

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

**January 20th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 9/1**

[Al-Qaeda Threat in Af-Pak Region Persists: White House](#)

Pajhwok / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 19th January

Even as the strength of Taliban and Al Qaeda has been diminished to a large extent, the situation in Afghanistan continues to be of concern, the outgoing Obama administration said on Tuesday. "The situation in Afghanistan continues to be one of concern and I think the president would acknowledge that this is an area where we've made important progress that has made the American people safer," the White House press secretary said.

[Bangladesh Minister Amu flies to India to join Bengal global business summit](#)

The Financial Express | 19th January

A thirty-member delegation led by Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu Thursday left Dhaka for India to join the "3rd Edition of Bengal Global Business Summit-2017". The two-day summit will begin on Friday at Milan Mela Hall in Kolkata, reports BSS citing a press release.

[One Belt One Road conference concludes with 8-point declaration](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 19th January

The first edition of One Belt One Road Nepal Conference 2017 concluded with 8-point declaration here in Kathmandu on Thursday. One Belt One Road (OBOR), also known as Belt and Road initiative, is a strategy and framework proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping after taking the helm of Chinese leadership in 2013. The strategy focuses on connectivity and cooperation of China with the Eurasian region. Foreign Minister Prakash Sharan Mahat, who was invited as a chief guest in the conference organised by BP Koirala School of Public Policy, said, "We are committed to strategic cooperation and enhancement of connectivity. However, China needs to understand that Nepal has a geopolitical complexity. Nepal is committed to One China Policy."

**AFGHANISTAN**

['Barbaric act of terrorists would not weaken the ties': UAE](#)

The Afghanistan Times | 18th January

The foreign minister Salahuddin Rabbani met with the foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zaid Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi express condolence in the recent terrorist attack which killed five UAE diplomats in Kandahar. Five diplomats died in a bombing in Kandahar that killed at least 11 people and wounded 17 others, including Juma al-Kaabi, the UAE ambassador to Afghanistan last week.

[Taliban can carry on insurgency for a very long time: Sartaj Aziz](#)

Khaama Press | 19th January

The Taliban militants group can carry on insurgency for a very long time, Pakistan's foreign affairs adviser Sartaj Aziz

said as he insist that the Afghan leaders to review their “fragmented” approach to peace talks with the Taliban on containing and ending the resilient insurgency. Aziz made the remarks during an interview with the Voice of America. He said the group may not be able to capture (the) bulk of Afghanistan or the capital or any other (major urban) place.

#### [Obama talks with President Ghani and CEO Abdullah](#)

Khaama Press | 19th January

President Barack Obama has spoken with President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. The White House said President Obama called President Ghani to speak with the two leaders regarding the bilateral relations of the two nations. “President Obama spoke by phone today with President Ashraf Ghani of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, who was joined by Chief Executive Officer Dr. Abdullah Abdullah,” according to a statement by White House.

#### [Some Parts of the Constitution Omitted: Bashardost](#)

Pajhwok / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 19th January

Some Wolesi Jirga (WJ) members on Wednesday alleged some articles of the constitution had been either altered or removed. Dr. Ramazan Bashardost, an outspoken lawmaker from Kabul, said there was difference between constitution copies the Loya Jirga had approved and those formally printed and contained the signature of Sibghatullah Mujadidi, the then Loya Jirga head. He claimed the difference had been made to the copy of constitution approved by Loya Jirga and the one printed formally.

### **BANGLADESH**

#### [Bangladesh demands Rohingya repatriation to Myanmar, crisis solution at OIC meeting](#)

bdnews24 | 19<sup>th</sup> January

Bangladesh has demanded return of the Myanmar’s Rohingya people living in the country and called for “durable solutions” to the crisis in the Rakhine State. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam made the call on Thursday at an emergency meeting of the OIC foreign ministers in Malaysia. The ‘Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers on the Situation of the Rohingya Muslim Minority in Myanmar’ was convened in the wake of the ongoing crisis in the Muslim-majority impoverished region.

#### [Bangladesh Government splits home ministry in two divisions](#)

bdnews24 | 19<sup>th</sup> January

The Cabinet Division issued a circular on Thursday, which means the ministry will now have two secretaries for separate divisions handling public security and security services. Public Security Division will handle the law-enforcing agencies while the Security Services Division will handle fire-service, prisons, narcotics department, and immigration and passports.

#### [Hasina invites global business to focus on Bangladesh](#)

bdnews24 | 20th January

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has pitched for global knowledge and business to focus on Bangladesh to help her country make its 'Digital Bangladesh' dream come true. She pointed out it would be a win-win' for both sides. She made the call while joining a discussion, a part of the ongoing World Economic Forum meet, held at the Sheraton Hotel at Jakobshorn in Davos on Thursday evening.

### **BHUTAN**

#### [Bhutan participates in Asia Cooperation Dialogue meeting](#)

Kuensel Online | 19th January

Bhutan participated in the 15th ministerial meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) on January 17, according to a foreign affairs press release. Bhutan’s delegation was led by ambassador to Kuwait, Tshering Gyaltshen Penjor and officials of the foreign affairs and economic affairs ministries. The Abu Dhabi Declaration was adopted at the meeting and will serve as a blueprint for collaborative approaches in implementing energy related programmes and projects for realisation of regional security and sustainability of energy resources and technologies.

