

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

March 10th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 5/3

[Kanchanpur local dies in India's SSB firing](#)

My Republica | 10th March
A 32-year-old man from Ananda Bazaar of Punarbas Municipality-8 in Kanchanpur district died when India's Seema Sashastra Bal (SSB) allegedly opened fire on locals on Nepal-India border on Thursday. The victim has been identified as Gobinda Gautam of Punarbas Municipality-8. He was pronounced dead at CP Hospital, Dhangadi, said police.

[US disburses \\$550 million under CSF to Pakistan](#)

Express Tribune | 10th March
The United States has disbursed \$550 million under the Coalition Support Fund (CSF) grant to Pakistan, rekindling Islamabad's hopes for a better external account position that had come under stress due to delay in release of the money. The Trump administration transferred the funds this month with a fresh tranche of \$200 million coming early this week, said an official of the finance ministry.

[Sri Lanka to release all 85 Indian fishermen soon](#)

Colombo Page | 9th March
All 85 Indian fishermen, who are in Sri Lankan custody, would be released soon, India's Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday. The official Ministry Spokesperson Gopal Bagley told the weekly media briefing today the government of Sri Lanka has informed the High Commission of India in Colombo that all 85 Indian fishermen currently in Sri Lankan custody will be released.

AFGHANISTAN

[India to spend \\$450 million in housing projects in Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press | 9th March

The government of India intends to spend around \$450 million in housing projects in Afghanistan, it has been reported. The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing informed regarding India's intention following a meeting between the Indian Ambassador Manpreet Vohra Minister Syed Sadat Mansoor Naderi.

[ISIS claim of Kabul attack being assessed as preliminary leads found: Sediqi](#)

Khaama Press | 9th March

The relevant security institutions are assessing the claims made by the loyalists of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist as preliminary leads have been found by the intelligence operatives. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) spokesman Sediq Sediqi informed regarding the progress a day after the main military hospital was hit by one of the deadliest coordinated attacks for which ISIS loyalists claimed responsibility.

[Taliban stones woman to death, whips man over adultery in Badakhshan](#)

Khaama Press | 9th March

The Taliban insurgents have stoned a woman to death but left the man after whipping him over adultery in northeastern Badakhshan province of Afghanistan. According to the local officials, the incident took place in the remote and restive district of Wardoj.

BANGLADESH

[Govt trying to restore glory of jute: PM](#)

BSS/ the Daily Star | 9th March

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said her government was making constant efforts to restore the lost glory of jute, reclaiming its repute of being the country's "golden fibre". "We want to restore the lost glory of jute as we want to flourish our local products," she told the opening of the country's maiden National Jute Day celebrations in line with her last year's announcement. She added works were underway for modernisation and diversification of jute products to reclaim the lost glory of the fibre which "once jute was the only foreign exchange earning sector of Bangladesh".

[90% male migrant workers victims of corruption in 2016: TIB](#)

The Daily Star | 9th March

Around 90 percent male migrant workers fell victim of corruption in 2016, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) said today. "Destination country's employers and recruiting agents with Bangladesh recruiting agents deal with the buying and selling of Visas," TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman alleged while replying to a query at a programme held at MIDAS Centre in Dhaka. Applicants had to pay Tk 13,000 to Tk 15,000 as bribe for approval of each application at Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry, the TIB report said. The ministry approved 61,122 applications in 2016, it said.

[Bangladesh witnessing uplift as democracy exists: PM](#)

The Financial Express | 9th March

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told the Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) on Wednesday that massive development activities were taking place in Bangladesh as democracy existed in the country at present. Taking a swipe at those who always raise a question about existence of democracy in Bangladesh, Hasina, also the Leader of the House, said: "If democratic environment doesn't exist in the country, how they talk and criticise the government in this way ... the country is witnessing massive uplift as democracy exists here."

