



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

October 30th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 11/10

[Presidential committee on SAIMT releases its proposals to resolve SAIMT issue](#)

Colombo Page | 29th October
The Presidential Committee appointed by the President Maithripala Sirisena to resolve Issues related to the Faculty of Medicine of the South Asia Institute of Technology and Medicine (SAITM), has released its solutions to the issue. The Presidential Committee has taken into account the recommendations made by various parties including the heads of the medical faculties of state universities, in the interests of all stakeholders and in accordance with government policies and has submitted the following proposals to provide a permanent solution.

[India Starts Trade Route to Afghanistan Via Iran](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 30th October
India on Sunday shipped its first consignment of wheat to Afghanistan by sea through Iran's strategic Chahbahar Port. The shipment, an Indian gift for Afghanistan, was sent from the western seaport of Kandla. It will be taken by trucks to Afghanistan from the Iranian port. The new trade route follows an air freight corridor introduced between India and Afghanistan in June last year to provide greater access for Afghan goods to the Indian market.

[Khaleda Zia Orphanage Trust graft trial against Khaleda to go on: SC](#)

The Daily Star | 30th October
The Supreme Court in Bangladesh today cleared way for Zia Orphanage Trust corruption trial against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, to be continued at a lower court. The apex court passed "no order" on a petition filed by Khaleda seeking order to allow her lawyer for further cross examination of nine prosecution witnesses. A four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah, performing the duties of chief justice, passed the "no order" today after hearing on the petition.

AFGHANISTAN

[Abdullah Wants UNSC Sanctions on Haibatullah, Aides](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 30th October

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah has asked the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to impose sanctions on Taliban's supreme leader Mullah Haibatullah and other leaders. Haibatullah was appointed the militant group's leader about one and a half years back after the death of Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour. A statement from the CEO office said CEO Abdullah on Sunday met with UNSC's sanctions committee head Kairat Umarov, and members here in Kabul.

[Deadly Taliban attack on security post leaves 13 dead in Kunduz](#)

Khaama Press | 30th October

A deadly Taliban attack on a security post in northern Kunduz province of Afghanistan left at least thirteen people dead, the security officials said Sunday. The incident took place in the early hours of Sunday morning in the vicinity of the restive Khanabad district. The district administrative chief of Khanabad Hayatullah Amiri confirmed that a number of Taliban insurgents attacked a police check post in the district at around 3 am. He said at least thirteen policemen lost their lives in the attack and only one policeman managed to escape the area.

[A New Era of Cooperation for Central Asia](#)

Khaama Press | 29th October

Central Asia is a dynamic and fast-changing region. Over the past couple of decades, it has shown that increased regional cooperation is indispensable to achieving development goals. The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program started operations in 2001 and has made significant contributions to the region's growth. The program has grown steadily to 11 member countries[1] and has financed more than \$30 billion of investments to enhance transport and energy linkages and boost cross-border trade. Over a third of this amount, or \$10.5 billion, has come from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which has supported CAREC since its inception.

BANGLADESH

[Beijing with Dhaka'](#)

The Daily Star | 30th October

Chinese ambassador says on refugee crisis, hopes soon it'll be solved; pro-army rally in Myanmar despite Rohingya outcry; US delegation to visit soon. Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka yesterday said his country stands by Bangladesh and hopes there will soon be a peaceful solution to the Rohingya crisis. "We expressed our commitment that we stand by Bangladesh [on the Rohingya problem]. We do hope that this issue will be settled as soon as possible peacefully," Ma Mingqiang said at a function at the Economic Relations Division in the capital.

[Farmers Bank putting Bangladesh's financial sector 'at risk', govt report says](#)

bdnews24 | 29th October

The government has flagged The Farmers Bank Limited, owned by former minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and hit by irregularities, as 'risky' for the financial sector of Bangladesh. Bangladesh Bank appointed an observer for the bank last year after finding irregularities in disbursing loans of billions of taka only three years into starting operations, a move halted by the High Court later. Now the finance ministry says the bank is taking loans with high interest rates from depositors and other banks while it does not have the capacity to repay. The Farmers Bank has created 'systematic risk' for Bangladesh's entire financial sector in this way, the Bank and Financial Institutions Division or BFID says in a report. The division submitted the report to the parliamentary standing committee on the finance ministry on Sunday.

