



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

**October 16th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 06/10**

['Afghanistan to Ink Transport Agreement with Central Asian States'](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 15<sup>th</sup> October

Afghanistan would soon sign an agreement with the Central Asian States which will open new venues and routes for the land-locked country, the Ministry of Transport said on Saturday. Addressing reporters in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of northern Balkh province, Transport Ministry spokesman Hekmatullah Qawanj, said Afghanistan initiated major steps to resolve transport related issues on regional level. He said the possible agreement was under consideration in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Pakistan at the moment.

[9-month export of Bangladesh to India reaches \\$485m](#)

The Financial Express | 15<sup>th</sup> October

The country's merchandise export to India reached \$485.83 million in the first nine months of the current calendar year (2017). The statistics, revealed by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), also showed that export to India stood at \$154.88 million in the first quarter (July-September) of the current fiscal year (FY18). Annual export to India amounted to \$672.40 million in the past fiscal year (FY17). Though India offers tariff-free market access to the Bangladesh, the exporters are facing series of non-tariff walls.

[Sri Lankan President invites black flag waving protesters in the North for discussions](#)

Colombo Page | 14<sup>th</sup> October

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena, who was visiting Jaffna, told the black flags waving protesters in the North to take flags of peace and try to resolve conflicts through discussions. A small group of people demanding the transfer of three Tamil prisoners who have been sent from the Vavuniya Prison to the Anuradhapura Prison, back to Vavuniya Prison staged a protest along the road waving black flags. President Sirisena, who was on his way to the Hindu College in Jaffna alighted from his vehicle and went to the protesters to meet them. Talking briefly to protesters, the President told them that he is ready to discuss with anyone who have issues sitting at one table, whether they are from South or North.

### [Muscat Meeting to Discuss Afghan-Pak Relations: CEO](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 16<sup>th</sup> October

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah on Sunday said relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan would be discussed in upcoming Quadrilateral Cooperation Group (QCG) meeting in Muscat, the capital of Oman. Talking to reporters in Mehtarlam, the capital of eastern Laghman province, Abdullah said good relations with neighbours was Afghanistan's need and said the recent visit of the Pakistan Army Chief was aimed at decreasing tensions and improving relations between the neighbors.

### [Iranian Economy Minister Meets Counterparts from India, Afghanistan](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 16<sup>th</sup> October

Iranian Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Masoud Karbasian in separate meetings with his Afghan and Indian counterparts reviewed issues of mutual interest with them. The meetings were held on the sidelines of the 2017 Annual joint meeting of the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund (IMF). In his meeting with Indian Minister of Finance Arun Jaitley, Karbasian expressed Iran's readiness to host joint commission meeting in early 2018. He pointed to using \$450m credits of India to develop Chabahar Port and also to establish cooperation in transportation field.

### [Clash among ISIS and Afghan forces leaves 12 dead, wounded in Kunar](#)

Khaama Press | 15<sup>th</sup> October

At least twelve people were killed or wounded during a clash between the Afghan security forces and the ISIS militants in eastern Kunar province of Afghanistan. The 201st Silab Corps of the Afghan National Army (ANA) forces in the East said the incident took place late on Saturday night in the vicinity of Kunar Bain area. A statement by the Silab Corps said at least eight ISIS militants were killed and four others were wounded during the clashes.

## **BANGLADESH**

### [12 Rohingyas die as boat capsizes in Teknaf](#)

UNB/ The Daily Start | 16<sup>th</sup> October

At least 12 Rohingya people, including six children and four women, died as a boat carrying them capsized in the Naf River near Shah Porir Dwip area in Teknaf upazila early 16<sup>th</sup> October.

Lt Commander Zafar Imam of Bangladesh Coast Guard, said that the boat carrying around 50-60 Rohingya people from Dhaunkhali of the Rakhine state in Myanmar, capsized on the estuary of the river around 4:00am.

