

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

**December 16th, 2016 | Volume: 2 - 7/12**

[FDI in Pakistan down massive 45% in Jul-Nov](#)

Express Tribune| 16<sup>th</sup> December  
Foreign direct investment (FDI) in Pakistan has declined by 45% to \$460 million in the first five months (Jul-Nov) of the ongoing fiscal year 2016-17, compared with \$840 million in the same period last year, according to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Tuesday. The country has recorded low levels of foreign investment in recent years. Many foreign investors have pulled out because of a persistent energy crisis and poor governance.

[Key ISIS figures involved in recent Kabul attacks arrested](#)

Khaama Press|15<sup>th</sup> December  
Several key figures of the loyalists of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group involved in plotting and executing a number of deadly attacks in Kabul city, were arrested by the Afghan intelligence operatives. The National Directorate of Security (NDS) said at a group of at least 10 people were arrested in connection to the previous attacks and a number of other attack plots in the capital. A statement by NDS said the militants were involved in plotting and executing the deadly attack on Sakhi shrine in Kabul and another deadly attack on the VIP protection unit in Kabul city.

[NCC, Chinese team sign MoU to boost trade](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 16<sup>th</sup> December  
Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC) held a bilateral trade and business and investment promotion meeting with a visiting Chinese delegation here on Thursday. The 10-member Chinese delegation was led by Vice President of Qingdao Municipal People's Congress Madam Wu Shuling. The two sides signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen trade and business ties. On the occasion, NCC President Rajesh Kazi Shrestha urged the visiting delegation for their increased investment, particularly in Nepal's hydropower, tourism and agriculture sectors. "This visit will further strengthen ties between the two countries," he said.

**AFGHANISTAN**

[Hekmatyar's notorious colander in Afghan intelligence custody](#)

Khaama Press|15<sup>th</sup> December

One of the most notorious commanders of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the leader of Hezb-e-Islami, is in the custody of the Afghan intelligence, the National Directorate of Security (NDS). A source in Afghan intelligence confirmed to RFE/RL that commander Zardad has been detained and is serving in the custody of the National Directorate of Security.

[8 ISIS militants killed in separate airstrikes in East of Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press|15<sup>th</sup> December

At least 8 loyalists of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group were killed in separate airstrikes conducted by the US forces in eastern Nangarhar province of Afghanistan. The provincial police commandment said the militants were killed in Haska Mina and Achin districts. According to the local security officials, at least six of the militants were killed in Kharga area of Haska Mina district while two others were killed in Pekha area of Achin.

### [Framework for Cooperation Conference Begins in Kabul](#)

Outlook Afghanistan | 15th December

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) Afghan Civic Engagement Program (ACEP)-facilitated Framework for Cooperation Conference kicked off in capital Kabul on Wednesday. Over 400 civil society, media and government representatives from all 34 provinces of Afghanistan gathered in Kabul on December 14-15 to attend the conference, a statement from USAID said. The two-day event would be an opportunity to discuss current engagement among civil society, media and government and collaboratively develop pathways to improve future coordination and cooperation.

### [Fuel price must be controlled by national organ, not through an enterprise: GUOGCA](#)

Outlook Afghanistan | 15th December

The General Union of Oil and Gas Companies of Afghanistan (GUOGCA) on Thursday criticized monitoring and control of fuel and gas price by fuel and gas department (governmental enterprise), saying that a national organ was required to control fuel and gas price in the market. "Fuel and gas department is like a government enterprise, it is not a general attorney office to monitor and control fuel prices in the market," said GUOGCA chief executive, Azerakhsh Hafezi.

## **BANGLADESH**

### [Myanmar's Rohingya insurgency has links to Saudi, Pakistan: Report](#)

bdnews24 | 15th September

A group of Rohingya Muslims that attacked Myanmar border guards in October is headed by people with links to Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, the International Crisis Group (ICG) said on Thursday, citing members of the group. The coordinated attacks on Oct 9 killed nine policemen, and sparked a crackdown by security forces in Muslim-majority Rakhine State in northwest Myanmar. At least 86 people have been killed, according to state media, and the United Nations has estimated 27,000 members of the largely stateless Rohingya minority have fled across the border to Bangladesh.

