

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

**February 10th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 5/2**

[Sri Lanka, Maldives explore ways to further strengthen friendly relationship and bilateral ties](#)

Colombo Page | 9<sup>th</sup> February  
Sri Lanka and the Maldives today agreed to further broaden and strengthen the friendly relationship and the bilateral ties between the two Indian Ocean island nations. Sri Lanka's Foreign Affairs Minister Mangala Samaraweera, who is on a two-day official visit to the Maldives to attend the Third Session of the Joint Commission between the Maldives and Sri Lanka, called on the Maldivian President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom, this afternoon, at the President's Office.

[HRW asks Bangladesh to drop Rohingya relocation plan](#)

bdnews24 | 9<sup>th</sup> February  
The Bangladesh government should immediately drop its plan to transfer Rohingya refugees to an "uninhabited, undeveloped" coastal island, Human Rights Watch has said in what is clearly a sharp reaction to the government's intended move. Relocating the refugees from the Cox's Bazar area to Thengar Char island would deprive them of their rights to freedom of movement, livelihood, food and education, in violation of Bangladesh's obligations under international human rights law, the New York-based rights group said in a statement posted on its website.

[Ghani, Trump speaks over phone, discuss issues of mutual interest](#)

Khaama Press | 9<sup>th</sup> February  
President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and US President Donald Trump discussed issues of mutual interest during a phone conversation earlier tonight. The Office of the President, ARG Palace, said the two leaders discussed counter-terrorism and other issues, including Afghanistan and regional security as well economy. "President Ashraf Ghani and President Donald Trump discussed counter terrorism, Afghanistan and regional security, economy & other bilateral issues over the phone," Shah Hussain Murtazvi, a presidential palace spokesman said.

**AFGHANISTAN**

[Russia to Host Regional Conf. on Afghanistan: Lavrov](#)

MNA / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 9<sup>th</sup> February  
Russia has announced it will host a regional conference on Afghanistan in Moscow in mid-February, with representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, Iran and India in attendance.

[ISIS leader involved in major Kabul attacks is killed: ARG](#)

Khaama Press | 10<sup>th</sup> February  
A top leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group who was involved in some of the major attacks in Kabul city has been killed, the ARG Presidential Palace said. According to ARG Palace, Qari Munib was killed during a counter-terrorism operation conducted on 13<sup>th</sup> January in Achin district of Nangarhar.

**BANGLADESH**

[BIDA gets Tk 688b investment proposals in 2nd quarter](#)

The Financial Express | 9<sup>th</sup> February  
An aggregate of Tk 687.67 billion worth of investment proposals were registered with the Bangladesh Investment

Development Authority (BIDA) during the October-December period of 2016. The investment proposals, made in the second quarter of the current fiscal year (FY) by some 487 local and foreign entrepreneurs, were 36.84 per cent or Tk 185.16 billion higher than that of the July-September period of the same year, according to the BIDA.

#### [EC reformation process still mired in criticism](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 10<sup>th</sup> February

Amid its much-hyped reconstitution, the 11th Election Commission (EC) still remains the centre of discussion in Bangladesh's political arena with many continuing to criticise the reformation process. In continuation of its disgruntlement ever since the new EC was formed, the BNP kept raising its eyebrows over the constitutional body, putting the reconstitution procedure in doubt. BNP's Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said: "The total process of EC reconstitution was merely a drama. The government and the search committee have cheated the people.

#### [Expatriates can participate in local poll](#)

The Daily Star | 10th February

The government will formulate a citizenship law allowing Bangladeshi expatriates to contest elections to local government bodies and to participate in political activities, Law Minister Anisul Huq said yesterday. Bangladeshis abroad, however, cannot become lawmaker, president and Supreme Court judge as per the proposed citizenship act, he said while speaking as the chief guest at a roundtable discussion on the Proposed Citizenship Act 2016 organised by the Centre for Nonresident Bangladeshis at Hotel Sonargaon in the capital.

### **BHUTAN**

#### [SASEC project in Pasakha to miss deadline](#)

Kuensel Online | 9th February

The Nu 294.14 million (M) South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) project to improve the Pasakha bypass road in Phuentsholing will miss its deadline. The contracting firm, M/s Gaseb Construction, was recently terminated for failing to complete targeted works. The project started in September 2015 and the deadline for completion was August 2017. The contract was awarded to M/s Gaseb Construction which was in a joint venture (JV) with SPML and Maccaferri.

#### [Non-resident Bhutanese, key to financial inclusiveness](#)

Mizzima | 9th February

Over 4,000 Bhutanese working and studying in Australia have only 32 foreign currency accounts with the banks in the country today. However, only 18 have made deposits into their foreign currency accounts facilitated by Remit-Bhutan, which was launched about four months ago.

### **MALDIVES**

#### [New agency established to promote Maldivian tourism](#)

Sun Online | 9<sup>th</sup> February

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has established a new agency to promote the tourism industry of Maldives – Maldives Tourism Promotion Board Limited. The presidential decree published this Thursday reads that Maldives Tourism Promotion Board Limited was established to promote Maldives in the international market as a tourist destination, market Maldivian tourism industry, and monitor and strengthen the industry.

#### [Economic Ministry introduces mobile token system](#)

Sun Online | 9<sup>th</sup> February

Ministry of Economic Development has introduced a mobile token system for its services through mobile phone application "QueueBee". "We have set a system through which token numbers can be taken without coming to the ministry. The waiting list can also be viewed using the system," said Mariyam Wisam, Registrar of Companies.