[Senior US officials to visit Bangladesh over Rohingya issue](#)

Prothom Alo | 30th October

Simon Henshaw, acting assistant secretary of the State for the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, will lead a delegation to Myanmar and Bangladesh between 29 October and 4 November to discuss Rohingya crisis, reports UNB. Deputy assistant secretary Scott Busby of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, acting deputy assistant secretary Tom Vajda of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, and office director Patricia Mahoney of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs will accompany the State's acting assistant secretary.

BHUTAN

[Energy saving programmes to bring significant returns: DRE](#)

KuensilOnline | 28th October

Bhutan can earn Nu 621 million (M) from saving electricity consumption in industry, buildings, and appliances sectors annually, according to the Department of Renewable Energy (DRE). The department has drafted the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Policy, which is in its final draft with the Gross National Happiness Commission. DRE's director Mewang Gyeltshen said: "The policy is expected to be approved soon." The draft policy says that the annual saving potential in electricity consumption, averaged over the 15 years projected period in the industry, buildings and appliances sectors, is about 300 million kWh, which at the present average export tariff of electricity of Nu 2.07 per kWh amounts to an additional government revenue of about Nu 621 M)per annum. "Moreover, it also has potential to reduce cross-border green house gas emission," it says. Mewang Gyeltshen said that the department identified four sectors: industry, building, appliances, and transport, which are the highest energy consumers in the country.

[Challenges while studying possible cultural landscape sites](#)

KuensilOnline | 28th October

Limited time, distance, and rapid socioeconomic development were some of the challenges while conducting the study of the Nabji village in Trongsa for cultural landscape site. Department of Culture's senior Architecture, Yeshe Samdrup, said that the officials couldn't get to the site frequently because of the distance and limited time. "To study and understand the community, people and their way of living, one needs to stay and spend time." Yeshe Samdrup said that change and development was allowed but the plan would guide the change. "The plan is just to guide community as this would impact their lives and they will live through this plan." He said that if the development is not brought considering landscape, it could tarnish the landscape. He said that the team would be revising the management plan and incorporating the feedback provided by panel members. Nabji was identified due to the land's connection with the historical past, he said. "In Nabji, the land use pattern, through irrigation system with the settlement to the upper side, and irrigated land at lower profile, has created a unique perception of landscape."

MALDIVES

[President: Society needs to stop stereotyping women](#)

Sun Online | 29th October

Society needs to stop stereotyping women by holding on to the belief women need to do a specific type of work, says President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom. Yameen made the comment during the closing ceremony of First

Lady Fathimath Ibrahim's women's symposium "Kanbalunge Mahaasinthaa" last Saturday night. The women's symposium "Kanbalunge Mahaasinthaa" was held to empower women, and train women to defend women's rights and work for Yameen's 2018 Presidential Campaign.

[Political parties issued MVR 23M from State budget](#)

Sun Online | 29th October

Political parties operating in Maldives have been issued their money from the State budget, says Ministry of Finance. Statistics released by Ministry of Finance shows political parties were issued MVR 23 million. The money was issued this Sunday. The money was issued this Sunday amid concern by political parties over the delay. The highest amount this year went to ruling Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) – which currently holds the highest number of members. The party received MVR 10 million

MYANMAR

[Myanmar-India border meeting in Imphal 'constructive'](#)

MIZZIMA | 28th October

The 11th Indo-Myanmar Regional Border Committee Meet between India and Myanmar concluded on 27 October 2017 with the signing of the minutes of the meeting between the two countries, according to a press release. The 11th edition of the meet was held at Imphal under the aegis of Spear Corps of Indian Army from 25-27 October, according to the Inspector General of the Assam Rifles (South) October 27. An 18 member delegation from Myanmar, consisting of officials of the Army and Civil departments attended the meeting. The Indian delegation was headed by Lieutenant General Anil Chauhan, AVSM, SM, VSM, GOC Spear Corps and the Myanmar delegation was headed by Maj Gen Phone Myat, Commander, North West Command. They were accompanied by other civil and military officials of their respective countries. Maj Gen Phone Myat said the talks were fruitful with regards to commitments on the Myanmar-India border, and issues of insurgency.

[Myanmar pro-army rally defies Rakhine outcry](#)

MIZZIMA | 30th October

Military songs rang out across downtown Yangon Sunday as thousands rallied in defence of Myanmar's army, an institution accused by the global community of driving Rohingya Muslims from the country. More than 600,000 Rohingya have fled western Rakhine state to Bangladesh since late August when raids by terrorists from the minority group were met with ruthless army "clearance operations". But inside Myanmar support for the army has surged -- an unlikely turnaround for a once feared and hated institution that ruled for 50 years and whose lawmakers lost heavily in 2015 polls. Those elections sent Aung San Suu Kyi's pro-democracy party into power, but the Rohingya crisis has put her government on the backfoot. Demonstrators carried banners lauding Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing and rebuking the international community for "pressuring the Tatmadaw" -- as Myanmar's army is known.

