



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

**May 31st, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 12/5**

[Modi, Merkel Discuss Afghanistan, Radicalisation and Terrorism](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Tolonews | 31<sup>st</sup> May  
Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Angela Merkel in a meeting on Monday discussed regional and global issues, including Brexit, terrorism, Afghanistan as well as China's One Belt One Road initiative. At the end of the first day of Modi's two-day Germany visit, the two leaders discussed Afghanistan and reiterated their support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation and development process. There was discussion also on the issue of radicalization and terrorism and each countries experience in dealing with this, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement. The statement added that Indian Prime Minister also appreciated Germany's presence in Afghanistan to provide stability and called upon the need for

[Nepal-China MoU on OBOR historic: Oli](#)

RSS / The Kathmandu Post | 30<sup>th</sup> May  
The main opposition CPN-UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli has termed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that Nepal recently signed with China regarding the 'One Belt One Road' initiative as historic and a milestone for heightening the bilateral ties. Addressing an interaction programme on OBOR organised here on Tuesday, Oli expressed his hope that OBOR initiative would not only help China attain prosperity but also provide a strong base for taking country's prosperity to a new height.

[Pakistan to appoint ad hoc judge at ICJ](#)

Express Tribune | 31<sup>st</sup> May  
Pakistan has decided to appoint its ad hoc judge at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which is hearing a plea filed by India against the sentencing of Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav, who has been awarded capital punishment by a military court for 'fomenting terrorism in Balochistan and Karachi'. Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Ashtar Ausaf Ali will be leading Pakistan's legal team at the next hearing of the case on June 8 at the United Nations' court which stayed Jadhav's execution on May 18 — an order that India projected as its victory and Pakistan downplayed as procedural court matter.

consolidation of efforts in the country.

## AFGHANISTAN

### [Heavy explosion rocks Kabul city](#)

Khaama Press | 31<sup>st</sup> May

A heavy explosion rocked Kabul city earlier today as there are fears that scores of people have been killed or wounded in the incident. The Ministry of Interior spokesman Najib Danish confirmed the incident has taken place close to the Zandaj square in the 10th police district of the city. He said a suicide bomber detonated a vehicle packed with explosives in the area. The Ministry of Public Health officials are saying more than 60 people in wounded condition have been shifted to the hospitals so far.

### [Ghani Orders Strong Security Measures Nationwide](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Pajhwok | 31<sup>st</sup> May

The armed forces' commander-in-chief has stressed increased security measures across the country to ensure calm prevailed during the holy month of Ramadan, the Presidential Palace said on Tuesday. A statement from the palace to Pajhwok Afghan News said President Ashraf Ghani chaired a meeting of security forces as the commander-in-chief on Tuesday noon. The meeting assessed the country's security situation, especially of Ghazni, Zabul, Kandahar, Uruzgan, Helmand and Badghis provinces, and issued necessary instructions to security and defence forces' officials.

### [Kabul to Host Reconciliation Conference](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Pajhwok | 31<sup>st</sup> May

Kabul will host an international conference on peace, security and reconciliation next week, with representatives from 20 countries likely to attend the event. Zardasht Shams, Afghanistan's deputy head of mission in Islamabad, was quoted as saying on Tuesday the conference was being organized at the instructions of President Dr Ashraf Ghani. Shams told The Daily Times cooperation on combating terrorism would be a key agenda item. Ghani floated the "Kabul Process" suggestion to keep all stakeholders onboard about the situation in Afghanistan.

## BANGLADESH

### [Dhaka, Vienna agree to deepen ties](#)

BSS/ Prothom Alo | 31<sup>st</sup> May

Bangladesh and Austria has agreed to boost cooperation in the fields of economy, climate change and combating terrorism. Prime minister Sheikh Hasina held bilateral talks with Austrian chancellor Christian Kern at Federal Chancellery on Tuesday. "We have agreed to boost cooperation in the fields of economy, climate change, combating terrorism and sustainability of the planet," the Austrian chancellor said in a press statement after the talks with Bangladesh PM.

### [PM Hasina for 'science diplomacy' to ensure economic growth](#)

The Financial Express | 30<sup>th</sup> May

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has emphasised 'science diplomacy' to ensure economic growth through innovations and knowledge sharing. Her remarks came on Tuesday while addressing a conference of the

International Atomic Energy Agency or IAEA marking its 60 years. "We have devised science diplomacy to ensure partnership for sustainable economic development through knowledge generation and sharing," the prime minister told the conference in the Austrian capital.

#### [Bangladesh may get benefit from Indian cattle slaughter ban](#)

The Financial Express | 30<sup>th</sup> May

The leather produced in India contains certain type of grains which leather from countries like South America and Africa do not have. "Bangladesh's leather is more akin to that of leather manufactured in India," said Nafis of Zia Hide Skin Agency, who has a factory in Chennai. Md Ibrar, director of Adiba Leather, is worried about the supply of raw hide, according to a report by [economictimes.indiatimes.com](#).

#### [Budget deficit to be wider in FY2018](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 31<sup>st</sup> May

To meet the deficit, the government of Bangladesh will borrow Tk48,960 crore from the banking sector. In next fiscal year, the budget deficit will be more than 5% of gross domestic product breaking years of practice as the government focuses on winning voters' heart ahead of the general election. Finance ministry officials said it's the government high-up decision to keep the budget deficit above 5% of GDP with major funds coming from the banking sector to address the gap.

