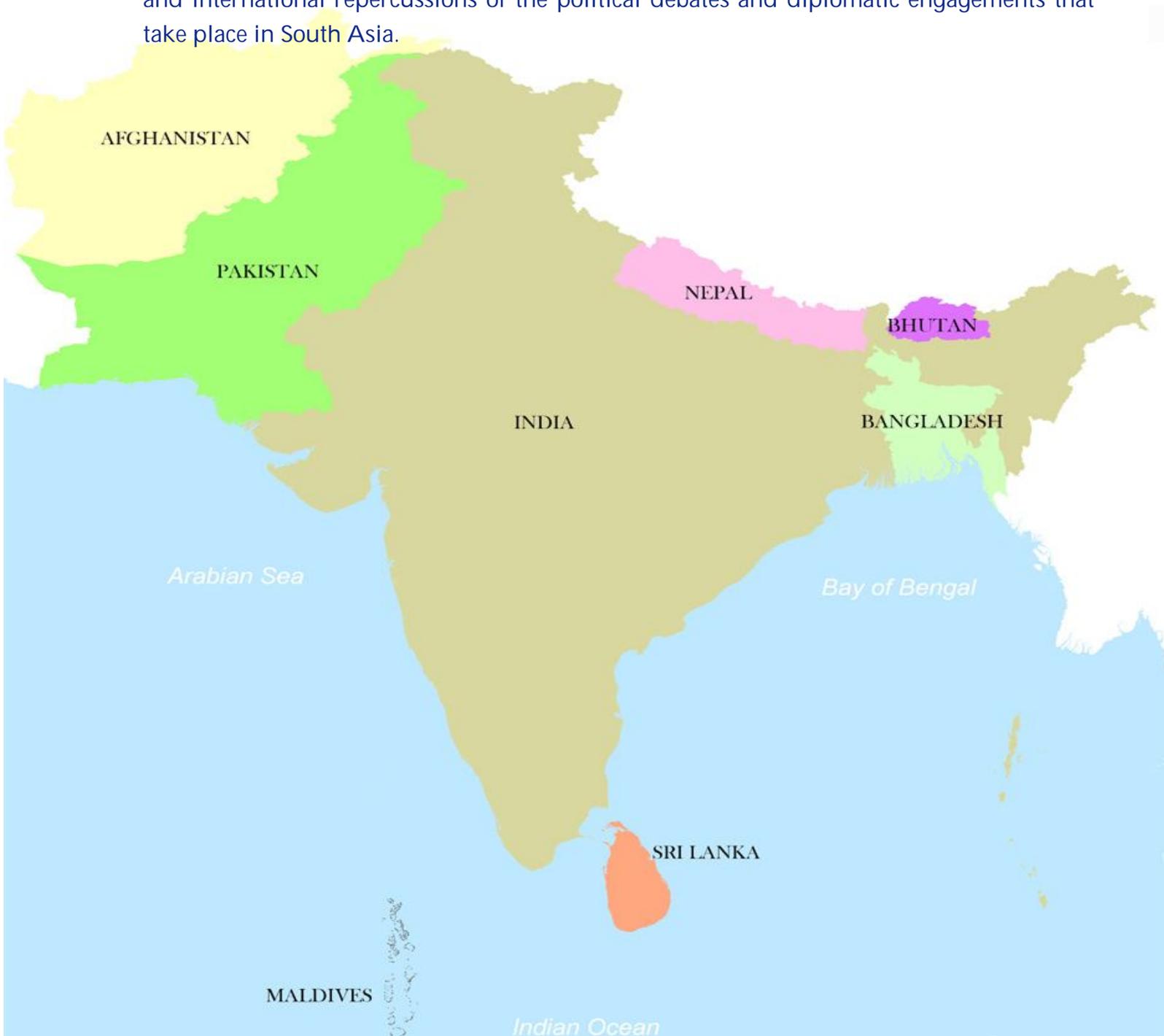


# SOUTH ASIA TRENDS

November 2014

South Asia Trends is a monthly newsletter on South Asian affairs. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide a panoramic view of important events that shape and impact the politics of the subcontinent. The effort would be to inform our readers of the domestic, regional and international repercussions of the political debates and diplomatic engagements that take place in South Asia.



**Compiled & Edited by**  
**Gulbin Sultana**

**idsa**  
INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE  
STUDIES & ANALYSES  
रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

## Editor's Note

18th SAARC Summit was held in Kathmandu on November 26 and 27, 2014. Heads of State/Government of all the eight South Asian countries attended the summit. Three agreements SAARC Regional Agreement on Railways and Regulation of Passenger and Cargo Vehicular Traffic amongst SAARC Member States and energy were supposed to be signed during the summit. Only the agreement on Energy was signed, as Pakistan was not prepared to sign the other two. SAARC members also did not have consensus on the status of China in the SAARC. While Pakistan and other smaller members of SAARC were in favour of elevating China's status to full member or dialogue partner, India is not very keen to see China as a member or dialogue partner. There was a lot of speculation regarding a meeting between the prime ministers of India and Pakistan which did not happen. Though both the leaders shook hands during an informal gathering on the second day of the summit there was no breakthrough. With this attitude and differences among the members regarding various agreements and issues, it is doubtful that the SAARC would be able to achieve the goals listed out in the 'Kathmandu Declaration'.

## Afghanistan

### **President Ghani attends the 4<sup>th</sup> foreign ministerial conference of the Istanbul Process<sup>1</sup>**

President Dr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai made a four day visit to China to attend the 4<sup>th</sup> foreign ministerial conference of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan in Beijing. Addressing the conference, the president invited the Taliban to participate in the government-led reconciliation process in the interest of last peace in the war-torn country. While inaugurating the event on Afghanistan's security and reconstruction, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said, "Beijing will provide Kabul with \$82 million of non-reimbursable assistance this year." Over the next three years, China would give Afghanistan non-reimbursable assistance of US \$245 million. In the upcoming five years, Li added, China would help train 3,000 people of all circles and provide 500 scholarships for students.

### **Pakistani Army Chief Gen. Raheel Sharif meets President Ghani<sup>2</sup>**

During a meeting with Pakistani Army Chief General Raheel Sharif at the Presidential Palace in Kabul on November 6, President Ashraf Ghani said that Pakistan and Afghanistan were facing a common enemy in the form of terrorism that could be eliminated through a joint strategy. According to a statement from the Palace, General Raheel Sharif expressed Pakistan's desire to open a new chapter in its relationship with Afghanistan.

### **President Ghani visits Islamabad<sup>3</sup>**

President Ghani went to Islamabad on November 14 for a two-day visit. Ghani's visit was being regarded as a two-day fence-mending mission. President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai said partnership with Pakistan was an important pillar of Afghanistan's foreign policy while Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif called his country as a second home for the Afghan leader. Addressing a joint press conference with Sharif in Islamabad, Ghani said adoption of practical steps would improve bilateral relations of the two countries. He added the Central Asia-South Asia Regional Energy and Trade (CASA) and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) projects would help link the two countries. The Afghan president also said that they looked forward to the visit of PM Nawaz in Afghanistan. For his part, Nawaz said the two sides recognised the need to build a strong relationship based on mutual respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity. The premier said Pak-Afghan cooperation was imperative for peace and prosperity in the region. Nawaz reaffirmed that peaceful, prosperous and united Afghanistan was in Pakistan's vital interest and also reaffirmed support for intra-Afghan reconciliation process. The premier said Pakistan was committed to upgrading cooperation in border security, defence, Afghan reconstruction, capacity building, parliamentary exchanges and cultural links. During the visit, President Ghani met Minister of Finance Mohammad Ishaq Dar and discussed how to increase trade ties between the two countries, resolve problems being faced by Afghan traders in imports through Pakistan's seaports and facilities for Afghan traders in area of transit trade. Both sides agreed to enhance the existing bilateral trade volume from US \$2.5 billion to US \$5 billion over the next two years.

### **Ghani attends the SAARC Summit<sup>4</sup>**

President Ashraf Ghani attended the 18<sup>th</sup> South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit. Addressing the opening session of the Summit, Ghani dwelt extensively on the challenges Afghanistan faces and called for greater integration with his more affluent partners to spur economic growth. President Ghani said he would not allow anyone to conduct a proxy war in his country or Afghan territory to be used against its neighbours. Asia's economic boom needs to be tapped into by the rest of the SAARC countries, Ghani noted, especially in the field of energy where significant gas and oil resources could be used regionally to push up growth. Ghani also talked extensively about the need to promote accountability within Afghanistan to build a peaceful future and expressed appreciation for support from the SAARC members.

### **NATO Secretary Gen. Jens Stoltenberg visits Afghanistan<sup>5</sup>**

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg arrived on a surprise visit to Afghanistan on November 6 and met with President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. At a press conference, Stoltenberg spoke along side the Afghan president and voiced in confidence in the Afghan forces' ability to take over security for the country once the combat mission ends in December. However, President Ghani added an end to the ISAF combat operations did not mean a halt to bilateral cooperation. Instead, he continued, it represented the opening of a new chapter: 'Operation Resolute Support'. From January 1, 2015 NATO will launch a new non-combat mission to pursue the development of Afghan security forces' capacity. Other aspects of NATO's continued commitment will include contribution to the financial sustainment of the Afghan security forces.

### **Obama extends US combat role in Afghanistan<sup>6</sup>**

Based on the classified reports as said by the New York Times, Obama ordered American forces to "carry out missions against the Taliban and other militant groups threatening American troops or the Afghan government". The authorization of direct role in the war will allow for the use of American jets, bombers and drones to support the Afghan security forces in their combat missions; specifically, according to a senior American military officer, U.S. Air Force F-16 fighters, B-1B bombers and Predator and Reaper drones. This decision comes as previously Obama had announced that the U.S.-led NATO combat operations would conclude at the end of 2014, but according to the New York Times the extension of a direct combat role in Afghanistan was decided upon after "a lengthy and heated debate" between the Pentagon and the White House.

### **Wolesi Jirga approves the BSA and the SOFA<sup>7</sup>**

The Lower House of Parliament, known as the Wolesi Jirga, has approved the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with the United States and the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with NATO on November 23. 172 Members of Parliament approved of both security agreements while five others disapproved of the endorsement.

### **Obama pledges support to Afghan women<sup>8</sup>**

US President Barack Obama reaffirmed Washington's support to Afghan women and girls to develop their talents, raise their voices and strengthen their communities and their country. In a video message to the inauguration of the USAID funded Promote Programs, President Obama said, "the future of Afghanistan will be written by all Afghan citizens – men and women, boys and girls." USAID has committed US \$216 million to fund Promote Programs, making it the largest women's empowerment project in the US government's history. The Promote programs will help 75,000 young Afghan women become leaders in their fields over the course of the five-year program. Speaking during the inauguration ceremony, President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani also reaffirmed commitment on robust investment on girls education, saying that educating a girl will have its impact on the coming five generations.

### **Afghanistan worst country for investment in Asia: WB<sup>9</sup>**

Afghanistan is the worst country for investments in Asia, and the seventh worst in the entire world, according to a report recently published by the World Bank (WB). The report cites security threats, corruption, lack of reform and declining international aid as some of the most fundamental factors behind Afghanistan's fragile investment climate. Last year, Afghanistan was ranked 182 out of 185 countries evaluated by the World Bank for investment potential. But this year's report saw the country drop to 183 as the number of countries evaluated expanded to 189. The Afghanistan Investment Supporting Agency (AISA) has responded to the report, and did not dispute its findings.

### **Saudi Arabia to build mega Islamic centre in Kabul<sup>10</sup>**

The Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Afghanistan, Mesfer bin Abdul Rahman Al-Ghaseb, has signed a contract with a construction company to build the biggest Islamic center in Afghanistan to promote Islamic education. He said lessons geared toward countering the extremist message will be emphasised at the center. The announcement comes soon after President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani's visit to Saudi Arabia, during which officials from Kabul and Riyadh committed themselves to enhance bilateral cooperation between their countries.

### **India to support Afghanistan to build strong, peaceful democratic nation<sup>11</sup>**

Former president Hamid Karzai visited New Delhi to attend HT Leadership summit. Speaking at the summit on November 21, he said that terrorism perpetrated and supported from "outside" was the main challenge for Afghanistan. He asked New Delhi "to do more" in defence cooperation with Kabul. He also said India and China should join hands to fight extremism in the region. During his visit, Mr. Karzai met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and briefed him about the developments in Afghanistan following the formation of the national unity government. PM Modi said that India would continue to extend its full support to the new government in Afghanistan in its efforts to build a strong and peaceful democratic nation.

### **New Kabul PC members administered oath<sup>12</sup>**

The newly-elected Provincial Council (PC) members of central Kabul province were sworn-in on November 17 at the Governor's House in Kabul despite warnings from losing candidates to disrupt the ceremony. After being put on hold for seven months, final results from the April 5 provincial council elections sparked protests and fraud allegations by failed candidates in various provinces. The previously planned oath-taking ceremony for Kabul PC members was slated for Nov 11, but it had to be cancelled due to protest demonstrations by nearly 300 people in front of the Governor's House. The protesters on November 16 renewed their warning and called for the creation of a special tribunal to investigate fraud allegations. As many as 454 individuals contested the April elections in Kabul province and 33 of them, including seven women, were elected.