[Bangladesh elected OPCW chair, defeating Pakistan](#)

Prothom Alo | 9th March

Bangladesh has been elected chair of the executive council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), defeating Pakistan. A foreign ministry press release issued on Thursday said this is for the first-time Bangladesh has been elected to such a position of the Executive Council in the OPCW. "Bangladesh ambassador to the Netherlands Sheikh Mohammed Belal, also permanent representative to the OPCW, was elected the chairperson of the OPCW on 09 March 2017 for the term 2017-2018," read the press release.

[PM Hasina questions report that NGOs helped reduce poverty 1% a year in Bangladesh](#)

Bdnews24.com | 10th March

Though foreigners are effusive in their praise of NGOs for their role in poverty alleviation in Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has her questions about their claims of achievement. She says Bangladesh would be totally free from poverty now if it was reduced by 1 percent every year through the activities of Non-Government Organisations. Sheikh Hasina recently came down hard on Finance Minister AMA Muhith over the latter's appreciation of the role played by Grameen Bank and BRAC in poverty alleviation.

BHUTAN

[Nu 200M town hall for Thimphu city in the pipeline](#)

Kuensel Online | 9th March

Thimphu Thromde plans to construct a town hall in Changangkha in Thimphu in the next fiscal year. Besides housing meetings, the town hall will accommodate the offices of the thrompon, the thromde executive secretary and thromde's customer care offices. The construction of the hall is estimated to cost Nu 200M (million). The thromde's executive secretary Passang Dorji said that the hall would be constructed in phases. For the initial construction phase, funds will be provided by the Indian government.

[794kgs of green chillies seized in Bajo](#)

Kuensel Online | 9th March

The Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA) office in Wangdue seized 794kgs of imported green chillies from Bajo town yesterday. At least nine vegetable vendors were found to have been involved in illegally importing green chillies, which were hidden in boxes containing cabbages, officials said. Each vendor was fined ten times the market rate of Nu 50/kg. A total of Nu 397,000 in fines were levied on the nine vendors. The highest fine levied was Nu 100,000 for 200kgs of green chillies and the lowest was Nu 7,500 levied on a vendor who smuggled in 15kgs.

MALDIVES

[MPs petition for “no confidence” vote on Speaker Maseeh](#)

Sun Online | 8th March

A group of lawmakers are petitioning for a vote of no confidence to remove Speaker of People’s Majlis, Abdulla Maseeh from his seat. The lawmakers announced the submission of the petition in a press conference held in front of People’s Majlis this Wednesday morning. They include some lawmakers from both the ruling Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) and opposition, Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP).

[ACC: No better team to investigate corruption](#)

Sun Online | 9th March

Vice President of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has commented that there was no better team than the current one in the commission to investigate cases involving corruption. ACC sent 14 cases for prosecution and was sent back 70 cases by Prosecutor General’s Office in 2016. “Sun” questioned the Vice President of ACC, Muawwiz Rasheed regarding the quality of commission’s investigative teams, and Muawwiz expressed dull confidence in ACC’s investigations, and replied that even some of the corruption cases filed with the police were investigated by ACC.

[Saudi: Rumors are false, no intention to buy land in Maldives](#)

Sun Online | 10th March

Embassy of Saudi Arabia in the Maldives have said that the rumors in the media about Saudi trying to buy an atoll in the Maldives are false. A statement issued by the Saudi Embassy said that the Saudi government has no intention to buy an atoll, island or land in Maldives to run a major project and they do not even want to run a project under that condition. The Saudi Embassy said that while such allegations were being made in the media, the embassy expresses concern that no attempt was made to contact the Saudi Embassy to get a response and is saddened by it.

MYANMAR

[More than 20,000 Myanmar refugees enter China](#)

Mizzima | 10th March

More than 20,000 Myanmar refugees have entered China, fleeing areas along the border after violent clashes broke out between the south east Asian country's army and ethnic rebels this week, Beijing said Thursday. Geng Shuang, a spokesman for China's foreign ministry, said at a regular press briefing on Thursday that the Myanmar residents are being offered humanitarian assistance "to temporarily avoid the war".

