



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

November 20th , 2017| Volume: 3 - 6/11

[First India Myanmar Bilateral Military Exercise 2017 to take place this week](#)

Mizzima | 20th November

The first India Myanmar Bilateral Military Exercise 2017(IMBAX – 2017) is scheduled to be conducted in India from November 20 -25, the Shillong Times has reported. The joint exercise is the first of its kind military training exercise on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) between India & Myanmar. The aim of this training event is to train the Myanmar delegation for participation in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations under the UN Flag, according to the report.

[ADB to give BD \\$260m for infrastructure development](#)

The Financial Express | 19th November

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed agreements for \$260 million in loans to help sustain and increase infrastructure investments in Bangladesh as well as renewable energy interventions. Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary Kazi Shofiquel Azam and Manmohan Parkash, newly-appointed Country Director of ADB, signed the loan agreements Sunday afternoon on behalf of their respective sides at a ceremony at the ERD Conference Room in the city. The assistance forms the first tranche of \$526 million multitranche ADB loans for the Third Public-Private Infrastructure Development Facility (PPIDF 3).

[Pence, Abdullah Talk Terrorist Sanctuaries & Election Preparations](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan| 19th November

Vice President Mike Pence and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah on Friday discussed the current political situation in Afghanistan.

After the meeting The White House said: “They focused on president Trump’s South Asia policy and its beneficial impact on the security situation in Afghanistan.” Pence commended the Afghan security forces for their bravery and sacrifices in battling the insurgency and international terrorists, such as ISIS and Al- Qaeda. He stressed the need for Kabul’s continued engagement and progress on necessary reforms, political inclusion and preparations for forthcoming elections -- all critical to providing greater stability and opportunities for Afghanistan.

AFGHANISTAN

[China's envoy for Afghanistan meets Pak army chief amid growing US pressures](#)

Khaama Press| 19th November

The Special Envoy of China for Afghanistan Ambassador Deng Xijun has met with the Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan General Qamar Javed Bajwa amid growing pressures by Washington on Islamabad to act against the terror outfits having safe havens in the country. The Inter Services Public Relations, Pakistani military's media wing, in a statement said "H.E Mr Deng Xijun, Special Envoy on Afghan Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) today."

[Unlicensed Companies Importing 87pc of Fuel: ANSA](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan| 20th November

The Afghanistan National Standards Authority (ANSA) cancelled licenses of 58 companies over importing low quality petroleum during the past two years and another 15 companies faced the same charges, an official said on Saturday. Meanwhile, officials said 87 percent of fuel was imported to the country by companies operating without licenses. The Wolesi Jirga or lower house of Parliament on Saturday summoned Feroz Masjidi, acting Commerce and Industries Minister and ANSA head Naqibullah Faeq and Ahmad Waled Tamim, head of Fuel Enterprise. The three officials were summoned to answer questions from lawmakers about the import of low quality petroleum products.

[Necessary Steps Taken to Reach to a Peace Deal with Pakistan: Ghani](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan| 20th November

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani said that the Afghan government has taken necessary steps to reach a peace deal with Pakistan. Speaking to local residents and elders of southern Zabul province, President Ghani rejected the perceptions that Afghanistan wants destruction of Pakistan. He said this is neither the notion of the Afghan government and nation nor will Afghanistan allow anyone to do bad with the country. President Ghani also added that such perceptions that the government's strategies regarding peace efforts are not clear, are also baseless. This comes as President Ghani has long been insisting on peace with Pakistan first approach.

BANGLADESH

[War crimes committed against Rohingyas](#)

UNB/ The Daily Star | 20th November

Describing Myanmar army's atrocities on Rohingya people in Rakhaine State as "war crime" and "basic violation of human rights", the visiting US senators have assured Bangladesh of extending all-out support to resolve the crisis. The assurance came when a delegation of the US Senate, led by Senator Jeff Markley, met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday. After the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters. The delegation, which visited the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar on Saturday, condemned the "war crimes and ethnic cleansing".