### **MYANMAR**

#### [Bangladesh rebukes Myanmar for 'unprovoked aggression'](#)

Mizzima | 9th February

Bangladesh on Wednesday rebuked Myanmar for opening fire on a boat in the Naf river that marks their border

and killing one fisherman, describing it as an "act of unprovoked aggression". Tensions have been running high since thousands of Rohingya began pouring over the border, fleeing a crackdown by the Myanmar army which began in October.

#### [Tatmadaw forms committee to investigate allegations in UNOHCHR report](#)

Mizzima | 10th February

The Tatmadaw (Defence Services) issued a news release dated 9 February stating it was forming an Investigation Committee to investigate alleged human rights violations in Myanmar mentioned in a report released by United Nations Office of High Commissioner of Human Rights (UNOHCHR). The notification says the investigation committee will look into alleged human rights violations and other illegal activities committed during area clearing operations by Tatmadaw after coordinated attacks in Rakhine State on three Police Border Guard posts on 9 October 2016.

#### [Myanmar business survey sheds light on the constraints businesses face](#)

Mizzima | 10th February

A report which provides an overview of businesses in Myanmar and sheds light on the constraints they face, was launched yesterday by the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Planning and Finance, H.E U Maung Maung Win and the UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, Haoliang Xu. The Myanmar Business Survey was jointly conducted by the Central Statistics Organisation and the United Nations Development Programme.

### **NEPAL**

#### [Federalism will not succeed in Nepal: Minister Mahat](#)

Himalayan News Service / The Himalayan Times | 9<sup>th</sup> February

Nepali Congress central leader and former finance minister Ram Sharan Mahat today said implementation of federalism was a major challenge facing the country at the moment. Speaking at a press meet organised by Lamjung chapter of Nepal Press Union in Besisahar, Mahat held that country was experiencing difficulties due to federalism. "I have been saying that federalism will not succeed in Nepal.

#### [Cabinet to extend tenure of TRC, CIEDP today](#)

My Republica | 9<sup>th</sup> February

A Cabinet meeting is taking place to extend the tenure of Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Commission for the Investigation of Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP) for one more year on Thursday. The commissions were formed to investigate the incidents of serious human rights violations committed during the conflict era. The Cabinet has to extend the tenure of the Commissions which were formed on February 10, 2015.

#### [Elections within Jestha: State Minister Jwarachan](#)

My Republica | 10<sup>th</sup> February

State Minister for Commerce Subarna Jwarachan has claimed that the local body elections will take place before the Nepali month of Jestha. The State Minister made the remark after inaugurating the Madhyabindu Festival, which took off on Thursday at Chomar of Nawalparasi.

### **PAKISTAN**

#### [Pakistan to borrow \\$600m from China](#)

Dawn | 10th February

Pakistan has decided to borrow \$600 million from China to boost its dwindling foreign currency reserves that have depleted by \$1.7 billion since expiry of the International Monetary Fund programme. It is the second time in the last three years that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government has decided to ask a friendly country to boost its foreign currency reserves. Earlier, Saudi Arabia had gifted \$1.5 billion to Pakistan in two equal tranches in 2014.

#### [Gen Bajwa, US defence secretary discuss steps needed for peace in region](#)

Dawn | 10th February

Gen Bajwa congratulated Mr Mattis on assuming the office of US defence secretary and expressed the hope that his vast experience in the field would be of "great value" for the region. For his part, Secretary Mattis recalled the

sacrifices rendered by the people and armed forces of Pakistan in the fight against terrorists and praised their resilience. He also lauded the role the Pakistan Army has played in combating the scourge of terrorism.

### [India, Pakistan in race to destroy young minds](#)

Dawn| 10th February

The inevitable target of their bogus and potentially violent writings are the minorities — non-Hindus in India and non-Muslims in Pakistan. Consider the latest attempt at subversion from India. According to reports on Thursday, ministers in the Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled (BJP) Rajasthan state have proposed that the outcome should be rewritten in the mediaeval battle of Haldighati that was fought between the forces of Mughal emperor Akbar and Rajput chieftain Rana Pratap.

## **SRI LANKA**

### [Sri Lanka says its relations with India are excellent](#)

Colombo Gazette| 9th February

Sri Lanka says its relations with India are excellent and both countries are moving together in partnership. The High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to India Chitranganee Wagiswara referred to the strengthening of the bilateral ties after the assumption of office of the National Unity Government in Sri Lanka, adding that “today we are moving together in partnership in building and further strengthening our traditionally close relations”.

### [MP Namal Rajapaksa to be indicted under money laundering act](#)

Colombo Page| 9th February

The Police Financial Crime Investigation Division (FCID) informed the court that they intend to submit charges against MP Namal Rajapaksa and a group of parliamentarians under the money laundering act. The Police had informed the Colombo Magistrate's Court that Namal Rajapaksa acting as a Member of Parliament, had bought shares from a company called "HelloCorp" by spending more than 45 million Rupees which was collected illegally.

### [Sri Lanka boosts scientific cooperation with CERN](#)

Colombo Page| 10th February

An International Cooperation Agreement (ICA) to enhance scientific cooperation in High Energy Physics between the scientific community of Sri Lanka and the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), was signed in Geneva on Wednesday (8 February 2017). Minister of Science, Technology & Research, Susil Premajayantha and the Director for International Relations of CERN, Ms. Charlotte Warakaulle signed on behalf of the two parties.

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### ***About Ananta Aspen Centre***

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

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