

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

March 26, 2018 | Volume - 4 - 10/03

[PM reassures BD support to Palestinian cause](#)

The Financial Express | 26th March

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday reiterated Bangladesh's support to independent Palestine state, saying the brotherly country enjoys a special place in the hearts of the people of Bangladesh. She came up with the remarks when visiting Secretary General of the Fatah Movement and President of Palestine Football Association and Olympic Committee General Jibril Rajoub paid a courtesy call on her at her official residence Ganobhaban. The Fatah Movement Secretary General recalled with deep gratitude 'Bangabandhu's unequivocal support for the cause of independent Palestine', saying Bangabandhu belonged not only to Bangladesh but also to Palestine.

[Myanmar and India hold joint navy exercise](#)

Mizzima | 26th March

Two battleships from Myanmar have arrived at Vishakhapatnam, India, to take part in Indian a joint Myanmar Navy Exercise 2018 (IMNEX-18). The exercise is being held off the eastern coast of India, the India Today reported on 25 March. The exercise will be carried out in two phases namely the harbour phase (25th-30th March) and the sea phase (31st March-3rd April). UMS King Sin Phyu Shin (Frigate) and UMS Inlay (Off-shore patrol vessel) are the two Myanmarese navy battleships that are taking part in the joint exercise.

[Vietnam, Sri Lanka look to increase bilateral relations, trade to US\\$ 1 billion](#)

Colombo Page | 25th March

Vietnam wishes to advance its relationship with Sri Lanka and has suggested increasing exchange of all-level delegations to increase bilateral relations and trade, Chairwoman of the National Assembly of Vietnam Nguyen Thi Kim told Sri Lanka's Speaker of parliament Karu Jayasuriya. The Vietnamese political leader met with her Sri Lankan counterpart on the sidelines of the 138th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly (IPU-138) in Geneva, Switzerland.

AFGHANISTAN

["Military effort is necessary, but not sufficient to get us to reconciliation," Gen. Nicholson](#)

Kabul Times | 26th March

As efforts of Afghanistan government are underway for maintaining peace and stability in the country and most of the world countries are supporting the Afghan government peace plan, the

Resolute Support mission commander believes it may provide the key for reconciliation and peace in the country. Army Gen. John W. Nicholson Jr. said that military parts of President Donald Trump's strategy are now in place and they are already making a difference. The general spoke to reporters traveling with Marine Corps Gen. Joe Dunford, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

[Afghanistan, US, Saudi and UEA Hold Meeting](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 26th March

Afghanistan's national security adviser held meetings with representatives from the three countries where they discussed a range of issues. Afghanistan National Security Adviser Haneef Atmar, met with the US, Saudi Arabian and United Arab Emirates' National Security Advisers in Washington on Saturday, the NSC said in a statement. The statement said Atmar, who was on a visit to the US, held a four-day quadrilateral meeting and discussed the fight against terrorism, the Afghan peace process and the country's economic development. Participants at the meeting expressed their support for the peace process in Afghanistan, emphasizing the need for joint efforts and practical steps in order to achieve success.

[President Dedicates New Solar Year to Education](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 25th March

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has termed the new solar year as education year, stressing the need for paying more attention to the development of the vital sector. The president said converting the Education Ministry into a thoroughly professional and apolitical institution was the top priority of his government. Ghani expressed the views during a gathering marking the launch of the new academic year. The president launched the year by ringing the bell. Ghani claimed the education system had improved in recent years and the number of professionally trained teachers and students had also risen.

BANGLADESH

[Donald Trump lauds Bangladesh leadership, people in addressing Rohingya plight](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 25th March

US President Donald Trump has lauded Bangladesh President Md Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and its people for sheltering the Rohingyas who fled persecution in Myanmar's Rakhine state. In separate letters, sent to media by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday, on Bangladesh's Independence Day, Trump thanked Hamid, Hasina and the people of Bangladesh for their response to the refugees' need. The US president lauded Hasina in his message to her, saying: "Your personal leadership has been critical to addressing the plight of the Rohingya who fled to safety in your country." "I thank you for all you have done to assist these men, women and children in need," he wrote.

