

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

**January 16th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 7/1**

[US airstrike kill top Taliban leaders in Helmand province](#)

Khaama Press | 15<sup>th</sup> January  
Several top leaders of the Taliban militants group were killed in an airstrike conducted by the US forces in southern Helmand province, local officials said Sunday. The airstrike was carried out in the restive Musa Qala district of Helmand, the provincial government media office said in a statement. The statement further added that 25 militants were killed or wounded in the airstrike which included some of the top leaders of the group.

[Prime Minister pledges to cut poverty in half by 2020](#)

Colombo Page | 14<sup>th</sup> January  
Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has promised to reduce poverty by half in the next four years and make Sri Lanka a high income country by 2030. Speaking at an event held in Galle today, the Premier said the government will launch a special program to halve the country's poverty by 2020. The government has introduced an economic agenda with the aim of making Sri Lanka a high income country by 2030. "We have to achieve this target," Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said.

[Jahangir led New JMB killing squad 'Isafa' group](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 16<sup>th</sup> January  
Jahangir Alam alias Shubhash alias Shanto alias Tiger alias Adil alias Jahid, more commonly known as Jahangir, allegedly one of the key planners of the Gulshan attack, is currently being interrogated about the attack in an eight-day remand in police custody. According to Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit Chief Additional Commissioner Monirul Islam, Jahangir is the chief of New Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh's (JMB) killing squad, which is known as the 'Isafa' group.

## AFGHANISTAN

[Senators Call on Ghani to Dissolve the High Peace Council](#)

Tolnews / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 16<sup>th</sup> January

Senators from the Meshrano Jirga (Upper House of Parliament) on Sunday asked President Ashraf Ghani to dissolve the High Peace Council (HPC) following the insensitive remarks uttered by former HPC advisor Abdul Hakim Mujahid. According to the senators, those who call the Taliban peace angels and say they are a sacred group are disrespecting all civilians who have been killed by the Taliban. This comes after Mujahid said last week, in the wake of Tuesday's deadly bombings in Kabul and Kandahar that the Taliban were angels of peace and the group is a sacred group.

[Kabul, Delhi Strategic Partnership Meeting Soon: MoFA](#)

Pajhwok / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 16<sup>th</sup> January

The second meeting of Afghanistan and India Joint Strategic Partnership (AIJSP) would be held in the near future, a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has said. The matter was discussed during a meeting between Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani and Indian Ambassador in Kabul Manpreet Vohra on Saturday, the statement said. The Indian envoy extended his condolence to the Afghan government over recent terrorist attacks that claimed

several precious lives in the country. During the meeting the third foreign secretary level meeting of Afghanistan, Iran and India was also discussed. The meeting would be held next month.

### [Pakistan Proposes Intelligence Cooperation with Afghanistan to Fight Terrorism](#)

Xinhua / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 16<sup>th</sup> January

Pakistani army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Sunday spoke to Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and offered intelligence cooperation to curb terrorism together, the Pakistani Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. The offer came after a series of terrorist attacks in Afghanistan that killed dozens of people including five UAE diplomats in the southern city of Kandahar.

## **BANGLADESH**

### [PM leaves for Davos to join World Economic Forum](#)

BSS/ Protom Alo | 15<sup>th</sup> January

Prime minister Sheikh Hasina left Dhaka Sunday night for Davos on a five-day official visit to Switzerland to join the 47th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF). Executive chairman of the WEF professor Klaus Schwab invited her to attend the Forum who would be the first elected Bangladeshi leader to attend the high profile annual global meeting that draws statesmen, top business leaders and the intelligentsia to discuss crucial global issues, foreign ministry sources said.

### [26 get death in N'gang 7-murder case](#)

The Daily Star | 16<sup>th</sup> January

Twenty six people including Nur Hossain and suspended Rab official Tareque Sayeed were awarded death penalty and nine jailed for various terms in Narayanganj 7-murder case. The district and session judge's court started reading out the verdict around 10:03am amid tight security in and around the court premises.

### [Over 5.1m disadvantaged people get allowance](#)

The Financial Express | 16<sup>th</sup> January

As many as 5.10 million (5,120,000) underprivileged people are getting monthly allowance regularly as the present government has fixed a target to eradicate extreme poverty from the country by 2030, reports BSS. Poverty reduction is the core objective of the present government, which has undertaken all initiatives for gradual socio-economic development in the country.

## **BHUTAN**

### [3.92 percent CPI registered in November](#)

Kuensel Online | 14<sup>th</sup> January

The price of goods and services between November 2015 and November last year has increased by 3.92 percent, the highest monthly inflation last year, as revealed by the consumer price index (CPI). This is 1.30 percentage points higher than October 2016 which was 2.62 percent. This means that between October 2015 and October last year, the price of goods and services increased by 2.62 percent.

### [Merger of parties unlikely for 2018 elections](#)

Kuensel Online | 14<sup>th</sup> January

Druk Chirwang Tshogpa (DCT) President Lily Wangchuk believes that a merger of Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT), Bhutan Kuen-Nyam Party (BKP) and her party can form a political force that will be strong enough to form the government next year. According to Lily Wangchuk, DNT has proposed for a merger more than once. However, she suspects that the proposals were just a "political tactic" to leave behind her party.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Dhunya: President Yameen's policies are extremely effective](#)

Sun Online | 15<sup>th</sup> January

The new State Minister of Ministry of Health, Dhunya Maumoon has declared President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom's policies extremely effective, commenting that Maldives was going in the right direction despite various challenges. Dhunya has originally been the first Minister of Foreign Affairs of President Yameen's administration before resigning in June, 2016 over conflicts of opinion over some of the administration's policies.

