

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

**February 28, 2018 | Volume - 4 - 12/02**

[Minister Hakimi, Kazakh Ambassador discuss economic, trade cooperation](#)

The Kabul Times | 27th February

Eklil Hakimi, Minister of Finance, in a meeting with Omirtay Bitimov, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Afghanistan, discussed the 10th joint economic and trade commission between Afghanistan and Kazakhstan, further strengthening bilateral relations between two countries, Kazakhstan's investment in Naib Abad-Mazar-e-Sharif Dry Port and establishing railway in the site, construction of commercial warehouses and imports and exports through air and land transit, the statement from the Ministry added.

[Senior Trump aide calls for 'new relationship' with Pakistan](#)

Dawn | 28th February

Repeating allegations about Haqqani network sanctuaries and shortcomings in Pakistani efforts to check illicit financing, senior US National Security official Lisa Curtis said on Tuesday the Trump administration wanted a "new relationship" with Islamabad. "Ms Curtis urged the government of Pakistan to address the continuing presence of the Haqqani network and other terrorist groups within its territory, and reiterated the international community's long-standing concern about ongoing deficiencies in Pakistan's implementation of its anti-money laundering/counterterrorism finance regime," the US Embassy said in a statement on her trip.

[BHUTAN-1 ready to be delivered for launch](#)

Kuensel | 27th February

Hitting a milestone in the history of space science and technology in Bhutan, the country's first cubesat BHUTAN-1 is ready for delivery to the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) for launch. The news was shared during a press conference via video conferencing for cubesat Flight Model (FM) delivery organised by the Kyushu Institute of Technology (Kyutech), Japan yesterday. Bhutan, along with Malaysia and the Philippines, is currently participating in the second joint global multi-nations BIRDS Project called BIRDS-2, initiated by Kyutech, represented by four engineers from the telecom and space division of the information and communications ministry (MoIC).

**AFGHANISTAN**

[Afghanistan hands over management of Afghan-Turk schools to Turkey](#)

The Kabul Times | 27th February

Ministry of Education (MoE) on Monday, Feb 26th, formally handed over the management of Afghan-Turk schools to the Turkish government, defying calls by parents and students to keep the schools under Afghan control. “Based on the MoU signed between the Ministry of Education and Turkey, the management of Afghan-Turk Schools has been handed over from Cag Educational Foundation to the Turkish Ministry of Education, the MoE said in a statement, adding the transition of leadership of the schools was aimed to further promote the quality and quantity of the schools which will be regulated by the education ministries of the two countries. According to the MoE, the Turkish government has committed to outline a ten-year plan based on which Turkey will increase the number of schools and will focus on the quality of education and equip them with more facilities.

#### [Senior US Diplomat Discusses Afghan Security with Pak Foreign Secy](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 27th February

US Deputy Assistant to the President and National Security Council Senior Director for South and Central Asia Lisa Curtis held a meeting with Foreign Secretary Tehmina Janjua on Monday, Feb. 26th. In the emergency meeting held at Foreign Office (FO) in Islamabad, the situation in Afghanistan and bilateral relations came under discussion during the meeting. Pak-US relations, which have witnessed a downward trend after US President Donald Trump’s new year tweet, were discussed during the huddle. Trump’s tweet was followed by the US withholding \$255 million in aid to Islamabad, accusing Pakistan of failing to cooperate fully in the fight against terrorism.

### **BANGLADESH**

#### [Visiting Nobel laureates: Don’t hesitate to call yourselves Rohingya](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 27th February

The Nobel laureates visiting the no man’s land between Myanmar’s Tambru and Bangladesh’s Konapara border areas have asked the refugees not to hesitate to call themselves Rohingya. Mairead Maguire of Northern Ireland and Tawakkol Karman of Yemen visited the no man’s land on Tuesday. Around 700,000 Rohingyas entered Bangladesh since August 2017, fleeing the Myanmar military’s oppression termed as “ethnic cleansing” by the UN. During their visit, the laureates spoke to the Rohingyas living in the area.