[Digital Security Act: Freedom of expression to get hurt](#)

The Daily Star | 26th March

The European Union and 10 countries including the US and the UK have expressed concern over several sections of the proposed Digital Security Act-2018 as what they said is it "would suppress freedom of expression in multiple ways". Ambassadors of the countries and the EU or their representatives expressed their worry at a meeting with Law Minister Anisul Huq at his secretariat office in Dhaka yesterday. The minister later said he assured them of considering their concern, and if necessary, changes or clarification would be made in the proposed act.

BHUTAN

[MoEA launches National Intellectual Property Policy 2018](#)

Kuensel | 24th March

Almost three years after the formulation, the National Intellectual Property Policy (NIPP) 2018 was launched yesterday in Thimphu to provide intellectual property (IP) rights to promote creativity and innovation for social, cultural and economic development. The policy was approved during the 151st session of the Cabinet held on February 13 this year. The Department

of Intellectual Property's director general, Kinley T Wangchuk, said NIPP sets out seven strategic objectives towards a more balanced, equitable and integrated approach to the use of the IP system. "The increase in innovation and creativity to fuel our economic, social and cultural development will get us closer to the attainment of greater well-being, contentment and happiness for our people," he said.

MALDIVES

[All that were denied bail transferred to Maafushi Prison](#)

Sun Online | 23rd March

Everyone who were arrested during the recent State of Emergency in the Maldives, that were later denied bail, has been transferred to Maafushi Prison. At the remand hearings on Wednesday and Thursday at the Criminal Court, all of them were ordered to be detained at a place designated by the Correctional Service. On the list of people who were transferred to Maafushi are the former President, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, his elderest son, the MP for Dhiggaru constituency, Ahmed Faaris Maumoon, for Commissioner of Police, Ahmed Areef, Chief Justice, Abdulla Saeed, Supreme Court Judge, Ali Hameed, Head of Judicial Administration, Hassan Saeed, the MP for Dhangethi constituency Il'ham Ahmed along with President Maumoon's son-in-law, Mohamed Nadheem and the JP Leader, Qasim Ibrahim's eldest son, Siyadh Qasim.

[Three programs inaugurated on the occasion of Water Day](#)

Sun Online | 25th March

On the occasion of the World Water Day, Environment Ministry has inaugurated three programs under the "Fenfahi" campaign launched in 2017 to create awareness for sewerage systems. At the ceremony held to launch the "Fenfahi Newsletter", "Fenfahi Communication Plan" and "Instagram Photo Competition", the programs were launched by the Environment Minister, Thoriq Ibrahim. World Water Day is marked on 22 March 2018. According to the Ministry, the Fenfahi Newsletter the latest information the ongoing water and sewerage installation projects and other programs will be delivered to industry heads.

MYANMAR

[Ambassador of Italy visits Marine National Park](#)

Mizzima | 26th March

From 23 to 25 March 2018 the Ambassador of Italy Pier Giorgio Aliberti visited Kawthaung and Lampi Marine National Park where the Italian NGO Istituto Oikos implemented the project "COAST - Building Local Capacity for Conservation and Tourism Development in Myeik Archipelago", funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Lampi Marine National Park, located in the Myeik Archipelago, is the only Marine National Park of Myanmar. Istituto Oikos has been working for 10 years to promote the conservation of natural resources and the sustainable management of this Park. Thanks to the project COAST – promoted by Istituto Oikos and partially funded by Italy – local development, natural resources management and biodiversity conservation have been endorsed by supporting local authorities and involving local communities.

[Myanmar rejects draft resolution on human rights](#)

Mizzima | 26th March

Myanmar has rejected a draft resolution on the situation of human rights in the country, tabled by the European Union (EU), according to state media. THE draft resolution entitled "Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar" tabled by the European Union (EU) was considered for action on 23 March 2018 during the 37th Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. During the discussion, Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations Ambassador U Htin Lynn delivered a statement before taking action on the draft resolution, and categorically rejected the draft resolution highlighting paragraphs which are highly intrusive and directly challenging to the state sovereignty of Myanmar.

