

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

**January 29, 2018 | Volume: 4 - 10/01**

[Consul General of India speaks on India-Myanmar relations](#)

Mizzima | 29th January

Last week, India celebrated their 69th Republic Day on 26 January and hosted government representatives from the ASEAN nations in New Delhi. In Mandalay, Myanmar, H.E. Nandan Singh Bhaisora, the Indian Consul General spoke to a gathering of dignitaries about the relations and ties between India and Myanmar. The following is his speech: "It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to address this distinguished gathering. May I extend, on behalf of the Indian Consulate a very warm welcome to all of you; thank you for joining us this evening to mark the 69th Republic Day of India. On this day, the Indian people gave to themselves a Constitution to secure for all its citizens, justice, liberty equality and gender and economic equity. Despite a number of social and political challenges that India has been facing during all these years, it has made its own mark in almost every field.

[Pakistan seeks 'credible' Afghan peace initiative](#)

The Express Tribune | 29th January

As the security situation in Afghanistan is fast deteriorating with the new wave of violence, Islamabad wants Kabul to come up with a 'credible and inclusive peace plan' to end perpetual instability in its neighbouring country. For this purpose, Pakistan is pinning hopes on the Afghan leadership to announce a comprehensive peace plan during the crucial regional conference scheduled to take place in Kabul next month. The key meeting to be attended by Afghanistan's immediate neighbours, as well as other regional and international players, is taking place under the banner of 'Kabul process' that the Afghanistan government initiated in June last year.

[Peace Council welcomes Indonesian suggestion to hold trilateral Ulema committee](#)

Afghanistan Times | 28th January

The government-run High Peace Council said it welcomes an offer by the Indonesian president to establish a committee of religious scholars from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Indonesia to find a solution for the Afghan war, amid the escalation of terrorist activities in Afghanistan including capital Kabul. Indonesian President, Joko Widodo in a recent visit to Pakistan, asked for the establishment of committee of the clerics from three countries to seek ways for peace in Afghanistan. The council's spokesman called it a "good measure", expressing hope that Jakarta's efforts be effective in the Afghan peace process.

### [Trump Says US Working to Destroy Terror Groups](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 28th January

Speaking at Davos, US president said America will never allowing Afghanistan to become a safe haven again for terrorists. US President Donald Trump said on Friday that America is committed to ensuring that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists and urged other nations to invest in their own defences to make the world safer from rogue regimes. Addressing the World Economic Forum (WEF) gathering in Davos, Trump said the US is working with allies and partners to destroy terrorist organisations such as Daesh. "We are committed to ensuring that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists who want to commit mass murder of our citizens.

### [Indonesian President Joko Widodo arrives in Kabul](#)

Khama Press | 29th January

The Indonesian President Joko Widodo arrived in Kabul today to meet with his counterpart President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and other high level Afghan officials. According to reports, President Widodo is also expected to meet with the Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah during visit to Kabul to discuss issues of bilateral interest. President Widodo is the first Indonesian President to visit Afghanistan after almost 58 years following the last visit by an Indonesian President in 1961. He is also expected to visit the historic Dar-ul-Aman Palace which is currently undergoing restoration and the Indonesian Islamic Center in Kabul.

## **BANGLADESH**

### [Dhaka, Jakarta sign deals to boost trade, diplomatic cooperation](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 28th January

Bangladesh and Indonesia have signed five instruments to boost cooperation in different sectors between the two countries, including trade, diplomacy, fishing and energy. The deals were inked in the presence of visiting Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina after the official talks between the two countries at the Prime Minister's Office. Bangladesh Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed and Indonesian Minister of Trade Enggartiasto Lusitania signed the joint ministerial statement on the launch of the negotiation for Bangladesh-Indonesia preferential trade agreement.

### [Japan keen to extend support for energy sector](#)

The Financial Express | 28th January

Japan has expressed interest to continue cooperation with Bangladesh in various sectors, including power and energy. "Prime Minister Shinzo Abe desires to continue cooperation with Bangladesh in various sectors," said Visiting Japanese PM's Special Adviser Kentaro Sonoura during a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Ganobhaban. Sonoura said Matarbari 1200 MW Ultra Super Critical Coal Fired Power Plant is a flagship project on cooperation between the two countries in the power sector.

