

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

March 12, 2018 | Volume - 4 - 04/03

[Sri Lankan President meets Indian Prime Minister at Solar Alliance conference](#)

Colombo Page | 12th March
President Maithripala Sirisena after attending the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) in New Delhi met with the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The Indian Prime Minister said that the participation of the Sri Lankan President in the ISA Summit is a privilege and requested the President to extend his assistance in delivering the message of the ISA Summit to the world.

[PM secures three-fourths vote](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 12th March
Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli secured a three-fourths majority at the 275-member strong House of Representatives, emerging as the most powerful executive head of the nation in the post-1990 period. In the vote of confidence motion tabled at Parliament on Sunday, Oli garnered 208 votes out of the total 268 cast. The vote share is over 77 percent when the total vote cast is taken into account and is 75 percent against the total strength of the House.

[India trying to resolve Teesta issue, Modi assures Hamid](#)

Daily Sun | 11th March
Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said they were trying to resolve the hurdles to the signing of the Teesta water-sharing deal with Bangladesh 'keeping all concerned on board'. He made the remarks during a meeting with President Abdul Hamid on the sidelines of the International Solar Alliance founding conference 2018 at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

AFGHANISTAN

[Pak Presses US For Reconciliation in Afghanistan](#)

Daily Outlook | March 11, 2018

Islamabad - Pakistan Foreign Secretary Tehmina Janjua highlighted the need for reconciliation in Afghanistan. Tehmina Janjua on a two-day visit to Washington stressed the need for restarting the process of reconciliation in Afghanistan. She held two high-level meetings at the White House and the State Department respectively during her visit to Washington. "The meetings went off very well. There's a sense of positivity that they want to strengthen their relationship with Pakistan," Janjua was quoted by the Dawn, as saying. "There was also a great deal of focus on peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan and, both sides welcomed Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's recent peace offer to the Taliban," said Ambassador Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhary, who attended both meetings.

[South Asia Stability Tied to Peace in Afghanistan](#)

Daily Outlook | March 11, 2018

The Pakistani ambassador to the United States says stability in Afghanistan is essential for enduring peace in South Asia. US Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry made the remarks at a meeting with an eight-member delegation of US journalists, who are due to arrive in Pakistan. Pakistan had rendered countless sacrifices in war against terrorism, taking indiscriminate action against all terrorist outfits, the diplomat said. Pakistan-US cooperation in fighting terrorism has helped achieve shared objectives such as defeating the menace of extremism, Chaudhry claimed. Peace in Afghanistan could be secured through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process that offered incentives for all stakeholders, he concluded.

BANGLADESH

[Myanmar erects security structures atop burned Rohingya land: Amnesty](#)

The Independent | 12th March

Myanmar is building security installations on top of razed Rohingya villages, Amnesty International said Monday, casting doubt on the country's plans to repatriate hundreds of thousands of refugees. The new Amnesty report, "Remaking Rakhine State," uses satellite imagery and interviews to point to a rapid increase in military infrastructure and other construction since the start of the year that researchers say amounts to a "land grab". "The new evidence and the rebuilding that Amnesty has documented in our latest research shows that the Myanmar authorities are building over the top of the very places the Rohingya need to return to," Tirana Hassan, Amnesty's crisis response director, told AFP ahead of the report's release on Monday.

[UN Myanmar expert wants genocide probe](#)

Prothom Alo | 10th March

The UN independent investigator on human rights in Myanmar sees growing evidence to suspect genocide has been committed and wants prosecutions for crimes committed against entire ethnic and religious groups, she said in a report published on Friday. Yanghee Lee, in a report submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council, said she was "increasingly of the opinion that the events bear the hallmarks of genocide and therefore calls in the strongest terms for accountability." "The government leadership who did nothing to intervene, stop, or condemn these acts must also be held accountable."

