



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

**December 13th , 2017| Volume: 3 - 1/12**

[Breakthrough reported in Pak-US ties and talks on Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press | 12th December  
A breakthrough has been reported in relations between the United States and Pakistan as the two countries are busy holding talks on Afghanistan. According to the local media reports, citing officials privy with the development, the officials of the two countries have held a series of talks on Afghanistan following the visit by defense secretary James Mattis.

[Malaysian Prime Minister to visit Sri Lanka on December 17](#)

Colombo Page | 12th December  
Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak will pay a two-day official visit to Sri Lanka starting from 17 December, the Malaysian Foreign Ministry said in a statement today. The Foreign Ministry Wisma Putra said in a "planned movement" the Malaysian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Wan Zaidi Wan Abdullah was reassigned and given a new assignment prior to the Prime Minister's visit.

[In CPEC talks, Chinese drive a hard bargain with Pakistan](#)

DAWN | 13th December  
Pakistan appeared to have been pushed hard by the Chinese side to give in more than it secured in return during the recently held 7th joint cooperation committee (JCC) meeting of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This is evident from the minutes of the 7th meeting on a series of issues including revision in the completion deadlines of the energy projects, the Main Line-1 project and early activation of revolving fund in 30 days for payments to Chinese sponsors.

**AFGHANISTAN**

[New US Ambassador to Focus on Peace in Afghanistan](#)

Tolonews / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 13th December

The new United States Ambassador to Afghanistan, John R. Bass, presented his credentials to President Ashraf Ghani during an official ceremony at the Arg Palace on Tuesday, the US embassy said in a statement.

### [Russia Favors Dialogue with Taliban: Lavrov](#)

Tolonews / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 13th December

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at an event in India on Monday said an inclusive political dialogue for peace in Afghanistan should include the Taliban and other regional countries, the Hindu reported.

### [Government approves contracts for new projects worth 2.1 billion Afghanis](#)

Khaama Press | 12th December

The Afghan government has approved contracts for the new projects worth during around 2.1 billion Afghanis, according to the Office of the President, ARG Palace. The contracts were approved during the meeting of the National Procurement Commission (NPC) chaired by President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani.

## **BANGLADESH**

### [Dhaka, Paris agree to boost economic ties](#)

BSS/ Prothom Alo | 12 December

Dhaka and Paris on Tuesday agreed to constitute a joint commission to explore the opportunities of cooperation in the fields of trade and economy and other priority areas. The decision was taken in the bilateral meeting between French president Emmanuel Macron and prime minister Sheikh Hasina at Elysee Palace in Paris. Briefing reporters after the meeting, foreign secretary Md. Shahidul Haque said the two leaders in a very cordial and warm atmosphere discussed the bilateral and global issues of mutual interests.

### [Earth can be save only by shared responsibility, Hasina tells Paris One Planet Summit](#)

bdnews24 | 12<sup>th</sup> December

Calling on the developed world to fulfil their pledges on climate change, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina says only shared responsibility can save the planet. Addressing the One Planet Summit in the French capital, she has also announced that her administration will initiate measures to increase tree coverage by two percent in Bangladesh within the next five years. "I would like to urge the developed countries to fulfil their commitments in bringing climate justice and meeting historical responsibility. We can secure the world only through shared responsibility."

### [India's garment imports from Bangladesh up 56pc](#)

The Financial Express | 12<sup>th</sup> December

India has imported \$87.4 million worth of readymade garments from Bangladesh during July-November 2017. According to the data released by Export Promotion Bureau of Bangladesh, it is a 56 per cent rise compared to import of \$55.92 million during the same period of the previous year. India has seen such rise in its garment imports since it went through the biggest Goods and Services Tax (GST) reform in July this year. Due to the surge in imports, Indian apparel manufacturers will face stiff competition from Bangladesh.

## **BHUTAN**

### [HH Je Khenpo consecrates Lhabab Choeten in Trashigang](#)

Kuensionline | 12th December

His Holiness the Je Khenpo consecrated the Lhabab Choeten at Kheri in Trashigang yesterday. Former soldiers constructed the choeten as part of retired armed forces' social service project. Tshering Samdrup, the architect of the choeten, said: "By far this is one of the best. This is exactly what I wanted." The choeten has three different prayers engraved on its wall. The top (choe-ku) is carved with ami-dawari prayers, the middle (long-ku), representing Chenrezig, has the inscription of mani prayer, and trulku at the bottom has Baza Guru prayer.

#### [Livestock department receives 'Institutionalising Compassion' Award](#)

Kuensionline | 12th December

The Department of Livestock (DoL) received the prestigious award for "Institutionalising Compassion" at the 10th Asia for Animals Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal from December 2-5. The award recognises the department's contribution in improving animal welfare in the country and implementing the nationwide dog population management campaign.

