



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

October 11th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 04/10

[Muscat to Host Afghan Peace Talks Next Week](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 10th October

A meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) is due in Muscat, the capital of Oman, next week to discuss Afghanistan's peace process after a long gap, an official said on Monday. The group, involving senior officials from Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the US, last met in May 2016 in Islamabad, when they had agreed to give peace a chance. In their fourth meeting that held in Kabul in February 2016, the group announced that representatives of the Afghan government and Taliban insurgents would meet in Islamabad by the first week of March for direct talks.

[Kabul puts off transit trade meeting with Pakistan](#)

DAWN | 11th October

Kabul has unilaterally put off a meeting of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Coordination Authority (APTTCA), a high-level forum set up to deal with problems hindering smooth implementation of a revised transit treaty. The last meeting of the authority was held last year.

[Finland ready to provide Sri Lanka technology to generate power from sea waves](#)

Colombo Page | 10th October

Finland is ready to provide Sri Lanka with the experience and technology to generate power from the sea waves and a power generation program will be implemented in Sri Lanka next year, Chief Executive Officer of Finland's AW Energy John Liljelund says. Liljelund made this statement when Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe visited the AW Energy on a study tour. Prime Minister Wickremesinghe led a delegation to tour the facility to learn about the technology and observed the state of the art equipment manufactured by the company for power generation through sea waves.

AFGHANISTAN

[Ten - Nation Kabul Meet Mulls Joint Anti-Drugs Strategy](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 10th October Representatives from 10 countries who met in Kabul on Monday discussed to devise a joint regional strategy at combating narcotics. A two-day conference hosted by the Ministry

of Counter Narcotics in Kabul is being attended by representatives from Afghanistan, Iran, China, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Afghan counter-narcotics minister Salamat Azimi told the meeting that a draft regional cooperation strategy against drugs had been prepared by his ministry and would be discussed at the two-day conference.

[Taliban militants and their local leaders suffer heavy casualties in Zabul operations](#)

Khaama Press | 10th October

The Taliban insurgents and their local leaders suffered heavy casualties during the operations in southern Zabul province of Afghanistan. The Ministry of Defense (MoD) said the operations were conducted in Shahjoi and Mizan districts of the province. A statement by MoD said at least 23 Taliban militants were killed and 28 others were wounded during the operations. The statement further added that the deputy shadow district chief of the group for Mizan Hayatullah Mujahid, Taliban's shadow military chief for Mizan Sediq Agha, and three of their commanders were among those killed.

[Pakistan's foreign minister says Islamabad attempting to start Afghan peace process](#)

Khaama Press | 10th October

The foreign minister of Pakistan Khawaja Asif has said Islamabad is attempting to resume the Afghan peace process in a bid to end the ongoing violence in the country. Asif, quoted by local media outlets, has said Islamabad has called for a meeting in Muscat of Oman and has requested all the concerned groups to participate in the talks.

BANGLADESH

[Obesity spreading in Bangladesh children, new study blames junk food](#)

bdnew24 | 11th October

More children and teenagers in Bangladesh are obese now than before like many other developing countries, a new study suggests blaming food marketing, policies, and pricing. Bangladesh is traditionally known for the home of world's one of the largest number of underweight children. But a new study, led by the Imperial College London and the World Health Organization or WHO, established experts' apprehension that the country is in fact facing the 'dual burden' of both malnutrition and obesity. The fast food market is mostly unregulated in Bangladesh with no government policy to control pricing and advertisements giving the way of new global chains in the market.

[Bangladesh apparel exports to China, Japan fall](#)

The Financial Express | 11th October

Bangladesh's apparel exports to China and Japan -- world's second-and third-largest economies -- fell significantly this fiscal so far as businesses failed to reap benefit of duty-free market access. Experts and exporters cited a number of bottlenecks that caused the fall in the first quarter of the current fiscal year compared to that of the corresponding period of last fiscal. The country received US\$74.30 million from apparel exports to China in a 10.15 per cent negative growth during the period over that of corresponding period of FY2016-17, according to data available with the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).