### **7 percent rise in poppy cultivation in Afghanistan: UNODC<sup>13</sup>**

UN Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) has released its survey report indicating that poppy cultivation has risen by 7 percent as compared to 2013 in Afghanistan. The report stated the area used for poppy cultivation grew to 224,000 hectares (553,000 acres) of land, mostly in the southern part of the country. The report added the increased cultivation would likely produce 6,400 tons of opium indicating 17 percent rise in opium production. 69 percent of total drugs of Afghanistan are being produced in southern zone, of which, 46 percent is produced in Helmand province, according to the report. Over US \$7 billion have been spent so far in the fight against drugs but its cultivation is still on the rise. President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai said combating the menace of narcotics needed a joint international strategy.

### **Afghanistan ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> on Global Terrorism Index list<sup>14</sup>**

A new global study by the London-based Institute for Economics and Peace has ranked Afghanistan second after Iraq on the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) list. The report says terrorism is increasing in Afghanistan, with ten percent more terrorist attacks and 13 percent more fatalities in 2013 than 2012. Whilst there were seven different terrorist groups active in Afghanistan, one group, the Taliban, were responsible for the majority of attacks and casualties. National Directorate of Security (NDS) spokesman Haseeb Sediqi said that this year, the Taliban used huge force and financial resources to conduct armed attacks in the cities resulting to nearly 70 percent rise in these attacks. This is believed to be the new plan of the militant group to turn from villages to the cities.

## **Bangladesh**

### **President visits China<sup>15</sup>**

President Abdul Hamid made a five day visit to China to attend the Dialogue on Strengthening Connectivity Partnership, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit. The president was being accompanied by 42 officials. During the visit, President Abdul Hamid met his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. The two presidents emphasised further strengthening the economic and other cooperation between the two countries for mutual benefits. President Hamid sought Chinese cooperation in the field of oceanography, training on UN peacekeeping and peace-building operation,

enhancing defence production capability of Bangladesh Armed Forces, in strengthening Bangladesh's capacity to address the challenges related to climate change and disaster risk reduction. He invited Xi to visit Bangladesh anytime next year to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and China. Lauding Bangladesh for its economic and social development, the Chinese president gave assurance of continuing its grant and assistance for the development of Bangladesh. He also appreciated Bangladesh's role in various international and regional forums, and said his country would invite 100 young people from Bangladesh to visit China.

### **President Hamid meets Myanmar President Thein Sein<sup>16</sup>**

President Abdul Hamid said Bangladesh and Myanmar should work together to find out effective mechanisms for a permanent solution to the long-pending Rohingya issue. President Hamid said this at a bilateral meeting with Myanmar President Thein Sein at Diaoyutai State Guest House in Beijing. President Hamid also stressed enhanced cooperation between the two countries in preventing production of narcotics and illicit trafficking, establishing direct road and rail link between the two countries. Hamid invited his Myanmar counterpart to visit Bangladesh. President Thein Sein said he was looking forward to paying a visit to Bangladesh. Thein Sein also invited Hamid to visit Myanmar.

### **Prime Minister Hasina attends the SAARC Summit<sup>17</sup>**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina along with 63 members left Dhaka for Nepal on November 25 to attend the 18th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit on November 26-27. PM Hasina had four separate bilateral meetings with the heads of the government and state of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nepal on the sidelines of the summit in Kathmandu on November 26. In the meetings, all the leaders stressed the need for stronger cooperation to combat militancy, alleviate poverty and make SAARC an effective body. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi reassured Sheikh Hasina of signing the Teesta water-sharing deal and implementing the Land Boundary Agreement, saying his government was working sincerely on the issues. Modi also informed Hasina that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banarjee, who had opposed the signing of the Teesta treaty, now had no objection and that Mamata would come to Bangladesh with him at the time of striking the deal. He also emphasised that Bangladesh cooperated more in sharing intelligence over the recent Burdwan blasts with the Indian intelligence agencies. During the meeting with the Nepal PM, Hasina recalled the support of the Nepalese people for the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh. Koirala thanked Hasina for allowing Nepal to use the Mongla Port. Hasina said she requested India to allow Nepal and Bhutan to use its corridor to enter Bangladesh. The Nepalese PM invited Bangladeshi investment in his country in hydro-electricity projects. During the bilateral meeting, the Afghan president wanted to know from Hasina how Bangladesh curbed militancy. Hasina told the president that Bangladesh and her government had to take immense risks to wipe out the menace. She said her government had adopted zero tolerance for militancy. Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif and Hasina exchanged pleasantries and congratulated each other on becoming prime minister for the third time. At the 30-minute-long meeting, they discussed terrorism and power shortages in Pakistan.

### **India-Bangladesh finalise the inter-country transmission line<sup>18</sup>**

The import of 100 megawatt electricity from Tripura received a boost after officials of Bangladesh and India finalised the inter-country transmission line on November 3. The two countries decided that an inter-connection line would be drawn from Suryamaninagar power sub-station in Agartala to Comilla in Bangladesh. The electricity will be transported from the 726MW thermal power project at Palatana in Gomati district of the northeastern Indian state. The decision was taken at a meeting of technical experts from India and Bangladesh in Agartala, the capital of Tripura.

### **NIA shares information with Bangladesh intelligence agency<sup>19</sup>**

A four-member team of India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) headed by Sharad Kumar went to Dhaka on November 17 to share information about militancy with Bangladesh and find out a mechanism to jointly fight against the menace. The NIA team handed over to intelligence agencies in Dhaka a list of 11 suspected Bangladeshi militants believed to be behind the October 2 Burdwan blast. Bangladesh also handed over to the NIA a list of 51 - 10 militants and 41 top criminals - who are believed to be hiding in India. Bangladesh and India have planned simultaneous raids along the border to nab the hiding members of the outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB). The home ministry of Bangladesh Government formed a six-member committee to work on militancy and extend cooperation to the NIA in the investigation. Additional Home Secretary Kamal Uddin Ahmed heads the committee which will have representatives of intelligence agencies. Following the visit of Indian team, a seven-member team of law enforcement and intelligence agencies of Bangladesh made a three-day visit to India to help the Indian intelligence agencies locate the Bangladeshi JMB members believed to be hiding in India.

### **BGB-BSF conference<sup>20</sup>**

A four-day conference between the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) began at Tamabil on Sylhet-Meghalaya border on November 17. Brigadier General Latiful Haider, commander of BGB North-East region led the 20-member Bangladesh team while Sree Sudesh Kumar, inspector general of BSF Meghalaya region, led the Indian side at the conference.

### **Leather manufacturers from India and Bangladesh sign MoU<sup>21</sup>**

Leather manufacturers from India and Bangladesh signed a memorandum of understanding to intensify cooperation, foster joint ventures and explore possibilities of direct investments on November 27. The Indian Footwear Components Manufacturers Association (IFCOMA) and the Leather Goods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh signed the agreement on the sidelines of a leather sector fair at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka. Indian High Commissioner Pankaj Saran was present during the agreement signing.

### **Nisha Biswal visits Bangladesh<sup>22</sup>**

US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Nisha Biswal came to Dhaka on November 27 on a three-day visit after attending the 18<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit in Kathmandu. Nisha Desai Biswal in separate meetings with opposition leader Raushan Ershad, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and civil society representatives said that national consensus among political parties was a must to strengthen democratic processes and sustainable economic development. This was Biswal's third trip to Dhaka.

### **Government registers protests with Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka<sup>23</sup>**

Bangladesh government has strongly protested the resolution adopted by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Provincial Assembly of Pakistan on the war crimes verdicts, terming it "direct interference" in the internal affairs of Bangladesh. In a diplomatic note sent to the Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka on November 25, the Foreign Ministry deplored the adoption of the said resolution by the KPK Assembly, which it said was a brazen denial of justice for the victims of the heinous crimes committed by the convicted individuals and that the KPK Assembly chose to speak for Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami. On November 6, the Foreign Ministry summoned the acting high commissioner of Pakistan Ahmad Hussain Dayo and strongly protested Islamabad's reaction to the recent verdict in the trial of war criminal Motiur Rahman Nizami. In an aide-memoire, the government deplored the comments made by a senior and important cabinet member of Pakistan government regarding the verdict by the International Crimes Tribunal, Bangladesh without appreciating its true perspective. Earlier on December 17, 2013, Dhaka summoned the then Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Afrasiab Mehdi Hashmi Qureshi and deplored the resolutions adopted by the Pakistan National Assembly and Punjab Provincial Assembly expressing concern over the execution of war criminal Quader Mollah.

### **Bangladesh-South Korea Foreign Office Consultations held in Seoul<sup>24</sup>**

Korea has urged Bangladesh to purchase training and combat aircraft and high-tech defence hardware from the country. Korean First Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Ambassador Cho Taeyong made the call at the second Bangladesh-South Korea Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) in Seoul on November 5. However, there was no response from Bangladesh side regarding the issue. Bangladesh sought Korean support in infrastructural improvement including road and rail connectivity and requested to consider establishing direct air connectivity between Dhaka and Seoul.

### **Russia urges Bangladesh to import more commodities<sup>25</sup>**

Russian ambassador in Dhaka, Alexander Nikolaev, met Finance Minister AMA Muhith on November 2, 2014 and urged Bangladesh to import more commodities, particularly wheat, from Russia, as it has abundance of agricultural products. But Muhith said it would be tricky as banking transactions with Russia are problematic. The government will try to find a way out of it. Muhith assured Nikolaev at the meeting that Bangladesh would take some new initiatives to enhance relationship between the two countries, including forming a joint commission.

### **Dhaka opens its first resident diplomatic mission in Vienna<sup>26</sup>**

Dhaka has opened its first-ever resident diplomatic mission in Vienna on November 1. Director General (East Asia and Pacific Wing) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Md. Abu Zafar has been appointed as ambassador to Austria.

### **Germany to grant €211 million to Bangladesh<sup>27</sup>**

Bangladesh will get €211 million for bilateral technical and financial cooperation from Germany, according to a statement issued by German embassy in Dhaka. Of the total, €140 million will be earmarked for making energy supply more efficient by improving and establishing transmission lines and substations. Germany pledged the funds during a meeting on development cooperation between the two governments, which concluded in Dhaka on November 3. Wolfram Klein, head of the South Asia division of the German economic cooperation and development ministry, and Mansur Md. Faizullah, additional secretary (Europe wing) of the finance ministry, led the delegations.

### **“Showcase Bangladesh 2014” in Kuala Lumpur<sup>28</sup>**

Bangladesh urged Malaysian investors to take up new investment ventures in the fast-growing manufacturing, services and infrastructure projects to help the country reach newer heights of development. Dhaka also sought technological support from Kuala Lumpur as it has developed expertise in the area. Officials and entrepreneurs of Bangladesh made the call while addressing the inaugural session of a three-day trade show — “Showcase Bangladesh 2014”, which began at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre on November 14. Bangladesh-Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BMCCI) in collaboration with Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia, Malaysia South-South Association, Malaysia External Trade Development Cooperation and Malaysian Industrial Development Authority hosted the event for the third time. About 60 Bangladeshi companies from banking and insurance services, readymade garments, textiles, infrastructure, ICT and telecom and other sectors joined the showcase with their products and services.

### **Bangladesh is at risk of higher levels of terrorism<sup>29</sup>**

Though not in conflict, Bangladesh is at risk of higher levels of terrorism, according to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report. The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), a Sydney-based non-profit research organisation, published the report on November 18, calculating various political, social and violence factors to determine the risk. Bangladesh ranks 23<sup>rd</sup> among 162 nations in the GTI. Bangladesh is among the 13 countries vulnerable to high terror risk and third South Asian country in such a position besides Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

### **Swedish assistance to Bangladesh<sup>30</sup>**

Sweden will give Bangladesh 1.6 billion Swedish krona in development assistance in the next seven years. The move is part of the Nordic country’s development strategy for Bangladesh for 2014-2020. The aim of the strategy is to: alleviate poverty; strengthen democracy, respect for human rights and gender equality; and

contribute to sustainable development. Sweden committed the same amount in 2013 as development assistance for Bangladesh.

### **Inflation, exports and foreign reserves in the month of October<sup>31</sup>**

Inflation continued its descent in October, coming down to 6.6 percent, the lowest in 23 months. Food inflation was the biggest driver behind the drop in October, sliding to 7.16 percent from 7.63 percent in September. Non-food inflation, however, edged up to 5.74 percent last month from 5.63 percent in September, owing to a rise in house rent, transportation costs, education and medical expenses and other non-food items, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. With the latest reduction, inflation is close to Bangladesh Bank's target for the fiscal year — 6.5 percent. Exports declined 7.63 percent year-on-year to US \$1.96 billion in October due to a slowdown in apparel exports, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau. Garment exports fell 3.5 percent to US \$7.76 billion in October compared with the same month last year. The contribution of garment items to national exports is more than 80 percent. However, Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserves rose to a record high of US \$22.31 billion at the end of October from US \$21.84 billion in September.