### **BHUTAN**

#### [Highlanders asked to return home for census](#)

Kuenselon | 30<sup>th</sup> May

On the eve of the Population and Housing Census of Bhutan (PHCB), enumerators in Merak gewog in Trashigang learnt that most of the highlanders were away with their cattle in the pastures. The absence of most of the householders in the gewog was noticed during the two-day updating process conducted on May 28 and 29. The householders were away in various brangsa (pastureland outside the locality) with their cattle. It is estimated that about 45 households were away with their cattle. This happened because of a miscommunication among the villagers said Merak mangmi, Phurpa. He said those herders who were on the move with their cattle assumed that the census would be conducted everywhere, irrespective of their original village, including the brangsa, which is scattered over the highlands.

### **MALDIVES**

#### [USD 117 million worth of facilities allocated for the Maldives through IDB](#)

Sun Online | 29<sup>th</sup> May

On his visit to take part in the annual conference of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), Finance Minister, Ahmed Munawar has secured USD 117 million worth of facilities to the Maldives. Ministry of Finance and Treasury said that the facilities were assigned in the discussions with the IDB and the institutes involved. And so the in a meeting with the President of IDB, Dr. Bandar M. H. Hajjar, Minister Munawar shared information about the upcoming projects in the Maldives. Area to be financed by IDB include infrastructure projects and waste management projects.

### **MYANMAR**

#### [State Counselor: Peace Conference Agreements 'A Significant Step' for Burma](#)

The Irrawaddy | 29<sup>th</sup> May

The stakeholders' negotiations at the Union Peace Conference (UPC) "mark a significant step" toward future democratic federalism, said the State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at the closing ceremony of the second 21st Century Panglong in Naypyidaw. Despite encountering disagreements over the basic federal principles of equality and self-determination—among the government, the political parties, the Tatmadaw and the ethnic armed organizations—the members of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) who organized the event are optimistic that the conference achieved its aims "to some extent."

#### [Ma Ba Tha Lay Members Announce Plan to Form Political Party](#)

The Irrawaddy | 29<sup>th</sup> May

Leading laypersons from Burma's biggest Buddhist nationalist group, the Association to Protect Race and Religion—commonly known as Ma Ba Tha—have announced that they will soon form a political party. MaungThway Chon, one such Ma Ba Tha member, revealed the plan after the association's two-day meeting in Rangoon. "We will set up a party named '135 United Patriots.' We came to a consensus from all the laymen who attended today," he told the media on Sunday. He is also the president of DhammaWunthanuYakhita, a Ma Ba Tha sub-chapter.

### NEPAL

#### [Nepal-China MoU on OBOR historic: Oli](#)

RSS / The Kathmandu Post | 30<sup>th</sup> May

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#### [Phase II local polls to be held on June 28](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 31<sup>st</sup> May

A day after the government said it would hold the second phase of local elections on June 23, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Bimalendra Nidhi told the Post on Tuesday that elections are set to be rescheduled for June 28 and that the Cabinet would take a decision to this effect on Wednesday.

#### [Ministries still hesitant to delegate authority to local units](#)

My Republica | 31<sup>st</sup> May

The government has allocated 17 percent of the total budget, or Rs 225 billion, to 744 local units for the coming Fiscal Year 2017/18. Though it was widely expected to delegate the authority of selecting development programs and projects to the local units from the coming fiscal year 2017/18, it didn't happen -- at least in budget allocation. The government has not decreased budget allocation to ministries. Many ministries have kept several ongoing projects under their jurisdiction instead of handing them over to local bodies. Government sources say many lawmakers have piled pressure to keep such projects at the center.

### PAKISTAN

#### [Chinese company plans bus manufacturing plant in Pakistan](#)

Express Tribune | 31<sup>st</sup> May

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has indeed opened several avenues for business ventures that

were previously unexplored between Pakistan and China. In one such development, a renowned Chinese company – Yutong Bus – has expressed interest in investing in inter-city and intra-city bus services in Sindh.

#### [Sartaj to brief Senate on Saudi military alliance today](#)

Express Tribune | 31<sup>st</sup> May

Advisor to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz will brief the Upper House of Parliament on Wednesday (today) on the contentious issue of Saudi Arabia-led military alliance and Pakistan's possible role in it. Government's apparent reluctance to divulge details about the Saudi-led military alliance had irked Senate Chairman Raza Rabbani who served notices on the ministers and the secretaries of defence and foreign affairs to appear in the House and satisfy the members on the issue.

#### [Chinese firm gets nod for setting up power plant](#)

Express Tribune | 31<sup>st</sup> May

A Chinese company has got initial approval for setting up a 300-megawatt imported coal-based power plant in Gwadar, which is part of the \$57 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) comprising scores of energy and infrastructure projects. The Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) has issued a Letter of Interest to China Communications Construction Company (CCCC) for developing the power project in the port city of Balochistan.

### **SRI LANKA**

#### [Third Indian ship arrives to assist Sri Lanka flood victims](#)

Colombo Page | 30<sup>th</sup> May

Indian Naval Ship, INS Jalashwa along with rescue and medical teams and relief goods arrived at the Port of Colombo to assist the flood relief efforts in the country. The ship is the third consecutive Indian naval vessel to arrive in Sri Lanka over the past three days, loaded with relief materials. Secretary to the President P. B. Abeykoon received the relief materials on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka and later handed it over to the Navy Commander Vice Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne.

#### [New policy to negotiate trade deals](#)

Colombo Gazette | 26<sup>th</sup> May

Sri Lanka announced a new trade policy to negotiate international trade agreements. The Ministry of Development Strategies and International Trade headed by Malik Samarawickrema said in a statement that a New Trade Policy (NTP) has been drafted by a committee comprising of trade sector experts in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, making a remarkable milestone in the history of trade policy making in Sri Lanka.

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