[Over 15,000 Bangladeshis in foreign jails now, parliament told](#)

bdnews24 | 20th November

A total of 15,149 Bangladeshis have been detained or imprisoned in foreign jails, according to information released in parliament by the ministry of expatriates' welfare and overseas employment. In absence of Nurul Islam BSc, the minister, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed took the floor and informed the House on Sunday that of the total Bangladeshi detainees in foreign prisons, the highest 10,885 were in Saudi Arabia. Bangladeshi

prisoners in other countries are as follows: UAE 977, Malaysia 810, Kuwait 384, Qatar 309, Libya 239, Oman 661, Greece 257, Italy 134, Maldives 124 and Iraq 115, Singapore has 84 Bangladeshi in its jails, Japan 23, South Korea 27, Jordan 59, Egypt 4, Hong Kong 79, Thailand 1, and Mauritius 7.

BHUTAN

[Aspiring entrepreneurs learn about registering a business](#)

Keunsel Online | 18th November

To sensitise aspiring entrepreneurs, the economic affairs ministry held a session on business registration and legal requirements at the global entrepreneurship week on November 16 in Thimphu. An industry can be either production and manufacturing, or construction and services industry. Regional Trade and Industry Office (RTIO) issues industrial licenses for any types of industries including business license to start a cottage or a small industry. Any Bhutanese who is 18 years and above can own and operate a business.

MALDIVES

[President: Every citizen must abide by the law](#)

Sun Online | 19th November

Every Maldivian citizen must abide by the law, respect one another and put forth patriotism, says President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom in his address to the nation on occasion of National Day. Yameen said the National Day of a country brings out patriotism. He said it was a day for the people to have great aspirations and hopes for the future of the nation. "My appeal is for every Maldivian citizen to abide by the law, respect each other and put forth patriotism. For the Maldives to develop and become self-sufficient," said Yameen in his address.

MYANMAR

[Asia, Europe foreign ministers to see Rohingya plight in Bangladesh](#)

Mizzima | 18th November

A host of foreign ministers from Asia and Europe descend on Bangladesh Saturday for talks on the Rohingya refugee crisis that has put strains on this impoverished nation. The talks will discuss international support for Bangladesh, according to an EU statement. Bangladesh Foreign Minister A. H. Mahmood Ali will take his counterparts from Germany, Sweden and Japan, together with the European Union's diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini, to the border town of Cox's Bazar Sunday to see the camps. Refugees are penned inside vast, squalid camps, and UNICEF estimates that 25,000 children are suffering from severe malnutrition that could easily become a major killer. Dhaka has prohibited the Rohingya from leaving the camps, fearing an influx in its bigger cities.

[IMF expects to see Myanmar economy rebound to 6.7 percent growth for 2017-18](#)

Mizzima | 18th November

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) team led by Mr. Shanaka J. Peiris visited Myanmar from November 6 –17 to conduct discussions for the 2017 Article IV consultations. The team says Myanmar's economy is rebounding and macroeconomic imbalances are stabilizing with growth expected to rebound to 6.7 percent in 2017/18. The medium-term outlook remains favourable, albeit moderately weaker than previously anticipated and with greater downside risks. They say a second wave of reforms is needed to accelerate the growth momentum and foster inclusion, anchored on a medium-term economic plan linked to capacity development. The staff team met with the governor and deputy governors of the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM), the union minister and the deputy

ministers of Ministry of Planning and Finance (MoPF), senior government officials, parliamentary members, private sector representatives, and the financial community.

NEPAL

[Nepal-India border security meeting held](#)

The Himalayan Times | 20th November

With anti-election activities on the rise, a joint meeting of security officials of Nepal and India was held intending to intensify the security situation by devising various security strategies in Dharan, Sunsari today. Security officials of both countries agreed to curb criminal activities, besides curbing the trade in drugs and small arms and ammunition to beef up of security in the run up to the provincial and parliamentary elections in Nepal.

[Revision of Koshi, Gandak treaties proposed](#)

MyRepublica | 20th November

Two non-government organizations (NGOs) of Nepal and India have proposed revising Koshi and Gandak treaties. Speaking at a workshop entitled 'The Shared Watercourses Summit' organized jointly in Kathmandu by Pro Public of Nepal and Indian Environment Law Organization (IELO), Shawhiq Siddiqui, a legal expert of IELO, said that the two treaties can be updated for addressing problems that communities in both Koshi and Gandaki river basins are facing. Siddiqui also said that most of the clauses in both the treaties include project development which has already been completed.