### [Malaysia to build field hospital for Rohingyas](#)

UNB/ Protom Alo | 16<sup>th</sup> October

Malaysia has committed to build a field hospital in Cox's Bazar with the aim of providing better health services for the Rohingya refugees who have fled persecution in the troubled Rakhine state of Myanmar. New arrivals into the refugee camps dotting the south-eastern reaches of Bangladesh crossed 537,000 on 15 October, marking Day 50 of the current crisis. A full-blown humanitarian disaster constantly feels like it's just one stroke of bad luck away. Bangladesh appreciated Malaysia's bold position in support of persecuted Rohingyas, their initiative of providing humanitarian assistance to the Rohingyas and welcomed the proposal for setting up the field hospital in Cox's Bazar to provide improved medical care services to around 300,000 Rohingyas.

## **BHUTAN**

### [Security concerns halt South-South Highway construction](#)

Kuensel | 14<sup>th</sup> October

The suspension of South-South National Highway's construction is not because of external pressure and definitely not the government of India, the Prime Minister clarified. Rather, Lyonchhen Tshering Tobgay said that it was because internal security is given due importance. "Some people say GoI don't want this road," he said. "If it's true we would not have built Jomotshangkha-Samrang and Nganglam – Dewathang roads. Kidnapping and records of militants has been an issue."

### [Govt. for amendment despite court case over fiscal incentives](#)

Kuensel | 14<sup>th</sup> October

The government has submitted all laws related to fiscal incentives to the National Assembly for amendment, Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay said. "This is our responsibility," he said. Prime minister maintained that the government has clarified that it is the prerogative of the government to grant and declare fiscal incentives. "However, we have also said that there are big risks for these powers to be misused for corrupt practices, and personal gain." He said that the government, therefore, agreed with the Parliament that henceforth it should be submitted as a money bill and it should get the Parliament's approval. "On the other hand, the laws allow the government the authority to grant fiscal incentives."

## **MALDIVES**

### [Number of people living in poverty increases by 31 percent](#)

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

The number of people registered as poor in Maldives has increased by 31 percent between the years 1436 H and 1437 H. Coordinator at Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Mohamed Ahsan reported to "Sun" that there had been 12,335 people registered as poor and due for alms in the year 1436 H. He said the figure increased by 3,934 people in the year 1437 H. The number of people registered as poor and due for alms in 1437 H were 16,269 people – a 31 percent increase compared to 1436 H.

### [Speaker of Parliament Maseeh meets Russian President Putin](#)

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

Speaker of the Parliament, Abdulla Maseeh, currently attending the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) meeting in Russia has met with the Russian President, Vladimir Putin. It is unclear as to on which date that the Speaker met with the Russia President. In a tweet sent out last night, the Majority Leader of the Parliament, Ahmed NIhan Hussain Manik posted pictures of the Speaker with President Putin. The IPU meeting is set from 14-16 October in Moscow.

## **MYANMAR**

### [Australia expands its support for Myanmar's farmers](#)

Mizzima | 16<sup>th</sup> October

Australia and Myanmar have developed their strategy of research collaboration in fisheries, livestock and cropping systems for the next ten years. They will continue the work started out with the program "MyFarm", the Australian Ambassador Nicholas Coppel said during its showcase in Nay Pyi Taw on Saturday. "We know that agriculture is the engine of Myanmar's future", he said. The agriculture, fisheries and livestock sectors account for

about 30% of gross domestic product (GDP), and about 70% of the population depends on them for their livelihoods, Coppel highlighted.

### [Myanmar army to investigate Rakhine operations](#)

Mizzima | 16th October

Myanmar's military says it is investigating its operations in violence-wracked Rakhine state, where the United Nations has accused troops of waging an ethnic cleansing campaign against Rohingya Muslims. In the last seven weeks, more than half a million Rohingya have fled Rakhine for Bangladesh, shocking the globe with accounts of Myanmar soldiers and Buddhist mobs murdering and raping civilians before torching their villages to the ground. The army has steadfastly denied the charges and insists it is targeting Rohingya terrorists who attacked police posts on August 25, killing around a dozen security officers.

