

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

October 10th, 2016 | Volume: 2 - 4/10

[Expanding the Bangladesh-China trade frontier](#)

The Daily Star | 10th October
Chinese President Xi Jinping will be visiting Dhaka for an official visit on October 15, 2016. This is happening three decades after Chinese President Li Xiannian visited Bangladesh in March 1986. This high-profile visit has already triggered considerable optimism in all quarters due to the fact that China is the biggest trade partner and one of the most trusted friends of Bangladesh since formal diplomatic relations were established in mid-1970s. Both the countries are ready with a number of agreements worth billions, covering trade, investment and developmental cooperation, to sign during President Xi Jinping's visit.

[No role for militancy in Pakistan's policy-making: envoys](#)

DAWN | 9th October
There's no role for militancy in policy-making and non-state actors cannot be allowed to operate from the Pakistani territory, says a parliamentary delegation from Pakistan, which completed its five-day visit to the US capital on Saturday. In a briefing to Pakistani, and later an Indian, journalists at the end of their visit, the prime minister's special envoys on Kashmir also said that the United States was doing "positive pushing and prodding" for reducing tensions between India and Pakistan.

[Sri Lanka PM dismisses Northern Province CM's call for a federal solution](#)

Colombo Page | 7th October
Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on Friday said the demand by the Chief Minister of the Northern Province C V Wigneswaran for a federal solution to Tamil ethnic issue in the new constitution is irrelevant since it is the parliament that makes a constitution. The Prime Minister said that Wigneswaran's demands are irrelevant and the all-party steering committee report would be the basis for constitutional change. Two weeks ago Wigneswaran had demanded a federal solution to meet the political aspirations of the Tamil minority. The opposition in parliament demanded government response to Wigneswaran's demand, New Indian Express reported.

AFGHANISTAN

[Afghan Forces Capable of Defending their Country: Stoltenberg](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Tolo News | 8th October

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in an interview with TOLONews this week that despite the violence currently noted in the country the Afghan security forces are able to handle the situation. "We very clearly stated when we handed over the responsibility of the security to the Afghan forces that we had to expect violence and instability," Stoltenberg said.

[EU Stresses Continued Global Support for Afghanistan](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Pajhwok | 8th October

Participants of the just-concluded Brussels Conference have promised continued international support for Afghanistan's political and economic stability, the European Union said on Thursday. A self-reliant, prosperous

and peaceful Afghanistan is a priority for the European Union, Afghanistan, its neighbours and the international community, a statement from EU said.

[Seven soldiers killed in Baghlan chopper crash](#)

Afghanistan Times | 9th October

Seven troops killed after an army helicopter crashed in northern Baghlan province Sunday morning, the defense ministry confirmed. "An army helicopter crashed due to technical problems at 4:00am, in which all seven onboard including four crews and three army soldiers were killed in QurghanTepa area of Baghlan province," said DawlatWaziri, a spokesman for the ministry.

[Clashes underway as Taliban try to capture Farah City](#)

Afghanistan Times | 9th October

Fierce fighting between Afghan security forces and the Taliban insurgents is underway in western Farah province, in which some areas have fallen to the Taliban, officials and residents said on Sunday. Mohammad Daud Aram, head of the youth affairs department and resident of BaghPul, said the Taliban overran the Nawbahar and Berang Toot neighborhoods Saturday night. Nawbahar is situated 12 kilometers northwest of Farah City and BaghPul is two kilometers west of provincial capital, which is increasingly under threat by the militants.

[Ministry Alarmed at Failure to Adhere to Human Rights Convention](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Tolo News | 10th October

Justice Ministry officials have said government has not implemented almost 29 percent of the articles included in the UN's Human Rights Convention. Officials said 21 percent of the articles have been fulfilled while 49 percent are under implementation. The ministry warned that the lack of implementation was alarming.

BANGLADESH

[China may lend Bangladesh \\$40b](#)

The Financial Express | 8th October

China is expected lend Bangladesh a record \$40 billion and the loan agreements is likely to be signed during President Xi Jinping's Bangladesh tour next week, officials have hinted. "Loan agreements of a record amount will be signed," State Minister for Finance and Planning MA Mannan has said. Xi will visit Bangladesh from October 14. He is scheduled to arrive at Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) International Airport in the morning.

[Myanmar says nine police killed by insurgents on Bangladesh border](#)

Reuters / bdnews24 | 9th October

Myanmar says at least nine police officers have been killed and four wounded in multiple assaults on border guard posts along the Southeast Asian nation's frontier with Bangladesh. Eight attackers, identified only as "insurgent terrorists," but believed by officials to belong to a Muslim group, were killed and two were captured alive in clashes in the western state of Rakhine since the early hours of Sunday, national police chief Zaw Win told a press conference.

BHUTAN

[LG contestants want state to fund campaign expenses](#)

Kuensel Online | 8th October

Those who contested in the recent local government (LG) elections in Trashigang say that state-funded election campaign funds should be provided. LG aspirants in both the first and second LG elections held in 2011 and this year had to bear campaign expenses themselves. Only parliamentary contestants are entitled to a Nu 130,000 state-funded campaign fund. LG contestants have to limit their campaign expenses to Nu 50,000. This includes expenses for renting offices, hiring office equipment, utility bills, communication expenses, stationery and travel.

MALDIVES

[PPM Parliamentary Group attempt reconciliation between Maumoon, Yameen](#)

Sun Online | 9th October

Parliamentary Group of ruling Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) has made the decision to meet with both the Leader of PPM, former Maldivian President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom and President Abdulla Yameen Abdul

Gayoom to reconcile differences between them. Deputy Leader of PPM Parliamentary Group, Vilufushi MP Riyaz Rasheed spoke to “Sun” and said that the decision was made this Sunday.