[EC publishes final PR list](#)

The Himalayan Times | 20th November

The Election Commission today unveiled the final list of provincial and parliamentary proportional representation candidates submitted by political parties. According to a press release issued by EC Spokesperson Navaraj Dhakal, 2,273 candidates are contesting parliamentary PR elections across the country. Similarly, 3,565 candidates are contesting provincial PR elections. Out of 2,273 in the parliamentary PR list 1,048 are male and 1,224 are female. Likewise, among, the 3,565 PR provincial candidates, 1,572 are male and 1,993 are female.

PAKISTAN

[Every effort being made for permanent peace in Karachi: PM Abbasi](#)

Dawn | 20th November

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said on Sunday that every effort was being made for permanent peace in Karachi and the government was focused on fast completion of development projects in the mega city. He held out an assurance that the federal government would continue its cooperation with the Sindh government for development of the province. He expressed these views during a meeting with Sindh Governor Mohammad Zubair at the Governor House, the PM Office's media wing said in a press release. The meeting reviewed the overall law and order situation in the province, progress on the federal government-funded projects and matters pertaining to economic and business activities.

[Policy to promote human rights continues, UN group assured](#)

Dawn | 20th November

Pakistan has informed the Working Group of UN Human Rights Council that its policy of improving and promoting human rights of all its citizens with strengthened democracy, independent judiciary, free media and

active civil society will continue. In its report, Pakistan told a meeting of the group held in Geneva recently that in the pursuit of promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, it continues to face challenges such as terrorism, resource constraints, capacity building, awareness raising, effective enforcement of laws and policies, protection of vulnerable groups and natural disasters due to climate change. Pakistan says its Ministry of Human Rights has formulated a draft national policy framework for promotion and protection of human rights after completing the consultative process at federal and provincial levels. The draft has been circulated among the ministries for final consultation before submission to the federal cabinet for its approval.

[Veteran PML-N leaders staying govt hand](#)

The Express Tribune | 20th November

Some veteran PML-N leaders are opposed to the use of force against protesters of a religious group calling for a federal minister to resign over changes in the Khatm-e-Nabuwat clause from the previous Election Bill. This is why the government has avoided action to evict the protesters, The Express Tribune has learnt. The sit-in has lasted for the past two weeks, partially paralysing civic life in parts of the twin cities. So far, several rounds of talks between the government and leaders of the religious group yielded no result. The government is under mounting public pressure and the Islamabad High Court also ordered it to immediately get the protest site vacated. PML-N leaders, including the party chief Nawaz Sharif's son-in-law Captain (ret'd) Safdar, Religious Affairs Minister Sardar Yousaf, Chairman PML-N and Leader of the House in Senate Raja Zafarul Haq and Religious Affairs Minister of State Pir Aminul Hasnat warned the government against the use of force, saying that it might aggravate the situation, informed quarters in the party said.

SRI LANKA

[Sri Lankan Prime Minister visits restive southern coastal town hit by Buddhist-Muslim communal violence](#)

Colombo Page | 19th November

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe today visited the southern coastal town of Gintota in Galle district where clashes between the Buddhist and Muslim communities erupted injuring four people and resulting in damages to properties. Meeting with the affected people, the Prime Minister said the police have been instructed to strictly enforce the law against the people inciting violence and damaging properties regardless of their status.

[UAE keen to support joint development projects with Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page | 19th November

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who is visiting Sri Lanka, called on President Maithripala Sirisena at the President's Official Residence. Welcoming the UAE minister, President Sirisena expressed his happiness over the rapid progress of the relationships between the two countries and highlighted Sri Lanka's keenness to strengthen relations with the UAE in various fields.

[Sri Lanka power regulator says over Rs. 50 billion financial losses could result from delays in implementing long term power projects](#)

Colombo Page | 19th November

Sri Lanka's power regulator, Public Utility Commission of Sri Lanka (PUCSL) cautions that the delays in implementing the long term power projects in the next three years could result in financial losses over Rs. 50 billion and a power crisis that could seriously affect the national economy. In a report released recently and handed over to the power supplier Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) and to the Ministry of Power and Renewable

Energy, the regulator said the total expected financial loss due to implementation delays of 2018-2020 plant schedule in the long term generation expansion plan is Rs. 50.62 Billion.

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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