[Bangladesh Govt plans to turn prisons into correction centres](#)

The Financial Express | 10th October

The government plans a new prisons law amending the existing act with an aim of transforming the prisons into correction and rehabilitation centres. The proposed law would be called 'Correctional Facilities and Rehabilitation Act for Prisoners', according to a law ministry press release, reports BSS. A committee led by law ministry's Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division's Senior Secretary Mohammad Shahidul Haque was formed for

drafting the law, the press release said. The committee comprises the secretary of home ministry's public security division, Inspector General of Prisons and representatives of the law ministry and police.

BHUTAN

[Young learn their rights](#)

KuenselOnline | 10th October

Twenty-six young volunteers with two youth networks, Bhutan Youth Development Fund's Y-VIA and RENEW's DAISAN, attended a rollout programme on child protection and youth participation at Yangchenphug Higher Secondary School (YHSS) last week. Besides child rights and protection, students from YHSS, Lungtenzampa Middle Secondary School and Motithang HSS were educated on the importance of planning and executing the plans, having safety plans for themselves, and responding and preventing violence against children during the four-day programme that ended on October 7. The regional coordinator with Y-VIA and also the programme facilitator, Joytshna Gurung, said it's important to learn how to plan and execute the plan because no matter how equipped one is with knowledge and skills, if he or she does not have proper planning, ideas fail. The participants were also introduced to child rights articles and childcare and protection act.

[World Post Day: BP launches track and trace system](#)

KuenselOnline | 10th October

Bhutan Post (BP) yesterday launched domestic track and trace system, and blue poppy stamps to mark the World Post Day yesterday. His Majesty the King granted rare and valuable collection of philatelic and communications products to the Bhutan Postal Museum in Thimphu. The collection included rare and innovative stamps of Bhutan, postal stationery and telegram messages, among others and would greatly enrich the museum and become the main attraction for the visitors. "It will also make the museum more complete in many aspects and ultimately help us in achieving the objective of the museum, which is to promote the country, its rich culture and heritage." Bhutan Post said that the collection would assist the postal museum in carrying out research and documenting the postal and philatelic history of Bhutan. Track and trace system will enable customers to track the journey of the items sent from one place to another in the country. Head of BP's information communication technology, Jamyang Phuntsho, said that the system will record the entry, delivery and also the location of the item entered at different divisions of Bhutan post. "We will provide a 13 digit number with which a person can click on the link and have access of the details."

MALDIVES

[President: Politicians have no right to criticize judiciary](#)

Sun Online | 10th October

Politicians have no right to openly criticize the Maldivian justice system, says President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom. Yameen made the comments during his speech at the event held by him and First Lady Fathimath Ibrahim for senior citizens of the country in Rasfannu Artificial Beach last Monday night. The President said the biggest priority should be to maintain the peace in any place. He said no one should incite another to commit a crime, and that it was not a characteristic of a democracy.

MYANMAR

[World Bank urges better labour migration policies in ASEAN](#)

Mizzima | 11th October

Intra-regional migration in ASEAN increased significantly between 1995 and 2015, turning Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand into regional migration hubs with 6.5 million migrants – 96 percent of the total number of migrant workers in ASEAN, according to the report, entitled *Migrating to Opportunity*. A substantial number of migrant workers are Myanmar nationals. Approximately US\$62 billion in remittances were sent to ASEAN countries in 2015. Remittances account for 10 percent of GDP in the Philippines, 7 percent in Vietnam, 5 percent in Myanmar, and 3 percent in Cambodia. The ASEAN Economic Community has taken steps to facilitate mobility, but these regulations only cover certain skilled professions – doctors, dentists, nurses, engineers, architects, accountants, and tourism professionals – or just 5% of jobs in the region.