#### [Bangladeshi groups in the United States ban with the ISI](#)

Bangladesh News 24 | 28th February

The United States has banned two individuals and seven groups in connection with the Middle East-based militant group ISI, among which there are also Bangladeshi groups. The US Treasury Department issued a ban on Tuesday, Reuters reported. On the website of the Foreign Assets Control of the Treasury Department, two people in the list of sanctions for global terrorism have added Abu Musab al-Barnaby and Nigerian Mahad Moolim. Seven groups of Bangladesh, Egypt, the Philippines, Somalia, Nigeria and Tunisia have been listed with sanctions.

#### [Corruption a blow to ease of doing business: Bernicat](#)

The Financial Express | 28th February

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Mercia Burnicat has said corruption still remains a challenge for companies doing business in Bangladesh. “Bangladesh government has taken concrete actions towards making ease of doing business indicator more favourable by improving level-playing field. But progress has not been made yet”, she added. “Corruption still remains a challenge for firms doing business here. I think there are a number of other areas too where progress still needs to be made,” she said.

### **BHUTAN**

#### [ACC forges regional alliance](#)

Kuensel | 27th February

A seven member high level delegation from the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka are in the country for a five-day experience sharing visit, a press release from the ACC states. The

delegation is in the country to learn from the tools, techniques and best practices/experiences of Bhutan in preventing and combating corruption. The visit is also expected to complement their current initiative of designing national-level action plan towards eliminating bribery and corruption in Sri Lanka. While in the country, the delegates will call on the Prime Minister, the Speaker, the Chief Justice and the Attorney General. These meetings will underscore the strong political will that Bhutan enjoys in the fight against corruption.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Maldivian government requests EU assistance in resolving issues in the country](#)

Sun Online | 27th February

The Maldivian government has requested assistance from the European Union (EU) in the efforts to resolve the political unrest in the country. A statement issued by the Foreign Ministry today, the government said that they will continue to work with the EU and its member countries and "appreciates the continued support and cooperation that the European Union is continuing to extend in strengthening the electoral, governance and democratic structures and framework. "While the Maldivian government has expressed gratitude for continual support, the EU Foreign Affairs Council passed a resolution today on the concerns regarding the Maldives. The resolution called to the Maldivian government to lift the state of emergency declared on 5 February and hold discussions with the oppositions in an effort to hold a fair Presidential Election this year.

### [Supreme Court rules State Emergency extension was valid](#)

Sun Online | 26th February

Supreme Court has ruled that the parliament decision to extend of the state of emergency by 30 days as a valid decision. The advisement given by the court to the parliament today said that the Article-87B requires having a set number of MPs during the sitting to vote on it but it is not an administrative point of view. Court said that the extraordinary sitting of the parliament on 20 February, the required amount of MPs to be present are 86. The Supreme Court ruling on the issue was reached by unanimous vote of the court.

## **MYANMAR**

### [USDP tries again to enact a right to recall law](#)

Mizzima | 28th February

MP Sai Than Naing of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) called at a House of Nationalities session for passing and enacting a 'Right to Recall Law' which confers power to voters to recall their elected representatives. MP Sai Than Naing of upper house from Karen State No. 5 constituency said at parliament that the voters wanted to recall their elected representatives when they were inefficient in discharging their duties. This is the second attempt by the USDP party to enact a 'right to recall law' during this term of the parliament because another USDP MP Thaug Aye raised the same question at parliament in February last year.

### [Mizzima introduces Free-to-Air TV channel](#)

Mizzima | 27th February

Mizzima Media Group today introduced its Free-to-Air TV channel in Myanmar. Mizzima is one of the five private companies that recently signed a cooperation agreement with state-run Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV) to operate as content providers for digital free-to-air TV channels in a multi-playout system of MRTV. In addition to thanking donors and supporters, who had supported Mizzima while in exile in India and Thailand Mizzima's Editor-In-Chief and Managing Director Soe Myint also acknowledged the support of the international community.

## **NEPAL**

### [Nepal committed to protecting, promoting human rights: Bairagi](#)

The Himalayan Times | 28th February

Foreign Secretary Shanker Das Bairagi addressed the High-level Segment of the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland, yesterday. In his address, Bairagi said the Universal Declaration of Human Rights remained the source of aspiration of mankind as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. In the context of the 70th year of the adoption of the UDHR and 25th year of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the foreign secretary said all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Highlighting the profound meaning the right to development bears for many developing countries like Nepal, Bairagi reminded that the promise made by the Vienna Declaration to realise the universal and inalienable right to development still remained unfulfilled.