## **Bhutan**

### **Prime Minister attends the 18<sup>th</sup> SAARC summit<sup>32</sup>**

Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay went to Nepal on November 25 to attend the 18<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit. Prime Minister Tobgay said at the opening of the summit on November 26 that collective resources need to be better used to reduce high levels of poverty in the region. "Our region is blessed with resources which however need to be distributed equitably. One fifth of the world population can transform the future but need to be provided with enabling policies to unlock their potential," he said. Prime Minister Tobgay also called for fighting climate change, human and drugs trafficking in the border areas of the region. He also called for fighting poverty and terrorism, which he said were the other major challenges in the region. Prime Minister Tobgay met Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on the sideline of the summit.

### **Pranab Mukherjee visits Bhutan<sup>33</sup>**

Indian President Pranab Mukherjee went to Bhutan on a two-day state visit on November 7. In a special, unprecedented gesture and break from protocol, His Majesty the King received the Indian President at Paro airport. The King and the President presided over the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the establishment of Nalanda University. Bhutan is the 11th country to sign the MoU. During the visit, president met Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay. President Mukherjee inaugurated the Jigme Wangchuck Power Training Institute (PTI). The institute will build capacity and enhance knowledge of officials and staff that will work in commissioned hydropower plants. A grant of Nu 337 million has been approved by the government of India (GoI) to upgrade the Technical Training Institute at Dekiling to the Jigme Wangchuck PTI. In a press conference, the Indian press secretary, Venu Rajmony, said that the president, during his audience with His Majesty the King, recalled the role played by Bhutan and the leadership of the Fourth Druk Gyalpo in 2003, when military operations were conducted to flush

out extremists camped in Bhutan. President pointed out that such action should be an example to all SAARC countries. President asserted that India and Bhutan's security is "intricately interlinked and indivisible". President also praised Bhutan's democratic experiment, in which the Fourth Druk Gyalpo gave up power voluntarily and persuaded the Bhutanese to accept democracy. This was the first bilateral state visit by an Indian President to Bhutan in 26 years. India provided grants of Nu 1.3 billion to Bhutan during the state visit President Pranab Mukherjee. The Nu 1.3 billion represents the first portion for three projects that were inaugurated by President Mukherjee. Of the total amount, Nu 405.5 million is for the upgradation or double-laning of the East-West highway, scheduled to be completed in the next three years. The second project is the School Reform Program, for which Nu 868.9 million was provided. The third project is the establishment of the Jigme Wangchuk Power Training Institute, for which Nu 15 million was provided on.

### **Gol approves 303 SDPs<sup>34</sup>**

Government of India (GoI) has approved 303 small development projects (SDP) worth Nu 4.55 billion, including the 46 projects in the first batch of SDP for the 11th Plan. This was sealed during the second Bhutan-India SDP committee meeting held on November 19. The projects include blacktopping of gewog connectivity roads, construction of farm roads, irrigation channels, suspension bridges, water supply scheme and additional facilities for 12 schools under School Reform Programme across the country. In March, 59 projects in the first batch of SDP were approved. The councillor from the Indian embassy, Nina Tshering La, who led the Indian delegation, said 13 projects of the 59 had to be removed and reworked by the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC). This, she said, was because most of these projects were related to schools. "There are already about 37 schools under project tied assistance (PTA)," she said, adding that the plans in some of the schools under SDP had to be reworked. A Bhutanese official said that the government would be proposing these 13 projects, which had to be removed from the SDP, under PTA. Reviews were also conducted on the implementation status of the first batch of SDPs, approved in March this year. For SDP, she said that the 30 percent of the funding would be provided to kick start the project. Then, based on the progress of each projects, another 60 percent of the fund would be sanctioned. The remaining 10 percent would be released upon completion of the project. The government of India has committed to release Rs 1.8 billion in the first year of the Plan to finance SDPs. In total, the GoI's contribution on SDP for the Plan period stands at Nu 8.5 billion. According to a press release from the foreign ministry, the remaining projects under SDP worth Nu 3.9 billion would be programmed in subsequent SDP committee meetings, meaning that all SDP would be approved by December 2015. Meanwhile, Government of India has, in writing, stated that they won't be able to sanction a Nu 660 million grant for the fourth small development project (SDP) initiated in the 10th Plan. This was because the previous government, according to finance minister Namgay Dorji, didn't heed to certain procedures and guidelines that the two countries were required to follow.

### **Nu 1.7 billion refunded in excise duty<sup>35</sup>**

Government of India (GoI) announced a total excise duty refund of Nu 1.756 billion to Bhutan for the year 2013 on November 28. Bhutan received Nu 2.38 billion as

excise duty refund for 2012. The refund is made on excisable commodities imported from India. Although most of the commodities are subject to levy of excise duty in India, there are specific exemptions issued through notifications by the government of India. Furthermore, since imports made by the hydropower projects are exempted from excise duty at source, no excise duty claims are made for the imports made by these projects. The business community has proposed that the modality of the present procedure of excise duty refund to Bhutan should be changed. And the private sector feels that doing so would benefit them and the government. However, the modality could not be amended until 2016, when the Indo-Bhutan Trade Agreement will expire.

### **Indian Army Chief visits Bhutan<sup>36</sup>**

His Majesty the King granted an audience to the Indian Chief of Army Staff, General Dalbir Singh Suhag, who made a three-day visit to Bhutan on November 2, 2014. This was his first visit abroad after taking charge in July this year.

### **Thai delegation visits Bhutan<sup>37</sup>**

A 105-member delegation from Thailand, led by the deputy foreign minister Don Pramudwinai, came to Bhutan to celebrate the 87th birth anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, the 59th birth anniversary of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, the sixth anniversary of His Majesty the King's coronation, and the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bhutan and Thailand. To celebrate these occasions, the Royal Thai embassy and the Royal Thai consulate in Thimphu organised a reception on November 14 at the Taj Tashi. Princess Chimi Yangzom Wangchuck launched commemorative postage stamps, depicting Thai-Bhutan relations, at the reception. Diplomatic relations between Bhutan and Thailand were established in 1989, but contacts between the royal families of the two countries were established as early as 1985.

### **Austrian govt. commits Nu 173 million for energy, environment and tourism<sup>38</sup>**

Austrian government has committed Nu 173 million for three new projects in energy, environment and tourism that are in line with the 11th Five Year Plan. The Gross National Happiness Commission secretary, Sonam Wangchuk, and resident representative of the Austrian coordination office, Christine Anna Jantscher, signed the three agreements on November 18. Meanwhile, the Austrian government's assistance for the 11th Plan is projected at Euro 10 million or more than Nu 750 million, roughly. More than Nu 90 million is allocated for DGPC to safeguard and minimise risks associated with existing hydropower plants. But this comes with a condition that DGPC also invests about Nu 50 million to procure scientific equipment. With an assistance of about Nu 8.2 million, the Austrian government will also help in drafting and promoting two circuit tourism development plans in eastern Bhutan.

### **Six more peacekeepers assigned to UN<sup>39</sup>**

Bhutan is expanding its role in UN peacekeeping by sending six more security personnel, including a woman, to the West African state of Liberia. Six officers of the Royal Bhutan Police (RBP) will be joining the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

## Maldives

to serve as UN Police (UNPOL) on a one-year assignment. They will serve under the UN's blue flag and wear the blue beret. This is the second time Bhutan is contributing security personnel for a UN peacekeeping mission. In September, Bhutan contributed two Royal Bhutan Army officers and one Royal Body Guard officer for UN peacekeeping missions in the Middle East and Africa. There will now be nine Bhutanese security personnel involved in UN peacekeeping.

### **President attends the 18<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit<sup>40</sup>**

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom attended the 18<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit. In his address at the inaugural session of the Summit, the President called for collective action among the SAARC member states in working towards the mutual benefit of the region. On the sideline of the summit, President Yameen met with President Mahinda Rajapaksa of Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan, and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi. During these meetings, President highlighted the commitment of the Maldivian Government to further strengthening relations with these South Asian states, while also discussing approaches to make SAARC a more dynamic organisation.

### **Sushma Swaraj makes transit visit to Maldives<sup>41</sup>**

Minister of External Affairs of India Sushma Swaraj reaffirmed that strong commitment would be given for stability, prosperity and security of Maldives by India on November 3 at Ibrahim Nasir International Airport during the transit visit to Maldives after the completion of her official visit to Mauritius. In a meeting held with Minister of Foreign Affairs Dunya Maumoon at Hulhule Island Hotel, Minister Sushma extended Victory Day greetings to Minister Dunya and all the citizens of Maldives.

### **India extends greetings on the occasion of the Republic Day<sup>42</sup>**

President of India Pranab Mukherjee has said that he was confident that the India-Maldives relationship would continue to expand and strengthen in the coming years, to the mutual benefit of the people of both countries. This came in a message from Mukherjee to President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom, to extend greetings to the government and the people of the Maldives on the occasion of the Republic Day of the Maldives. Prime Minister Modi also sent message to President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom on the occasion of the Republic Day of the Maldives.

### **Russian Prosecutor General Yury Chaika visits Maldives<sup>43</sup>**

Russian Prosecutor General Yury Chaika arrived in Maldives on November 5 on an invitation of Prosecutor General's Office of Maldives to strengthen relations in the area of prosecution of both countries. The Prosecutor General Yury met President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom on November 6 at the President's Office. Discussions were focused on further strengthening the bilateral relations between the Maldives and Russia. During Yury's visit both Russia and the Maldives signed an agreement regarding cooperation in criminal matters. Yury also requested Maldives to sign its first extradition agreement with Russia, following the enforcement of the Extradition Act which is presently in the parliament.

### **China provides cans, LED lights and Solar PV systems to the Maldives<sup>44</sup>**

Government of China has provided 200 trash cans to the Maldives. The agreement in this regard was signed at a ceremony at the Ministry of Environment on November 6, by Deputy Minister of Environment Ali Amir, and Deputy Ambassador of China to Maldives Liu Jiyang. Speaking at the ceremony, Ali Amir noted that the price of the 200 trash cans exceeds MVR 500,000, and thanked the Chinese government. He said that the trash cans would be used for waste management, a serious environmental problem faced by Maldives. Government of China has also provided LED lights and Solar PV systems to the Maldives. The agreement in this regard was signed at a ceremony at Mookai Suites on November 18, by Minister of Environment and Energy Thorig Ibrahim and Deputy Ambassador of China to Maldives Liu Jiyang. Under the agreement, the Chinese government will provide 125,000 LED bulbs, 75,000 LED tube lights, and ten 80-kW solar PV systems. Speaking at the ceremony, Thorig said that the lights would be used at government offices as part of the government's efforts to reduce electricity costs. The Chinese government also provided 270,000 LED lights to the Maldivian government last year. They have been donated to 509 government institutions in 164 islands.

### **Maldives proposes amendments to the Montreal Protocol<sup>45</sup>**

The Maldives has called the international community to take into consideration the hindrances and challenges faced by small nations in eliminating substances that harm the ozone layer. Speaking at the 10th Conference of Parties under the Vienna Convention, Tariq Ibrahim, the Maldivian Minister of Environment, said that these measures must be taken under the Montreal Protocol. The Minister said that the Maldives had begun the implementation of plans designed to stop use of HCFC gases in fisheries vessels and equipment. According to the Minister, the Maldives had, in union with the Federated States of Micronesia, proposed amendments to the Montreal Protocol so that work on minimizing the usage of HFC gases. The 10th Conference of the Parties under the Vienna Convention, and the 26th Meeting of the Montreal Protocol took place from 17th to 21st of this month in Paris, France.

### **Maldives elected as the next Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States<sup>46</sup>**

Maldives has been elected as the next Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). The decision was announced on November 11 at the Ministerial Meeting of AOSIS in Seychelles, with votes in favour from 37 countries. The Maldives spearheaded the efforts to form AOSIS, following the first ever Small States Conference held in the Maldives in November 1989. Maldives' election as Chair of AOSIS will be effective from January 1, 2015.

### **GMIAL claims US \$ 803 million from the Maldives as compensation<sup>47</sup>**

GMR Male' International Airport Private Limited (GMIAL), a subsidiary of GMR Infrastructure Limited (GMR), has claimed US \$803 million from the Maldivian government as compensation for terminating the agreement to manage Ibrahim Nasir International Airport (INIA). The initial amount sought by GMR in damages from the Maldivian government, when it filed the case to the Singapore tribunal,

was \$1.4 billion. In June this year, after 18 months of detailed proceedings, the tribunal's verdict stated that the Maldivian government and MACL were jointly liable in demands to GMIAL "for loss caused by wrongful repudiation of the agreement as per the concession agreement". The tribunal directed the Maldivian government and MACL to pay \$4 million to GMIAL as compensation for legal costs within 42 days. However, the tribunal did not declare the compensation amount for the unlawful termination of the contract.

### **President meets the Director of Mauritius Commercial Bank<sup>48</sup>**

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom met with the Director of Mauritius Commercial Bank (MCB), Mr. Raoul Gufflet. The meeting was held on November 23 at the President's Office. Discussions at the meeting were focused on the investment opportunities available in the Maldives. They also explored avenues to further expand trade and investment sectors of the country.

