

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

October 24th, 2016 | Volume: 2 - 10/10

[Indian Foreign secretary, Sri Lankan President discuss economic cooperation](#)

Colombo Page | 23rd October
Indian Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar, who arrived in Sri Lanka with a business delegation on Saturday for a three-day official visit, met with Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena on Sunday. Foreign Secretary Jaishankar, on an economic diplomacy initiative, held discussions with President Sirisena on implementation of various initiatives and economic cooperation projects decided by the leadership of the two countries. Potential Indo-Lanka partnerships in areas such as transport, energy and infrastructure were in the center of the discussions.

[Most of Taliban's Leaders are Based in Pakistan: Abdullah](#)

Outlook Afghanistan | 24th October
CEO of the National Unity Government (NUG) Abdullah Abdullah said on Sunday at a press conference after his trip to Saudi Arabia that "most of the Taliban's leaders are based in Pakistan." "Taliban's trip to Pakistan is not news because they are there and carry out all their activities from there," Abdullah said in response to a journalist's question. Regarding the government's secret peace talks with the Taliban in Qatar, Abdullah said: "I don't know details over government's peace talks with Taliban in Qatar."

[Pakistan likely to attend regional moot in India](#)

The Express Tribune | 24th October
Pakistan is likely to attend a key regional conference on Afghanistan in India in what appears to be a calculated diplomatic move at a time when the Narendra Modi administration is making desperate attempts to isolate Islamabad globally. The Heart of Asia-Istanbul ministerial meeting is scheduled to take place in the first week of December in the Indian city of Amritsar.

AFGHANISTAN

[Afghan forces seize Pakistani truck laden with 1,000 kg of explosives](#)

Khaama Press | 23rd October

The counter-terrorism forces of the Afghan police confiscated a truck carrying at least 1,000 kg of explosives in eastern Kunar province of Afghanistan. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) said three suspects including two Pakistani nationals were also arrested in connection to the transportation of the explosives. MoI further added that the explosives were of Ammonium Nitrate type which are mainly used to manufacture Improvised Explosive Device (IED).

[Survey shows 43 per cent increase in opium product](#)

Afghanistan Times | 23rd October

A survey prepared with the ministry of counter-narcotics and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, says a 43-percent increase in the opium product so far this year. The survey adds that the poppy cultivation had 10 per cent increase, compared to the same period last year. “In 2016, the estimated opium production amounted 4,800 tons which indicates an increase of 43 percent,” said counter-narcotics minister Salamat Azimi, adding that the ceiling of opium product was 3,300 tons in 2015.

BANGLADESH

[Hasina re-elected as Awami League president, Obaidul Quader new general secretary](#)

bdnews24 | 23rd October

The Awami League has re-elected Sheikh Hasina as President while Obaidul Quader has been made the new General Secretary. The ruling party chose the new leadership for the next three years on Sunday, the second day of its 20th National Council, at the session held at the Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB). Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury proposed Hasina's name as president.

[Low skill, poor business environ overshadow country's advantages](#)

The Financial Express | 24th October

A US rating agency has ranked Bangladesh as the world's most cost-competitive destination for outsourcing. In a latest global survey conducted by the agency, the country has beaten world's top outsourcing destinations like India, China, Malaysia and Brazil to secure the highest score in terms of financial attractiveness. However, despite such outstanding score in terms of cost-competitiveness, Bangladesh secured 26th position in the overall survey output due to very low score in terms of skill and business environment.

BHUTAN

[North Thimphu “very important” says DPT and PDP](#)

Kuensel Online | 22nd October

The North Thimphu by-election will come into the national political spotlight in November. Ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) is leaving no stone unturned to make inroads in the capital, which is considered a Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) stronghold. The opposition is determined to retain the seat. DPT has pitted 26-year-old former private employee Kessang Wangmo, while former corporate employee Tshering, 33, is the PDP candidate. Party leaders have thrown their weight behind their respective candidates.

[Journalist accuses Chief Justice of prima facie](#)

Kuensel Online | 22nd October

In a major development to the ongoing defamation case between an independent journalist and a businessman, the journalist in a letter written to the Prime Minister and all members of Parliament, has accused the Chief Justice of prima facie and is calling for an enquiry. Prima facie is used to describe the apparent nature of a case upon initial observation.

MALDIVES

[High Court upholds ruling allowing Yameen to take over PPM](#)

Sun online | 23rd October

High Court has upheld the Civil Court ruling ordering President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom to take over running of Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) from its leader, former Maldivian President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom. The case was filed at the High Court by a common member of PPM, Abbas Waafir (Seenu Hulhudhoo). Delivering the verdict, the Chief Judge of the High Court, Abdulla Didi said that the ppm case was filled to bring an end to the halt of the party and if the laws and regulations cannot provide a remedy, one has to be provided through the court.

[66 Maldivian companies to participate in World Travel Market](#)

Sun Online | 23rd October

Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC) has announced it will be participating in World Travel Market – one of the biggest tourism fairs in the world, scheduled for November in London, England.

MMPRC said that it had met with Maldivian partners who will be participating in the event, and shared detailed information regarding it.

MYANMAR

[Govt Unveils Detailed Economic Policies](#)

The Irrawaddy | 22nd October

Long-awaited detailed economic policies were announced by the government in Naypyidaw today with State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi pledging a secure business environment for both local and foreign investors. "I would like to invite all business people to work with us," the state counselor said. "That is why we host this meeting."

