



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

November 1st, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 1/11

[Sri Lankan President announces major measures to dispel misconceptions on constitutional reforms](#)

Colombo Page | 31st October
Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena yesterday said that the government will take three major measures to dispel the misinformation creating misconceptions about the new constitution to be drafted. "The government will take three important steps on constitutional reforms and to prevent incorrect information which creates incorrect ideas about the proposed new constitution", President Sirisena said.

[Russian Businessmen Looking to Invest in Afghanistan](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 1st November
Russian businessmen who visited Afghanistan on Monday said they want to invest in the agricultural, transportation and manufacturing sectors in the country. A delegation of twenty Russian businessmen attended the third meeting of its kind between Afghanistan and Russia, where they discussed investment opportunities. Officials from the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry said despite the current problems and insecurity in Afghanistan, Russian businessmen are ready to invest in the country.

[Rohingya crisis will affect Bangladesh economy, says US Ambassador Bernicat](#)

bdnews24 | 30th October
The US envoy in Dhaka says the Rohingya crisis will affect Bangladesh's economy as over half a million Myanmar nationals crossed the border in just eight weeks. Rohingya crisis will also have an impact on this country's economy," Ambassador Marcia Bernicat said on Monday while addressing a luncheon meeting of the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh or AmCham.

AFGHANISTAN

[Hekmatyar Throws Weight behind HPC Peace Plan](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 1st November
The Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) on Tuesday lent it weight behind the High Peace Council (HPC) new peace strategy and expressed its readiness for any kind of support. A statement issued by HPC's media office in Kabul said HPC chief Mohammad Karim Khalili, secretary reconciliation Mohammad Akram Khpalwak and President's

special envoy on political affairs and others called on HIA leader Gulbaddin Hikmatyar at his residence on Tuesday. HPC's deputies and some other leadership members of the council were also present at the meeting, the statement said,. It quoted Khpalwak as calling the HIA's signing of peace pact a 'bold step' by Hekmatayar.

[Kazakhstan vows to support Afghan forces, provide satellite technology support](#)

Khaama Press | 31st October

Kazakhstan has vowed to provide support in different sectors to Afghanistan specifically in defense sector and satellite technology to combat terrorism and drugs.

The defense minister and aerospace industry of Kazakhstan Beibut Atamkulov on Monday visited Kabul and met with President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani to help kick off practical cooperation in defense and other fields between the two countries, according to the Office of the President, ARG Palace. President Ghani thanked the government of Kazakhstan for supporting Afghanistan, specifically in providing training support to the civilian and military cadets of the country.

[Several feared dead, wounded as suicide attack rocks Kabul city](#)

Khaama Press | 31st October

A suicide attacked rocked Kabul city earlier this evening as there are fears that several people were either killed or wounded in the explosion. Security sources are saying at least seven people have been killed and around twenty one others have been wounded in the explosion, citing the preliminary reports. However, the eyewitnesses in the area are saying that more than ten people were killed and over ten others were wounded in the attack. The incident took place in the vicinity close to Wazir Mohammad Akbar Khan and Shash Darak diplomatic area of the city.

BANGLADESH

[President, leader of newly floated BJP missing](#)

Prothom Alo | 1st November

The family of Mithun Chowdhury, president of Bangladesh Janata Party (BJP), has sought intervention of the prime minister and the home minister in ensuring his safe return to them. Mithun Chowdhury and another leader of the party, Ashik Gosh Asit, remained missing since late night of 27 October. Mithun's wife Sumana Chowdhury made the allegation of his disappearance at a press conference at the Sylhet District Press Club on Tuesday.

[Bangladesh raising funds, delaying Rohingya repatriation: Myanmar](#)

Prothom Alo | 1st November

Myanmar has blamed Bangladesh for delaying the start of a repatriation process for hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslim refugees, saying it feared Dhaka could be stalling until it receives multi-million dollars of international aid money.

BHUTAN

[Entire workforce to be covered under new NPPF policy](#)

Keunsel | 31st October

According to a draft National Pension and Provident Fund (NPPF) Policy, less than one in five of the country's working population is covered under retirement benefits scheme such as pension and provident fund schemes, exposing most of our workforce to social vulnerabilities after retirement. However, things are expected to change for the better when the draft NPPF Policy 2017 comes into effect. According to the policy, all citizens employed, either on contract or regular employment, including the self-employed and members of national workforce, will

be covered under for retirement benefits.

[Their Majesties leave for Delhi today](#)

Keunsel | 31st October

On the invitation of the Prime Minister of India, His Majesty The King, accompanied by Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen, and His Royal Highness The Gyalsey will travel to New Delhi, India, on a 4-day visit from today until November 3. The Royal visit would provide an opportunity to both the sides to review the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation, including befitting celebrations for the golden jubilee of Bhutan and India's diplomatic relations in 2018, and to advance the special bilateral ties of friendship and cooperation.

MALDIVES

[President: Maldives remains committed to maintain democracy](#)

SunOnline | 30th October

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has said that the Government of Maldives remains committed to maintain judicial independence, democracy, rule of law and human rights, and in continuing to cooperate with international partners in upholding the standards of good governance. In his meeting with the European Parliament Delegation visiting the country at the President's Office today, President Yameen spoke of the challenges faced at this early stage of democratic transition and the strides the Government has made in overcoming existing challenges and consolidating a smooth-functioning democratic system. The President also emphasized that the Maldives attaches high importance to its relations with the EU and conveyed appreciation for the support and cooperation extended by the EU, especially in climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts undertaken by the Maldives. Maldives and the EU delegation reaffirmed their commitment to continue working together and promote shared values and interests.