### **Malaysian investors visit Maldives<sup>49</sup>**

A team of Malaysian investors came to Maldives on November 15. Mohamed Fayaz, Maldives High Commissioner to Malaysia said that 17 investors who belong to Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Malaysia were included in the team. He stated that the investors were interested to invest on fields of guest house, guest boutiques, fishing, construction, export and import and real estate businesses in Maldives. An information session was organised for the visiting delegation of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, regarding investment opportunities in the Maldives. The session, held at the STELCO conference hall on November 16, was attended by the members of the Malaysian delegation and senior officials of Maldivian ministries.

### **Government decides to convert the airport in L. Kadhdhoo into a military airport<sup>50</sup>**

Maldivian government has decided to convert the airport in L. Kadhdhoo into a military airport. Colonel Retired Muhammad Naazim, the Minister of Defence, said that the airport has been handed over to his ministry for the work of transformation. He also said that the necessary work would be done and the airport would begin operations as a military airport starting from the coming January. The Minister said helicopters used by the Maldives National Defence Force would be relocated there when the transformation is complete. He also said that the ministry is trying to get aircrafts to be used by the MNDF with the new facility.

### **President reiterates Maldives' support for a Palestinian State<sup>51</sup>**

In a message sent on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has reiterated the Maldives' support for the establishment of a Palestinian State. In his message, the President emphasised that the Maldives fully supports the Palestine's efforts to establish statehood, and urged the rest of the world to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and establish an independent state of Palestine.

### **Export declines-import increases in October<sup>52</sup>**

Export of goods from Maldives has been decreased by 48 percent and import to Maldives has been increased by four percent in October 2014 when compared with October 2013. According to import/export statistics of Customs, goods worth MVR 131.3 million have been exported from Maldives in October 2014, while goods worth MVR 251.3 million have been exported from Maldives in October 2013. According to Customs, decrease in export of chilled yellow fin tuna and skipjack tuna from Maldives was the main reason for the decrease in exports in October 2014 when compared with October 2013. Imports have been increased by four percent in October 2014 when compared with October 2013. Out of the total amount spent on imports, most were spent on importing petroleum products. The second most imported category was food items, followed by machinery and electronics.

### **Government submits projected state budget for 2015 to the Parliament<sup>53</sup>**

The government has submitted the projected state budget for 2015, worth MVR 24,341,906,072, to the parliament on November 4. Presenting the budget at the parliament sitting, Minister of Finance and Treasury Abdulla Jihad said that 65 percent of the budget, or MVR 15.8 billion, has been allocated for recurrent expenses. The ministry has estimated that 26 percent of the budget would be spent on salaries and allowances, 13 percent would be spent on social security and welfare, and 8 percent would be spent on operations.

### **IMF supports Green Tax<sup>54</sup>**

International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said that they were contented about what was being included in the Maldives' budget projected for the year 2015 and they support the decision of the government to introduce Green Tax next year. In a press conference held on November 20 at auditorium of Regional Bank by the IMF team, which arrived in Maldives to review the economy of Maldives, Head of the team, Alison Stuart said that expenses and revenue has been included applicably in the projected budget for 2015 in order to decrease the physical deficit.

### **Maldives repatriates 7,962 expats<sup>55</sup>**

Minister of Defence Mohamed Nazim said that 7,962 expats were repatriated this year, under the voluntary departure program and efforts to repatriate expats living illegally in the Maldives. Minister Nazim announced this at a press conference at Coast Guard Building on November 16, held to brief the media regarding the efforts of the institutions operated under the Ministry of Defence over the past year. The Defence Minister said that about US \$24 million had been retained in the local economy as a result of the repatriation of the expats over the past year. Nazim said that the number of illegal expats still stands at around 30,000, and according to Immigration Department's records, the total number of expats in the Maldives has reached 120,000.

### **Current population of the Maldives is 341,256<sup>56</sup>**

The National Bureau of Statistics has revealed that the current population of the Maldives is 341,256. The preliminary results of the census conducted in September

## Nepal

2014 show that 399,939 people live in the Maldives in total, out of which 341,256 are Maldivians. The population of the Maldives was 298,968 in 2006. The current sex ratio is 100 women to 103 men.

### **Prime Minister Sushil Koirala inaugurates the 18<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit<sup>57</sup>**

Prime Minister Sushil Koirala inaugurated the 18<sup>th</sup> SAARC summit at City Hall in Kathmandu on November 26. Welcoming all the heads of state and government in his inauguration speech Koirala stressed on the need of exploring the abundant opportunities that lies in the region. Koirala also called for making SAARC more powerful and meaningful region. Heads of state and government of all the member countries also addressed the summit after Koirala. Observers from different countries also gave speeches in the inauguration session. The foreign ministers of all eight SAARC countries signed the SAARC Framework Agreement for Energy Cooperation (Electricity) at the concluding session of the Summit on November 27. The Summit concluded with the endorsement of the 36-point Kathmandu Declaration Letter. Speaking at the closing ceremony, Nepali Prime Minister Sushil Koirala announced that the next SAARC Summit would be held in Islamabad after two years.

### **Prime minister holds talks with his SAARC counterparts<sup>58</sup>**

Prime Minister Sushil Koirala held separate bilateral talks with heads of state and government of SAARC nations on November 26. The meetings focused on regional development, integration as well as bilateral issues between respective countries. PM Koirala held talks with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Maldivian President Abdulla Yameen, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa at Soaltee Hotel. The heads of state/government of seven countries congratulated PM Koirala for successfully holding the SAARC Summit with warm hospitality.

### **Indian Army Chief calls on PM Koirala<sup>59</sup>**

Visiting Indian Army Chief Dalbir Singh called on Prime Minister Sushil Koirala at latter's office in Singha Durbar on November 13. On the occasion, the two discussed Nepal-India military relations and topics relating to mutual interest, informed PM's Press Coordinator Prakash Adhikari.

### **US asks Nepal to oppose ISIS activities<sup>60</sup>**

A senior US official has requested Nepal to oppose the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, a militant group operating in war torn countries of the Middle East. During a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sushil Koirala on November 9, visiting US Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights Sarah Sewall asked Nepal to make its statement public on the activities of ISIS. This is the first time Nepal formally received such a request from any country.

### **Indian minister Gadkari calls on PM Koirala<sup>61</sup>**

Indian Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, who went to Kathmandu to participate in an infrastructure summit, paid a courtesy call on

Prime Minister Sushil Koirala in Baluwatar on November 12. During the meeting, they discussed various issues, including bilateral ties, India's experience in infrastructure development, ongoing constitution writing process in Nepal and Nepal-India development assistance.

### **Chinese firm bags airport contract<sup>62</sup>**

Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) awarded the contract to upgrade Bhairahawa's Gautam Buddha airport to China's Northwest Civil Aviation Airport Construction Group. The upgraded regional international airport will come into operation by 2017-end. CAAN Director General Ratish Chandra Lal Suman and General Manager of Northwest's Overseas Department Zhou Zun signed the Rs 6.22 billion civil works deal. The planned airport will have a 3,000-metre runway and a capacity to serve 760,000 passengers annually after the completion of the first phase of upgradation. The airport in Bhairahawa which is being upgraded into a regional international airport is the gateway to Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha. Of the total project cost, ADB will provide US \$ 58.50 million (US \$ 42.75 in loans and US \$ 15.75 million in grants), the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) will give US \$ 15 million loan and CAAN will bear the rest as counterpart funding.

### **Norway pledges \$60m grant for power sector expansion<sup>63</sup>**

Norway has pledged a grant of 360 million Norwegian kroner (\$60 million) for Nepal's power sector to be spent under the Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation (Sasec) Power Expansion Project. The project's lead donor, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), will administer the Norwegian aid. The project aims to increase electricity access and help overcome power shortages in Nepal besides exporting surplus power to India by strengthening and increasing the power transmission capacity and network in the country. The ADB and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed a co-financing agreement on November 15. This is by far the largest single project supported by Norway to the energy sector of Nepal. The grant from Norway will complement a US \$180 million loan from the ADB's concessional resources, a loan of US \$120 million from the European Investment Bank, and a US \$11.2 million grant from the ADB-administered Strategic Climate Fund.

### **Nepal asks India to ease quarantine restrictions<sup>64</sup>**

Nepal has requested India to relax quarantine restrictions on 16 agricultural products to facilitate exports. The Ministry of Commerce and Supplies wrote to the Indian government urging to grant recognition to quality certification issued by Nepal. The farm products for which the ministry has asked for easier market access are tomato, cabbage, cauliflower, strawberry, large cardamom, ginger, green tea, fresh and dry vegetables, chilli and oil cake, among others.

### **Nepal-India agrees to devise long time plans<sup>65</sup>**

Nepal and India have agreed to formulate a master plan for the period until 2035 and an action plan until 2025 on power trade. The two countries will also hold a study on possible technical difficulties while interconnecting transmission lines.

At the first meeting of the secretary-level Joint Steering Committee and joint-secretary-level Joint Working Group in New Delhi on November 20, the two countries agreed to form two committees—one for preparing the master plan and the action plan, and another for identifying measures to resolve any technical problems that may arise in interconnection of transmission lines. The two permanent mechanisms—Joint Steering Committee and Joint Working Group—were formed to monitor existing areas and explore new areas of cooperation when the two countries signed the Power Trade Agreement (PTA) in October. The committees will meet every six months. Meanwhile, the two countries have also agreed to complete the Detailed Project Report (DPR) of the Pancheswar Multipurpose Project within the next six months. A meeting of the Pancheswar Development Authority in New Delhi on November 19 also decided to initiate the project construction within a year by making the authority functional. The meeting also decided to award the DPR contract to Wapcos India, which was involved in merging and upgrading separate DPRs conducted by Nepal and India some two decades ago.

### **WB agrees to give US \$46 million for Kabeli hydro project<sup>66</sup>**

Government of Nepal and the World Bank (WB) have signed a \$46 million loan and grant agreement for the Kabeli Hydroelectric Project despite the uncertainty surrounding its fate after the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) ordered the termination of its licence. The finance deal seeks to address the concern raised by the CIAA over the non-completion of the project's financial closure. Of the total funding agreed, US \$40 million is loan and US \$6 million is grant. Finance Secretary Suman Prasad Sharma and WB Country Manager for Nepal Takuya Kamatak signed the pact on November 24. The hydropower project is located on the Taplejung-Panchthar border in eastern Nepal and is expected to be completed by June 2019.

### **Three-party meet inconclusive<sup>67</sup>**

A meeting of the three major parties—Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and UCPN (Maoist)—convened on November 29 at Baluwatar ended inconclusively. Top leaders of the three major parties sat for talks with an intention to reach an understanding on key contentious issues of constitution drafting. However, the meeting failed to reach a common ground after the parties remained firm on their respective stances. NC and UML reiterated that the Political Dialogue and Consensus Committee (PDCC) forward their joint proposal to the Constitution Assembly to which the opposition party UCPN (Maoist) said, at most, the joint proposal of the NC and the UML could be annexed to the PDCC report as stated by PDCC Chairman Baburam Bhattarai earlier.

### **MJF-N proposes nine federal states<sup>68</sup>**

Madhesi Janadhikar Forum Nepal (MJF-N) has put forth a nine-province state restructuring proposal. MJF-N Chairman Upendra Yadav tabled the state restructuring proposal based on ethnicity at the meeting of Political Dialogue and Consensus Committee (PDCC) on November 30, 2014. The MJF-N is a constituent of the 22-party alliance led by UCPN (Maoist) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal. However, the alliance of opposition parties has not been able to forge a common

ground on state restructuring model. Proposing to federate the country into nine geographical provinces, MJF-N has proposed a provision of changing the name and capital of state through a two-thirds majority of provincial assembly. The nine states proposed by MJF-N are: Limbuwan, Kiranti, Tamsaling, Magarat, Newa, Narayani, Tamuwan, Madhes/Tarai, and Karnali/Khasan. Likewise, the MJF-N has proposed VDCs and municipalities at local level under the province.

### **Janajati leaders announce protest demanding ethnic states<sup>69</sup>**

'Adibasi Janajati Rastriya Andolan' has revived the demands for single identity-based ethnic states with right to self determination and autonomy. Janajati leaders across the political spectrum have been united to initiate a unified campaign for identity-based federalism similar to the "nationwide movement" that they launched before the dissolution of the first Constituent Assembly in 2012. The demands were raised by Andolan formed under the chairmanship of Padma Ratna Tuladhar. Stating that the ruling parties—Nepali Congress and CPN-UML—had rejected the agenda of ethnic identity, Janajati leaders, intellectuals and activists announced their protest programmes to exert pressure on their demands for right to self determination, autonomy and ethnic states.

### **No alternative to consensus: 20-party alliance<sup>70</sup>**

A meeting of the 20 parties represented in the Constituent Assembly (CA) led by main opposition UCPN (Maoist) has concluded that there is no alternative to consensus for drafting new constitution. The meeting, convened at Singha Durbar in Kathmandu on November 30, has also appealed to the government to take ahead the constitution drafting process, ensuring the inclusion of everyone for the process cannot be taken forward on the basis of majority. The alliance also criticised the ruling parties—Nepali Congress and CPN-UML—who recently came up with a common proposal on constitution drafting, for hindering the process of dialogue and consensus amongst the major parties.

