

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

**March 23, 2018 | Volume - 4 - 09/03**

[Bright Future for India-Myanmar Business and Investment Partnerships](#)

Mizzima | 22nd March

Speaking at the second edition of Myanmar-India Business Conclave, India's Minister for State Commerce & Industry Shri C R Chaudhary reiterated India's commitment to the Look East and Act East policy. From India's perspective, Myanmar is the gateway for south-east Asia and accords the highest priority to deepen trade and investment relations with the country through regional value chains and integration. Minister pointed out that area of collaboration can include sectors like agriculture and agro-processing, power and infrastructure, pharmaceuticals, health services, education and skill development, ICT and IT related services. As part of Act East policy, the Government of India is establishing project development fund to identify the feasibility of investments in sectors like super speciality health services in the CLMV countries.

[PM to visit India from April 6 to 8](#)

The Himalayan Times | 23rd March

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli is all set to visit India in the first week of April and the ministries have started finalising the agenda to make his visit a grand success. "Both sides have intensified preparations for PM Oli's visit to India," Supply Minister Matrika Yadav told THT. "Prime Minister Modi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj are keen to welcome our prime minister." Yadav said Oli's visit could take Nepal-India relations to a new height and it could herald a new beginning in bilateral relations. Foreign Minister Pradeep Gyawali will visit India to prepare the ground for the PM's visit.

[5th India Education fair Yangon opens](#)

Mizzima | 23rd March

In order to facilitate a wider range of career assessment opportunities, the 5th India Education fair 2018 will again reach out to students of Myanmar on 23 and 24 March 2018, at Summit Parkview Hotel, Yangon. Organized by "SAPE Events & Media Pvt. Ltd." supported by the Embassy of India, Yangon, India-Myanmar Chamber of Commerce and 4R Consultancy Yangon which is bringing a delegation of Universities from India. The focus of the event will be to "invite students to study in India under various scholarships". According to a press release, the fair will be inaugurated by Dr Pho Kaung,

### [Cross-border shelling continues in Kunar province of Afghanistan](#)

Khama Press | 22nd March

The local officials in eastern Kunar province are saying that the cross-border shelling from the other side of Durand Line continue on this province as dozens of artillery shells landed in two district over a period of 24 hours. Provincial police spokesman Faridullah Dehqan confirmed that more than 80 rounds of artillery shells landed on Nari and Dangam districts during the latest incursions that started on Tuesday. He said the shelling did not result into the loss of lives but a house was damaged besides inflicting losses to the other properties. The Ministry of Defense and the central government officials have not commented in this regard so far. This comes as the Chief Executive of the Government of National Unity Abdullah Abdullah on Saturday shared the issue of cross-border artillery shelling on eastern provinces of Afghanistan during his meeting with Pakistan's National Security Advisor Nasser Khan Janjua.

### [Taliban cannot win through war and violence, says Atmar](#)

Khama Press | 23rd March

The Afghanistan National Security Advisor Mohammad Atmar called the government's peace offer to Taliban the best option as he insists that the group cannot win through war and violence. Atmar made the remarks during his visit to the United States and while speaking during a gathering in the US Institute for Peace. He said the Afghan government seeks peace through negotiations but warned that the government is also having the strategy for war besides pursuing the peaceful strategy of reconciliation. According to Atmar, the pressures on the anti-government armed militant and terrorist groups are on the rise after the announcement of the new US strategy for South Asia.

## **BANGLADESH**

### [PM: People of Bangladesh can achieve anything](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 23rd March

The impending graduation of Bangladesh to developing country status is the achievement of the people, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on Thursday. The PM was addressing a reception accorded to her at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka. "This achievement is the achievement of the people of Bangladesh," she said. "I think country's people are the main source of all power. They can achieve anything." On March 15, the United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) officially declared the eligibility of Bangladesh to graduate from the group of least developed countries (LDC).

## **BHUTAN**

### [Two Bhutanese win South Asia Procurement Innovations Award 2017](#)

Kuensel | 22th March

Two Bhutanese officials won the 2nd South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Procurement Innovation Award 2017. A senior ICT associate of Construction Development Board (CDB), Chencho Tshering's paper on "Web-based online evaluation tool (E-tool) for procurement of works by Royal Government of Bhutan" won the award, while an associate lecturer of Jigme Namgyal Engineering College in Dewathang, Samdrupjongkhar, Pema Wangchuk's case study on 'Successful Community Contracting in Bhutan-GNH Model for Procurement of Works that Ensures Social, Economic, and Environmental Sustainability' was chosen as the runners-up.

The results were declared during the 5th South Asia Regional Procurement Conference held in New Delhi, India, from February 5 to 7 this year.