### [Khaleda to lead BNP in talks with president](#)

Prothom Alo | 15th December

Former prime minister and BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia will lead her party in its talks on reconstitution of the election commission with president Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban on 18 December. The names of 10 members of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) delegation headed by Khaleda were sent to the president's house on Thursday.

### [President, PM pay tributes to war heroes on Victory Day](#)

UNB/ The Daily Star | 16th December

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today paid tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War of Bangladesh by placing wreaths at the National Monument at Savar on the occasion of the 46th Victory Day.

### [Bangladesh officials get training in India on marine fish](#)

The Financial Express | 16th December

An Indian leading marine fisheries research institute will help Bangladesh to develop its marine fish sector. CMFRI, the largest marine fisheries research institute will support Bangladesh to develop necessary manpower and expertise in the area of marine fish stock assessment, a significant tool for conserving the fishery wealth, according to report by PTI.

## **BHUTAN**

### [Demonitisation hits orange exporters](#)

Kuensel Online | 15th December

Some exporters say that the government should prioritise businesses rather than pilgrims. While poor cardamom yield disappointed farmers in Dagana and Tsirang this year, the expectations of orange growers were exceeded as orange

production almost doubled. However, orange exporters are now being affected by the demonitisation of high denomination INR notes in India.

#### [Potato prices hit new low at P'ling auction yard](#)

Kuensel Online | 15<sup>th</sup> December

Without takers, there are more than 500 metric tonnes (MT) of potatoes in 66 truckloads waiting to be auctioned at the Food Corporation of Bhutan Ltd (FCBL) auction yard in Phuentsholing. Kuensel has learned that the farmers prevented their potatoes from being auctioned when traders quoted prices as low as Nu 50 for 100kg (a sack) of potatoes on December 13. The auction could not be continued yesterday.

### **MALDIVES**

#### [Former President Nasheed: Will return before the election, must not over throw Yameen's presidency](#)

Sun Online | 15<sup>th</sup> December

Former President Mohamed Nasheed has said that he would be returning to the Maldives before the 2018 Presidential Election and the presidency of President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom must not be overthrown. Speaking on Raajje TV's "Falasurukhee" (Headline) program from the UK, Nasheed, who has been sentenced to 13 years in prison, said that he does not intend to live the rest of his life abroad.

#### [Maldives-India joint training exercise begins in Kahdhoo](#)

Sun Online | 15<sup>th</sup> December

The Maldives-India joint training exercise, Exercise Ekuverin 2016 (Exercise Friends) has begun in Laamu Kahdhoo. Exercise Ekuverin is an annual training program focused on maintaining the relationship between the armies of both the Maldives and India since 2009 where trainings and experience on operations such as counter terrorism.

### **MYANMAR**

#### [US to review Saudi links to Muslim insurgents in Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 16<sup>th</sup> December

The US government is reviewing a new International Crisis Group report alleging Saudi Arabian links to Muslim insurgents in Myanmar, Department of State spokesman John Kirby said at a briefing on Thursday, according to *sputnik news*.

#### [German chemical company BASF to open construction chemicals plant in Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 16<sup>th</sup> December

German chemical company BASF announced plans Thursday to build its first manufacturing plant in Myanmar to produce tailor-made construction chemical solutions from the firm's Master Builders Solutions portfolio for the domestic building market, industry website powderbulksolids.com reported on 16 December.

#### [Malaysian official prepared to talk to end alleged human rights abuses against ethnic Rohingya](#)

Mizzima | 16<sup>th</sup> December

Malaysian officials say they are prepared to talk with their counterparts in Myanmar to find a resolution to end alleged human rights abuses against ethnic Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state, RFA reported on 15 December.