[President: Biggest focus of Budget 2018 – HR development](#)

SunOnline | 1st November

The Projected State Budget for 2018 has been compiled with the biggest focus of human resource development, but it is not something which can be accomplished within just one year, says President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom. Speaking during the inauguration of Dhaalu Airport this Wednesday morning, Yameen said human resource development was vital to maintain a fast pace of economic development. "With the economy developing at such a fast pace, there is no other choice for us but to develop human resources. It's vital. Otherwise, we would have to again look for foreign employees for the new jobs that are created," said Yameen. He also said his administration prioritized creating employment opportunities for the youth. He said each and every airport that is opened created multiple employment opportunities. And every resort built with the establishment of airports in turn created more employment opportunities. He said those employment opportunities needed to go to the youth, and that such projects facilitated the administration's efforts to empower the youth.

MYANMAR

[Myanmar Air Force to induct JF-17 fighters by end-2017](#)

Mizzima | 31st October

A JF-17 Fierce Dragon fighter aircraft with the insignia of the Myanmar Air Force (MAF) on its tail has been conducting test flights in China's Chengdu airport, indicating that plans to induct them into MAF by end of this

year may be on course. That will make Pakistan a military hardware exporter because the Fierce Dragon has been jointly developed by Pakistan and China.

[UN names new coordinator for Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 1st November

The United Nations on Tuesday named a new interim relief coordinator in Myanmar as the government continues to block demands that humanitarian workers be allowed to reach Muslim Rohingya in Rakhine state. Knut Ostby of Norway, who has worked for the United Nations in 17 countries including East Timor and Iran, will serve as the UN coordinator from November 1. The United Nations is urging Myanmar authorities to end the military campaign, grant permission to aid workers to reach those in need in Rakhine and allow the return of the Rohingya from Bangladesh.

NEPAL

[New tax regime hits Nepal's export to India](#)

The Himalayan Times | 31st October

Nepal's export to India has been adversely affected after the enforcement of Goods and Services Tax (GST), as the export to India became costlier after the new rules were implemented. Export of major export items to India, which were enjoying zero duty or nominal tariff earlier, has dropped significantly, according to the Nepal Rastra Bank's recent report. Export of juice, jute products, vegetables and fruits, processed food like biscuits and noodles, cardamom, among others, have plunged heavily. Export of juice, which was a major export item to India in the previous years, has plunged by 57 per cent in the first two months of current fiscal as compared to corresponding period of the previous fiscal year.

[India removes GST on services supplied to Nepal against payment in Indian currency](#)

The Himalayan Times | 29th October

Nepali traders have been exempted from paying the goods and services tax (GST) while purchasing services in India if the payment is made in the Indian currency to the Indian service providers. Issuing a Gazette notification on Friday, the Ministry of Finance, India announced removal of the GST on supply of services to Nepal and Bhutan against payments made in the Indian currency. Earlier, the GST was exempted only if the service supplier received payment in convertible foreign currency. That rule had created extra burden on Nepali traders as they usually make payments to service suppliers in the Indian currency.

PAKISTAN

[Pakistan now ranked 147th in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index](#)

The Express Tribune | 1st November

Pakistan has slipped three places on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index and is now ranked a lowly 147th among 190 economies, denting the government's pro-business image ahead of next general elections. The index is mostly used as a guide by foreign investors to learn more about a country, aiding decisions on pouring in money in the economy. Pakistan, however, slipped from its last year's rating despite the introduction of some reforms in areas of starting a business and making international trade relatively easier. If one government department is to be blamed for the overall poor performance, it is the Ministry of Finance, as the country's ranking nosedived on the indicators of paying taxes and getting credit.

[US to give Pakistan chance to strike terrorist targets, says Tillerson](#)

Dawn | 1st November

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has informed Congress that Pakistan is willing to target terrorists if provided

information and Washington plans to give Islamabad the opportunity to prove it. At a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Monday night, American lawmakers also warned that if the United States insisted on having the option of first strike against a nuclear-armed nation, it could send a wrong signal to other nations with nuclear weapons. They particularly mentioned India and Pakistan, two nuclear nations with strained relations.

SRI LANKA

[New constitution can change the course of the country - Minister Mangala Samaraweera](#)

Colombo Page|31st October

Sri Lanka's Minister of Finance Mangala Samaraweera says by formulating a new constitution the trajectory of the country can be changed towards a new direction and create an 'equal citizenship' to bring about economic prosperity. He expressed these views participating in the debate held in parliament today on the Steering Committee Report on constitutional reforms. The Minister said the burning issue in Sri Lanka is the ethnic problem although certain quarters do not seem to have such a problem.

[Sri Lanka invites Turkey to invest in new opportunities](#)

Colombo Page|31st October

Turkey celebrated its Republic Day and the 94th anniversary of the establishment of Republic of Turkey yesterday in Colombo with the participation of many dignitaries. Sri Lanka and Turkey has strong ties in many sectors and the two governments expect to expand those ties further, especially in trade and investment sectors. Speaking at the event, Minister of Public Enterprises Development Kabir Hashim said Sri Lanka is poised to become a key financial, logistical and business hub of the Indian Ocean and expressed hope that the Turkish investors would participate in the new opportunities that are now opening up in the country.

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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