### **Chand announces formation of new party<sup>71</sup>**

Leader Netra Bikram Chand, who severed his ties with Mohan Baidya-led CPN-Maoist has formed a new party under his leadership on November 29. Chand was CPN-Maoist Secretary before he decided to separate from the party calling Chairman Mohan Baidya "incapable" of leading the party and class struggle ahead. According to central member Sharad Bhandari, the gathering decided to remove dash from the party's current name and stick with the name the party used during the decade long people's war. The three-day long gathering has appointed leader Chand as the coordinator while it also decided to call a national gathering so as to finalise the party's organisational structure. Likewise, the party has decided to hold the national gathering by next month.

### **Madhesi Morcha revived<sup>72</sup>**

Madhesi parties revived the Samyukta Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha – an alliance of six Madhes-based parties. The alliance was revived in order to raise the Madhes-related demands inside and outside the Constitution Assembly. The front includes Bijaya Kumar Gachhadar-led Madhesi Janadhikar Forum-Loktantrik, Mahanta

Thakur-led Tarai Madhes Loktantrik Party, Upendra Yadav-led Madhesi Janadhikar Forum-Nepal, Rajendra Mahato-led Sadhbhawana Party, Mahendra Yadav-led Tarai Madhes Sadhbhawana Party and Sarat Singh Bhandari's Rastriya Madhes Samajwadi Party. A meeting of the six parties convened at the parliamentary party office of MJF-Loktantrik in Singha Durbar on November 24 made the announcement that they would not join the government unless the constitution was drafted.

### **Khadka forms committee to revive Hindu state<sup>73</sup>**

Former Home Minister and Central Working Committee member of Nepali Congress Khum Bahadur Khadka has formed a 25-member committee to revive Nepal as a 'Hindu state'. The slogan of the campaign led by Khadka is "Nation, Nationality and Sanatan Hindu State". Advocate Kumar Regmi is the member secretary of the campaign to revive Nepal as a Hindu state through a nationwide training programme of its cadres while its members are former Speaker of the House Taranath Ranabhat, Constituent Assembly member Suwarna Juwarchan, Central Working Committee member of the party Pushpa Bhusal and former state minister Devendra Raj Kandel. Other members of the committee includes former minister and NC leader Chirinjivi Wagle, who was convicted of corruption charges, including Shiva Raj Joshi, Duryodhan Singh Chaudari.

### **Remittance inflows decline for second straight month<sup>74</sup>**

Remittance inflows have declined for the second straight month amid a surge in imports triggering concern about a possible impact on the economy. Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) has blamed increasing use of remittance to finance illegal trade, particularly gold smuggling, for the drop in payments. According to an NRB report on the country's macro-economy during the first quarter of the current fiscal year, remittance inflows decreased 0.6 percent in Nepali rupee terms. During the first two months, remittance had dropped 4 percent.

## **Pakistan**

### **Prime Minister attends the 18<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit<sup>75</sup>**

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif attended the 18<sup>th</sup> SAARC summit in Kathmandu. Speaking at the inaugural speech, Prime Minister Nawaz Shariff called for unity among the SAARC members to fight poverty and terrorism in the region by erasing the bitter past memories. He also stressed on bringing China to the SAARC region to make it more inclusive. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif held an "unofficial" talk with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the retreat organised by Nepal government at Dhulikhel on November 27. However, both the leaders didn't acknowledge each other during the inaugural ceremony of the Summit and at the sideline meeting held at Soaltee Hotel on November 26. Prime Minister Sharif met presidents of Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives and prime ministers of Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan on the sidelines of the summit.

### **Nawaz Sharif visits China<sup>76</sup>**

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif made a visit to China on November 8. During the visit, Prime Minister Sharif met Chinese President Xi Jinping and provided commitment to help China with its fight against extremists that Beijing says are

active in its unruly far western region of Xinjiang. The two countries had signed more than 20 agreements during Sharif's trip, including nuclear power and on the deepwater port of Gwadar, solar power production at Quaid-e Azam Solar Park, easy loan for laying optic fibre between the two countries, mining of 65,00,000 metric tons of coal in Thar Block-2, 870 MW Sukhi Kinari hydropower project, 1320 MW Sahiwal power project, MoU for 100 MW Jhimpir wind power project, an Industrial Park in Faisalabad and an agreement for economic and technical cooperation.

### **PM Nawaz visits Berlin<sup>77</sup>**

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif went to Berlin on November 10 on a two-day official visit on the invitation of German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The premier's visit was intended to help in strengthening the ties between the two countries. PM Nawaz invited German investors to invest in Pakistan, particularly in the energy and agriculture sectors. He said there is great scope for investment in agriculture, livestock and forestry in Pakistan and Germany could prove to be an important partner in these sectors.

### **Army chief holds talks at Pentagon<sup>78</sup>**

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Raheel Sharif made his first visit to the United States. During the visit, the army chief Raheel Sharif met Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey. General Sharif and his delegation received the US Army's full honour guard when they arrived at the Pentagon for the second phase of their visit to the United States. After the ceremony, the Pakistani delegation attended a roundtable with the US delegation, which included General Dempsey and Deputy Secretary of Defence Robert O. Work. The army chief and his delegation also had separate meetings with Raymond T. Odierno, Chief of Staff of the US Army and General Joseph F. Dunford, Commandant of the Marine Corps.

### **US donates equipment to Pakistan for monitoring IED chemical import<sup>79</sup>**

The United States Homeland Security Investigations office (HSI) has donated 80 Toyota Hilux trucks, 160 body armor suits, five electronic hand-held chemical analysis units, cameras, binoculars, gloves and over 10,000 chemical test kits to Pakistan Customs. With this technical help from the US, Pakistan Customs Service's End Use Verification (EUV) project has formally been launched, which will help the Customs monitor the import and export of chemicals used both legally and illegally. The EUV project will allow Pakistan Customs, a wing of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), to safely facilitate the entry of dual-use chemicals being imported for legitimate purposes, and also aid them in investigating and preventing the entry of chemicals intended for use in improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The EUV project consists of 80 Pakistani teams that will conduct verification checks countrywide.

### **Nawaz, Obama interacts over phone<sup>80</sup>**

US President Barack Obama telephoned Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on November 21 and reiterated the need to combat terrorism. Detail of the conversation was not disclosed, but according to the Islamabad version, the US leader called

PM Sharif to inform him about his decision to visit Delhi in January to attend the Indian Republic Day celebrations. According to the White House version the conversation was focused on the security situation in Pakistan.

### **Pakistan summons US ambassador over 'unsubstantiated' Pentagon report<sup>81</sup>**

Pakistan summoned US Ambassador Richard Olson to the Foreign Office on November 5 to convey concerns over a recent Pentagon report alleging that terrorists operate against India and Afghanistan from sanctuaries inside Pakistan. The country's protest over what the Foreign Office called "unwarranted comments" was conveyed by the Prime Minister's Adviser on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz to the US ambassador at the Foreign Ministry. "Pakistan has taken serious exception to comments contained in the US Department of Defence report sent to the US Congress under the title 'Progress Towards Security and Stability in Afghanistan'," Foreign Office spokesperson Tasneem Aslam said.

### **"Pakistan has world's fastest growing nuclear programme": US think tank<sup>82</sup>**

"Pakistan has the world's fastest growing nuclear programme capable of weaponising up to 200 nuclear devices by the year 2020", a US-based think tank said in a recently released report. "Pakistan...is believed to have enough fissile material to produce between 110 and 120 nuclear warheads," said the report Strategic Stability in the Second Nuclear Age Council released by the influential Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). The CFR notes that Asia is witnessing a nuclear buildup, despite the fact that nuclear arsenals are shrinking in the rest of the world.

### **Jamaatul Ahrar threatens to attack India following Wagah blast<sup>83</sup>**

The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan Jamaatul Ahrar (TTP-JA) claimed responsibility for the suicide bombing on the Wagah border and said the attack was as much aimed at India as Pakistan. At least 60 Pakistanis were killed during the popular flag-lowering ceremony on November 2. TTP-JA is a new outfit that broke away from the mainstream Taliban movement in September and has announced its support for the Middle Eastern group Islamic State, whose belligerent anti-Western ideology has begun to inspire militants across South Asia. Jamaatul Ahrar's openly anti-Indian rhetoric differs from that of the mainstream Pakistani Taliban, who are mainly focused on their insurgency against Pakistani security forces in the volatile tribal northwest of the country.

### **TTP joins hands with Lashkar-i-Islam in Khyber<sup>84</sup>**

Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) stated that it was joining hands with Lashkar-i-Islam (LI), the banned militant group operating in the Khyber tribal region. The group also stated that it had appointed a new spokesman, Mohammad Khurrasani, weeks after sacking its former spokesman Shahidullah Shahid who had announced his allegiance with the Islamic State (IS). TTP further said that its fighters under Mullah Fazlullah would support the LI and added that a proper fight would be initiated against the security forces and government. The militant outfit also announced that it would send men to fight along with LI militants in Khyber.

### **Christian couple beaten to death<sup>85</sup>**

An enraged mob beat a Christian couple to death and burnt their bodies in the brick kiln where they worked on November 4 for allegedly desecrating a copy of the Holy Quran. The incident took place at the town of Kot Radha Kishan, some 60 kilometres southwest of Lahore, and is the latest example of mob violence against minorities accused of blasphemy. Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif has constituted a three-member committee to fast track the investigation of the killings and ordered police to beef up security at Christian neighbourhoods in the province. Meanwhile, the European parliament called on Pakistan to overhaul its blasphemy laws with a view to repealing them, saying they were “increasingly used to target” Christians and other minorities.

### **“1,200 militants killed during 5-month offensive”: army<sup>86</sup>**

The Pakistan army has killed 1,200 suspected militants in an anti-Taliban offensive during the past five months, seriously reducing the group’s ability to carry out attacks. More than 800,000 people had fled due to the military offensive. Chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Maj Gen Mohammad Saeed Aleem has said that the reconstruction of installations damaged during the ongoing operation against militants in North Waziristan tribal region would take two years to complete and costs Rs 75 billion.

### **Italy’s army chief meets General Raheel Sharif<sup>87</sup>**

General Claudio Graziano Chief of Staff of Italian Army met Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. Both the generals discussed a wide range of issues of mutual interest, including defence and security cooperation and measures contributing towards regional stability, an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) statement said. General Raheel reiterated the commitment and resilience of the people of Pakistan and its armed forces in confronting multifarious security challenges. General Claudio Graziano was given a guard of honour on his arrival at the GHQ. He also laid a floral wreath at the Yadgar-i-Shuhada while paying tribute to the sacrifices of Pakistan’s armed forces. General Claudio Graziano remarked during the meeting that “Italy is committed to further deepening its already strong defence ties with Pakistan”.

### **Pakistan conducts a successful test launch of Hatf IV<sup>88</sup>**

Pakistan conducted a successful test launch of intermediate range Hatf IV (Shaheen I-A) ballistic missile on November 17 which is capable of carrying nuclear and conventional warheads to a range of 900 kilometres, a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. ‘Shaheen I-A’ missile is an upgraded version of the ‘Shaheen I’ with a longer range and is estimated to have a payload capacity of 1,000 kilograms. The missile’s impact point was in the Arabian Sea. On November 13, Pakistan had conducted a successful training launch of intermediate range Shaheen II (Hatf-VI) ballistic missile. The recent launches come days after India announced that it had test-fired a nuclear-capable cruise missile from Balasore in Odisha state. The missile, with the name of Nirbhay, has a range of over 700 kilometres. Again on November 9, India had announced that it had successfully test-launched long-range nuclear-capable strategic ballistic missile, Agni-II.

### **Pakistan condemns Israeli 'act of terror' on Al-Aqsa mosque<sup>89</sup>**

Pakistan strongly condemned Israeli attack on Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem and termed it an "act of terror". "Israel has always flouted international law and has violated human rights of Palestinians," Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said in a statement issued on November 5. He said that Pakistan is with Palestinians against the state repression of Israel and expects United Nations to take note of it.

### **PM seeks world help for talks with India on Kashmir<sup>90</sup>**

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has reaffirmed support to the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people and underlined the need for a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue through talks. He also called upon the international community to persuade India to join the process of negotiations. "Both countries need confidence-building measures and the international community's influence and persuasion were required to bring India to the negotiating table," PM Sharif said in his address to the budget session of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Council on November 20. The prime minister said that Pakistan stood by its principled stand that the Kashmir issue should be resolved through talks in accordance with UN Security Council's resolutions. He assured the Kashmiris on behalf of the people and the government of Pakistan that they were not alone in their struggle.

### **"Kashmiris are freedom fighters, not separatists": FO<sup>91</sup>**

Pakistan's Foreign Office (FO) strongly reacted to a statement issued by Indian Defence Minister Arun Jaitley and said Kashmiris were freedom fighters who were carrying out their movement from an occupied territory and not separatists. Speaking to media representatives during the weekly briefing in Islamabad, FO spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said Jaitley's statement was "unacceptable for Pakistan". Jaitley had said that Pakistan must make a "conscious choice of peace" and decide whether it wanted to talk to the Indian government or the Hurriyat leaders. The spokeswoman added that Pakistan was sincere when it came to a dialogue with India, saying dialogue with India is not a favor, but a necessity for peace and development in South Asia.

