



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

November 27th , 2017 | Volume: 3 - 9/11

[Another 3,000 new arrivals put total Rohingyas at 624,000](#)

Prothom Alo | 27th November
Some 3,000 more Rohingyas entered Bangladesh since 22 November putting the total number of Rohingyas at 624,000 since 25 August, said the UN Migration Agency on Monday, reports UNB. As of 25 November, Bangladesh Immigration and Passports Department registered a total of 663, 694 people through biometric registration, according to the IOM Needs and Population Monitoring. Meanwhile, Bangladesh Social Service Department has identified 7,771 unaccompanied and separated children

[Govt asked to satisfy court on 'role of armed forces as an arbitrator' in agreement with protesters](#)

Dawn | 27th November
The Islamabad High Court on Monday lashed out at the government as well as the Army for the role assigned to the military "as the mediator" in the agreement to end the sit-in at Islamabad's Faizabad Interchange. The Army chief instead of following the orders of the chief executive became a mediator, pointed out Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui as a hearing into the Faizabad protest was underway at the high court on Monday. "Who is the Army to adopt a mediator's role?" inquired the judge. "Where does the law assign this role to a major general?"

[Ghani orders election selection committee to start work after IEC chief dismissal](#)

Khaama Press | 26th November
President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani ordered the selection committee of the Independent Election commission to select new nominees to fill the vacant place in the election commission after its chief was dismissed last week. The Office of the President, ARG Palace, in a statement said late that the decree was issued by President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani after no individual was found from the existing list of the nominees to be well qualified to fill the vacant position. The statement further added that the selection of the new members is a national process and only well qualified and experienced individuals should be elected to perform as a member of the election commission.

AFGHANISTAN

[Russia should enter into dialogue with US regarding Afghanistan: Karzai](#)

Khaama Press | 27th November

The former Afghan President Hamid Karzai says Russia should enter into a dialogue with the United States in a bid to help resolve the ongoing violence in the country. In an interview with the State-owned Sputnik TV, Karzai said we want the widest possible cooperation with Russia in the political, economic and diplomatic fields; this cooperation is in our best interest and will contribute to stability in our country. Karzai further added that Afghanistan want Russia to enter into a dialogue with the United States and other countries on the issue of Afghanistan in order to see what is really happening in Afghanistan and how they can help.

[India pledges \\$2.87m to repair 350 public buses in Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press | 27th November

The Indian government has pledged around \$2.87 million in latest financial assistance to Afghanistan to repair around 350 public buses.

“Continuing its long-standing development support to the people of Afghanistan, the Government of India (GoI) has today agreed to provide financial assistance of US\$2.87 million to the Ministry of Transport of Afghanistan,” the Embassy of India in Kabul said in a statement.

[Elections to be Held on Schedule, Promises Danish](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 26th November

Second Vice President Sarwar Danish underlined the imperative of national unity, promising that the Wolesi Jirga election would be held on schedule. Danish issued the call for unity while addressing the lower house of parliament on the occasion of introducing 12 ministers-designates to lawmakers for the vote of confidence. Concern at divisions “The enemies of the country have been trying to widen the gap between the government and the people and create divisions among different ethnic groups,” the VP alleged. Danish accused Afghanistan’s foes of seeking to pit government organs against one another. He said the government and parliament should work together to prevent divisions in the nation.

BANGLADESH

[Govt concludes metro rail deal with JICA](#)

bdnews | 27th November

The government on Wednesday struck the much expected financing deal with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for the country’s first Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit Development (DMRTD) Project (1), commonly known as Metro Rail Project involving a total cost of about Tk 22,000 crore.

[HC resumes reading out verdict in BDR carnage case](#)

Prothom Alo | 27th November

The High Court on Monday restarted reading out the verdict on the death reference and appeals in the BDR carnage case today for the second consecutive day. A three-member HC special bench led by justice M Shawkat Hossain resumed reading out the judgment at 10:53am. The other two members of the bench are justice Md Abu Zafar Siddique and justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder. Earlier on 3 April, the HC bench kept the verdict as Curia Advisari Vult (CAV) after concluding the hearing on the appeals and the death reference. A Dhaka court on 5 November 2013 sentenced 152 BDR members of the erstwhile Bangladesh Rifles and two civilians to death, and 161 others to life imprisonment for their involvement in the BDR mutiny. A total of 257 appeals were filed with the High Court against the lower court verdict. Seventy four people, including 57 army officials, were killed in the BDR mutiny on 25-26 February in 2009 at the Pilkhana headquarters in Dhaka. The paramilitary force was later renamed Border Guard Bangladesh.