MYANMAR

[Nine Myanmar police killed in attack on Bangladesh border](#)

Mizzima | 10th October

Nine police officers were killed during coordinated ambushes in Myanmar's strife-torn Rakhine state on Sunday with authorities saying the attackers hailed from the Muslim Rohingya community, a persecuted minority. The night time raids hit three posts on the border with Bangladesh and have sent tensions soaring in a region battered by sectarian clashes between Buddhists and Muslim Rohingyas. Rakhine has been effectively split on religious grounds since bouts of communal violence tore through the state in 2012, killing scores and forcing tens of thousands to flee.

[More protests over ongoing conflict](#)

Mizzima | 10th October

Activists conducted a campaign in Yangon yesterday calling for the stopping of armed conflicts in Myanmar and a probe into the case where one child was killed and others injured due to shelling. People from about 30 organisations gathered outside Mahabandoola Park downtown, wearing white and holding placards and shouting “Stop wars for peace”. The escalation in fighting, especially in Kachin State and Shan State, has resulted in a number of casualties and the internal displacement of many civilians. At the same time, humanitarian access to conflict areas has been severely hampered.

[Fears of a serious quake prompt landmark NGO and local govt preparedness forum](#)

Mizzima | 8th October

The impending threat of a large earthquake devastating Myanmar's major cities has galvanised government agencies, INGOs and CSOs into action, with a landmark meeting taking place on October 8 in Yangon. ActionAid Myanmar organized the Earthquake Forum Yangon on earthquake preparedness and the response capacity of Yangon with the guidance of Ministry on Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and the Yangon regional Government.

NEPAL

[MoFALD issues fresh mandate to commission](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 8th October

The Ministry of Local Development and Federal Affairs (MoFALD) on Friday issued a new mandate to the Local Level Restructuring Commission (LLRC), as per which the commission can split the area clusters (Ilakas) or merge two or more of them while determining the number of and boundaries of local units. There are 927 Ilakas across the country.

[I will bridge gap between Nepali Diaspora and the UK: Envoy Subedi](#)

My Republica | 8th October

Nepal's ambassador to the UK, Durga Bahadur Subedi has said that he would work for the interest of Nepal and Nepali people during his four years' tenure. Speaking at an interaction organized by the Nepali journalists in the UK on Friday evening, Subedi said that he would take the existing ties between Nepal and the UK to a new height, making it more cordial, result-oriented and stronger.

[4 Chinese companies interested in Kathmandu-Kerung railway project](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 9th October

Four Chinese companies have shown interest to conduct feasibility study of Kathmandu-Rasuwadhi railway network after Nepal sought the northern neighbour's help to conduct survey and detailed project report (DPR). Once the proposed railway is constructed, it will establish direct railway connectivity with Chinese railway which is expected to arrive in Kerung, a bordering town of China across Rasuwadhi, within a few years.

[Agencies press govt to review visa-ticket rule](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 9th October

The Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agencies (Nafea) has asked the government to reconsider its free visa free ticket policy arguing that the low cost recruitment scheme has done more harm than good to the foreign employment sector.

PAKISTAN

[Pakistan, India signal move to lower rhetoric](#)

The Express Tribune|10th October

Realising that war is not an option, Pakistan and India are quietly working to lower rhetoric after weeks of verbal duel and even border skirmishes that virtually brought the two arch-rivals to the brink of a military conflict. When the national security advisers (NSAs) of the two countries spoke to each other by phone on October 2, their conversation was focused on how to prevent further escalation. Officials familiar with the development told *The Express Tribune* that NSA Lt-Gen (retd) Nasser Khan Janjua and his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval agreed that both sides should stop giving 'provocative' statements as a first step towards defusing tensions.

[OGRA approves 36 per cent hike in gas prices](#)

The Express Tribune|10th October

In a move that might come as a shock and surprise for consumers, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) decided on Sunday to increase gas price by 36% for the ongoing financial year (2016-17).

[Trade resumes with Kabul after successful talks](#)

The Express Tribune|10th October

Trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan across the Torkham border resumed on Sunday after border administrations of the two countries held a successful round of talks over new tax measures introduced by Afghan authorities.

SRI LANKA

[Sri Lankan President stresses on regional cooperation during discussions with Thai Prime Minister](#)

Colombo Page|8th October

Strong regional cooperation is the key to overcome the challenges of poverty and equity said President Maithripala Sirisena today when he called on the Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha for bilateral discussions this evening during his working visit to attend the Asia Corporation Dialogue (ACD) held in Bangkok.

[Sri Lanka determined to continue to borrow from China](#)

Colombo Gazette|9th October

Sri Lanka is determined to continue to borrow from China despite racking up a debt pile worth 75% of its economy, the country's finance minister told GlobalMarkets. Ravi Karunanayake said Sri Lanka would continue to do business with China. "Sure [Chinese FDI] concerns us — but China has deep pockets, and it's better to have some investment than no investment at all," he said.

[Japan, Sri Lanka to sign technical cooperation agreement to develop historical Kandy city](#)

Colombo Page|10th October

Sri Lanka and Japan on Monday will sign a technical cooperation agreement to develop the historical central hill capital of Kandy city. The Urban Development Authority (UDA) of Sri Lanka and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) will enter into a technical cooperation to formulate the Kandy urban development program.

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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