### **China denies training Pakistan troops near Indian border<sup>92</sup>**

China has rejected a report floating in the Indian media that its troops were training Pakistani soldiers on the India-Pakistan border, saying that it was not a factual report. "There are no facts backing relevant reports," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei said during a media briefing. He was responding to a report in the Indian media which stated that Border Security Force's (BSF) intelligence wing has found that Chinese troops were training Pakistani soldiers across the Rajouri sector of the international border.

### **Pakistan, Russia sign defence cooperation agreement<sup>93</sup>**

Pakistan and Russia signed a defence cooperation agreement on November 20. Signed by Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and his Russian counterpart Sergey Shoigu, the agreement was hailed by Pakistan's defence ministry as "a milestone" in defence ties between the two countries. Mr Shoigu was in Islamabad on the first

visit by Russian defence minister to Pakistan since the collapse of the Soviet Union. He is accompanied by a 41-member delegation. The agreement provides for exchange of information on politico-military issues; cooperation for promoting international security; intensification of counter-terrorism and arms control activities; strengthening collaboration in various military fields, including education, medicine, history, topography, hydrography and culture; and sharing experiences in peacekeeping operations. The two sides discussed joint efforts for fighting international terrorism and drug trafficking.

### **36 Indian prisoners released from Karachi jail<sup>94</sup>**

Pakistan released 36 Indian prisoners on November 28 from the District Prison Malir in Karachi, as a gesture of good will. 419 Indian fishermen are currently held in Karachi's District Prison Malir. According to the Fishermen Cooperative Society of Pakistan, approximately 400 Pakistani fishermen are currently being held in Indian prisons.

### **Imran Khan announced 'Plan C'<sup>95</sup>**

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan announced on November 30 his party's plan to paralyse major cities – and eventually “shut down” the entire country. Addressing a crowd of thousands assembled at D-Chowk, Imran Khan unveiled “Plan C” according to which he would shut down Lahore, Faisalabad, Karachi and by December 16 all of Pakistan. The PTI rally and the announcement of “Plan C” was a critical next-step for the party, which had lost political mileage and steam since the massive anti-government movement launched in August.

## **Sri Lanka**

### **President attends the 18<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit<sup>96</sup>**

At the inaugural session of the 18th South Asian Association for Regional Corporation (SAARC) Summit at the Rashtriya Sabha Griha in Kathmandu, Mahinda Rajapaksa said terrorism was a fundamental challenge for a nation's stability. President Rajapaksa also called on all SAARC countries to join forces against external threats. The President met fellow leaders of the SAARC on the sideline of 18th SAARC Summit. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Mahinda Rajapaksa discussed matters pertaining to the interest of both nations during their meeting.

### **Special Forces of Indian and Sri Lankan army conduct Joint military exercise<sup>97</sup>**

A three-week long joint military exercise between the special forces of Indian Army and Sri Lanka Army concluded on November 23 with a closing ceremony at the Magampura International Convention Centre in Hambantota. A contingent of 42 Indian Army Special Force troops including 5 officers and 37 other ranks joined the Sri Lankan contingent of 300 Special Forces and Commandos, and a few Navy and Air Force personnel in the exercise called Mithra Shakthi. The Exercise, meant purely to share knowledge and experience between Special Operation Forces of both Sri Lanka and Indian Armies through enhancement of interoperability, joint efforts and mutual exchange of Special Operation tactics, was implemented under the directions of the Army Commander, Lieutenant General Daya Ratnayake.

The Mithra Shakthi Exercise, an initiative, designed largely by the Indian Army was the successful outcome of the 'Annual Defence Dialogue' that was co-chaired in Colombo early October by both Mr. R.K Mathur, Indian Defence Secretary and Mr. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, Secretary to Ministry of Defence and Urban Development.

### **A delegation of Sri Lankan Air Force makes official visit to Pakistan<sup>98</sup>**

A high level delegation of Sri Lanka Air Force headed by Air Marshal Kolitha Aravinda Gunatilleke, Commander of Sri Lanka Air Force, visited Air Defence Command, Pakistan Air Force (PAF), on November 29. The delegation attended a briefing on the working of Air Defence Command and also visited Air Defence Operation Centre. The Sri Lankan delegation visited Pakistan Air Force Academy, Risalpur on November 28 and attended a comprehensive briefing about the Academy's organisation structure and training. Air Marshal Gunatilleke also called on Pakistan President Mamnoon Hussain at Aiwan-e-Sadr on November 27. The delegation of Sri Lankan Air Force is on an official trip of Pakistan to enhance the co-operation between the Air Forces of the two countries.

### **Prime Minister D.M. Jayaratne visits India<sup>99</sup>**

Sri Lankan Prime Minister D. M. Jayaratne came to India to attend convocation at Manipal University. In his convocation address Prime Minister Jayaratne said that India and Sri Lanka have the longest continuous historical link, and both nations have been culturally and historically very close "up to this day". He also spoke about enhancing Sri Lanka's "unbroken lineage" of friendship with India.

### **Government of India provides assistance to the landslide victims<sup>100</sup>**

Government of India has committed, as part of its housing project in the estates in Sri Lanka, to construct houses in some landslide prone estates from where people have been evacuated, the Indian High Commission in Colombo said on November 10. Government of India had made a commitment to provide emergency humanitarian assistance worth SLR 5 million, following the devastating landslide that occurred on October 29, 2014 in Haldummula Division of Badulla district in Uva Province and in pursuance of this, A. Natarajan, the Assistant High Commissioner of India in Kandy handed over relief goods, on behalf of the High Commissioner of India, to the Governor of Uva Province Nanda Mathew at the Governor's Office in Badulla. The relief goods have been identified in coordination with the Government of Sri Lanka and procured locally in Sri Lanka. The items include large and small generators, water pumps, tractor, chainsaws, concrete power saws, canvas water hose and aluminum cookware, among others.

### **President pardons five Indian fishermen<sup>101</sup>**

The five Indian fishermen, who were sentenced to death together with three Sri Lankan fishermen by the Colombo High Court for alleged drug trafficking, were pardoned by President Mahinda Rajapaksa on November 19 following protests in India and the intervention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. However, the three Sri Lankans are still in jail serving a life sentence. A protest was staged in Jaffna on November 20 calling for the release of the three Sri Lankans. Prime Minister Modi

thanked President Rajapaksa when they met in Kathmandu on the sideline of the SAARC summit. However, Sri Lanka Navy again arrested 14 Tamil Nadu fishermen – four from Rameswaram and ten from Jagadapattinam – and confiscated three trawlers on November 23.

### **Sri Lankan refugees launch fast at the Central Prison in Tiruchi<sup>102</sup>**

Twenty-six, including 25 Sri Lankan refugees and one Malaysian citizen, who have been quarantined at a special camp at the Central Prison in Tiruchi, launched a fast on November 15, demanding the early completion of the cases against them. They are facing charges, including illegal entry and suspected association with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Many of them were recently transferred to the special camp from different camps in the State.

### **Russian naval ship makes goodwill visit at port of Colombo<sup>103</sup>**

Sri Lanka Navy, in accordance with naval traditions, ceremonially welcomed the Russian naval ship “Yaroslav Mudriy” arrived at the Port of Colombo on a goodwill visit on November 24. RFNS Yaroslav Mudriy is a destroyer commanded by Captain 3rd Rank Vladimir A Cherokov. The 126.6 meters long ship has a displacement of 4,480 tons and a crew of 210 naval personnel. The visiting Russian ship stayed in Sri Lanka till November 28.

### **Business delegation from New Zealand visits Sri Lanka<sup>104</sup>**

President Mahinda Rajapaksa is hopeful that New Zealand will be able to make a valuable contribution at the UN Security Council (UNSC) with its commitment to representing small and medium countries. The President said this at a meeting with New Zealand’s Minister of Primary Industries and Racing Nathan Guy at Temple Trees on November 4. Guy was in Sri Lanka with a business delegation to further enhance economic cooperation between the two countries. The delegation, Guy said, represents a variety of different sectors, including hospitality, tourism, technology and the dairy industry, among others.

### **Sri Lanka to chair the meeting of the high contracting parties to the convention on CCW<sup>105</sup>**

Sri Lanka has been designated by acclamation to Chair the 2015 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the UN in Geneva, succeeds Ambassador Remigiusz A. Henczel, the Permanent Representative of Poland to the UN in Geneva. Accepting the honor conferred on Sri Lanka by the 118 High Contracting Parties to the convention at the conclusion of the week long CCW sessions in Geneva on November 14, 2014, Ambassador Aryasinha expressed appreciation to the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) for proposing Sri Lanka on behalf of the Group.

### **Construction work on the first phase of the Northern Expressway launched<sup>106</sup>**

President Mahinda Rajapaksa on November 14 launched construction work on the first phase of the proposed Northern Expressway, which also has an extension to Kandy. The President placed the foundation stone at the Senkadagala entrance

launching the construction of the Kandy – Colombo segment of the Expressway. The 300-kilometer long highway will be constructed under four stages and the first stage of the project from Enderamulla to Ambepussa is expected to cost US\$ 1 billion and it would be completed with Chinese assistance, according to the Government Information Department. The four lane expressway will be built at a cost of approximately US\$ 4.5 billion and is scheduled to be completed by 2018.

### **Sri Lanka and Mauritania signed agreement to establish a Joint Commission<sup>107</sup>**

Sri Lanka and Mauritania signed an agreement on November 12 to establish a Joint Commission on Cooperation to further strengthen relations between the two countries. The signing took place following bilateral talks between President Mahinda Rajapaksa and President of Mauritania Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz at the President's Office. The two countries also signed an agreement on Bilateral Political Consultations.

### **High-level parliamentary delegation of Belarus visits Sri Lanka<sup>108</sup>**

Expanding trade relations between Sri Lanka and Belarus was the focus when a high-level parliamentary delegation from the National Assembly of Belarus, led by the Chairman of the House of Representatives Vladimir Andreichenko, met with Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa at Temple Trees on November 20. The discussion focused considerably on trade relations, including the expansion of markets for export products from both countries. This included Sri Lanka's fisheries sector. During the meeting the Chairman of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus said there is a market for Sri Lankan goods in not only Belarus but also in neighboring countries with which Belarus has customs union arrangements.

### **Mission Director USAID visits Koslanda landslide victims<sup>109</sup>**

Mission Director Sherry Carlin from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) visited the Poonagala Tea Factory camp that houses victims of the recent Koslanda landslide on November 18. She also joined World Vision humanitarian representatives to distribute school kits to children and view the "Child Friendly Space" established with United States Government support through USAID.

### **UNHCR hails Sri Lanka<sup>110</sup>**

The UN refugee agency says Sri Lanka successfully managed to address the issue of statelessness by initiating a series of legislative changes. UNHCR noted that starting from 1986 Sri Lanka allowed formerly stateless populations like the Tamils of Indian origin who were brought in the 1800s to work on tea plantations and a small ethnic Chinese population that had been in the country since the 1930s to access citizenship.

### **Government hits back at the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights<sup>111</sup>**

Sri Lankan Government hit back at the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, accusing him of using intemperate language to attack and vilify a sovereign member of the United Nations. In a letter to Prince

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, hours after he issued a statement accusing the Government of attempting to sabotage the UN led investigations on Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Ravinatha Aryasinha, said that the actions of Al Hussein would regrettably constrain constructive engagement which the Government of Sri Lanka has consistently sought to pursue.

### **Government raises objections with the UN<sup>112</sup>**

The Minister of External Affairs, Professor G L Peiris met the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations, Subinay Nandy on November 17 and conveyed to him, Sri Lankan Government's extreme discontent regarding the unprofessional manner in which the investigation on Sri Lanka is being conducted by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The Minister's protest to the UN Resident Coordinator focused on the unacceptable way in which the deadline for submission of evidence to the investigation had been originally set by the OHCHR had been changed unofficially and re-set once again. As per the OHCHR's call for submissions on its website, the deadline, 30 October, was definite and mandatory. However, the Spokesperson of the OHCHR, in response to a question from the Colombo Gazette and The Sunday Leader had later stated that, although officially the deadline was 30 October and will not be extended, it is understood that some material may take time to arrive and that submissions arriving late, therefore, will not necessarily be refused. Expressing objection to OHCHR's conduct that is inconsistent with essential standards of objectivity and fairplay, Professor Peiris questioned why such irregular behaviour has to be resorted to in carrying out this investigation which claims to be open, candid and fair.

### **Sri Lanka ranks 36 in the GTI<sup>113</sup>**

Sri Lanka has been identified as one of the 13 countries that are being at risk of increased terrorist activity from current levels in the 2014 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) Report released on November 19. The second edition of the GTI report, produced by the London-based Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), has ranked Sri Lanka at 36th place with a score of 4.01 out of 10 among 162 countries.

### **Snap Presidential election on January 8, 2015<sup>114</sup>**

The Presidential election will be held on January 8 next year. The Central Committee of Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the main constituent party of ruling alliance, has unanimously decided to nominate the incumbent President of Sri Lanka as the party's candidate for the upcoming presidential election. The Central Committee has taken this decision at a meeting held on November 19 at the Presidential Secretariat under the chairmanship of the President. Former SLFP General Secretary Maithripala Sirisena resigned from his ministerial post to contest the Presidential election as common opposition candidate.