## **MYANMAR**

### [First Honorary Consulate of Ukraine in Myanmar opened](#)

Mizzima | 14<sup>th</sup> January

The first Honorary Consulate of Ukraine in Myanmar was officially opened this week in Yangon. Both Myanmar and Ukraine would try their best to promote the process of collaboration and they had a long way to go, said by Kyaw Zeya, the permanent secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Myanmar and Ukraine have diplomatic relations starting from 1999, and this year is the 18-year anniversary between two countries.

### [Liberalisation of telecom sector contributed to Myanmar's economic growth](#)

Mizzima | 14<sup>th</sup> January

An expert symposium held on 12 January in Myanmar's capital, attributed the liberalisation of the Telecommunications industry in Myanmar for the many positive contributions to the growth of country's economy. With more than USD 2.8 billion investment in just two years from countries including Japan, Norway and Qatar, the telecommunications sector is one of the leading sectors for foreign direct investment into Myanmar.

### [Myanmar earns over 1 bln USD from beans, pulses export in first 9 months of 2016-17](#)

Global Times / Mizzima | 16<sup>th</sup> January

Myanmar exported about 1 million tons of beans and pulses earning over 1 billion US dollars in the first nine months of this fiscal year 2016-2017 as of December, official media reported Saturday. The export increased by about 150,000 tons compared with the same period of last fiscal year 2015-2016.

## NEPAL

### [Govt ready to put constitution amendment bill to vote when UDMF wants, says Nidhi](#)

Himalayan News Service / The Himalayan Times | 15<sup>th</sup> January

Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Bimalendra Nidhi said that the ruling parties were ready to put the constitution amendment bill to vote as and when desired by the agitating United Democratic Madhesi Front.

### [Parliament ratifies Trade Facilitation Agreement](#)

Himalayan News Service / The Himalayan Times | 16<sup>th</sup> January

The Parliament ratified the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) on Friday. The TFA was signed by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) member states in 2013 during the Bali ministerial meet and 106 out of the 164 member countries of the WTO had ratified the agreement before Nepal.

### [Foreign minister to attend Raisina Dialogue in Delhi](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 16<sup>th</sup> January

Foreign Minister Prakash Sharan Mahat is due to arrive here on Monday to attend the second Raisina Dialogue, India's flagship geo-political conference, organised by the Ministry of External Affairs in partnership with the Observer Research Foundation. The three-day dialogue gets underway on Tuesday, with an inaugural speech from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Taj Palace in New Delhi.

### [Cabinet expansion unlikely at the moment](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 16<sup>th</sup> January

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's plans to expand the Cabinet to bring in the Bijaya Gachhadar-led Madhesi Janadhikar Forum-Loktrantrik along with a few fringe parties, and to add a few ministers from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party including its chairman Kamal Thapa, is looking increasing unlikely by the day.

### [Parliament panel sees breach of statute provision](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 16<sup>th</sup> January

The Social Justice and Human Rights Committee of Parliament has accused the government of breaching the constitution by circumventing the constitutional provision to table the annual report of the National Human Rights Commission in Parliament for discussion.

## PAKISTAN

### [Gen Sharif to speak on terrorism at Davos meeting](#)

The Dawn | 16<sup>th</sup> January

Former army chief retired General Raheel Sharif, who enjoys an impressive record of successfully leading a war against terrorism, has been invited to the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, where he will speak

on the subject of terrorism. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will lead the Pakistani delegation to the meeting, which will be chaired jointly by Brian T. Moynihan of the Bank of America, award-winning documentary maker Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Frans van Houten and Meg Whitman.

#### [Pakistan preps briefing for Trump admin](#)

The Express Tribune | 16<sup>th</sup> January

With Donald Trump set to take oath as the next president of the United States this week, Pakistan is preparing a detailed presentation about its successes against terrorism for his administration. The move is aimed at dispelling the perception that Pakistan fight against militant groups is selective. Zardari leaves for Dubai ahead of his trip to Washington for Trump's inauguration.

#### [Dubai police blames Afghans for Kandahar atrocity](#)

The Express Tribune | 16<sup>th</sup> January

A senior UAE police official has held the Afghan government responsible for the deadly bombing in Kandahar which on January 10 killed five UAE diplomats and injured its ambassador. The blast had occurred inside the Kandahar governor's high-security guest house where the UAE diplomats, including Ambassador Juma Mohammed Abdullah Al Kaabi, gathered for dinner. No group claimed responsibility and the Taliban denied any involvement.

### **SRI LANKA**

#### [Sri Lanka ratifies Maritime Labour Convention 2006](#)

Daily News | 15<sup>th</sup> January

The government of Sri Lanka deposited the instrument of ratification of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006) with the International Labour Office last week, becoming the 81st ILO member state and the 16th Asian State to have ratified the Convention. Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha who deposited the instrument of ratification said Sri Lanka looked forward to working closely with the ILO, for capacity building and training in labour standards and labour inspection.

#### [Sri Lanka keen to resume oil import from Iran](#)

Colombo Gazette | 15<sup>th</sup> January

Sri Lanka is interested to resume import of crude oil and oil products from Iran, Susil Premajayantha, the country's minister of science, technology and research, said. Premajayantha made the remarks during a meeting with Iran's foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif in Tehran, the IRNA news agency reported today. He expressed hope that the two countries' energy co-op would be boosted after settling the "remaining financial obstacles."

#### [More power to be purchased from private sector](#)

LBO / Daily News | 16<sup>th</sup> January

Cabinet has decided to purchase 60 megawatts of power through an open international competitive bidding process for a short term period of six months starting from February. This 60MW is to be installed at three or more suitable locations to ease the transmission constraints that has arisen in the Central and Southern Provinces. According to the recommendations made by Public Utilities Commission, more generation capacity should be added to the national grid to ensure uninterrupted power supply.

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#### ***About Ananta Aspen Centre***

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