

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

February 3rd, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 2/2

[India allocates Rs 125 crore for Sri Lanka in 2017 budget](#)

Colombo Gazette | 1st February
India has allocated Rs 125 crore for Sri Lanka in the 2017 budget which was presented today. The Indian External Affairs Ministry has been given Rs 14,798 crore in the Union Budget, an increase of mere Rs 135 crore compared to last year with a major decline in allocation for projects in Afghanistan from Rs 520 crore to Rs 350 crore, the Press Trust of India reported.

[BD, Palestine signs MoU](#)

The Financial Express | 2nd February
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina held a meeting with Palestine President Mahmoud Abbas, on his first-ever state visit to Bangladesh. After the bilateral meeting a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two countries, reports bdmews24.com. They began bilateral talks with delegations from the two countries at 4pm.

[Pakistan in a quandary over Trump's travel ban](#)

The Express Tribune | 3rd February
The world is reeling from the shock of Donald Trump's rise to the US presidency and his controversial executive orders, particularly his immigration policy. Many countries, including Western capitals, have denounced his decision to ban the entry into the US of nationals from seven Muslim-majority countries. Pakistan, however, is treading a careful path.

AFGHANISTAN

[Bootie of natural riches; Insurgents earns \\$46m from illegal mining to continue war in Afghanistan: Survey](#)

Afghanistan Times | 1st February

Afghanistan Anti-Corruption Network (AACN) on Wednesday released a report revealing that armed insurgents including Taliban militants and Islamic State (IS), aka, Daesh terrorists are being beefed by illegally digging mines. A survey conducted by the AACN showed that insurgents gained \$46 million through illegal extraction of minerals and its export only in Khogyani district of eastern Nangarhar province in 2016. The survey assessed illegal extraction of minerals in Nangarhar province, particularly Khogyani district. According to the survey, National Unity Government (NUG) in 2015 showed strong commitment to ban illegal mining and its export, but still illegally and unskillfully mineral extractions are continue in different parts of Afghanistan.

[Daesh commander killed in Nangarhar airstrike](#)

Afghanistan Times | 1st February

In an airstrike carried out by foreign, a senior leader of Daesh terrorist group, Shahid Umer was killed on Wednesday in eastern Nangarhar province, local officials said. Provincial governor's spokesperson, Attaullah Khogyani said, "Shahid Umer was commanding a group of 40 Daesh loyalists in Nangarhar province." He added that the drone strike was conducted on Wednesday morning in the troubled Achin district. Moreover, citing preliminary reports, Khogyani said that "Shahid Umer had probably entered Afghanistan from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan."

[About 500,000 Afghan Children at Risk: AIHRC](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 1st February

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) on Tuesday said that there are serious concerns about the lives of between 300,000 and 500,000 Afghan children employed as laborers or work on the streets. The AIHRC stated that the issue of child labor affects hundreds of thousands of children who are deprived of a formal education. "We have suggested the Afghan government increase the social security for supporting children," CEO of the AIHRC Musa Mahmoudi said. The Afghan government and international children rights groups have failed to address the plight of these children, the AIHRC said.

[Trump's Travel Ban to Embolden Terrorists, Warns OIC](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 1st February

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has voiced concern at President Donald Trump's order banning citizens of seven Muslim countries into the US. On Friday, Trump slapped four-month restrictions on refugees' entry into the United States and temporarily barred travelers from the seven Muslim countries. A statement from the OIC Secretariat warned the move would further complicate the already grave challenges facing refugees around the globe.

[Ghani Tasks Delegation to Assess Helmand Security Situation](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 1st February

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has held a video conversation with top officials of southern Helmand province and tasked a delegation to visit the province and assess the security situation closely, a statement from Presidential Palace said on Tuesday. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah and other high ranking officials were present during the video conference held Monday evening with Helmand governor, police chief and other local officials, the statement said.

BANGLADESH

[IDB voices concern over changes in Islami Bank](#)

Prothom Alo | 2nd February

Saudi Arabia-based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) has expressed its concern over the massive reshuffle in the country's largest private bank, Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited (IBBL), without consulting bank's foreign stakeholders. In a letter recently sent to finance minister AMA Muhith on 24 January, IDB president Bandar M H Hajjar said the foreign stakeholders of the bank -- IDB, Saudi Arab, and Kuwait -- who together hold 52 per cent of the bank's shares were not consulted before bringing the change to the top positions of the bank.