NEPAL

[Indian government hands over ICP Birgunj to NITDB](#)

The Himalayan Times | 26th March

The government of India handed over the Integrated Check Post (ICP) Birgunj to the government of Nepal today, which will help in the smooth cross-border movement of goods and passenger traffic to/from Nepal from a single place. Consul General of India to Nepal in Birgunj, BC Pradhan, handed over the infrastructure developed under the assistance of the Ministry of External Affairs, India, to Nepal Intermodal Transport Development Board (NITDB) – the government agency which has been assigned for the operation, maintenance and management of the ICP. Construction of ICP Birgunj was started in April 2011 and it took seven years to complete the construction and bring it into operation.

[EU report smacks of rancour, says Prime Minister Oli](#)

The Himalayan Times | 25th March

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli today said the final report of the European Union Election Observation Mission to Nepal undermined Nepal. Addressing a programme organised by the National Election Observation Committee here, the PM urged the EU to correct its final election report. The final report of EUEOM had stated: “The design of the proportional quota system, which also includes well represented social groups, such as Khas Arya, among the groups for inclusion, is arguably in contravention of international standards on equality, as affirmative action measures are foreseen only as a means to promote equality.” The PM said the European Union should not underestimate Nepal’s social harmony, constitutional provisions and achievements.

PAKISTAN

[US sanctions seven Pakistani firms for ‘nuclear trade’](#)

Dawn | 26th March

The Trump administration has added seven Pakistani companies to a list of foreign entities that presumably pose a significant risk to the national security and policy interests of the United States by allegedly engaging in nuclear trade. The move could undermine Pakistan’s ambition of joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), an elite club of countries that can trade fissile materials and nuclear technologies. The move forms a series of decisions aimed at putting a squeeze on Pakistan. The list, prepared by the US Bureau of Industry and Security, declares that all seven companies are “reasonably believed to be involved, or to pose a significant risk of being or becoming involved, in activities contrary to the national security or foreign policy interests of the United States”.

[Upgrade technology to compete globally, PM advises industry](#)

The Express Tribune | 25th March

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi advised the industrial sector on Saturday to upgrade its technological base in order to enhance global competitiveness. Appreciating the latest technology introduced by Fast Cables, he said the establishment of an aluminium alloy plant in Lahore was a good omen for the country’s economy. He admitted that conditions for the manufacturing sector were not ideal, but the government was sincerely making efforts to facilitate manufacturing.

[I'm here to change my community's destiny, says Pakistan's first transgender news anchor Marvia](#)

Dawn | 25th March

Having aired for the first time 10 years ago, Kohenoor News re-launched on Friday with an elaborate ceremony where it also announced its hiring of transgender individual Marvia Malik as a news anchor – apparently a first in Pakistan’s media history. The response to this initiative could be gauged from the appreciation it has received on social media with tweets and video messages by scores of people including renowned journalists and TV personalities. Marvia says she had made up her mind as a child that she doesn’t want to end up where her fellow

transgenders do: dancing on the streets, begging, selling their bodies. She wanted to become either a journalist or a lawyer.

SRI LANKA

[No-confidence motion against PM is a dud - Minister Rajitha](#)

Colombo Page| 25th March

Minister of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine Dr. Rajitha Senaratne says that the no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe is a futile exercise and the government has the ability to defeat it. Health Minister made this statement participating in a walk organized by the National Programme for Tuberculosis Control & Chest Diseases of the Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine to mark the World Tuberculosis Day.

[New Zealand's support for investment in Sri Lanka's fisheries sector](#)

Colombo Page| 26th March

High Commissioner of New Zealand to Sri Lanka Joanna Kempker has said that she will encourage New Zealand investors to invest in Sri Lankan fisheries projects. The High Commissioner has given this assurance during a discussion with the Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development Mahinda Amaraweera at the Minister's official residence recently.

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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