## NEPAL

### [Parties file closed lists of candidates](#)

The Himalayan Times | 16th October

Political parties today filed the closed list of candidates for Proportional Representation elections of both assemblies — provincial and parliamentary — at the central office of the Election Commission. All major political parties — the Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, CPN-Maoist Centre — and other regional and fringe parties submitted their list of PR candidates for all 110 seats of the parliamentary assembly and 220 seats of the provincial assemblies of seven provinces. Chief Election Commissioner Ayodhi Prasad Yadav said that all the parties that had entered the premises of the EC until 5:00pm today could submit their PR lists.

### [Nepal-India joint team inspects ICP Birgunj](#)

The Himalayan Times | 16th October

A joint team of Nepal and India today inspected the Integrated Check Post (ICP) Birgunj and instructed the contractor to complete the remaining works as soon as possible. Secretary at the Ministry of Commerce Chandra Kumar Ghimire and Ambassador of India to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri, along with officials from the government and Embassy of India in Kathmandu, had observed progress in construction of ICP Birgunj today, which is being developed under the grant assistance of the government of India.

## PAKISTAN

### [Ex-acting PIA chief: Flying off home, German evades corruption probe](#)

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

Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) is still investigating corruption charges against former acting CEO of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Bernd Hildenbrand — a German national — who went abroad for a month under a special exemption despite his name being on the Exit Control List (ECL).

### [Graft cases: Dar's fifth accountability hearing postponed till 12 noon](#)

DAWN | 16<sup>th</sup> October

The accountability court on Monday postponed Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's fifth hearing till 12 noon after his lawyer Khawaja Harris failed to appear in court due to some prior commitments. As the finance minister appeared

in court, the bench rejected junior lawyer Kauseen Faisal Mufti's application for the defendant's exemption from future hearings.

### [Those talking against army are country's enemies, says Musharraf](#)

DAWN | 16<sup>th</sup> October

All-Pakistan Muslim League (APML) chief and former president retired Gen Pervez Musharraf said on Sunday that those talking against Pakistan and its army were enemies of the country. In a telephonic address to a rally of his party, he said the army was the protector of the country's borders and it had rendered outstanding services to the nation. The army had not only worked to defend the country but also contributed greatly in its socio-economic sector, he added.

### [Question of federal job quota stays unresolved](#)

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

While the provinces are demanding the announcement of the National Finance Commission Award, the government has yet to legislate on the provincial quota system for federal government jobs which expired soon after the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) came into power. Despite expiring on August 13, 2013, new rules for provincial quotas in federal government jobs have still not been enacted.

## **SRI LANKA**

### [Sri Lanka Navy takes action against drug smuggling to support national program to eliminate illegal drugs](#)

Colombo Page|15<sup>th</sup> October

Sri Lanka Navy says it takes swift action against drug smuggling into the country through sea routes as well on land fully supporting the Sri Lankan President's joint national effort to create a country free of drugs. "The Navy, in close coordination with the national task force to eliminate drugs, continues its operations against drug smuggling via sea as well as on land under the direction of the Commander of the Navy, Vice Admiral Travis Sinniah," the Navy said in a statement. The Navy has taken swift action against a number of cases involving the possession and sale of drugs in violation of the Excise Ordinance. The Navy has apprehended a large quantity of drugs smuggled into the country via sea and arrested a large number of drug dealers and handed them over to the law enforcement authorities for legal action.

### [Digital Disruption: IQ leads the charge in Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page|16<sup>th</sup> October

For the first time in Sri Lanka, Innovation Quotient -IQ- is bridging the gap between human insight, applied creativity and technical capability. And it's bringing these solutions to top corporates, businesses and start-ups around the country. Sri Lanka's digital transformation is imminent-and IQ is leading the charge as the only tech-creative-consultancy hybrid to offer design thinking and innovation focused on digital transformation to tackle complex business issues. IQs portfolio covers digital transformation, tech solutions, rapid prototyping, digital marketing, campaign management, and also includes a media lab.

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