### **MALDIVES**

#### [Councils warned against meeting diplomats without permission](#)

Sun Online | 12<sup>th</sup> December

Local Government Authority (LGA) has issued a circular warning atoll and island councils against meeting foreign diplomats without permission from Ministry of Home Affairs. LGA's warning follows recent meeting with Indian ambassador Akhilesh Mishra by G. A. Atoll councilors and recent meeting with British ambassador James Dauris by G. Dh. Atoll councilors. LGA said the authority has notices an increase in meetings by councils with foreign diplomats and members of international bodies in violation of the Maldivian Constitution and Supreme Court decision.

### **MYANMAR**

#### ['Burma, Bangladesh Need to Redraft Agreement, Involve UN' - HRW](#)

Mizzima | 12th December

An agreement by Bangladesh and Burma to begin returning Rohingya refugees to Burma by January 23, 2018, creates an impossible timetable for safe and voluntary returns and should be shelved, Human Rights Watch has said in a letter to the two governments. International donors, who would be needed to fund the massive repatriation effort, should insist that Burma and Bangladesh invite the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to join in drafting a new tripartite agreement that ensures adherence to international standards.

#### [Myanmar to seek labour agreements with other Southeast Asian countries](#)

Mizzima | 12th December

Myanmar's Labour Ministry is seeking labour migration agreements with the governments of other Southeast Asian countries and territories to send women there to work legally as maids, RFA reported on 11 December quoting a government official. Government officials are hoping that labour migration will boost Myanmar's developing economy by providing employment for impoverished citizens and increasing the remittances they send back home.

### **NEPAL**

### [New govt by December 30](#)

MyRepublica | 12th December

CPN-UML and CPN (Maoist Center) have started doing homework to form a new government. Both the parties are all set to form the new government by December 30 once the Election Commission publishes the final list of newly elected Parliamentary and Provincial members. “The new government will be formed as soon as the Election Commission will publish the list of newly elected members of Federal Parliament and Provincial Assembly. “Preparations are underway,” said Bishnu Rimal, spokesperson of UML Central Election Mobilization Committee, adding, “The country will get a new government by the end of December.”

### [IME and Muthoot sign deal for Indo-Nepal remittance](#)

MyRepublica | 13th December

International Money Express (IME) and the India-based Muthoot Finance have signed an agreement for Indo-Nepal remittance service on Sunday. Issuing a statement, the IME said that the partnership will help Nepalis in India to send money to Nepal in an easier way. The receivers in Nepal can receive the amount through more than 7,100 agents of IME in Nepal. According to the statement, IME will also provide account deposit facilities to these customers besides cash payment options.

## **PAKISTAN**

### [Overseas Kashmiris 'willing to invest in country'](#)

The Express Tribune | 13th December

The British citizens of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) are ready to invest in the tourism and energy sectors of the country, claimed overseas businessman Raja Manawar Khan while addressing a group of senior journalists on Tuesday. Khan had migrated to the United Kingdom (UK) in the 1970s at the age of 10 with his family. After completing his studies Khan got into the hoteling business and then later shifted into real estate.

### [Inter-religious dialogue: UNGA adopts Pakistan sponsored resolution](#)

The Express Tribune | 13th December

The UN General Assembly on Monday passed a resolution, by consensus, on promoting inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue to advance a culture of peace and non-violence based on education, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation in the world. Sponsored by Pakistan and the Philippines, the text reaffirmed the solemn commitment of all states to fulfil their obligations to promote universal respect for and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## **SRI LANKA**

### [Rice exporters' delegation from Pakistan in Sri Lanka to promote and market Pakistani rice](#)

Colombo Page | 13th December

A 15-member delegation of Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) is visiting Sri Lanka to promote and market Pakistani rice, according to a statement. The delegation held a meeting with Muhammad Rizwan Hameem, Chairman, Cooperative Wholesale Establishment (CWE), which is the state body responsible for the procurement of rice from various origins.

#### [U.S., Sri Lanka launch \\$ 2 million HIV/AIDS Technical Assistance Partnership to fast track efforts to end AIDS in Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page | 12th December

The Governments of Sri Lanka and the United States on December 8 launched a two-year, US\$ 2 million (Rs. 306 million) HIV/AIDS Technical Assistance Partnership to fast track government efforts to end AIDS by 2025.

#### [Indian Air Force Chief calls on Sri Lanka Prime Minister](#)

Colombo Page | 12th December

Chief of the Air Staff of the Indian Air Force, Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa, who is on an official visit to Sri Lanka, called on the Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, at Temple Trees. During the meeting, matters of bilateral importance and mutual relevance including regional security were discussed. Mementos were exchanged between the visiting Air Chief and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe to mark the official visit.

#### [Ministerial Committee appointed to resolve Railway workers' issues](#)

Colombo Page | 12th December

A five-member Ministerial committee has been appointed by President Maithripala Sirisena to look into the railway strike. The decision to appoint a committee to hold discussions with railway employees engaged in the strike and to evaluate and resolve their issues, was taken after a lengthy discussion at the cabinet meeting today.

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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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