[Dhaka 'high-threat location', reckons US state dept](#)

Prothom Alo | 2nd Feb

The US state department has called Dhaka a high-threat location for political violence and crime directed at or affecting Washington's "official interests." The department, which deals with America's global policies, made the assessment in the 2017 crime and safety report, prepared and released by its Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) on Wednesday. "The Department of State alerts US citizens to concerns about the ongoing potential for extremist violence in Bangladesh," said the report referring to the terrorist attacks since 2015 that are "local, regional and international" threats of terrorism.

[Judge rejects Khaleda's no-confidence petition in Zia Orphanage Trust graft case](#)

bdnews24 | 3rd February

A Dhaka court has dismissed BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's petition seeking reinvestigation and expressing no confidence in the judge in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case. After the former prime minister did not make a statement in her defence and expressed no confidence on her part in the judge, Dhaka's Third Special Judge Abu Ahmed Jamadar on Thursday set Feb 9 for hearing the defence witnesses. The court will also hear Khaleda's unfinished statement in her defence in the Zia Charitable Trust graft case on the day.

[Bangladesh backs 2-state solution](#)

UNB/ The Daily Star | 3rd February

Strongly denouncing the recent Israeli announcement about building new settlements in Palestinian territory,

Bangladesh yesterday reiterated its stance on the two-state solution for Palestine and Israel. Bangladesh also reaffirmed its support for the people of Palestine. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reiterated her country's strong stance on the issue during the official talks with Palestine President Mahmoud Abbas at her office.

BHUTAN

[EU to provide Euro 20M for LG development](#)

Kuensel Online | 2nd February

The European Union (EU) will provide Euro 20 million (M) for capacity development of the local government and fiscal decentralisation in the next five years. The EU ambassador to Bhutan, Tomasz Kozlowski signed and handed over the agreement to the Gross National Happiness Commission secretary Thinley Namgyal in presence of the home minister yesterday.

[DCCL resumes cement supply after temporary halt](#)

Kuensel Online | 2nd February

Dungsam Cement Corporation Ltd (DCCL) has resumed supplying cement to the two major contractors of Mangdechhu and Punatsangchhu hydropower projects from January 28, following a halt of around 10 days. The two contractors, L&T and Jai Prakash complained about the cement's quality, after it failed a quality test at the site.

MALDIVES

[State of the Environment report is released](#)

Sun Online | 2nd February

Minister of Environment and Energy, Toriq Ibrahim has released the report on status of the environment of Maldives – State of the Environment 2016. The report, released during a function held at Ministry of Environment and Energy this Thursday morning, provides information on the current status of; quality of air, fresh water layers in islands, waste management, energy and coastlines, as well as ancestry of animals living in the country.

[Former Home Minister Umar to meet Jameel in London to discuss Presidential Election](#)

Sun Online | 2nd February

Former Home Minister Umar Naseer has decided to meet with the former Vice President, Dr. Mohamed Jameel Ahmed in London, UK, where he is in exile, to discuss the upcoming Presidential Election. Umar Naseer is a member of the Council in the Mauoom faction of PPM. He has also declared his intention to run in the Presidential Election 2018.

MYANMAR

[Climate change affected soybean farmers get new seeds, technology](#)

Mizzima | 2nd February

Hla Min had been successfully farming soybean since 1994 on the hillsides of Shwe Pahtoe (South), an ethnic Danu village in Pindaya Township, southern Shan State, when around 2008 his harvests began to fall. As rains became increasingly erratic due to a changing climate his crop suffered. Sometimes rains started unusually late and his plants would wither, or when he was about to reap his harvest it was flooded by a unseasonal downpour.

[Myanmar Buddhist monk muzzled after Muslim lawyer's murder](#)

Mizzima | 3rd February

A Myanmar Buddhist monk known for scathing anti-Islam tirades has been barred from speaking at an event after the murder of a top Muslim lawyer, a killing that has rattled a nation bristling with religious tension. Ko Ni, a respected legal adviser to the ruling National League for Democracy, was shot in the head on Sunday afternoon as he waited outside Yangon airport while holding his grandson.