### [Adopting natural solutions for water challenges](#)

Kuensel | 23rd March

A cleaning campaign was conducted to observe the World Water Day in the core areas of

Thimphu yesterday. It was themed “Nature for Water, exploring nature-based solutions to the water challenges.” Thrompon Kinlay Dorjee said that at present water problem is not as extreme as it is in other parts of the world. He added that as the city expands, the chances of water being contaminated increases. “With weather changes causing springs and streams to dry, it has been difficult to retrieve water at any time like before.” He said that the next generation should also have access to safe drinking water and that the current water-related problems should be addressed. More than 260 people were involved in the cleaning campaign. Thimphu Thromde’s chief environment officer, Yeshe Wangdi, said that three tractors, a tanker, and a truck were deployed for the campaign.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Maldives state of emergency lifted](#)

Maldive Independent | 22nd March

President Abdulla Yameen has ended a 45-day state of emergency declared last month in response to a Supreme Court order for the release of his jailed opponents. The emergency was lifted effective noon on Thursday despite “a diminished threat to national security, because the nation can now continue without further losses incurred, and upon the advice of the security services and in an effort to promote normalcy”, the president’s office said. The move comes after the criminal court over the past week issued disputed orders to keep high-profile detainees in custody, eleven of whom have been charged with terrorism and bribery over an alleged conspiracy to remove Yameen from office. The administration insists emergency rule since February 5 was necessary to resolve a “constitutional crisis created by two justices of the Supreme Court who conspired with political actors to violate both the constitution and standard legal norms and practices in order to illegally overthrow a lawful government, and whose actions constituted an imminent threat to national security.”

## **MYANMAR**

### [U.S. Embassy honors Women Of Change in Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 23rd March

U.S. Ambassador to Myanmar Scot Marciel congratulated three recipients of the annual U.S. Embassy Women of Change Award yesterday. This award recognizes women whose work advances the rights of all people in Myanmar and demonstrates the U.S. commitment to the role of women in public life in this country. “The United States is committed to supporting people in Myanmar who are working to improve peoples’ lives and advance human rights. The Women of Change Award is one way that we recognize the incredible work that so many women in Myanmar do,” Ambassador Marciel said. He added that this year’s recipients took risks to do things that were controversial, difficult, or dangerous; they stood up for under-represented communities; and they solved problems creatively.

## **NEPAL**

### [Grant voter rights to non-resident Nepalis, SC tells govt](#)

Kathmandu Post | 22nd March

A division bench of Justices Sapana Malla Pradhan and Purushottam Bhandari issued the directive in the name of government to ensure voting rights to Nepalis living outside the country. Law, Police and Regulation Forum had filed a writ at the Supreme Court stating that those Nepali’s living abroad should not be deprived of voting rights. Saying that the voting rights of Nepali diaspora living in various parts of the world should be guaranteed, the Forum has made Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, Parliament, Ministry of Foreign

Affairs and Election Commission defendants.

## PAKISTAN

### [Pakistan, US agree to enhance coordination for Afghan peace process](#)

The Express Tribune | 23rd March

Pakistan and United States have agreed to increase contacts for the resolution of all issues. The officials of both the governments will meet after mutual consultation. Agenda of talks will include issues like cooperation in eradicating terrorism and assistance in Afghan reconciliation process. The delegations of both the governments are expected to visit each other's countries once the schedule of meeting is decided. The agreement is the outcome of recent meeting between Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and US Vice President Mike Pence. According to the sources in the diplomatic channels, Pakistan has once again told US that it will not accept any 'do-more' demands.

### [Sherry Rehman becomes the first female Leader of the Opposition in Senate](#)

Dawn | 22nd March

PPP Senator Sherry Rehman has been declared the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, read a notification issued by the Senate Secretariat on Thursday. Rehman is the first female in Pakistan to hold the position. PPP, after getting its candidates elected as Senate chairman and deputy chairman — Sadiq Sanjrani and Saleem Mandviwalla, respectively — has now occupied the office of the opposition leader with the support of 34 members. Rehman is the party's seventh opposition leader in the Senate. After being elected, Rehman thanked her party's leadership and its allies for supporting her. She vowed to cooperate with all opposition parties in Senate going forward and to make the upper house more effective and active.

## SRI LANKA

### [CSE wins Global HR Excellence Award for Best Workplace Practices](#)

Colombo Page | 23rd March

The Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) won the award for Best Workplace Practices at the recently concluded World HRD Congress in Mumbai, India. The Global HR Excellence Awards, which held its 26th edition at the 2018 World HRD Congress, recognizes HR leaders and organizations for developing innovative HR practices that drive the company and its workforce. The World HRD Congress in 2018 attracted the participation of over 1400 HR professionals representing over 130 countries.

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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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