

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

November 23rd, 2016 | Volume: 2 - 8/11

[New framework for Indo-Bangladesh security cooperation'](#)

Prothom Alo | 22nd November
Dhaka and New Delhi may strike a new deal on security cooperation during prime minister Sheikh Hasina's planned tour of India in December, diplomatic sources said. The bilateral relations between Bangladesh and India have reached a new height after Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government took office.

[U.S. Navy ship Somerset arrives at Trincomalee Port in Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page | 22nd November
Sri Lanka Navy, in accordance with naval traditions, welcomed the United States Navy ship USS Somerset arrived at the Port of Trincomalee on Tuesday, 22nd November 2016 on a training visit. USS Somerset (LPD-25) is a San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock of the United States Navy. The ship, part of the Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group, is operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations with the embarked 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit in support of security and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

[Electric train project to be launched in Sri Lanka soon](#)

Colombo Page | 23rd November
Sri Lanka plans to launch an electric train service and will lay the groundwork soon, the Deputy Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation Ashoka Abeysinghe told Parliament on Tuesday. Responding to an oral question raised by MP Ashu Marasinghe, the Deputy Minister said a steering committee had been appointed to handle the project.

AFGHANISTAN

[China increases funds for Afghanistan housing project by CNY 1 billion](#)

Khaama Press | 22nd November

China has increased the budget for the Afghanistan housing project by Chinese Yuan (CNY) 1 billion, the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing announced Tuesday. Previously, China had pledged CNY 500 million for the housing project to be built in Kabul, consisting 10,000 housing units. The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing said the revised budget committed by China was announced during a meeting between Minister Syed Sadat Mansoor Naderi and the Chinese delegation.

[HRW urges govt to develop security plan to protect Shia people](#)

Afghanistan Times | 22nd November

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) on Tuesday urged government to develop a security plan to better protect the Shias during high-profile public events. In a statement, the HRW, said a suicide bomber killed at least 32 worshippers, including children, and injured 50 others, at a mosque in Kabul during observance of the religious

ceremony of Arbaeen. Since July, a wave of sectarian suicide attacks has injured or killed more than 500 members of the Shia community, the statement said.

[Karzai lauds India's surgical strike in Kashmir](#)

Afghanistan Times | 22nd November

Former President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai has expressed concern over Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, saying that India's surgical strike in Pak-administered Kashmir was a much-awaited step that his country had been demanding for a long time. He also said United States President-elect Donald Trump needs to work with all sections of society, including Muslims, so that terrorism can be fought effectively worldwide.

[New Commissioners on IEC, IECC Sworn-in](#)

Outlook Afghanistan | 23rd November

New commissioners on the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) were sworn-in on Tuesday after their appointment. The president by issuing two separate decrees has appointed Najibullah Ahmadzai, Abdul Qader Quraishi, Maleha Hassan, Wasima Badghisi, Maazullah Dawlati, Rafiullah Baidar and Gul Ajan Abdul Badi Sayyad as IEC commissioners and Gulam Dastagir Hidayat, Abdul Basir Faez, Ali Reza Rohani, Humaira Haqmal and Abdul Aziz Aryae as IECC commissioners.

BANGLADESH

[283 'irregular Bangladeshis' in Karnataka](#)

The Daily Star | 23rd November

The Congress government in southern Indian state of Karnataka yesterday said there were 283 irregular Bangladeshis in the state, and the process was on to deport them, but the opposition BJP rejected these figures, claiming that they were in thousands. State Home Minister G Parameshwara said in reply to a question raised by Sunil Kumar V of the BJP in the state legislative assembly session in Belagavi that there were 748 Bangladeshis in the state, 283 of them are staying illegally here as per the Foreigners Act, 1946.

[LoGIC project launched with initial \\$ 20m fund](#)

The Financial Express | 22nd November

Local Government Initiative on Climate Change (LoGIC), a project aiming to make 0.2 million of the most vulnerable houses in Bangladesh better prepared to adapt to climate change, was launched in Dhaka on Tuesday. Started initially with a budget of US \$ 20 million, the project will be implemented in the next four years in 7 most climate vulnerable districts of the country.

BHUTAN

[RMA freezes Ngultrum withdrawals for demonetised INR notes](#)

Kuensel Online | 19th November

The Central Bank has informed all banks in the country to freeze, until further notice, withdrawals of Ngultrums in exchange for demonetised INR notes of 500 and 1,000 denominations by Bhutanese individuals and companies, Kuensel has learnt. However, the banks can continue accepting deposits of the INR demonetised notes until November 30. The Central Bank issued the directive, which will stand until further notice, yesterday.

[HC dishes out heavy prison terms in gold smuggling case](#)

Kuensel Online | 22nd November

Four men involved in a gold smuggling case last year were handed down longer sentences by the High Court which revoked the Chukha dzongkhag court's decisions on November 16. The four were sentenced to prison terms ranging from two years to nine years and the gold was surrendered to the government. Chungdu Wangchuk

received a prison term of nine years and six months, Rinchen Dorji got seven years and six months, and Kuenley Tshering got two years, two months and eight days. The man who delivered the gold package from a man at the China border to Haa, Rinzin, was sentenced to two and half years.

MALDIVES

[Economic Development Minister Saeed: PM Modi, President Yameen have revolutionized the economy](#)

Sun Online | 22nd November

Minister of Economic Development of Maldives, Mohamed Saeed has commented that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Maldivian President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom have both revolutionized the economies of their respective countries. Speaking during the inauguration ceremony of Maldives Investment Forum 2016 which is underway in New Delhi, said that PM Modi and President Yameen had taken economic prosperity to a whole new level with their shared economic agendas.