[Ensure affordable solar energy](#)

The Daily Star | 12th March

Bangladesh yesterday called for ensuring transfer of technology and allocation of adequate funds for promoting affordable and sustainable use of solar energy in developing countries. Speaking at the founding conference of International Solar Alliance (ISA) at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi of India, President Abdul Hamid said Bangladesh is one of the worst sufferers of climate change. "Even though Bangladesh's share in emitting greenhouse gases is 0.1 percent, threats to Bangladesh are abundant. These include sea level rise, droughts, floods, and cyclones," said the president.

BHUTAN

[BDBL official accused of siphoning Nu 11.764M](#)

Kuensel | 10th March

While the Office of the Attorney General is yet to charge the nine, who were allegedly involved in embezzling Nu 576.469 million from the Bhutan Development Bank Limited, the Anti-Corruption Commission has unearthed another embezzlement of Nu 11.764M from its branch

offices in Gelephu and Pemagatshel. The commission forwarded its latest findings to the OAG last week. OAG officials said that they are yet to assign a prosecutor to review ACC's findings. The commission has implicated the assistant branch manager of Pemagatshel, Phurpa Gyeltshen, with 36 counts of embezzlement of funds and securities by public servant, five counts of commission amounting to abuse of function, and 36 counts of forgery. He is alleged to have siphoned off Nu 3.050M from Gelephu branch and Nu 8.472M in Pemagatshel from rural credit fund by creating 36 fictitious loan accounts.

MALDIVES

[Muhamma arrested under State of Emergency](#)

Sun Online | 11th March

Mohamed Abdulla (Mohamma), the Ihavandhoo MP disqualified for floor crossing, has been arrested under the declaration of State of Emergency. "Sun" has been informed Muhamma was arrested by plainclothes police officers from Buruzumagu in Male' City this Sunday. A number of arrests have been made by the police under the State of Emergency. Key figures include disqualified Dhangethi MP Ilham Ahmed, South Machangolhi MP Ahmed Sinan, deputy leader of MDP Mohamed Shifaz, attorney Adam Zalif (Ilham's brother). MDP's national council member Moosa Ali Manik, MDP's national council member Hassan Ahmed (Hassantey), ex-MP Ilyas Labeeb, Ahmed Shahid (North Galolhu MP Eva Abdulla's husband), MDP's national council member Moosa Ali Manik, and MDP's national council member Ahmed Adhuham have also been arrested under the State of Emergency.

MYANMAR

[Myanmar, EU reaffirm commitment on human rights](#)

Mizzima | 10th March

Myanmar and the European Union held their fourth Human Rights Dialogue this week in Nay Pyi Taw co-chaired by Minister for International Cooperation Kyaw Tin and EU Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis. Myanmar and the EU reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen cooperation in the field of human rights on the basis of shared principles and international human rights standards, according to a press release received 9 March. Discussions covered a wide range of human rights issues relating to labour rights; the situation in Rakhine State; freedom of expression, the press, assembly and association; access to basic social services; gender issues; human trafficking and related exploitations; protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities and combating and preventing religious intolerance and incitement to hatred; human rights cooperation in the United Nations, Myanmar's accession to and implementation of international human rights conventions and treaties; and rights of refugees and migrants and national minorities in the EU, according to the press release.

[Myanmar erects security structures atop burned land: Amnesty](#)

Mizzima | 12th March

Myanmar is building security installations on top of razed Rohingya villages, Amnesty International said, casting doubt on the country's plans to repatriate hundreds of thousands of refugees. Nearly 700,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled northern Rakhine state to Bangladesh since Myanmar launched a crackdown on terrorists six months ago. A new Amnesty report, "Remaking Rakhine State," uses satellite imagery and interviews to point to a rapid increase in military infrastructure and other construction since the start of the year that researchers say amounts to a "land grab". "The new evidence and the rebuilding that Amnesty has documented in our latest research shows that the Myanmar authorities are building over the top of the very places the Rohingya need to return to," Tirana Hassan, Amnesty's crisis response director, told AFP ahead of the report's release.