[IFC invests in sustainable tourism in Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 24th October

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, is lending up to \$13.5 million to United International Group Limited, a leading domestic hotel owner and operator in Myanmar, to expand United International's hospitality business, the IFC said in a statement.

[Myanmar gov't making efforts to pave way for non-signatory armed groups to sign ceasefire accord](#)

Mizzima | 22nd October

Myanmar government is making efforts to pave way for non-signatory armed groups to the Nationwide Ceasefire Accord (NCA) to join and complete the signing before a national-level political dialogue is to start next month, official media reported Friday. "Only signatories to the NCA are allowed to participate in the national-level political dialogue," Secretary of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) Salai Hlyan Hmone Sar Khaung told the Framework Review Meeting for Political Dialogue held at the National Reconciliation and Peace Center in Yangon Thursday.

[Rohingya trafficking victims arrested in Yangon](#)

Mizzima | 24th October

Myanmar authorities have arrested 17 Rohingya Muslims who were smuggled from western Rakhine State to Yangon, the Anadolu Agency reported yesterday quoting an official. The arrest on Saturday night came after a local resident reported to police that "some Muslims" were being sheltered in a house in North Okalapa Township of Yangon, the report said.

NEPAL

[Mukherjee visit expected to improve Nepal-India relations](#)

My Republica | 24th October

As Indian President prepares to visit Nepal after a hiatus of almost two decades, former diplomats and experts in Kathmandu see this as reflection of New Delhi's desire to improve 'troubled' relations between Nepal and India. They also expressed optimism that the visit scheduled to take place in two weeks could prove instrumental in bridging the 'deficit of trust' between the two countries and create conducive environment to expedite a large number of bilateral projects stalled for years. "Although the visit is a ceremonial one, this assumes special importance as this comes after a long gap. New Delhi seems to have a desire to improve relations with Kathmandu through the high-level visit," said former Foreign Secretary Madhu Raman Acharya.

[‘Nepal is not in isolation, it is in competition’](#)

Himalayan News Service / The Himalayan Times | 24th October

Alaina B Teplitz, Ambassador of the United States of America to Nepal, spoke to Pushpa Raj Acharya of The Himalayan Times on what the government could further do to improve the investment climate in Nepal so as to lure investors from the world's largest economy and also from across the globe.

[Discussion after motion is tabled tomorrow](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 24th October

Parliament has decided to table the impeachment motion registered against chief of the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority Lokman Singh Karki in the Legislature-Parliament on Tuesday for theoretical

discussion. The House meeting on Sunday decided to table the motion at 3pm on Tuesday. According to Speaker Onasari Gharti, theoretical discussion may start on the same day but could be postponed till the next meeting if the parties so request. The deliberation could take one to three days depending on the number of lawmakers willing to speak.

PAKISTAN

[Pakistan expects WB decision in 15 days on its petition for arbitration court on Indian dams](#)

DAWN|24th October

Pakistan expects a decision from the World Bank within next 15 days on its petition seeking change in designs of two Indian run-of-the-river hydropower projects — Ratle and Kishan Ganga— through constitution of a court of arbitration under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). Pakistan had objected to the construction and design of the 850MW Ratle and 330MW Kishan Ganga hydropower schemes, saying that both the projects would have adverse impacts on the flow of Chenab and Neelum rivers.

[Zarb-i-Azb an example of war for peace, says army chief](#)

DAWN|24th October

Terming Zarb-i-Azb an example of war for peace, Chief of Army Staff Gen Raheel Sharif said on Sunday that the successful military operation brought stability and prosperity to the country as well as the region. “Today, our brave men can tell the world with pride that by eliminating terrorist networks from the far reaches of Pak-Afghan border, an environment of peace and prosperity is flourishing,” he said, adding: “Having overcome the heartless enemy, we are set to march forward on the road to progress.”

[Pak-Afghan trade halves ‘due to transit trade glitches’](#)

The Express Tribune|24th October

Former deputy trade minister of Afghanistan Muzamil Shinwari has said that bilateral trade with Pakistan has gone down substantially due to ‘problems’ in transit trade. “If these problems are not addressed, bilateral trade could witness further decline,” warned Shinwari, who was the chief negotiator for the 2010 Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA).

SRI LANKA

[Sri Lankan President reiterates commitment to achieve development through renewable energy generation](#)

Colombo Page | 23rd October

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena reiterating his government's commitment to develop sustainable energy sources said the country will take measures to achieve development through renewable energy generation. Speaking at a religious ceremony held at the Bopitiya Siri Indrasabha Piriven Viharaya in Mathugama on Saturday, the President said several investors had shown interest in alternative power generation opportunities in Sri Lanka.

[No room in the country for conflicts based on languages – President](#)

Colombo Page | 23rd October

Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena says the present government will not allow any conflicts to take place in the country based on the languages spoken by the different communities. The President pointing out that countries across the globe including Sri Lanka have experienced conflicts based on languages, stressed that such unfortunate occurrences need to be eliminated.

[Sri Lanka Navy ship Sagara leaves for joint Coast Guard exercise with India and Maldives](#)

Colombo Page | 23rd October

Sri Lanka Coast Guard is joining the Indian and Maldivian Coast Guards for a four-day naval exercise in the seas off Male in the Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka Navy's Offshore Patrol Vessel, SLNS Sagara representing the Sri Lankan Coast Guard left for Maldives today (23) from the Port of Colombo to take part in the 13th edition of the tri-lateral coastguard exercise "DOSTI - XIII".

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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