## **BHUTAN**

### [15 Bhutanese women sent to Kurdistan illegally](#)

Kuensel | 27th January

It was June 11, 2017. Pelmo (Name changed) and four other Bhutanese women, who had never stepped out of Bhutan, landed at the Kurdistan International Airport in Iraq. As promised by their employment agency and its partners (agents) in Bhutan, they were supposed to work in Turkey. But that never happened. "I could smell something wrong, but we could not figure out what exactly," said Pelmo. Shortly after landing in Iraq, their travel documents, cell phones, cash and ornaments were seized, and they were put in a small room without ventilation. According to Pelmo, there are about 12 Bhutanese women employed as domestic helpers in Kurdistan today. Three returned last October with assistance from the local police.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Opposition requests impeachment of President Yameen at the Supreme Court](#)

Sun online|28th January

Four leaders of the opposition coalition has made a request at the Supreme Court to impeach President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom. In a tweet sent out by the former President, Mohamed Nasheed, earlier today, he said that a case of corruption and theft has been filed against President Yameen at the Supreme Court by the former President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, Jumhooree Party Leader, Qasim Ibrahim, Vice President of Adhaalath Party, Ali Zahir and himself.

## MYANMAR

### [Danish Embassy issues statement on anniversary of U Ko Ni's assassination](#)

Mizzima | 29th January

The Danish Embassy has issued a statement on the anniversary of the assassination of prominent lawyer U Ko Ni. On 29 January 2017, U Ko Ni was assassinated at Yangon International Airport. He was returning from a trip to Indonesia with the Information Minister U Pe Myint. The statement calls for a quick conclusion to the court cases against those accused in the assassination.

### [Nestle Myanmar expects fourfold growth by 2020](#)

Mizzima | 27th January

Swiss food and beverage giant Nestle operates in 190 countries producing more than 2,000 products with 330,000 employees from 450 factories. The brand has been recognized in Myanmar for more than 100 years. At the late of 2013, the company erected its next milestone stepping into Myanmar and Nestle Myanmar Limited was founded. Up until then, Nestle Myanmar had been importing their food items from nearby countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Philippines in which Nestle has local factories. In a recent interview, Nestle Myanmar Managing Director Hayri Devrim Cobek said that the company is expecting fourfold growth in Myanmar by 2020.

## NEPAL

### [Left alliance to share power in provinces](#)

The Himalayan Times | 28th January The left alliance partners today agreed to share posts of chief ministers, provincial speakers and deputy speakers as per the deal reached between CPN-UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli and CPN Maoist Centre Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal. As per the agreement facilitated by the task force formed by the Party Unification Coordination Committee, the UML will have chief ministers in provinces 1, 3, 4 and 5 and the CPN MC in provinces 6 and 7.

### [More Run of River plants to get 'take or pay' PPAs](#)

My Republica | 29th January

Nepal has established diplomatic relations with Benin — a French-speaking West African nation — increasing the number of countries with which Nepal has diplomatic relations to 157. During a signing ceremony organised at the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the UN in New York on Wednesday, Durga Prasad Bhattarai, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the UN, and his counterpart from Benin, Mr Jean-Claude F do Rego, signed on a joint document affirming the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, mission presser stated.

## PAKISTAN

### [Trump urges 'all nations' to fight Taliban](#)

Dawn | 29th January

US President Donald Trump has urged all nations to crack down on the Taliban group that orchestrated Saturday's terrorist attack in Kabul, killing 95 people. In a similar message, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson warned that those who support terrorists or offer sanctuaries to them will no longer be tolerated. As he often does, President Trump used a social media outlet, Twitter, to give his initial reaction, declaring: "We will not allow the Taliban to win!" "The United States is committed to a secure Afghanistan that is free from terrorists who would target Americans, our allies, and anyone who does not share their wicked ideology," President Trump said.

## [Cooperation between ports of Oman, Pakistan will establish 'big power': Ahsan](#)

Pakistan Today | 29th January

Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal affirmed that enhancing cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and Pakistan in the field of ports will establish a "big power" for transporting the supply chain to Africa. He added in a statement, which was published by a local Arabic newspaper, that Islamabad is making steady efforts to promote cooperation with the Sultanate in the different economic fields. He pointed out that the two countries have many promising cooperation opportunities. He also pointed out that cooperation between Gwadar port in Pakistan and the Omani ports may create a big power for transporting the supply chain to Africa. He noted that he is looking forward to a close cooperation with the Sultanate under the wise leadership of Sultan Qaboos bin Said, as this will serve the interests of both countries and marine trade as well.

## **SRI LANKA**

## [PM pledges to develop facilities to uplift living standards of up-country plantation community](#)

Colombo Page| 28th January

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said the United National Party led unity government has been able to grant land rights and resolve housing problem of the people in the plantation sector during the past three years. The Prime Minister was speaking at a public rally held at the Dunbar grounds in Hatton this evening to ensure the victory of the local government bodies under the United National Party (UNP) in the Nuwara Eliya District.

## [Conservation of wetlands is a social responsibility - Minister Patali Champika Ranawaka](#)

Colombo Page| 29th January

Minister of Megapolis and Western Development Patali Champika Ranawaka says the conservation of the wetlands is a timely social responsibility. The contribution made by wetlands to regulate urban temperature minimizing urban air pollution and to store excess water restoring the environmental balance is immense, the Minister pointed out.

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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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