### [Gups want statutory rape laws amended](#)

Kuensel Online | 19th January

Pointing out that the current statutory rape laws are unfair and unclear, local leaders asked that the state consider amending this legislation during the last day of the ninth Local Government Chairpersons' Conference (LGCC) in Phuentsholing, yesterday. Statutory rape is sexual intercourse with a minor or a person aged below 18. After officials of the National Law Review Task-force (NLRT) asked the 205 gups to raise any issues and inconveniences they face, a plethora of issues followed. However, questions related to statutory rape dominated the question hour.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Sudan pledges assistance to Maldivian Council of Fatwa](#)

Sun Online | 19<sup>th</sup> January

Islamic Fiqh Council of Sudan has pledged assistance to the Supreme Council of Fatwa of Maldives. The delegation from Islamic Fiqh Council of Sudan visiting Maldives upon invitation of Ministry of Islamic Affairs of Maldives met with Minister of Islamic Affairs, Dr. Ziyad Bagir last Wednesday, January 18. Ministry of Islamic Affairs reports Islamic Fiqh Council of Sudan pledged technical assistance to the Supreme Council of Fatwa of Maldives during the meeting.

### [World Bank: Tourism to pick up, economic growth of 4.3 percent expected](#)

Sun Online | 19<sup>th</sup> January

World Bank estimates the tourism industry of Maldives will pick up, fueling economic growth of an average 3.4 percent over the next three years. Economic Prospectus Report released by world Bank shows Maldivian economy grew by 3.5 percent in 2016 due to growth of construction industry and increase in government expenditure on public infrastructure development. WB noted that Maldivian government took huge loans to fund the public infrastructure development projects, leading to an increase in debt.

## **MYANMAR**

### [Myanmar military seize key KIA command base](#)

Mizzima | 20th January

The Myanmar military has seized a key command base and two others belonging to the ethnic Kachin Independence Army (KIA) as skirmishes continue between the two armies in Kachin state near the border with China, RFA reported on 19 January. The office of Myanmar commander-in-chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said Wednesday that government forces captured the 12th battalion of the KIA's third brigade in the town of Mansi in Bhamo district of Kachin state.

### [Malaysia PM urges Myanmar to end Rohingya crackdown](#)

Mizzima | 20th January

Malaysia's prime minister Thursday urged Myanmar to end its crackdown on the Muslim Rohingya minority, warning that Islamist extremists may exploit the crisis. The plight of the Rohingya, a stateless group denied citizenship in Myanmar and reviled as illegal immigrants by the majority Buddhist population, has become a lightning rod for anger across the Muslim world. Since October Myanmar's army has carried out "clearance operations" in the north of western Rakhine state to root out insurgents accused of deadly raids on police border posts.

## **NEPAL**

### [Interpol Asia Conference kicks off in Kathmandu](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 19th January

The 23rd Interpol Asian Regional Conference kicked off in Kathmandu on Wednesday bringing together police from various countries to discuss issues including terrorism, human trafficking, border security and cybercrime. Heads of police and police cooperation bodies from 33 countries are participating in the conference to discuss and showcase emerging security challenges in Asian region.

### [Nepal urges India to remove anti-dumping, countervailing duties on jute products](#)

My Republica | 19<sup>th</sup> January

Nepal has requested India to remove the anti-dumping and countervailing duties on Nepalese jute products exported

to India from Nepal. Ambassador of Nepal to India, Deep Kumar Upadhyay made this request when he called on Minister of Textiles of India Smt Smriti Zubin Irani in New Delhi on 18 January 2017.

### [Polls uncertain as govt ties up amendment and election bills](#)

My Republica | 20<sup>th</sup> January

The prospect of holding local elections has become uncertain, with the government tying up the constitution amendment bill tabled in parliament with the local elections. The government plans to endorse the constitution amendment bill along with the election-related bills. As the opposition parties have strongly opposed the constitution amendment bill, the government has failed to even announce the election date for lack of election-related laws.

## **PAKISTAN**

### [Pakistan asks India, World Bank to inform it of all future hydel projects](#)

Dawn | 20<sup>th</sup> January

Pakistan has asked the World Bank and India to inform Islamabad of all the dams and hydropower projects proposed to be built by New Delhi on the western rivers, and not just the two projects under dispute currently, so that the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) could be followed smoothly in future, an inter-ministerial meeting presided over by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar was told on Thursday. Ministers and other representatives of the ministries of water and power, foreign affairs and law and justice, the Attorney General's Office and civil and military experts attended the meeting.

### [Trump likes to see better US-Pakistan relations in future](#)

The News | 20<sup>th</sup> January

Pakistan's ambassador to United States Jalil Abbas Jilani said that US President-elect Donald Trump hopes to see better US-Pakistan bilateral relations in future. Jilani told this in an exclusive interview with Geo News on Thursday that Trump said this to him during a brief conversation at a dinner he hosted for foreign ambassadors.

## **SRI LANKA**

### [Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Sri Lanka - Sharif](#)

Colombo Page | 19<sup>th</sup> January

Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Sri Lanka, which are most cordial and friendly. Pakistan Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said when he and his Sri Lankan counterpart Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe met on the sidelines of the 2017 World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland Wednesday.

### [India, Sri Lanka to reach decision soon on Trinco port](#)

Colombo Gazette | 19<sup>th</sup> January

Sri Lanka is in talks to offer the port of Trincomalee to India. Speaking to The Hindu on the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi, Field Marshal Sarath Fonseka, Colombo's Minister of Regional Development, said that the decision on offering the port to India will be taken soon.

### [Sri Lanka Development Bonds issue for US\\$ 225 mn oversubscribed five-fold](#)

Colombo Page | 19<sup>th</sup> January

The issue of Sri Lanka Development Bonds (SLDBs) for US\$ 225 million has been oversubscribed with total bids received amounting to US\$ 1.137 billion, the Central Bank said on Thursday.

### [New Zealand and Sri Lanka to consider free trade agreement](#)

Colombo Gazette | 20<sup>th</sup> January

New Zealand and Sri Lanka will open diplomatic posts in each other's nations and are considering a free trade agreement, the Pacific country's trade minister said on Friday, according to the Reuters news agency.

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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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