[Mass interfaith rally prays for Rakhine peace](#)

Mizzima | 11th October

Tens of thousands of people filled a Yangon football stadium for an interfaith prayer ceremony on Tuesday, a show of unity in a country damaged by ethnically-charged violence against the Muslim Rohingya in Rakhine State. Buddhist monks, Catholic nuns, Christians, Hindus and Muslims were among those that poured into the arena to pray for peace in Myanmar's western Rakhine State, the epicentre of communal bloodshed that erupted in late August. The October 10 Yangon rally brought together a mix of faiths who back the government, which has defended its crackdown as a proportionate operation to flush out Rohingya terrorists. Many carried portraits of Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi.

NEPAL

[Avoid any decision that could affect polls, EC to govt](#)

MyRepublica | 11th October

Chief Election Commissioner Ayodhee Prasad Yadav has urged the government not to take any decision that can affect the scheduled parliamentary and provincial elections. The request from the election body chief comes at a time when speculations are rife that the government is preparing to reshuffle the cabinet by sacking ministers from the UCPN (Maoist), a key coalition partner. The relations between the two ruling coalition partners--Nepali Congress and the Maoist Center--have soured after the Maoist Center forged an electoral alliance with the main opposition CPN-UML last week.

[NC MPs demand ouster of Home Minister Sharma](#)

MyRepublica | 11th October

In a reflection of increasing rivalry between the two ruling coalition partners, a Nepali Congress (NC) lawmaker has demanded the resignation of Home Minister Janardan Sharma, who belongs to the CPN (Maoist Center), for failing to catch the murderers of construction entrepreneur Sharad Kumar Gauchan. Speaking in parliament in a special session Tuesday, NC's Ram Hari Khatiwada came down heavily against Home Minister Sharma. "If the individual responsible for maintaining peace and security fails to do so he should resign. I strongly demand the resignation of the home minister," Khatiwada said.

[Govt claims it can achieve targeted growth rate of 7.2pc](#)

The Himalayan Times | 11th October

At a time when multilateral development partners — World Bank and Asian Development Bank — have made

forecasts that the growth rate will decline moderately from around 4.5 per cent to 4.7 per cent, compared to 6.9 per cent in the previous fiscal, the government has said the high growth rate of last fiscal can be achieved this fiscal too. According to the Ministry of Finance, the country will achieve the targeted growth rate of 7.2 per cent this fiscal as paddy production will break last year's record of 5.23 million tonnes. Paddy production is expected to hover at around 5.3 million metric tonnes this fiscal.

PAKISTAN

[Senators raise questions over Gen Rizwan Akhtar's premature retirement](#)

DAWN | 11th October

The premature retirement of former Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief Lt Gen Rizwan Akhtar echoed in the Senate on Tuesday as Senators raised question over the causes behind the sudden move. Rizwan Akhtar on Saturday requested for early retirement from Pakistan Army citing "pressing personal commitments". He, in a letter, asked for "premature release" starting Oct 9, 2017, after nearly 35 years of active commissioned service in the armed forces.

[PM shakes up bureaucracy](#)

The Express Tribune | 11th October

The federal government notified the transfer and posting of 24 civil servants after their promotion to the top grade was approved by Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, according to an Establishment Division notification on Tuesday.

[Talks to be held with US on 'equality basis': Abbasi](#)

The Nation | 11th October

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi told his cabinet members on Tuesday that Pakistan would hold the upcoming talks with the United States on "equality basis". A federal minister who attended the cabinet meeting here told The Nation that the premier was confident of reviving the Pak-US ties.

SRI LANKA

[Twenty percent of state employees suffer from stress - Health Minister](#)

Colombo Page | 10th October

According to statistics at the Mental Health Unit of the Sri Lanka's Health Ministry, one in five public sector employees suffers from stress, Minister of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine Dr. Rajitha Senarathne said. Minister Dr. Rajitha Senarathne revealed this at the opening ceremony of the Pearl Child Guidance center for special needs children in Moragolla, Aluthgama recently. Speaking at the occasion Minister Rajitha Senarathne said the number of those who receive treatment for mental illness has also increased.

About Ananta Aspen Centre

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