[Night border crossing banned in Tamu](#)

Mizzima | 3rd February

Local residents in Tamu, Sagaing Region, have told Mizzima that night border crossing has been banned in Tamu

on the Indo-Burma border. The ban was announced in the morning of January 28 and though there was no curfew imposed in Tamu town, night border crossing has been banned.

NEPAL

[President Bhandari authenticates twin bills on election](#)

The Himalayan Times | 2nd February

President Bidya Devi Bhandari on Thursday authenticated two bills that were sent to her after the Parliament endorsed them.

[Germany's FICO enters Nepal](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 3rd February

FICO, a Germany based analytics and predictive software development company, has entered the Nepali market. The company aims at catering to the needs of banks and financial institutions (BFIs) in the country by providing software which will be helpful in combating money laundering and financial frauds and crime.

[Govt writes to EC for local poll preparations](#)

My Republica | 3rd February

The government has written formally to the Election Commission (EC) to make necessary preparations for holding local polls. However, it remains undecided over the poll date and whether the polls are to be held under the existing structures or as per the new federal setup.

[PM inaugurates Khimti-Dhalkebar transmission line](#)

My Republica | 3rd February

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal inaugurated the Khimti-Dhalkebar Transmission Line amid a function organized in Khimti of Dolakha on Tuesday. Speaking at the program, Dahal termed the project milestone in country's energy sector.

[Taskforce to study issues related to LLRC report](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 3rd February

The government has decided to form a three-member task force under Minister for Federal Affairs and Local Development Hitraj Pande to study the complaints against a report prepared by the Local Level Restructuring Commission (LLRC) and present suggestion within two weeks.

PAKISTAN

[Chinese firms eye Pakistan amid Beijing's 'Silk Road' splurge](#)

Express Tribune/ Reuters | 3rd February

Chinese companies are in talks to snap up more businesses and land in Pakistan after sealing two major deals in recent months, a sign of deepening ties after Beijing vowed to plough \$57 billion into a new trade route across the South Asian nation. A dozen executives from some of Pakistan's biggest firms told Reuters that Chinese companies were looking mainly at the cement, steel, energy and textile sectors, the backbone of Pakistan's \$270 billion economy.

[ARY channels banned in UK](#)

The Express Tribune | 3rd February

Six channels of ARY network have been banned in Britain after the network failed to substantiate its allegation against the Geo Television's owner Mir Shakilur Rehman. The ARY has also been ordered to pay a fine of Rs400 million. The ARY accepted before a British court of law that it had no evidence to prove its allegations. The Geo Group won all the 24 cases against ARY which accepted that all the accusations were false and could not be defended.

SRI LANKA

[Sri Lanka, Ethiopia conclude agreements in economic, political sectors strengthening bilateral ties](#)

Colombo Page | 2nd February

Ethiopia and Sri Lanka on Wednesday signed two agreements that will enable them to cooperate in political and

economic affairs strengthening bilateral relations. Foreign Affairs Minister Mangala Samaraweera, who is presently in Ethiopia in connection with the African Union Summit, and his Ethiopian Counter Part Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu signed the agreements following bilateral discussions on trade and economics.

[Chinese Oceanographic Research Vessel 'Quan Sanqiang' arrives at Sri Lanka's Colombo Port](#)

Colombo Page| 2nd February

Sri Lanka Navy, in accordance with naval traditions, welcomed a research vessel of Chinese Navy arrived at the Port of Colombo on Wednesday. The Oceanographic Research Vessel of People's Liberation Army Navy, 'Quan Sanqiang' arrived at the Port of Colombo last morning for a replenishment and technical halt, the Navy said.

[India constructs multi-ethnic tri-lingual school promoting reconciliation in Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page| 2nd February

India and Sri Lanka today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to construct a new multi-ethnic tri-lingual secondary school in Polonnaruwa District. High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka Taranjit Singh Sandhu, and Secretary to the Ministry of Education Sunil Hettiarachchi signed the MoU in Colombo on Wednesday.

[EU - Sri Lanka investor dialogue to boost trade and investment from Europe](#)

Colombo Page| 2nd February

Sri Lanka's investment promotion agency, the Board of Investment (BOI) and the Ministry of Development Strategies and International Trade have organized a meeting to address outstanding matters concerning investors from the European Union, a BOI statement 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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