



## Afghanistan

### *Govt Asked To Grow Online Trade*



Ways to improve online markets in the country have been discussed at a gathering of government officials and investors in Kabul. According to government statistics, at least 30 percent of the population used internet services, but at a high cost. "Everyone has become tired of letters and signatures, therefore we established an office under name of Asaan – Easy – through which we want to ease the administrative processes of our public services particularly for investors," said ....[full story](#)

### *Afghan MPs Hold Talks With Pakistani Delegation*



The Wolesi Jirga Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahimy met on Saturday with a Pakistani delegation, discussing Kabul-Islamabad ties and stability in Afghanistan. Pakistani parliamentarians said Pakistan helped Afghans during the jihad against the then USSR, but they said Pakistan has not cooperated sincerely in the fight against corruption....[full story](#)



## Azerbaijan

### *BTK railway may link Netherlands with China, Far East*

Transporting goods from Far East and China via Baku-Tbilisi-Kars is in direct interest of the Netherlands and it already considers the ways of joining the railway, Dutch ambassador to Azerbaijan Onno Kervers told Trend. "We are trying to look at how we can profit by linking to Baku-Tbilisi-Kars," said the ambassador. He added that nearly a month ago an expert from Limburg, a southern province of the Netherlands, visited Azerbaijan to participate in a seminar related to exploring and implementing important transport corridors, including...[full story](#)



### *IMF notes improvements in social protection, labor markets in Azerbaijan*

Notable improvements have been made in social protection and labor markets in Azerbaijan, Chief of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Mission to Azerbaijan Mohammed El Qorchi said following the completion of the visit to the country. An IMF team led by Mohammed El Qorchi visited Baku from November 30 to December 14 to hold discussions in the context of the 2018 Article IV Consultation. Qorchi said that the mission welcomes the authorities' progress in...[full story](#)



**Iran**

## *Iran, Tajikistan sign MOU on customs co-op*



Iran and Tajikistan signed an MOU on customs cooperation at the place of the World Customs Organization (WCO) in Brussels, IRNA reported on Friday. The MOU, which is considered a turning point in two countries' customs cooperation, was signed on the sidelines of a WCO special session and in the presence of head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) and his Tajik counterpart. Iran and Tajikistan had signed a customs cooperation agreement back in 2002, the same report confirmed....[end of story](#)

## *ECO Regional Planning Council meets in Pakistan with Iran's presence*

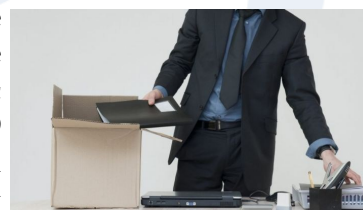


The four-day meeting will review progress on the implementation of the ECO-approved programs/projects and consider proposals for new programs and projects for 2018-2019. Pakistan Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Ahsan Iqbal, addressing the meeting, urged for wide-range cooperation among the ECO member states for economic development and prosperity. He said the world is facing challenges of terrorism and extremism and law and order is inevitable for development. Ahsan Iqbal said we will have to ensure ...[full story](#)

**Kazakhstan**

## *Kazakhstan to consolidate energy transmission companies by 2022*

The Kazakh government plans to consolidate the country's electrical grid and reduce the number of energy transmission companies by 30 percent by 2022. "We expect the number of energy transmission companies to reduce from 160 to 110 and 27 public utilities and 23 private energy transmission enterprises will cease operations by 2019 and by 2022 as part of the consolidation of regional electric grid companies," said head of Electric Power Industry Department of the Ministry of Energy Bauyrzhan Sarsenov at the briefing, adding that only a ....[full story](#)



## *Kazakh GDP grows 3.9 percent in 11 months*

Kazakhstan's gross domestic product (GDP) increase is expected to be 4 percent by the end of 2017 due to stable economic growth rates, said Minister of National Economy Timur Suleimenov at a Dec. 12 governmental meeting. The economy grew by 3.9 percent from January-November against the backdrop of accelerated investment activity, inflationary process stabilisation and an improved economic environment. The growth rate of investments in fixed assets totalled 5.7 percent and increased 2.8 times compared to 2016. The annual inflation rate has remained in the target corridor of 6-8 percent since the beginning of this year, including 7.3 percent in November.....[full story](#)







## Kyrgyzstan

### *The UN added horse game from Kyrgyzstan to list of important cultural heritage items*



The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization added 33 new items to its running list of important global cultural contributions. First established in 2008, 470 elements are included on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity from 117 countries (Canada and the United States are no-shows). They run the gamut from a whistled language developed in Turkish mountain regions, to the ancient Indian practice of yoga, to more ...[full story](#)

### *Kyrgyzstan, Russia sign bilateral documents on cooperation*



A signing of bilateral documents was held in Bishkek on December 15, 2017, on the results of the 6th Russian-Kyrgyz interregional conference, the press service of the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic reported. Thus, the following documents were signed: - Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of Tatarstan on trade and economic, scientific, technical and socio-humanitarian cooperation....[full story](#)