### **UNP leader proposes 'national unity government'<sup>115</sup>**

United National Party (UNP) leader Ranil Wickremesinghe has proposed forming a national unity government until the next General election if opposition common candidate Maithripala Sirisena wins the January Presidential elections. The UNP leader said that the main objective of the new government will be to abolish the

Executive Presidency. He said that while Maithripala Sirisena expects to abolish the Executive Presidency within 100 days after the Presidential elections, he feels it can be done in a shorter space of time. The UNP leader also proposed that temporary concessions be given to the public at the conclusion of the Presidential election next year and later hold a General election and allow the people to select who they want to the new Parliament. He said that at the General election the UNP will contest under the elephant symbol and look to have a larger representation in Parliament but yet work with other political parties on urgent national issues.

### CaFFE receives four incidents of pre-election related violence<sup>116</sup>

Election monitors reported pre-polls related violence, including shooting incidents in Puttalam and Madampe. The Campaign for a Free and Fair Election (CaFFE) said that the house of a staunch UNP supporter was shot at in Medagama, Madampe on November 23. CaFFE believes that both men were targeted because they lit firecrackers during celebrations by the the opposition when former SLFP General Secretary Maithripala Sirisena announced his intention to contest as the common opposition candidate. These are the second and third shooting incidents reported after the Presidential election was formally declared. CaFFE said it has received information on four incidents of pre-election related violence.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> "President Asks Taliban to Enter Peace Dialogue", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 1, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11198](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11198).
- <sup>2</sup> "President Seeks Pak Sincerity in War on Terror", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 7, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11228](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11228).
- <sup>3</sup> "Pakistan a Key Pillar of Afghan Foreign Policy: Ghani", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 16, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11270](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11270). "Ghani Wants Defence Ties with Pakistan Bolstered", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 15, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11265](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11265).
- <sup>4</sup> "Ghani Says Won't Allow a Proxy War in Afghanistan", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 27, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11344](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11344).
- <sup>5</sup> "We Won't Leave Afghans Alone: NATO Chief", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 9, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11237](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11237). "Ghani Hails NATO Pledge of Continued Support", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 7, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11227](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11227).
- <sup>6</sup> Amiri, Syed Sharif, "Obama Extends US Combat Role in Afghanistan", *Tolonews*, November 22, 2014 at <http://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/17207-obama-extends-us-combat-role-in-afghanistan>.
- <sup>7</sup> "Wolesi Jirga Approves BSA and SOFA Agreements", *Tolo news*, November 23, 2014 at <http://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/17215-wolesi-jirga-approves-bsa-and-sofa-agreements>. "Ghani Welcomes New Security Agreement with Washington", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 24, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11319](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11319).
- <sup>8</sup> "Obama Pledges Support to Afghan Women", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 9, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11235](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11235).
- <sup>9</sup> "WB Labels Afghanistan Worst Country for Investment in Asia", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 1, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11199](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11199).
- <sup>10</sup> "S. Arabia Vows to Help Restore Peace, Build Mega Islamic Center in Kabul", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 22, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11302](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11302).

- 11 "Terrorism from Outside Main Challenge: Karzai", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 22, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11301](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11301). "India to Support Afghanistan to Build Strong, Peaceful Democratic Nation", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 22, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11304](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11304).
- 12 "New Kabul PC Members Administered Oath", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 18, 2014 at [http://outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11282](http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11282).
- 13 "7% Rise in Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan: UNODC", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 13, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11261](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11261). "War on Drugs Needs Joint Global Strategy: Ghani", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 10, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11243](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11243).
- 14 "Afghanistan Ranks 2nd on Global Terrorism Index List", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 19, 2014 at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=11288](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=11288). "Taliban Focus Attacks on Cities: NDS", *Tolo news*, November 19, 2014 at <http://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/17176-taliban-focus-attacks-on-cities-nds>.
- 15 "President leaves for China", *The Daily Star*, November 7, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/president-leaves-for-china-49202>. "President urges increased access to Chinese market", *The Daily Star*, November 9, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/president-urges-increased-access-to-chinese-market-49399>.
- 16 "Resolve Rohingya issue", *The Daily Star*, November 10, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/resolve-rohingya-issue-49596>.
- 17 "PM leaves for Nepal today", *The Daily Star*, November 25, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/pm-leaves-for-nepal-today-51958>. "Trying, sincerely", *The Daily Star*, November 27, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/trying-sincerely-52213>. "Hasina, Nawaz discuss power, terrorism", *The Daily Star*, November 27, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/hasina-nawaz-discuss-power-terrorism-52217>.
- 18 "Bangladesh, India decide on power inter-connection line", *The Daily Star*, November 4, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/bangladesh-india-decide-on-power-inter-connection-line-48757>.
- 19 "Indian team due today", *The Daily Star*, November 17, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/indian-team-due-today-50707>. "NIA hands over list of suspects", *The Daily Star*, November 18, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/nia-hands-over-list-of-suspects-50861>. "Dhaka, Delhi plan hunt for JMB men", *The Daily Star*, November 20, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/dhaka-delhi-plan-hunt-for-jmb-men-51192>. "Dhaka team exchange info with NIA", *The Daily Star*, November 29, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/dhaka-team-exchange-info-with-nia-52591>.
- 20 "4-day BGB-BSF confce starts at Tamabil today", *The Daily Star*, November 17, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/country/4-day-bgb-bsf-confce-starts-at-tamabil-today-50688>.
- 21 "Bangladesh, India team up in leather sector", *The Daily Star*, November 28, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/bangladesh-india-team-up-in-leather-sector-52407>.
- 22 "US for talks to end disputes", *The Daily Star*, November 29, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/us-for-talks-to-end-disputes-52542>.
- 23 "Dhaka protests resolution in Pakistan's Khyber assembly", *The Daily Star*, November 26, 2014 at <http://bd.thedailystar.net/dhaka-protests-resolution-in-pakistans-khyber-assembly-52111>.
- 24 "Korea offers to buy defence hardware", *The Daily Star*, November 7, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/korea-offers-to-buy-defence-hardware-49200>.
- 25 "Russia calls for deeper trade links", *The Daily Star*, November 3, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/russia-calls-for-deeper-trade-links-48604>.
- 26 "Dhaka opens diplomatic mission in Vienna", *The Daily Star*, November 3, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/dhaka-opens-diplomatic-mission-in-vienna-48648>.
- 27 "Germany pledges 211 million to Bangladesh", *The Daily Star*, November 4, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/germany-pledges-211-million-to-bangladesh-48786>.

- <sup>28</sup> "Invest more in Bangladesh", *The Daily Star*, November 15, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/invest-more-in-bangladesh-50422>.
- <sup>29</sup> "Bangladesh at high terror risk", *The Daily Star*, November 19, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/bangladesh-at-high-terror-risk-51054>.
- <sup>30</sup> "Sweden pledges Tk 1,659cr in aid for Bangladesh", *The Daily Star*, November 26, 2014 at <http://bd.thedailystar.net/sweden-pledges-tk-1-659cr-in-aid-for-bangladesh-52042>.
- <sup>31</sup> "Inflation the lowest since Dec 2012", *The Daily Star*, November 14, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/inflation-the-lowest-since-dec-2012-50220>. "Exports fall 7.63pc in Oct", *The Daily Star*, November 11, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/exports-fall-7-63pc-in-oct-49713>. "Forex reserves hit record \$22.3b", *The Daily Star*, November 4, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/forex-reserves-hit-record-22-3b-48759>.
- <sup>32</sup> "SAARC summit begins in Kathmandu", *Bhutan News Network*, November 26, 2014 at <http://www.bhutannewsnetwork.com/2014/11/saarc-summit-begins-in-kathmandu/>
- <sup>33</sup> Dorji, Gyalsten K., "President of India in Bhutan", *Kuensel Online*, November 8, 2014 at <http://www.kuenselonline.com/president-of-india-in-bhutan/#.VF3JBzTVgoM>. Dorji, Gyalsten K., "India provides Nu 1.3B in grants", *Kuensel Online*, November 11, 2014 at [http://www.kuenselonline.com/india-provides-nu-1-3b-in-grants/#.VGjnJDTVj\\_0](http://www.kuenselonline.com/india-provides-nu-1-3b-in-grants/#.VGjnJDTVj_0).
- <sup>34</sup> Dorji, Tshering, "Gol approves 303 SDPs", *Kuensel Online*, November 20, 2014 at [http://www.kuenselonline.com/goi-approves-303-sdps/#.VG2O0zTVj\\_0](http://www.kuenselonline.com/goi-approves-303-sdps/#.VG2O0zTVj_0).
- <sup>35</sup> Subba, MB, "Nu 1.7B refunded in excise duty", *Kuensel Online*, November 29, 2014 at <http://www.kuenselonline.com/nu-1-7b-refunded-in-excise-duty/#.VHoFINLVjXc>.
- <sup>36</sup> "Picture story", *Kuensel Online*, November 3, 2014 at <http://www.kuenselonline.com/picture-story-726/#.VF3GEzTVgoM>.
- <sup>37</sup> "Huge Thai delegation in Bhutan for joint celebrations", *Kuensel Online*, November 15, 2014 at [http://www.kuenselonline.com/huge-thai-delegation-in-bhutan-for-joint-celebrations/#.VGjlvDTVj\\_0](http://www.kuenselonline.com/huge-thai-delegation-in-bhutan-for-joint-celebrations/#.VGjlvDTVj_0).
- <sup>38</sup> Dorji, Tshering, "Austrian govt. commits Nu 173M for energy, environment and tourism", *Kuensel Online*, November 19, 2014 at [http://www.kuenselonline.com/austrian-govt-commits-nu-173m-for-energy-environment-and-tourism/#.VGxlpDTVj\\_0](http://www.kuenselonline.com/austrian-govt-commits-nu-173m-for-energy-environment-and-tourism/#.VGxlpDTVj_0).
- <sup>39</sup> K Dorji, Gyalsten, "Six more peacekeepers assigned to UN", *Kuensel Online*, November 22, 2014 at [http://www.kuenselonline.com/six-more-peacekeepers-assigned-to-un/#.VHDJrjTVj\\_0](http://www.kuenselonline.com/six-more-peacekeepers-assigned-to-un/#.VHDJrjTVj_0).
- <sup>40</sup> "President and First Lady return to Male', on conclusion of official visit to Nepal to attend the 18th SAARC Summit", *The Presidency, Republic of Maldives*, November 28, 2014 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=15002>.
- <sup>41</sup> Minister of External Affairs of India: India committed to "security and stability of Maldives", *SunOnline*, November 3, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/25828>.
- <sup>42</sup> "Confident that India-Maldives relationship will continue to strengthen, says Indian President", *SunOnline*, November 12, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26005>. "Indo-Maldives relations would deepen and expand in the coming years – PM Modi", *The Presidency, Republic of Maldives*, November 17, 2014 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=14955>.
- <sup>43</sup> "Russian Prosecutor General arrives in Maldives", *SunOnline*, November 6, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/25868>. "Russian Prosecutor General meets with President Yameen", *SunOnline*, November 6, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/25890>. "Russia, Maldives sign agreement on cooperation in criminal matters", *SunOnline*, November 6, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/25885>. "Maldives requested to sign first extradition agreement with Russia", *SunOnline*, November 7, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/25908>.
- <sup>44</sup> "China gifts 200 trash cans to Maldives", *SunOnline*, November 6, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/25889>. "Chinese government provides LED lights and Solar PV systems", *SunOnline*, November 18, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26121>.
- <sup>45</sup> "Maldives calls for consideration of challenges faced by small nations in protecting the Ozone Layer", *SunOnline*, November 22, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26177>.