### **NEPAL**

#### [Three parties agree on holding local elections: Deuba](#)

My Republica | 15<sup>th</sup> December

Nepali Congress President and former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has said that the three major political parties, Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and CPN (Maoist Centre) were ready to hold local bodies' election by transforming the existing VDCs into local units. While inaugurating the party organizational reforms and awareness campaign organized by the Chitwan district committee here today, leader Deuba shared that he had held discussions

with UML chair KP Sharma Oli and Maoist Centre chair and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal about the issue and a consensus was forged among them for holding local election.

#### [Environment ministry preparing to set up EPCCC](#)

Himalayan News Service / The Himalayan Times | 16<sup>th</sup> December

The Ministry of Population and Environment is preparing to establish Environment Protection and Climate Change Council to address environment protection and climate change. Secretary at the Ministry of Population and Environment Bishwo Nath Oli said that the council was being formed to implement National Pollution Control Strategy and Action Plan. According to the ministry, the 41-member EPCCC will have prime minister as the chair, population and environment minister as vice-chair and population and environment secretary as member secretary.

#### [Power Summit puts spotlight on Nepal's 10,000MW in 10 yrs goal](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 16<sup>th</sup> December

Nepal is on track of energy sufficiency—for both household and industrial consumption—and can produce as much as 10,000MW in the next 10 years, if the policy environment remains stable. Although the installed capacity of hydropower projects that have come online to date is negligible compared to domestic demand, Nepal can have energy surplus if the under-construction and under-consideration projects are completed by the scheduled date.

### PAKISTAN

#### [Punjab industry heading towards shutdown](#)

Express Tribune | 16<sup>th</sup> December

Businessmen of Punjab have warned that it has become difficult for industries of the province to run their operations and they are fast heading towards complete closure because of high cost of gas and electricity.

#### [Damning indictment of govt inaction against militant bodies](#)

DAWN | 16<sup>th</sup> December

The inquiry commission on the Aug 8 Quetta carnage has called for banning terrorist organisations without any delay by enforcing the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) in letter and spirit.

#### ['Game-changing' road project gets underway](#)

DAWN | 16<sup>th</sup> December

The first phase of 'improvement' of N-70 (national highway) has commenced with the funding of Japan. Starting from Rakhi Gaaj-Khar-Bewata, the project aims to make the hilly portion of the road wide and safe for Gwadar-bound cargo traffic with the installation of eight steel bridges.

### SRI LANKA

#### [Korea and Sri Lanka discuss development cooperation](#)

Colombo Page | 14<sup>th</sup> December

Korea and Sri Lanka have had talks on development cooperation, the Foreign Ministry said today. The Foreign Ministry said that the Minister of Skills Development and Vocational Training Mahinda Samarasinghe undertook a visit to the Republic of Korea from 11 to 14 December 2016 on the invitation of the Korean Government.

#### [PPP to drive Sri Lanka-Tajikistan economic relations forward](#)

Colombo Page | 15<sup>th</sup> December

Public Private Partnership model is a key mechanism slated to drive future Sri Lanka-Tajikistan economic relations, Minister of Industry and Commerce Rishad Bathiudeen says.

#### [Sri Lanka signs Open Skies Agreement with India](#)

Colombo Gazette | 16<sup>th</sup> December

India signed an Open Skies Agreement with Sri Lanka and five other countries at the International Civil Aviation

Negotiations (ICAN), 2016 which were held in Nassau, defenceaviationpost.com reported. The other countries are Jamaica, Guyana, Czech Republic, Finland and Spain.

### [Sri Lanka President holds bilateral discussions with Malaysian Prime Minister](#)

Colombo Page| 16<sup>th</sup> December

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak officially welcomed the visiting President of Sri Lanka Maithripala Sirisena, who arrived in Malaysia on Wednesday, Dec 15 for a three-day visit, at Perdana Putra in Putrajaya today.

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### ***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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