## Pakistan

### *Pakistan hosts 28th meeting of RPC of ECO Countries*

Pakistan hosted the 28th Regional Planning Council (RPC) meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Member States here from December 11 to 14. The RPC of ECO is comprises of the heads of planning organizations of member states and meets at-least once a year prior to the annual meeting of the Council of Ministers. The meeting was discuss of basic strategies, policies and plans in accordance with the objectives and principles of regional cooperation laid down in the Treaty of Izmir, as well as policy guidelines of the Council of Ministers, said a press release .... [full story](#)



### *Foreign direct investment grows by 57pc*

Foreign direct investment (FDI) increased 57.2 per cent year-on-year to \$1.14 billion in the first five months of 2017-18. FDI was dominated by China as its share was 73pc in total inflows, according to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Friday. It was \$729 million in the comparable five-month period of 2016-17. Rising FDI is a good sign amidst dwindling foreign exchange reserves. The government recently raised \$2.5 billion by auctioning bonds in the international market to improve its reserves. SBP data showed the power sector received \$539m, highest among.... [full story](#)





## Tajikistan

### *Tajik Delegation participated in the 28th meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council in Islamabad*



The 28th meeting of the Council of Regional Planning of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was held in Islamabad on December 14. The delegation of the Republic of Tajikistan led by First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Nizomiddin Zohidi took part in the meeting. According to the MFA Information Department, following the meeting the program and calendar of ECO events for 2018 were approved. Nizomiddin Zohidi speaking at the ministerial segment of the meeting, noted the priority directions...[full story](#)

### *Tajikistan will assume the rotating ECO presidency in 2018*



The 28th meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC) of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) took place in the Pakistan capital, Islamabad, from December 11 to December 14, ASIA-Plus reports. According to the Tajik MFA information department, Tajikistan was represented at the meeting by First Deputy Foreign Minister, Nizomiddin Zohidi. Speaking at the meeting, Zohidi reportedly pointed out priorities of cooperation of Tajikistan with the ECO and ways of expansion of cooperation with this Organization ... [full story](#)



## Turkey

### *Turkey supports 170 countries with development aid*

Turkey provided official development assistance (ODA) worth \$21 billion to 170 countries from 2010 to 2016, according to data from Turkey's state development aid agency. The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) said 62 percent of Turkey's ODA was provided to Syria, while Africa, the central Asian Turkic republics, and Balkan countries received 9.54 percent, 5.44 percent and 4.3 percent, respectively. In that same period, Turkey provided \$13.66 billion of ODA -- including ....[full story](#)



### *Turkey attracted 30M tourists in 1st 11 months of 2017*

More than 30 million foreign nationals entered Turkey in the first 11 months of 2017, according to data compiled from Turkey's migration authority on Saturday. A total of 30.37 million foreign nationals entered Turkey, while 30.4 million left the country during the same time, according to data from the Migration Management Directorate General examined by Anadolu Agency. In 2016, 24.7 million foreign nationals visited Turkey, and in the first 11 months of this year this figure rose more than 5 million, the data showed. ....[full story](#)







## Turkmenistan

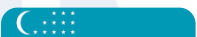
### *Illicit drugs and cigarettes publicly burnt in Turkmenistan*

The public burning of illicit drugs, counterfeit cigarettes and psychotropic substances seized by the law enforcement agencies of Turkmenistan during special operations took place near Ashgabat. The burning ceremony was attended by the heads of the law enforcement agencies of Turkmenistan, foreign diplomats and representatives of international organizations accredited in Ashgabat, including the UN, OSCE, as well as public associations and the mass media.....[full story](#)



### *Turkmenistan developing system of legal protection of intellectual property*

Creation of favorable economic conditions for the development of state system of legal protection of intellectual property in Turkmenistan is aimed at intensifying scientific, technical, economic and cultural growth of the country, the Neutral Turkmenistan newspaper reported Dec. 16. At the last meeting of the government, Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov signed the relevant resolution on collecting fees for procedures related to registration of objects of copyright law, a list of these procedures, as well as volumes of fees.....[full story](#)



## Uzbekistan

### *Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to expand cooperation in transport sector*



Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan will launch flights on route Tashkent-Bishkek-Tashkent on 23 December 2017. This was stated by the Minister of Transport and Roads of Kyrgyzstan Zhamshitbek Kalilov following the visit of the Kyrgyz President to Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan Havo Yollari (Uzbekistan Airways) will carry out two flights a week, as well as the airline of Kyrgyzstan "Air Manas" - two flights a week. He said that from 2018, the parties intend to resume air communication in the direction of Tashkent-Osh-Tashkent...[full story](#)

### *Delegation of Uzbekistan takes part in meeting of TIFA Council*



A delegation of Uzbekistan headed by Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade Sahib Saifnazarov took part in the meeting of the Council of the US-Central Asia Trade and Investment Framework (TIFA) on 12 December. According to the press service of the Ministry of Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan, the meeting of the council was held in Almaty (Kazakhstan). The Council members discussed cooperation in trade and investment between the countries of Central Asia and the United States. The sides discussed issues of expanding trade and creating...[full story](#)