

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

January 23rd, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 10/1

[‘Bangladesh can use Indian territory to import power from Nepal’](#)

Prothom Alo | 21st January
State minister for power and energy Nasrul Hamid on Saturday said Bangladesh has received India’s consent to import power from Nepal using Indian territory, reports news agency UNB. “We’ve received Indian consent to import power from Nepal. Now Bangladesh will sign a deal with Nepal to set up a power plant by investing there,” he told reporters.

[Wapda cancels Rs5.4bn contracts for Dasu project](#)

Dawn | 23rd January
Even before the formal launch of \$4.5 billion Dasu hydropower project, the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) has terminated two of its key contracts with a Chinese firm, citing ‘fundamental breaches’ of the agreement.

[Lord Mayor of the City of London arrives](#)

My Republica | 22nd January
The Lord Mayor of the City of London, Dr Andrew Parmley has arrived here Saturday on a four-day official visit to Nepal expected to take the Nepal-Britain relations to a new height. He was received by British Ambassador to Nepal Richard Morris and the Deputy Chief of Protocol Tej Bahadur Chhetri at the VIP lounge of the Tribhuvan International Airport.

AFGHANISTAN

[Taliban warns Trump to change Afghan policy](#)

Afghanistan Times | 23rd January

The Taliban group has asked the new US President Donald Trump and his cabinet members not to follow the policy of previous US leaders. “Afghanistan is burning due to wrong policies of previous US officials and their occupations,” the group said Sunday in a statement. “If Trump doesn’t revise US policy regarding Afghanistan and follow the old policy of Barack Obama and George W. Bush, the two former presidents of US and continue raids in Afghanistan, then problems would be very much disasters and continued.”

[1,500 US soldiers to be deployed to Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press | 23rd January

The United States will deploy at least 1,500 soldiers from the Ready First Brigade to Afghanistan, it has been reported. The soldiers will serve for a period of 9 months as part of the advise, assist, and train mission to help the Afghan army and police. With 300 already deployed to Afghanistan, the deployment of the remaining soldiers will start this month with the brigade expected to take up the mission in mid-February.

[NPC Approves 5 Projects, Rejects 2](#)

Pajhwok /Outlook Afghanistan | 23rd January

The National Procurement Commission (NPC) has approved five project contracts, rejected two and sent as many back to the departments concerned for assessment, a statement said Sunday. The statement from the Presidential Palace said President Ashraf Ghani chaired the NPC meeting which approved an eight-kilometre road construction from Borg

village to Surkhab village in the Mohammad Agha district of central Logar province at a cost of 160 million afghanis and buying five vehicles for the Afghanistan central bank.

BANGLADESH

[Govt eyes to take doing business ranking below 100 by 2021](#)

The Financial Express | 22nd January

The government has set a plan to bring down the country's position in doing business ranking to below 100 from the existing 176 within five years through reforming the rules and regulations of doing business. Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) Executive Chairman Kazi M Aminul Islam said this at a press conference in Dhaka on Sunday.

[Bangladesh concerned about Trump policy on trade, security](#)

Prothom Alo | 22nd January

Bangladesh is among the countries concerned at the manner in which the new US president Donald Trump has begun implementing his protectionist and populist campaign pledges after taking oath of office. According to diplomats and officials concerned, Trump's next moves on immigration, trade, climate change, and security issues will have implications for Dhaka.

[BD bids to borrow \\$500m from India](#)

The Financial Express | 23rd January

The government bids to borrow US\$ 500 million from India for bankrolling economic zones (EZs) planned across Bangladesh under a special industrialisation recipe.

BHUTAN

[Indian trucks operating in Bhutan: Truckers](#)

Kuensel Online | 21st January

Even when the government is looking to push through Parliament an ambitious road connectivity plan involving Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) that truckers fear will open up competition from foreign vehicles, Indian trucks are already competing with Bhutanese trucks to carry goods between points in Bhutan. According to the Truckers' Association of Bhutan (TAB), Indian trucks have been carrying coal and clinkers from Nganglam in Pemagatshel to Gomtu, Gelephu and Phuentsholing. Indian truckers are also competing with Bhutanese counterparts to transport the same goods from Samdrupjongkhar to the industrial towns.

MALDIVES

[Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture, Dr. Mohamed Shainee: Strengthening Maldivian economy vital for stability of Indian Ocean](#)

Sun Online | 22nd January

Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture of Maldives, Dr. Mohamed Shainee has commented that strengthening the Maldivian economy was imperative in order to maintain stability within Indian Ocean and South Asian region. Dr. Shainee made the comment during the conference on geopolitics and geo-economics – Raisina Dialogue – being held in India. Speaking during the conference, Dr. Shainee said that Indian investment had played a huge role in the economic progress made by Maldives over the last 30 years.