BHUTAN

[Assembly empowers BNCA board to update drug list](#)

Keunsel | 25th November

Amending section 59 of the Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Substance Abuse Act, 2015 (NDPSSAA), the National Assembly yesterday gave the power to update the list of banned drugs to Bhutan Narcotics Control Authority (BNCA) board. “The board in consultation with an expert panel may amend the schedules including addition, deletion of substances in the schedule or the whole schedule and or quantification of any of the substances deemed to be abused or trafficked,” the amendment stated. Section 59 of the Act stated that the Parliament may amend the Schedules including addition, deletion of the substance in the Schedule or the whole Schedule and or qualification of any of the substance deemed to be abused or trafficked. The National Assembly, with a majority show of hands, decided to empower BNCA’s board after the Legislative committee chairperson Ritu Raj Chhetri presented the amendments to the house.

[NC discusses providing legal aid service to indigent persons](#)

Keunsel | 25th November

The National Council (NC) members discussed the need to provide legal aid service to indigent persons yesterday. An indigent person, according to the legislative committee, is a person who is poor, helpless and needy who cannot afford the services of a lawyer for the conduct of a case or a legal proceeding. The legislative committee chairperson, Sangay Khandu, who is also the Samtse NC member, while submitting the committee review report, said that although the issue was discussed in previous sessions, particularly during the budget deliberations, NC took the decision to undertake a comprehensive review during the strategic workshop held last June. He cited Acts, and the Constitution that mandate a need to provide legal aid services to indigent persons. “If legal aid services are not provided, there will be discrepancies in uniform application of the law.”

<http://www.keunselonline.com/nc-discusses-providing-legal-aid-service-to-indigent-persons/>

MALDIVES

[Iruthisham: President's every step paves the future for the youth](#)

The Sun | 27th November

Youth Minister, Iruthisham Adam, has said that every step the President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom takes is to ensure a brighter future for the Maldivian youth. Speaking at the Youth Awards ceremony at Dharubaaruge tonight, Minister Iruthisham said that the President has started a number of national projects to help achieve the hopes of the youth and the youth community has been graciously accepting the opportunities. The Youth Minister said that the past four years have been very successful for young people in the Maldives and leading the success is President Yameen.

MYANMAR

[Mandalay Chief Minister calls for foreign investment in India meet](#)

Mizzima | 27th November

Dr Zaw Myint Maung, Chief Minister of Mandalay Region Government, called for foreign investment in the central Myanmar region at an international conference held in Kolkata, capital of West Bengal state of India. Dr Zaw Myint Maung was speaking on the evening of November 26 at the 2017 Horasis Asia Meeting. The meeting is running for two days from November 26-27. “I would like to advise businessmen, the earlier, the better for doing

business in Mandalay,” the Mandalay minister told delegates at the meeting. Dr Zaw Myint Maung said the meeting was a good opportunity to hold discussions with leaders in the business world. “India and Myanmar have a common history. The Myanmar minister said he welcomed India’s policies including the Act East Policy and Neighbourhood First that promote the relationship between India and ASEAN countries including Myanmar.

[Pope heads to Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 27th November

Pope Francis set off Sunday on his 21st and possibly most delicate overseas trip yet, a six-day visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh against the backdrop of the unfolding Rohingya refugee crisis. The 80-year-old pontiff’s plane left Rome en route for Yangon, Myanmar’s main city, shortly after 2100 GMT. He will touch down around 0700 GMT today hoping to encourage efforts to contain a crisis that has seen many of the Rohingya, a Muslim ethnic minority in the mostly Buddhist Myanmar, forced from their homes and into refugee camps over the border in Bangladesh. “I ask you to be with me in prayer so that, for these peoples, my presence is a sign of affinity and hope,” Francis told 30,000 believers in St Peter’s Square, shortly before packing his bags for the diplomatically fraught trip.

