



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

**October 25th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 09/10**

[Myanmar, Bangladesh agree to cooperate on Rohingya refugee repatriation](#)

bdnews24 | 24th October  
Myanmar and Bangladesh on Tuesday agreed to cooperate on the repatriation of Rohingya refugees and took steps to boost border security as relations between the neighbours have been strained by the continuing flow of refugees into Bangladesh. Over 600,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled Myanmar since Aug. 25, when Rohingya insurgent attacks sparked a ferocious military response by the Myanmar army that the United Nations has called ethnic cleansing.

[China, Afghanistan and Pakistan to Dominate Agenda: Tillerson](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 23rd October  
The Trump administration's South Asia strategy is under the spotlight, as US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson heads to New Delhi after stops in Kabul and Islamabad. A rising and increasingly assertive China, as well as America's future plans for war-torn Afghanistan, are among the issues that are likely to top the agenda, say analysts.

[Sri Lanka congratulates Japanese Prime Minister on his reelection victory](#)

Colombo Page | 24th October  
Sri Lanka has said that it will look forward to build stronger relation with Japan under the leadership of the re-elected Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. These sentiments have been expressed in congratulatory messages issued by President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on the Japanese Premier's reelection. "Heartfelt congratulations to Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for his landslide victory in the country's general elections," President Sirisena said in a Twitter message.

**AFGHANISTAN**

[Ghani Highlights India's Importance on Economic](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 23rd October  
President Ashraf Ghani on Tuesday highlighted that the economic cooperation with India was a bright prospect, saying that the country has 8 percent potential rate of growth. "The bright prospect is India regarding a consensus

of 8 per cent potential rate of growth," Ghani said, referring to China's growth settled at 6 per cent, while giving a public address at the Vivekanand International Foundation, a New Delhi-based think tank.

#### [India Ready to Receive Afghan Trucks at Attari Check Post](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 23rd October

India on Tuesday reiterated its readiness to receive Afghan trucks at the Integrated Check Post at Attari. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, who is in New Delhi on a day-long official visit, held detailed discussions with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in this regard on Tuesday. Issues related to connectivity were discussed between the two in detail. The establishment of an air freight corridor was acknowledged as an important factor in providing Afghan farmers direct and easy access to the Indian market.

### **BANGLADESH**

#### [Bangladeshi scientists discover fast, cheap way to detect cancer](#)

Prothom Alo | 25th October

A team led by an expatriate Bangladeshi scientist in Australia has developed a simple, fast, and inexpensive way to detect cancers at an early stage. Muhammad Jahirul Alam Shiddiky, who led the research team, teaches in the Griffith University as a senior lecturer. Anyone can diagnose cancer at home using this method, Jahirul told Prothom Alo. One has to take one or two drops of blood, serum or urine from cancer patients. Then a tiny amount of organic indicator (biomarker) that changes colour if the test is positive is added and a naked-eye observation can be used to find out the presence of cancer, said Jahirul.

#### [Bangladesh financial market needs credible benchmark](#)

The Financial Express | 25th October

Bangladesh's financial market runs sans effective benchmark called 'Dhaka Interbank Offered Rate (DIBOR)', leaving parties to quote rates in contracts and other financial instruments impromptu. Such ratings without a formal reference rate for the financial market are not always acceptable to foreign parties, and local stakeholders also get into difficulties in financial dealings, sources said. Though DIBOR initiative was launched at least eight years back, it remained a forgotten name as it couldn't make any headway in terms of its acceptance and popularizing.

### **BHUTAN**

#### [Bhutan-Thailand relationship blossoms over the years](#)

The Bhutanese Expression | 24th October

The areas of cooperation include culture, agriculture, economy, telecommunication and research and development. The two countries also have several things in common. Both have monarchy system and their citizens love and revere their monarchs. They share an interesting history in that neither Bhutan nor Thailand was ever colonized. They also share similar culture and religion. Bhutan's embassy in Bangkok was first established in 1999. Lyonpo Chenkyab Dorji, who is now the Chairman of Privy Council, was the country's first ambassador to Thailand. He was entrusted with the responsibility of strengthening the relationship between the two kingdoms and with 10 other ASEAN countries. Lyonpo says, over the years, the cooperation between the two countries have become stronger and exemplary. "There has been an increase in number of fields of cooperation," said Lyonpo

Chenkyab Dorji. “During my time, it was basically agriculture, health and human resource development.

#### [Project proposals prepared under framework for Continued Bhutanese-Danish Partnership](#)

The Bhutanese Expression | 24th October

Under the framework for Continued Bhutanese-Danish Partnership, the Foreign Ministry has coordinated with relevant agencies and formulated potential project proposals in the areas of organic agriculture, digitalisation, cultural exchanges, and climate change. This was highlighted by the Foreign Ministry officials during the 2nd high level biennial consultation between Bhutan and Denmark governments in the capital yesterday. However, Bhutanese officials mentioned that priority has been given to organic agriculture sector. “We have prioritised cooperation in organic agriculture not only because Denmark is the world’s leading organic nation but also keeping in mind how organic agriculture can accelerate the conservation of the our environment,” said Kesang Wangdi, Director General of Foreign Ministry’s Department of Bilateral Affairs.

### **MALDIVES**

#### [President: This government will pay debts, former leaders have no right to talk about debts](#)

Sun Online | 24th October

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has said that his government will pay the debts from the development projects by the end of their second term and the former Presidents have no right to talk about debts. The President made the comments in his speech at the meeting with the people of Raa atoll Fainu today. At the meeting, President Yameen said that although former Presidents talk about national debts, they have no right to do so since the debts taken on by the former Presidents had grown annually and exponentially when he finally got elected.