NEPAL

[India removes GST on services supplied to Nepal against payment in Indian currency](#)

The Himalayan Times | 29th October

Nepali traders have been exempted from paying the goods and services tax (GST) while purchasing services in India if the payment is made in the Indian currency to the Indian service providers. Issuing a Gazette notification on Friday, the Ministry of Finance, India announced removal of the GST on supply of services to Nepal and

Bhutan against payments made in the Indian currency. Earlier, the GST was exempted only if the service supplier received payment in convertible foreign currency. That rule had created extra burden on Nepali traders as they usually make payments to service suppliers in the Indian currency.

[EC condemned for ignoring SC order](#)

The Himalayan Times | 30th October

Lawyers and politicians have accused the Election Commission of making confusing statements regarding the types of ballot papers. Rastirya Janata Party-Nepal leader Laxman Lal Karna said the EC first announced it was printing single sheet of ballot papers for provincial and parliamentary polls but today it stated that it would print two types of ballot papers. "EC is a constitutional body and should not make such confusing statements," he said. He added that the contradictory statements of the EC had eroded public faith and confidence in the constitutional body entrusted with the duty of holding free, fair and impartial elections.

PAKISTAN

[Pakistan releases 68 Indian fishermen, 61 Afghans as 'goodwill gesture'](#)

The Express Tribune | 29th October

Pakistani authorities have released 68 Indian fishermen and 61 Afghan nationals as a 'goodwill gesture' to the two neighbouring countries. Speaking to Express News on Sunday, Karachi's Superintendent District Jail Malir Afaq Sami said the Afghan nationals, imprisoned under various charges, were released on Saturday and have been taken to Quetta, from where they will leave for Afghanistan through Chaman border. Meanwhile, 68 Indian fishermen, arrested for violating Pakistan's territorial waters, were released in a modest ceremony organised at Landhi Jail in Karachi on Sunday. The prison warden told the media that the fishermen were also given Ajraks – traditional Sindhi shawls – among other gifts on the occasion. Pakistan and India frequently arrest fishermen as the maritime border in Arabian Sea is poorly defined and many boats lack the technology to be aware of their precise location. India to release 39 Pakistani prisoners as goodwill gesture.

[US, Pakistan mull new anti-militant border strategy](#)

The Express Tribune | 30th October

Pakistan and the United States are discussing a proposal that seeks to evolve an "institutionalised framework" of cooperation to deal with the challenge posed by militant outfits on either side of the Pak-Afghan border, officials said here on Sunday. The proposal for setting up a new mechanism was discussed during Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's recent trip to Islamabad, where he held in-depth and wide-ranging talks with Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa. A senior Pakistani official familiar with the proposal told The Express Tribune that the mechanism, once finalised, would help address the trust deficit and also restore the confidence of Pakistan and the US in each other. We have extended to Pakistan certain expectations we have of their government and their leadership to deal with, in particular, these organisations and their leaders, and we are attempting to put in place a mechanism of cooperation through information sharing, not just information sharing, but action – action to be taken to deny these organisations the ability to launch attacks," Tillerson said last week.

SRI LANKA

[Sri Lanka Prime Minister says environment is created for everyone to coexist](#)

Colombo Page|30th October

Sri Lanka Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe says that under the present government an environment where everyone can live in coexistence has been built. He expressed regret that that some media publicize a false opinion stating that the country will be divided by the Government trying to introduce a new constitution. The Prime Minister said that people want reconciliation and they have given a mandate in 2015 to unite all communities.

[World Bank clarifies Sri Lanka media reports on Yala National Park](#)

Colombo Page|30th October

The World Bank has released a statement clarifying media reports on World Bank's position on the management of Yala national park. The Bank said it has indeed raised the importance of managing traffic in the National Park, an important cultural heritage and signature park for Sri Lanka. When people think of wildlife in Sri Lanka, this is the first park that comes to mind with its majestic cats, amongst other animals. But it's not simply the Bank that has been raising the importance of managing this resource carefully, many Sri Lankans who have visited the Park believe that the time is now to manage the resource before significant irreversible damage, the World Bank said.

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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