

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

**December 26th, 2016 | Volume: 2 - 11/12**

[Officials Count Around 30,000 War Dead in Afghanistan this Year](#)

Outlook Afghanistan | 26th December  
Hostilities in Afghanistan have left around 30,000 people dead and as many wounded, mostly insurgents, according to the latest official estimates. As of Sunday, counter-insurgency operations conducted by Afghan police and military forces around the country had left more than 18,500 "enemy" fighters dead and wounded 12,000 more, according to defense and interior ministry officials.

[Pakistani refugees returning from Afghanistan to be screened](#)

The Express Tribune | 26th December  
Repatriation of thousands of tribesmen who had fled to Afghanistan following the launch of Operation Zarb-e-Azb in North Waziristan Agency will start on January 15, 2017, says a top administration official. "The exodus of tribesmen from the border regions was understandable, but those who fled to Afghanistan from Miramshah and adjacent areas will be considered facilitators of militants and hence properly interrogated on their return," Kamran Afridi, the political agent of Khyber Agency, told Daily Express during a visit to North Waziristan.

[\\$167m ADB loan for gas sector: Deal Wednesday](#)

The Financial Express | 25th Dec  
The Bangladesh government will sign with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) \$167 million loan agreement for financing a project to improve infrastructure and operational efficiency of the country's gas sector. Last month, the ADB approved the loan amount to help promote sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty in Bangladesh by improving production efficiency at a key gas field, north of the capital

## AFGHANISTAN

[Afghanistan hope US deny asylum to female pilot Niloofar Rahmani](#)

Khaama Press | 26th December

The Afghan government officials have said they hope the United States will deny asylum request by the first fixed-wing female pilot of the country. Captain Rahmani denied to return to Afghanistan last week after completing months of further training in the United States, citing security concerns while requesting asylum in the country. However, a ministry of defense spokesman Mohammad Radmanish has said the government hoped that her request would be denied by U.S. authorities.

[Meshrano Jirga Approves Two Draft Laws](#)

Outlook Afghanistan | 26th December

The Meshrano Jirga or Senate on Sunday approved two draft laws including one preventing women's and children's harassment and the second governing military higher education institutes. Shafiq Nawrozkhel, the deputy head of

women commission of the upper house, tabled the bill on prevention of women and children harassment and asked lawmakers to approve the measure. She said in the draft law, verbal, physical, written and photo harassment of women and children were considered crime.

### [‘Ghani-Abdullah Differences not in Afghans’ Interest’](#)

Outlook Afghanistan | 26th December

A senior American diplomat said that the differences between the Presidential Palace and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Office “are not in the interest of the government and the Afghan nation.” Hugo Llorens, chargé d'affaires at the US Embassy in Kabul, met first deputy chief executive officer (CEO) Mohammad Khan and the two discussed the ongoing situation in Afghanistan, the region and the world, a statement from Khan’s office said. They also talked about the peace process. The American diplomat reiterated his country’s pledges with Afghanistan and vowed continued cooperation with both teams of the national unity government.

## **BANGLADESH**

### [Bangladesh’s female jihadists](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 24<sup>th</sup> December

A female militant blew herself up during a police raid in a militant hideout at Dhaka’s Ashkona, marking the first time a woman acted in the capacity of a suicide bomber in Bangladesh. Bangladesh’s new wave of violent extremists, notably the New Jama’atul Mujahideen Bangladesh outfit, are fielding an unprecedented number of female jihadists. Yesterday’s fatal detonation of an explosive by a female militant during a 16-hour police raid on her hideout marked the first time a woman here has acted in the capacity of a suicide bomber.

### [Government to make Bangladesh a failed state: BNP](#)

bdnews24 | 25<sup>th</sup> December

The ‘unelected and illegal’ government is trying to turn Bangladesh into a failed state, says BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhurul Islam Alamgir. His remarks on Sunday came in the context of comments by the chief justice concerning the competition for dominance among state bodies. The BNP leader was attending a programme by its ally, the Bangladesh Khilafat Majlish at the capital. “The government is turning the country into a place unfit to live,” claimed Mirza Fakhurul. “They have destroyed every pillar of the state”

### [Sikkim eyes Bangladesh market for export of hydel power from Teesta](#)

Prothom Alo | 19<sup>th</sup> December

The government of India’s Sikkim state is in talks with authorities in Dhaka to export hydroelectric power to Bangladesh, reports The Economic Times. It said the Power Trading Corporation (PTC) has been tasked to explore possibilities of export to Bangladesh, ahead of the commissioning of the 1200-megawatt Teesta-III project in North Sikkim in 2017. Teesta is a common river and Bangladesh and India are yet to resolve their longstanding dispute over sharing of its waters.