NEPAL

[Local governments vow to improve education quality in public schools](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 11th March

With the school level education coming under their jurisdiction, the local governments have started to unveil their programmes to ensure quality education and make schools zone of peace. Sinja Rural Municipality in Jumla district made a commitment to improve the school level education at the presence of lawmakers and officials from Department of Education amid a programme last week. Earlier, Purbi Chauki Rural Municipality in Doti and Pokhariya Rural Municipality Parsa had done the same.

[UAE Embassy selects two agencies to verify Nepali migrant worker certificate](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 12th March

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Embassy in Nepal named two private travel agencies to verify and deliver 'Good Conduct and Behaviour Certificate', to migrant workers seeking employment in the Gulf country. The UAE Embassy has selected City Express International Travel and Tours Pvt. Ltd and Yacca Travels & Tours Pvt. Ltd. The certificate is mandatory for all potential migrant Nepali workers heading to the UAE. This decision makes the task of aspiring job seekers easy since many workers stand in a long queue for hours to verify the certificate at the UAE embassy.

PAKISTAN

[Pakistan can play key role in shaping Afghan Taliban's behaviour: US diplomat](#)

The Express Tribune | 11th March

A senior US diplomat has said that the United States believes Pakistan can play a much more important role in shaping the Afghan Taliban's behaviour. The statement was made by Alice Wells, principal deputy assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, during a session on Afghanistan and Kabul Peace Process at the US Institute of Peace in Washington, DC on Friday. She stressed on Islamabad's critical role to provide incentives to the Afghan Taliban for undertaking negotiations with the Ashraf Ghani government.

[Illegal trade in wildlife rife across Pakistan, says study](#)

Dawn | 12th March

A recent study, compiled through undercover surveys of 55 markets in 23 cities across Pakistan, has revealed that a majority of species/animal derivatives on sale at these markets are listed within the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Red List of threatened species. The study found that Karachi hosted the highest number of markets and shops dealing in illegal wildlife followed by Peshawar. Titled An assessment of the scale of illegal wildlife trade in Pakistan, the study was conducted by the World Wide Fund for Nature-Pakistan (WWF-P) and authored by Dr Uzma Khan and Hamera Aisha.

[Pakistan can become hub of Islamic finance, say experts](#)

The Express Tribune | 11th March

Pakistan has all the ingredients necessary to become a hub of Islamic finance, financial experts stated after it was revealed that the country would host the World Islamic Finance Forum (WIFF) 2018. "Islamic finance is growing in Pakistan and the country will emerge as an Islamic finance hub by 2025," said Takaful Pakistan Chief Executive Rizwan Hussain. "When it comes to Islamic banking, people talk about Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, the UAE, etc, but few people mention Pakistan which has a huge potential for growth of Islamic finance," remarked Dr Ishrat Husain,

Chairman of the Centre for Excellence in Islamic Finance (CEIF) at the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi.

SRI LANKA

[Prime Minister instructs to expedite payment of compensation to Kandy victims](#)

Colombo Page| 11th March

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said that measures will be taken to promptly assess the damage incurred to the properties due to the recent communal clashes in the Kandy district and provide compensation to the victims. This was stated by the Prime Minister at a meeting held at the District Secretariat following a tour in the area where serious damage was inflicted by the Sinhalese mob on Muslim properties, homes and businesses. The Prime Minister led a ministerial delegation with a view to evaluate developments in the aftermath of the recent violence in the Kandy district.

[Sri Lankan President to commence visit to Japan from today](#)

Colombo Page| 12th March

Following his official visit to India from March 10-11, Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena will commence a six-day state visit to Japan from March 12 to 17 on the invitation of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. President Sirisena is scheduled to have an Imperial Audience with Japan's Emperor Akihito on 13 March, and on 14 March, he will meet Prime Minister Abe for summit talks. Following talks, the Japanese Premier will host the Sri Lankan President to a State dinner. The two leaders will discuss matters of mutual interest to deepen cooperation between Sri Lanka and Japan.

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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