MYANMAR

[Myanmar rebukes Malaysia PM over Rohingya defence](#)

AFP / Mizzima | 21st January

Myanmar's government lashed out at Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak on Friday, accusing him of using the Rohingya crisis unfolding in Rakhine state for his own "political interests". The premier of Muslim-majority Malaysia has been a vocal critic of Myanmar since violence erupted in the north of the state in October, when the army started hunting attackers behind deadly raids on police border posts.

[Magway Region CM denies saying former Magway CM under investigation](#)

Mizzima | 21st January

Magway Region Chief Minister Dr. Aung Moe Nyo told reporters that he did not say former Magway CM and his

cabinet were under investigation by the Bureau of Special Investigation (BSI) in connection with the case of misappropriation of the 2.8 billion kyat Magway Region development fund.

NEPAL

[Nepal to host BIMSTEC and SAARC Program Committee meeting in February](#)

My Republica | 22nd February

Nepal, which is currently assuming Chairmanship of the two regional organizations- SAARC and BIMSTEC is all set to host the SAARC Program-Committee meeting and BIMSTEC three levels of meetings in February this year. According to Madi Prasad Bhattarai, Regional Organization Division Chief under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Program Committee, comprising the Foreign Joint-Secretaries of the SAARC member-nation, would convene at its 53rd regular meeting in Kathmandu on February 1-2.

[Constitution amendment to resolve political problems: PM Dahal](#)

My Republica | 22nd January

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal on Sunday viewed that all should come together to amend the constitution which is only the way to address the issues specially raised by Madhes, and indigenous community. The PM accused those against peace of trying to foil the amendment process. He was speaking at a program in Lahan.

[Chinese private firm makes debut in Nepali hydropower sector](#)

My Republica | 23rd January

A Chinese private firm has bagged two major contracts to build hydropower plants in Nepal. This is the first time that a private Chinese firm has entered into the Nepali hydropower sector, according to government officials and the company which hired the firm. Though China's government-owned contractors and construction companies are yet to leave their mark through in terms of work performance, they said the entry of private Chinese firm opens a new chapter in Nepali hydropower sector, they added.

PAKISTAN

[Pakistan should equip workforce for CPEC challenges](#)

Express Tribune | 22nd January

Is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) really a fate changer? Yes, if everything goes according to the plan. But what is the plan? And how it is implemented? These two questions are important as doubts of smaller provinces about the real CPEC road map have started subsiding.

[Islamabad girds up for 'tough talk' with Kabul](#)

Express Tribune | 23rd January

Pakistan is preparing for 'tough talk' with Afghanistan in coming weeks when army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa will travel to Kabul at the invitation of President Ashraf Ghani. Although Gen Qamar has in principle accepted Ghani's invitation, he is waiting for the 'appropriate time' to visit Afghanistan in a bid to mend fractured ties with the neighbouring country.

[Terrorists will fail to derail stability: COAS](#)

Express Tribune | 23rd January

Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa has said that terrorists will fail to derail the stability achieved by the security forces with the help of tribesmen in the tribal regions. The army chief on Sunday travelled to Parachinar, the main city of Kurram Agency, where a day earlier 25 people were killed and dozens injured in bomb explosion at a crowded vegetable market.

[Two chunks of land handed over to Chinese firm for power project](#)

Dawn | 23rd January

The government has handed over the possession of two chunks of land to a Chinese company for launching the construction of converter stations of \$1.57 billion Matiari-Lahore 660kV High Voltage Direct Current transmission line. The control of the pieces of land measuring 175 acres (each) was given to the China Electric Power Equipment and Technology Company Ltd (CET), a company owned by the State Grid Corporation of China, in recent days after the

National Transmission Dispatch Company Limited (NTDCL) acquired these pieces of land from landowners.

SRI LANKA

[India denies claims talks on to take over Trinco port](#)

Colombo Gazette | 21st January

Indian official sources denied Regional Development Minister Field Marshal Sarath Fonseka's contention that Sri Lanka and India are in talks for developing the Trincomalee harbor, the New Indian Express reported.

[Lanka sees relations with China reaching greater heights](#)

Colombo Gazette | 22nd January

President Maithripala Sirisena on Saturday sent his greetings and good wishes to everyone celebrating the Chinese New Year in the People's Republic of China and around the world, the Xinhua news agency.

[Sri Lanka will try to negotiate separate trade agreements with Britain - PM](#)

Colombo Page | 22nd January

Even if Sri Lanka regains the European Union's GSP+ tariff concession, the government will try to negotiate separate trade agreements with Britain when it leaves the European Union, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said.

[Belgium and European companies affirm to expand trade ties with Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page | 23rd January

Sri Lanka's Finance Minister Ravi Karunanayake and Development Strategies and International Trade Minister Malik Samarawickrama met with representatives of the Belgium government and heads of several leading European companies in Brussels last week.

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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