## **BHUTAN**

### [Japan will provide more power tillers to Bhutan: Ambassador Hiramatsu](#)

Kuensel Online | 24<sup>th</sup> December

I have come to celebrate the end of an important year and the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Bhutan-Japan. Yesterday was the 83rd birth anniversary of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. Many important events took place to celebrate the 30th anniversary during the course of this year. From May to July the Bhutan exhibition ‘A Hint of Happiness’ was held with great success. Many Japanese visited the exhibition to know more about the beauty and attraction of Bhutan. From our part, a team from Fukushima prefecture consisting of experts on flower shows, tea ceremony, and Bonzai tree came to participate in the Royal Bhutan Flower Exhibition.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Police begins large scale operation against drugs with K9 unit](#)

Sun Online | 25<sup>th</sup> December

Drug Enforcement Department of the Maldives Police Service has started a large scale operation against drugs. Police

said that the operation began on Thursday is part of their efforts to protect the country from drugs, reduce the number of drug related crime and crime in general along with creating a safe environment for the society.

## MYANMAR

### [KIA/TNLA clash with government troops](#)

Mizzima | 26<sup>th</sup> December

Government troops clashed with about 60 members of a joint KIA and TNLA patrol while conducting area clearance operations in Muse Township Friday, state media reported on 26 December. As government troops repelled the attack, the armed groups retreated to the southeast.

### [APR Energy Extends Contract on 102MW Myanmar Plant](#)

Mizzima | 23<sup>rd</sup> December

APR Energy, a global leader in fast-track power solutions, announces yesterday that its 102MW project in Myanmar has been extended into the fourth quarter of 2017, according to a company statement. The original contract for the plant, signed in February 2014, was the first agreement between a U.S.-based company and the government of Myanmar for power generation since the lifting of sanctions.

### [Aung San Suu Kyi calls for efforts to restore Yangon's glory](#)

Mizzima | 26<sup>th</sup> December

Myanmar State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi has called on the people to work together with the government in restoring Yangon city's glory of "the most beautiful country in the eastern region", expressing the government's commitment to upgrade the former capital city, Myanmar News Agency reported Sunday.

## NEPAL

### [President Bhandari underscores common viewpoint on development agenda](#)

RSS / My Republica | 24<sup>th</sup> December

President Bidya Devi Bhandari has urged all political parties to move ahead on development agendas by forging a common view ground. Speaking at a program 'Madan Village Program for Development and Prosperity' organized by the Madan Bhandari Memorial Foundation at Itahara-8 in Morang on Saturday, President Bhandari suggested the parliamentarians demand development budget for the district by rising above their partisan interests.

### [Political consensus soon: Deuba](#)

RSS / My Republica | 25<sup>th</sup> December

Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba has hoped that the political parties would be successful to forge consensus very soon. During a gathering organized by Nepal Khadgi Service Committee here Sunday, NC President Deuba said he was committed to clearing political deadlock by forging consensus with other political parties.

### [Conference of govt attorneys concludes](#)

Himalayan News Service / The Himalayan Times | 26<sup>th</sup> December

A three-day conference of government attorneys ended in Kathmandu today issuing a 30- point declaration that says the Office of Attorney General should have a final call on indictment in cases where the government is the plaintiff, unless otherwise provisioned in the constitution. The conference also said all the state organs should be mandated to seek legal advice from the government attorneys.

## PAKISTAN

### [As election looms, so does a higher budget deficit](#)

The Express Tribune | 25<sup>th</sup> December

The time for general elections is approaching. Political parties have kickstarted their election campaigns by nominating key election organisers. In this regard, the government is not far behind and has jumpstarted the development projects. After the completion of the IMF's Extended Fund Facility (EFF), the government is facing a 'soft' budget constraint and is on the path of electioneering.

### [Hindu council worried over moves to amend conversion bill](#)

Dawn | 26<sup>th</sup> December

Patron-in-chief of Pakistan Hindu Council Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankwani has expressed serious concern over reports moves to amend to or abrogate the Sindh Criminal Law (Protection of Minorities) Bill, 2015, and warned if it was done

under pressure of 'extremist religious parties' this would add to deepen the sense of insecurity among non-Muslims. He cautioned that Pakistan might face isolation on international level if the bill was abrogated as the legislation had addressed growing complaints against increasing incidents of abduction and forced conversion of underage minor Hindu girls.

#### [CPEC will light up Pakistan, says PTI Chairman Imran Khan](#)

The News International | 26<sup>th</sup> December

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan said on Sunday that the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will light up the country. Imran Khan said the PTI has no issues with China, but is has problem with the federal government. He said his party would strive to mobilise people against the corrupt practices of the rulers.

### **SRI LANKA**

#### [Sri Lanka High Commission organizes trade promotion event in India](#)

Colombo Page| 25<sup>th</sup> December

Sri Lanka High Commission in India has organized a trade promotion event in New Delhi to promote Sri Lanka's exports among the members of Indian Importers Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

#### [Chinese assistance to set up three technical colleges with full facilities in rural areas](#)

Colombo Page| 24<sup>th</sup> December

The Chinese government has agreed to build three 'super' technical colleges with all facilities in rural areas, the Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training.

#### [Snowden seeks help for Lankan family who helped him](#)

Colombo Gazette| 26<sup>th</sup> December

Whistleblower Edward Snowden has made a Christmas request to his Twitter followers to help the refugee families, including a family from Sri Lanka, living in Hong Kong that sheltered him after he left the US and while he worked to expose the scope of the National Security Agency's information-gathering, sputniknews.com reported.

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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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