#### [India unilaterally constructs four bridges over Mahakali River](#)

The Himalayan Times | 28th February

The Indian side has constructed four wooden bridges over Mahakali River without the consent of Nepal. Mahakali River forms the western-most border between Nepal and India. India had sent a letter to the District Administration Office (DAO), Darchula a couple months back seeking Nepal's agreement to that connection. But they moved ahead with the construction of the four bridges without Nepal giving the consent.

#### [Environment Minister Pandit pledges elaborative measures to control air pollution](#)

MyRepublica | 27th February

Minister for Population and Environment, Lalbabu Pandit, has said companies producing non-biodegradable plastic products would be banned. Speaking at a face-to-face programme organized by the Rafat Sanchar Club on Tuesday, the Minister pledged to come up with policies to ban on the manufacturing of non-biodegradable plastic and to discourage production of non-perishable and canned food.

## PAKISTAN

#### [Pakistan among top investment destinations: Saudi official](#)

The Express Tribune | 27th February

Saudi Arabia sees Pakistan as one of the top destinations for making investments, said Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Abdulrahman Alharbi at the first meeting of the Pak-Saudi Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment held in Riyadh on Monday. The two sides reaffirmed commitment to strengthen trade and investment ties in line with the understandings developed during the meeting of the Pak-Saudi Joint Ministerial Commission held in Islamabad last month. The Saudi side acknowledged and appreciated the attractiveness of Pakistan as a preferred destination of investment in view of its macroeconomic indicators, growth, strategic location and overall investment regime.

#### [US sees 'positive indicators' from Pakistan on fight against terrorism](#)

The Financial Daily | 28th February

The US military is seeing some "positive indicators" from Pakistan showing it is becoming more responsive to US concerns about militant safe havens in the country but Islamabad has yet to make a strategic shift, a top US general said on Tuesday. "We are now beginning to see very positive indicators ... that they are moving in the right direction," said General Joseph Votel, head of the US military's Central Command, citing unspecified Pakistani actions 'on the ground'. "It does not yet equal the decisive action that we would like to see them take in terms of a strategic shift, but they are positive indicators," Votel told a hearing of the US House of Representatives.

#### [China values Pakistan's crackdown on terror financing amid US criticism](#)

The Express Tribune | 27th February

A Chinese foreign ministry's spokesperson said on Tuesday that China highly valued active measures taken by the Pakistan government to strengthen financial supervision and crackdown on terrorist financing. He also asked the international community to justly view and evaluate

Pakistan's efforts in the field of international anti-terrorism, instead of accusing it of bias and prejudice. "We hope all concerned parties in the international community can give an objective and fair assessment of this," Lu Kang said during his regular briefing.

## SRI LANKA

### [Government's aim is to create a young generation capable of defeating tribal views - Minister Mangala Samaraweera](#)

Colombo Page| 27th February

Minister of Finance and Mass Media, Mangala Samaraweera says that the aim of the government is to create a young generation capable of winning a modern world through defeating tribal views and the development of a country means that the younger generation go forward in education. Speaking at the opening of the new student dormitory of St. Thomas Girls High School in Matara and laying foundation stone for a new four storied building, the Minister said the country needs a society that could work with a "straight back".

### [Textiles to lead Sri Lanka's export revival in 2018 - OBG report](#)

Colombo Page| 28th February

Sri Lanka's apparel and textile export segment is likely to experience the highest rate of growth in 2018 as Sri Lanka focus on achieving \$20 billion in export earnings by 2020, according to a recent survey by the Oxford Business Group (OBG) said. Executives interviewed for OBG's most recent Business Barometer: Sri Lanka CEO Survey have resoundingly voted for textiles and apparel as the export segment likely to experience the highest rate of growth in overseas shipments in 2018.

### [Sri Lanka needs a concerted and coordinated policy response to mitigate future refinancing risks - Finance Minister](#)

Colombo Page| 27th February

Sri Lanka faces refinancing risks in the coming years and need a concerted and coordinated policy response to mitigate such risks, Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera said addressing a forum of Finance Secretaries and Central Bank Governors of 24 developing nations in Colombo. "It is clear that Sri Lanka, like many developing nations, faces such refinancing risks in the coming years. This warrants a concerted and coordinated policy response to mitigate such risks," he said.

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## ***About Ananta Aspen Centre***

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