#### [Budget of MVR 26 million for Parliament by-elections](#)

Sun Online | 24th October

The Parliament has passed a budget of MVR 26 million to hold the by-elections for the vacated seats at the parliament. Elections Commission has declared six constituencies as vacant. They are those of the MP for Villingili constituency, Saud Hussain, MP for Thulusdhoo constituency, Mohamed Waheed Ibrahim (Lawyer Wadde), MP for Maduvvari constituency, Mohamed Ameeth, MP for Dhiddhoo constituency Abdul Latheef Mohamed and the MP for South Mahchangolhi constituency, Abdulla Shinan and the MP for Dhangethi constituency, Il'ham Ahmed. Minister of Finance and Treasury, Ahmed Munawar proposed a supplementary budget of MVR 493 million to the parliament today.

### **MYANMAR**

#### [Myanmar and Bangladesh reach 10-point agreement on refugees](#)

Mizzima | 25th October

Myanmar and Bangladesh reached a 10-point agreement on Rohingya refugees at a meeting held yesterday in Naypyitaw and attended by representatives of the Home Ministries of the two countries. The agreement includes, “Stopping immediately entry by Myanmar nationals into Bangladesh and repatriation of refugees at the earliest date and restoring normalcy in Rakhine Region for their resettlement.” Both sides also agreed to form a joint working committee this coming November to arrange resettlement. The UN said that over 600,000 refugees had fled Myanmar after the Tatmadaw (armed forces) retaliated against ARSA terrorists group which launched coordinated attacks against some police outposts in northern Rakhine Region at the end of August.

### [Myanmar to reap greater rewards in deep-sea port development project](#)

Mizzima | 25th October

Myanmar is set to receive a greater amount of the profit-sharing in a \$7.2 billion deep-sea port development project in the town of Kyaukphyu in western Rakhine state, though negotiations with the main Chinese investor are ongoing, RFA reported on 24 October quoting a commerce ministry official. A consortium led by CITIC Group Corporation Ltd., China's state-owned investment company, is negotiating the profit-sharing deal with Myanmar officials for the deep-sea port, which is part of two development initiatives that also include an industrial park for a special economic zone and residential condominiums on 4,200 acres of land in Kyaukphyu, Ramree, and Manaung townships. The Myanmar government awarded CITIC the tenders for both projects in 2015.

## NEPAL

### [Poll duty to deprive lakhs of right to vote](#)

The Himalayan Times | 25th October

EC says it didn't have time to issue voter ids to govt staff on poll duty. Over half a million civil servants, teachers, security personnel, judges and other government employees deployed on election duty will not be able to cast their votes in the provincial and parliamentary elections slated for November 26 and December 7. In the first and second Constituent Assembly elections, government employees deployed on poll duty had the chance to vote under proportional representation electoral system, as the EC had issued them temporary voter identity cards and had also set up temporary polling centres for them. The EC said due to time constraint they could not arrange temporary voter identity cards or set up temporary polling centres for government employees deployed on poll duty, said EC Information Officer Surya Prasad Aryal.

### [German envoy for publicizing Nepal's peace process success abroad](#)

MyRepublica | 25th October

Newly-appointed German Ambassador to Nepal Roland Schaefer has pointed out the need to publicize Nepal's successful peace process around the world. Talking to a group of journalists at his office on Tuesday, Ambassador Schaefer said although the issue of transitional justice to conflict victims is yet to be settled Nepal's peace process has already marked major successes after the integration of former rebels in the national army and with the promulgation of the new constitution.

## PAKISTAN

### [Tillerson talks tough to 'incredibly important' Pakistan](#)

The Express Tribune | 24th October

The US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson pressed Pakistan to speed up its efforts against terrorism but described Islamabad as 'incredibly important' player to deal with some of the pressing challenges facing the region.

### [Amid Saudi Arabia and US pressure: Iran wants Pakistan to revive gas pipeline project](#)

The Express Tribune | 25th October

Iran has written a letter to Pakistan in a fresh bid to push ahead with the long stalled gas pipeline project following persistent pressure from Saudi Arabia and unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States.

### [Govt to monitor social media, says interior minister](#)

DAWN | 25th October

Amid growing concerns over the alleged disappearance of a number of social media activists linked to the ruling party, Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday announced plans to formulate a framework to monitor social media in order to prevent it from being used as a tool to malign national institutions and spread anarchy or extremism in the country.

## SRI LANKA

### [Sri Lanka PM reveals plans to develop Trincomalee Harbor soon](#)

Colombo Page|24th October

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe says in addition to the Colombo and Hambantota harbors Trincomalee Harbor will also be developed soon. Participating in the 45th anniversary celebrations of the Kandy Sinhalese Traders' Association in Kandy yesterday, the Prime Minister said both India and Singapore are willing to extend support to the port development activities and the discussions with the two countries are ongoing.

### [Sri Lanka's relationship with the UN at present is at the best - Foreign Secretary](#)

Colombo Page|24th October

As the United Nations turns 72 and Sri Lanka's formal relationship with the UN turns 62, country's relationship with the global organization at present is probably at the best it has ever been, Sri Lanka's Foreign Secretary Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam said. Speaking at the 72nd United Nations Day celebrations held Tuesday at the UN complex in Colombo Ambassador Kariyawasam said Sri Lanka, lost its way after Independence in 1948 and driven itself to self-isolation in the recent past has come a full circle with the election of the new government in January 2015.

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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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