- <sup>46</sup> "Maldives elected as next chair of AOSIS", *SunOnline*, November 12, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26011>.
- <sup>47</sup> "GMR claims \$803 million for terminating agreement", *SunOnline*, November 21, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26167>.
- <sup>48</sup> "President meets with the Director of Mauritius Commercial Bank", *The Presidency, Republic of Maldives*, November 23, 2014 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=14977>.
- <sup>49</sup> "Malaysian investors' team arrives in Maldives", *SunOnline*, November 16, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26071>. "Forum on investment opportunities held for Malaysian delegation", *SunOnline*, November 16, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26088>.
- <sup>50</sup> "Kadhdhoo Airport to be transformed into a military airport", *SunOnline*, November 28, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26285>.
- <sup>51</sup> "President reiterates Maldives' support for the establishment of a Palestinian State", *The Presidency, Republic of Maldives*, November 29, 2014 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=15007>.
- <sup>52</sup> "Exports decrease by 48 percent, imports increase by four percent", *SunOnline*, November 15, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26069>.
- <sup>53</sup> "Projected 2015 state budget of MVR 24 billion submitted to parliament", *SunOnline*, November 4, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/25840>.
- <sup>54</sup> "IMF: Budget is appropriate, we support for Green Tax", *SunOnline*, November 21, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26157>.
- <sup>55</sup> "Nearly 8,000 expats repatriated, says Defence Minister", *Sun Online*, November 16, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26090>.
- <sup>56</sup> "Maldives population exceeds 340,000", *SunOnline*, November 13, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26034>.
- <sup>57</sup> "PM Koirala inaugurates Saarc summit", *Kantipur*, November 26, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/26/top-story/pm-koirala-inaugurates-saarc-summit/398197.html>. "18th SAARC Summit concludes with 36-point Kathmandu Declaration Letter", *Kantipur*, November 27, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/27/top-story/18th-saarc-summit-concludes-with-36-point-kathmandu-declaration-letter/398245.html>.
- <sup>58</sup> "Koirala holds talks with his Saarc counterparts", *Kantipur*, November 27, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/27/capital/koirala-holds-talks-with-his-saarc-counterparts/398214.html>.
- <sup>59</sup> "Indian Army Chief Singh calls on PM Koirala", *Kantipur*, November 13, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/13/top-story/indian-army-chief-singh-calls-on-pm-koirala/397645.html>.
- <sup>60</sup> "US asks Nepal to oppose ISIS activities", *Kantipur*, November 10, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/10/top-story/us-asks-nepal-to-oppose-isis-activities/397464.html>.
- <sup>61</sup> "Indian minister Gadkari calls on PM Koirala", *Kantipur*, November 12, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/12/top-story/indian-minister-gadkari-calls-on-pm-koirala/397604.html>.
- <sup>62</sup> "Chinese firm bags airport contract", *Kantipur*, November 14, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/14/business/chinese-firm-bags-airport-contract/397661.html>.
- <sup>63</sup> "Norway pledges \$60m grant for power sector expansion", *Kantipur*, November 15, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/15/business/norway-pledges-60m-grant-for-power-sector-expansion/397716.html>.
- <sup>64</sup> "Nepal asks India to ease quarantine restrictions", *Kantipur*, November 15, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/15/business/nepal-asks-india-to-ease-quarantine-restrictions/397717.html>.
- <sup>65</sup> "Cross-border power trade: Nepal, India agree to devise long-term plans", *Kantipur*, November 21, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/21/business/cross-border-power-trade-nepal-india-agree-to-devise-long-term-plans/397971.html>.

- <sup>66</sup> "WB agrees to give \$46m for Kabeli hydro project", *Kantipur*, November 25, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/25/business/wb-agrees-to-give-46m-for-kabeli-hydro-project/398160.html>.
- <sup>67</sup> "Three-party meet inconclusive", *Kantipur*, November 29, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/29/top-story/three-party-meet-inconclusive/398320.html>.
- <sup>68</sup> "MJF-N proposes nine federal states", *Kantipur*, November 30, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/30/top-story/mjf-n-proposes-nine-federal-states/398362.html>.
- <sup>69</sup> "Janajati leaders announce protest demanding ethnic states", *Kantipur*, November 2, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/02/top-story/janjati-leaders-announce-protest-demanding-ethnic-states/397115.html>.
- <sup>70</sup> "No alternative to consensus: 20-party alliance", *Kantipur*, November 30, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/30/top-story/no-alternative-to-consensus-20-party-alliance/398363.html>.
- <sup>71</sup> "Chand announces formation of new party CPN (Maoist)", *Kantipur*, November 29, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/29/top-story/chand-announces-formation-of-new-party-cpn-maoist/398318.html>.
- <sup>72</sup> "Madhesi Morcha revived", *Kantipur*, November 24, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/24/top-story/madhesi-morcha-revived/398126.html>.
- <sup>73</sup> "Corruption tainted Khadka forms committee to revive Hindu state", *Kantipur*, November 1, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/01/capital/corruption-tainted-khadka-forms-committee-to-revive-hindu-state/397048.html>.
- <sup>74</sup> "Remittance inflows decline for second straight month", *Kantipur*, November 18, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/18/business/remittance-inflows-decline-for-second-straight-month/397848.html>.
- <sup>75</sup> "PM Koirala inaugurates Saarc summit", *Kantipur*, November 27, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/26/top-story/pm-koirala-inaugurates-saarc-summit/398197.html>. "Modi and Sharif hold unofficial talks", *Kantipur*, November 27, 2014 at <http://www.ekantipur.com/2014/11/27/top-story/modi-and-sharif-hold-unofficial-talks/398239.html>. "Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif meets regional leaders at SAARC summit", *Kantipur*, November 27, 2014 at [http://articles.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/2014-11-27/news/56515433\\_1\\_saarc-summit-saarc-leaders-pakistan-pm-nawaz-sharif](http://articles.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/2014-11-27/news/56515433_1_saarc-summit-saarc-leaders-pakistan-pm-nawaz-sharif).
- <sup>76</sup> "Pakistan says will help China fight Xinjiang militants", *Dawn*, November 8, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1143134/pakistan-says-will-help-china-fight-xinjiang-militants>.
- <sup>77</sup> "PM Nawaz arrives in Berlin", *Dawn*, November 10, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1143504/pm-nawaz-arrives-in-berlin>.
- <sup>78</sup> "Operation against terrorists affected by India: Gen Raheel", *Dawn*, November 19, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1145509/operation-against-terrorists-affected-by-india-gen-raheel>. Iqbal, Anwar, "Army chief holds talks at Pentagon", *Dawn*, November 19, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1145405/army-chief-holds-talks-at-pentagon>.
- <sup>79</sup> Haider, Mateen, "US donates equipment to Pakistan for monitoring IED chemical import", *Dawn*, November 13, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1144243/us-donates-equipment-to-pakistan-for-monitoring-ied-chemical-import>.
- <sup>80</sup> Iqbal, Anwar, "PM, Obama discussed terrorism, says White House", *Dawn*, November 23, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1146339/pm-obama-discussed-terrorism-says-white-house>.
- <sup>81</sup> "Pakistan summons US ambassador over 'unsubstantiated' Pentagon report", *Dawn*, November 5, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1142451/pakistan-summons-us-ambassador-over-unsubstantiated-pentagon-report>.
- <sup>82</sup> Haider, Sajjad, "Pakistan has world's fastest growing nuclear programme: US think tank", *Dawn*, November 24, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1146584/pakistan-has-worlds-fastest-growing-nuclear-programme-us-think-tank>.

- <sup>83</sup> "Jamaatul Ahrar threatens to attack India following Wagah blast", *Dawn*, November 5, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1142408/jamaatul-ahrar-threatens-to-attack-india-following-wagah-blast>.
- <sup>84</sup> Sherazi, Zahir Shah, "TTP joins hands with Lashkar-i-Islam in Khyber", *Dawn*, November 7, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1142908/ttp-joins-hands-with-lashkar-i-islam-in-khyber>.
- <sup>85</sup> "Christian couple beaten to death for 'desecrating Quran': police", *Dawn*, November 5, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1142386/christian-couple-beaten-to-death-for-desecrating-quran-police>. "EU urges Pakistan to overhaul blasphemy laws", *Dawn*, November 27, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1147298/eu-urges-pakistan-to-overhaul-blasphemy-laws>.
- <sup>86</sup> "1,200 militants killed during 5-month offensive: army", *Dawn*, November 16, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1144894/1200-militants-killed-during-5-month-offensive-army>. "Reconstruction of North Waziristan will take two years: NDMA chief", *Dawn*, November 13, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1144212/reconstruction-of-north-waziristan-will-take-two-years-ndma-chief>.
- <sup>87</sup> Haider, Mateen, "Italy's army chief meets COAS, praises Pakistan's role in regional peace", *Dawn*, November 10, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1143531/italys-army-chief-meets-coas-praises-pakistans-role-in-regional-peace>.
- <sup>88</sup> Haider, Mateen, "Pakistan test-fires Hatf IV ballistic missile", *Dawn*, November 17, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1145070/pakistan-test-fires-hatf-iv-ballistic-missile>.
- <sup>89</sup> Haider, Mateen, "Pakistan condemns Israeli 'act of terror' on Al-Aqsa mosque", *Dawn*, November 5, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1142458/pakistan-condemns-israeli-act-of-terror-on-al-aqsa-mosque>.
- <sup>90</sup> Naqash, Tariq, "PM seeks world help for talks with India on Kashmir", *Dawn*, November 21, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1145873/pm-seeks-world-help-for-talks-with-india-on-kashmir>.
- <sup>91</sup> Haider, Mateen, "Kashmiris are freedom fighters, not separatists: FO", *Dawn*, November 6, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1142683/kashmiris-are-freedom-fighters-not-separatists-fo>.
- <sup>92</sup> "China denies training Pakistan troops near Indian border", *Dawn*, November 18, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1145297/china-denies-training-pakistan-troops-near-indian-border>.
- <sup>93</sup> Syed, Baqir Sajjad, "Pakistan, Russia sign landmark defence cooperation agreement", *Dawn*, November 21, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1145875/pakistan-russia-sign-landmark-defence-cooperation-agreement>.
- <sup>94</sup> Rizvi, Manzar, "36 Indian prisoners released from Karachi jail", *Dawn*, November 28, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1147478/36-indian-prisoners-released-from-karachi-jail>.
- <sup>95</sup> Haider, Irfan, "Imran's Plan C: Paralyse major cities, paralyse Pakistan", *Dawn*, November 30, 2014 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1147893/imrans-plan-c-paralyse-major-cities-paralyse-pakistan>.
- <sup>96</sup> "President says terrorism a challenge", *Colombo Gazette*, November 26, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/26/president-says-terrorism-a-challenge-2/>. "Modi and Mahinda hold talks in Nepal", *Colombo Gazette*, November 26, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/26/modi-and-mahinda-hold-talks-in-nepal/>.
- <sup>97</sup> "Joint military exercise between Sri Lanka and India armies concludes", *Colombo Page*, November 24, 2014 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_14B/Nov24\\_1416815238CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_14B/Nov24_1416815238CH.php).
- <sup>98</sup> "Pakistan notes Lanka ties important", *Colombo Gazette*, November 28, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/28/pakistan-notes-lanka-ties-important/>. "Sri Lankan Air Force delegation visits Pakistani Air Defence Command", *Colombo Page*, November 30, 2014 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_14B/Nov30\\_1417339677CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_14B/Nov30_1417339677CH.php).
- <sup>99</sup> "PM wants strong India ties to continue", *Colombo Gazette*, November 9, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/09/pm-wants-strong-india-ties-to-continue/>.

- <sup>100</sup> "Indian houses for landslide affected", *Colombo Gazette*, November 10, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/10/indian-houses-for-landslide-affected/>.
- <sup>101</sup> "Protesters want 3 Lankans also freed", *Colombo Gazette*, November 20, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/20/protesters-want-3-lankans-also-freed/>. "Indians disappointed after new arrest", *Colombo Gazette*, November 24, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/24/indians-disappointed-after-fresh-arrest/>.
- <sup>102</sup> "Lankan refugees at Indian camp fast", *Colombo Gazette*, November 16, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/16/lankan-refugees-at-indian-camp-fast/>.
- <sup>103</sup> "Russian naval ship arrives at Sri Lanka's Colombo port on goodwill mission", *Colombo Page*, November 25, 2014 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_14B/Nov25\\_1416861187CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_14B/Nov25_1416861187CH.php).
- <sup>104</sup> "Mahinda pins hopes on Kiwis at UNSC", *Colombo Gazette*, November 4, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/04/sri-lanka-pins-hopes-on-kiwis-at-unsc/>.
- <sup>105</sup> "Lanka reiterates its commitment to UN", *Colombo Gazette*, November 16, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/16/lanka-reiterates-its-commitment-to-un/>.
- <sup>106</sup> "Northern Expressway work launched", *Colombo Gazette*, November 14, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/14/work-on-northern-expressway-launched/>.
- <sup>107</sup> "Mauritania firm over stand on Lanka", *Colombo Gazette*, November 13, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/13/mauritania-firm-over-stand-on-lanka/>.
- <sup>108</sup> "Sri Lanka and Belarus explore expanding trade relations", *ColomboPage*, November 20, 2014 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_14B/Nov20\\_1416495115CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_14B/Nov20_1416495115CH.php).
- <sup>109</sup> "USAID visits shelter for Koslanda landslide victims in Sri Lanka", *ColomboPage*, November 19, 2014 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_14B/Nov19\\_1416379996CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_14B/Nov19_1416379996CH.php).
- <sup>110</sup> "UN hails Lanka on ending statelessness", *Colombo Gazette*, November 4, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/04/un-hails-lanka-on-ending-statelessness/>.
- <sup>111</sup> "Government hits back at Prince Zeid", *Colombo Gazette*, November 8, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/08/government-hits-back-at-prince-zeid/>.
- <sup>112</sup> "Government raises objections with UN", *Colombo Gazette*, November 17, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/17/government-raises-objections-with-un/>.
- <sup>113</sup> "Sri Lanka at risk of increased terrorist activity, ranks 36th in Global Terrorism Index", *ColomboPage*, November 20, 2014 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_14B/Nov20\\_1416464646CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_14B/Nov20_1416464646CH.php).
- <sup>114</sup> "Presidential polls set for January 8", *Colombo Gazette*, November 21, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/21/presidential-polls-set-for-january-8/>. "Sri Lanka ruling party central committee unanimously decides to nominate President for a third term", *ColomboPage*, November 20, 2014 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_14B/Nov20\\_1416451294CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_14B/Nov20_1416451294CH.php).
- <sup>115</sup> "Ranil for a national unity government", *Colombo Gazette*, November 26, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/26/ranil-proposes-a-national-government/>.
- <sup>116</sup> "Pre-polls related violence increases", *Colombo Gazette*, November 23, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/23/pre-polls-related-violence-increases/>.