[Vice President Jihad calls on his Indian counterpart](#)

Sun Online | 22nd November

Maldivian Vice President Abdulla Jihad has called on his Indian counterpart, Vice President M. Hamid Ansari. The courtesy call took place at The Taj Palace in New Delhi, India on Monday night.

MYANMAR

[Govt Must Publicly Address Deputy Minister's Dismissal](#)

The Irrawaddy | 22nd November

On Saturday, the Burmese people woke up to news of the sudden dismissal of a deputy minister from the Daw Aung San Suu Kyi-led government. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation's Dr. Tun Win, an agricultural expert with 40 years of experience, became the first cabinet member to be expelled since the government's formation more than seven months ago. The announcement in the state-run newspaper said little about the reasoning behind Dr Tun Win's sacking. After the government's information blackout, the outgoing deputy minister's interview with the media on the same day shed more light on the purge, as well as on the role of U Win Htein, one of the National League for Democracy's (NLD) secretaries, in the dismissal.

[Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar urges immediate ceasefire in Northern Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 22nd November

Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Hong Liang on Tuesday urged an immediate ceasefire in Northern Myanmar. The ambassador made the call while attending an opening ceremony for the new building of the Myanmar Chinese Cooperation & Communication Centre and Chinese Enterprises Chamber in Myanmar in Yangon.

[Thousands flee Myanmar clashes to China: Beijing](#)

Mizzima | 23rd November

At least 3,000 people have fled into China due to fighting in northern Myanmar, Beijing said Tuesday, as the death toll from clashes between the military and ethnic insurgents rose to 10. The violence is a fresh blow to de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi's hopes of forging a nationwide peace agreement after decades of bloody insurgencies in Myanmar's borderlands.

NEPAL

[House panel endorses BAFI Bill with more teeth](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 22nd November

The parliamentary Finance Committee has passed the Bank and Financial Institutions (BAFI) Bill with the provision prohibiting people holding constitutional positions from becoming chairmen or directors of banks and financial institutions (BFIs).

[FM Mahat off to Australia](#)

My Republica | 23rd November

Foreign Minister Prakash Sharan Mahat on Tuesday left for Australia on a five-day visit. Organizing a press conference at his office, Minister Mahat said that the aim of his visit is to hold bilateral and multilateral talks to promote Nepal's national interests. Mahat is also scheduled to visit New Zealand in the course of his Australia visit.

[Minister Joshi urges international communities to invest in Nepal](#)

My Republica | 23rd November

Minister for Industry, Nabindra Raj Joshi, has urged international communities to invest in infrastructure development and industrial sector of Nepal as it has adopted a very liberal and competitive foreign investment policy.

PAKISTAN

[Gen Sharif valued partner against terrorism: US](#)

DAWN | 23rd December

The United States sees Chief of the Army Staff Gen Raheel Sharif as a valued and respected partner in the war against terrorism and wishes him well in his future pursuits, a US official said on Tuesday. Diplomatic sources say that an announcement about the appointment of the new army chief is expected on Saturday. Asked to comment on media reports that the general was stepping down as the army chief, a US State Department spokesperson said that any transition in the Pakistan Army was an internal matter of the country and it was only appropriate that any statement regarding this change should come from its government.

[Pakistan's motto is arms for peace, says PM Nawaz](#)

The Express Tribune | 23rd November

Kicking off the ninth International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) in Karachi, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday said Pakistan is against an arms race in the region but will pursue the motto of 'arms for peace'. "Pakistan is committed to discouraging arms race and promoting the motto of arms for peace, which has always been the tagline of IDEAS," Nawaz said while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the four-day defence exhibition.

SRI LANKA

[Navy beefs up security to nab heroin smugglers](#)

Colombo Gazette | 22nd November

The Navy has beefed up the security at sea to nab heroin smugglers, Navy Commander Ravindra Wijegunaratne told reporters today. He said that the Navy has already managed to foil several attempts to smuggle heroin into Sri Lanka from India. The Navy Commander said that the Navy intelligence unit is having a close watch for attempts to smuggle heroin using the sea route.

[No threat to Sri Lanka from India's nuclear plants, minister assures](#)

Colombo Page| 22nd November

Sri Lanka's Deputy Minister of Power and Renewable Energy Ajith P. Perera assured that Sri Lanka faces no threats from India's nuclear power plants. Responding to a question raised by MP Chandima Gamage in parliament, the Deputy Minister said that Western, Eastern and Northern coastal areas in Sri Lanka are protected from the effects of any nuclear accidents that may occur at an atomic power plant in India.

[Sri Lanka's economic partnership with Japan extends beyond trade, tourism](#)

Colombo Page| 23rd November

"Japan is one of Sri Lanka's closest friends with a relationship that has prevailed for centuries and has stood the test of time amidst changing international and domestic political circumstances. In recent years Sri Lanka's economic partnership with Japan has developed extending beyond trade and tourism," said Daya Weththasinghe, President of the Sri Lanka - Japan Business Co-operation Committee of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce at the Annual General Meeting of the SLJBCC held recently. "What needs to be done now is to take persistent efforts to market both our nations together as 'partners in progress'. Our two countries can strategically co-operate in areas such as Bilateral Trade, Tourism and Economic Partnerships."

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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