NEPAL

[Nepal votes in landmark poll; army blames rogue Maoists for blasts](#)

The Himalayan Times | 26th November

Nepalis began voting for a new parliament on Sunday with the army on alert on Sunday as a series of small blasts blamed on a rogue Maoist group reminded the Himalayan nation of the violence and instability it is hoping to leave behind. More than a decade after the end of a civil war between Maoist peasant guerrillas and security forces, Nepal is hoping this election – the first parliamentary polls since 1999 – will complete its long journey from a monarchy to become a federal republic.

[India turns to social-cultural ties as China steps up role in Nepal](#)

MyRepublica | 26th November

As China tries to deepen its influence in Nepal through the overarching framework of its One Belt One Road (OBOR) project, India is of late responding through a renewed focus on the socio-cultural aspects of its age-old relations with the new republic. Along with the ongoing partnership that mainly includes construction of physical and social infrastructure such as airports, highways, hospitals and educational institutions, India has placed renewed focus on promoting people-to-people relations through cultural ties and improved connectivity between the two countries, especially since the Narendra Modi government came to power.

PAKISTAN

[Report rules out Pakistan-India nuclear war](#)

Dawn | 27th November

South Asian experts reject the nuclear pessimism in Western capitals about their region, noting that the West’s nuclear “sky is falling” in South Asia argument does not hold when seen in proper context. This is the conclusion of a report by a prestigious Washington think-tank, the Atlantic Council, which also rules out the possibility of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan. The council based these findings on a series of seminars it held recently in New Delhi, Islamabad and Beijing, noting that South Asian experts who participated in these meetings were more optimistic than the “nuclear sky is falling” arguments often aired in the mass media, and policy conferences in

general. The experts argued that China, India and Pakistan, despite being enmeshed in a complex rivalry, “are stakeholders in the existing international order, and are committed to an open economic order and multilateral institutionalism”.

[Law minister Zahid Hamid resigns after govt gives in to demands of Islamabad protesters](#)

Dawn | 27th November

After the weeks-long protest that virtually paralysed the capital and saw several people losing their lives, the government has finally given in to the demands of protesters camped out at Faizabad Interchange with Zahid Hamid resigning as the Federal Law Minister. The minister's resignation comes in the aftermath of Saturday's botched operation against protesters at Faizabad and 'successful negotiations' with leaders of the demonstration late Sunday night, official sources and state broadcaster PTV say. Six people were killed while hundreds were injured during the operation that was eventually suspended.

[Islamabad 'concerned over climate-altering emissions'](#)

The Express Tribune | 27th November

Minister for Climate Change Senator Mushahidullah Khan has said Pakistan “will continue to support global efforts and contribute towards protecting human health and environment by completely phasing out the use of ozone-layer-depleting substances (ODSs) and replacing them with more effective and environmentally-safer alternatives in line with the Montreal Protocol”. “Pakistan is at the forefront in endeavours to phase out the use of ozone depleting substances,” the minister said while addressing the high-level ministerial segment of the Joint 11th Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and 29th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol held in Montreal, Canada.

SRI LANKA

[Sri Lankan President to leave for South Korea today on a state visit](#)

Colombo Page | 27th November

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena will leave for South Korea today on a three-day state visit from 28 to 30 November 2017 at the invitation of South Korean President Moon Jae-in. President's visit aims to strengthen diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and the Republic of South Korea. The visit coincides with the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. According to a statement by the South Korean President's office President Sirisena is scheduled to start off the visit by paying tribute at the Seoul National Cemetery on November 29. Later in the day, he will attend an official welcoming ceremony, which will be followed by a summit and an MOU signing ceremony. President Moon will host a state dinner for the visiting President.

[Sri Lanka's economic crisis began with the war - Finance Minister](#)

Colombo Page | 26th November

Minister of Finance and Mass Media, Mangala Samaraweera says the open economy was in operation for only two years and with the start of the war in the '80s the country went backwards. The economic crisis that began with the war in the early 1980s has affected Sri Lanka in various ways up to 2015, the Minister pointed out. Minister Samaraweera expressed these views addressing a seminar held in Matara recently under the theme "tax not a liability- social responsibility".

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.

To know more, Please log on to www.anantaaspencentre.in