NEPAL

[26 perish in Jajarkot bus accident](#)

My Republica | 9th March

At least 26 people have been killed and dozens injured after a bus veered off the road and fell some 200 meters at Bohara of Bherimalika Municipality-4 in Jajarkot district on Thursday. Of the 26 died in the incident, the bodies of 21 have already been verified. The bus (Na 3 Kha 22 79) was carrying about 60 passengers at the time of the accident. Though overload is said to have contributed to the accident, the main reason is the brake failure, according to injured passengers.

[Thapa makes it to govt, again](#)

My Republica| 10th March

A day after the Samyukta Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha (SLMM) served a seven-day ultimatum to the government warning of withdrawing support, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal on Thursday inducted Rastriya Prajatantra Party leaders, including RPP chairman, into his government. RPP Chairman Kamal Thapa, party's Chief Whip Dilanth Giri and Central Working Committee member Parshuram Tamang, who all had voted against Dahal during the prime ministerial election on August 3, joined the government on Thursday.

PAKISTAN

[CPEC: Hopes and fears as China comes to Gwadar](#)

Dawn| 10th March

A small compound in Gwadar town's old area is littered with coils of polyvinyl chloride (PVC). Around six workers calibrate a moulding machine mounted inside a parked truck and pass the coils through it. Pipes of different diameters and sizes come out from the other side. This is Gwadar's first pipe manufacturing plant. The rudimentary contraption belongs to a famous PVC pipe manufacturing company based in Karachi. All its workers have also come from Karachi. There is no other machinery here. No engineers in protective helmets oversee the manufacturing processes. No clerks or administrators run the facility's day-to-day affairs. The place is as humble as any other compound in town. And the pace of work here is leisurely.

[Imran defends Murad Saeed](#)

Dawn| 10th March

Hours after a scuffle between the lawmakers of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), PTI chief Imran Khan defended his party's MNA Murad Saeed by accusing the ruling party legislator of disrespecting female members of Mr Saeed's family. In his multiple tweets later in the day, the PTI chief also referred to past events to prove his point against the PML-N. In his tweets he gave different reasons which led to the scuffle and the aggressive behaviour of Mr Saeed contrary to the one claimed by Mr Saeed himself after the episode.

[Kuwait agrees to build oil pipeline in Pakistan](#)

The Express Tribune| 10th March

Kuwait has agreed to pour millions of dollars into building a white oil pipeline from Pakistan's south to north for transporting petroleum products from the port city of Karachi to major consumer Punjab. "During a recent visit to Kuwait, Pakistani officials invited the Gulf oil producer to set up an oil refinery in Balochistan and lay a white oil pipeline; its response was very positive and a high-level Kuwaiti delegation will arrive in Pakistan to discuss the two projects," said an official aware of the development.

SRI LANKA

[Indonesia, Sri Lanka to strengthen trade and economic ties](#)

Colombo Gazette| 8th March

President Maithripala Sirisena, who is on a state visit to Indonesia to attend the Indian Ocean Rim Association Leaders' Summit, met with Indonesian President Joko Widodo, today. The Indonesian President warmly welcomed President Sirisena when he arrived at the Merdeka Palace, the official residence of the President of Indonesia, marking the first state visit to Indonesia by a Sri Lankan Head of State in 40 years.

[Sri Lanka President emphasizes increasing women's participation in politics](#)

Colombo Page| 9th March

Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena says women's participation in politics is very much needed to be increased for a political culture with clean, honest and human values in the country. "Increasing of the women's participation in the political sector in order to create a clean, honest and sociable political movement will be an important factor in the future," President Maithripala Sirisena said speaking at a ceremony organized by the Sri Lanka Freedom party (SLFP) Women's Front to mark the International Women's Day.

[Sri Lanka ready to assume role as a growing hub in the Indo-Pacific – envoy](#)

Colombo Page| 10th March

The strategic location of Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean has made the island nation a maritime hub since ancient times and now, having achieved peace and stability, Sri Lanka is keen and able to re-assume an important role as a Hub in the Indian Ocean and its extended terrain, the Indo-Pacific, Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Washington, Prasad Kariyawasam said.

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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