooperate on financial Crimes investigations](#)

Colombo Page| 14th December

Sri Lanka Police and the Central Bank of Sri Lanka have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to cooperate on financial Crimes investigations. The agreement was signed between Financial Intelligence Unit of the Central Bank and Sri Lanka Police for the purpose of exchanging information related to the investigations conducted based on the Acts on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorist Activities.

[Health Minister orders probe into private hospital charges for outpatient drugs](#)

Colombo Page| 14th December

The Minister of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, Dr. Rajitha Senarathne has ordered an investigation to find out whether the private hospitals are passing the benefits of the reductions gazetted by the government in the prices of essential drugs, stents and eye lenses. The Ministry of Health has received complaints from patients that they do not receive the drugs, stents and eye lenses at discounted prices at some private hospitals. Paying attention to the patients' complaints, Health Minister, Dr. Senarathne has ordered the Director of the Private Hospital's regulatory unit, Dr Wasantha Dissanayake, today to initiate an investigation into the complaints and ask for explanations from the private hospitals that do not pass benefits to patients before canceling their registration.

About Ananta Aspen Centre

Ananta Aspen Centre is an independent and not-for-profit organisation that seeks to foster positive change in society through dissemination of knowledge. The Centre facilitates discussions on issues of international significance, values-based leadership and cross-sector outreach by engaging the civil society, government, private sector, and other key stakeholders.

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