

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

**November 4th, 2016 | Volume: 2 - 2/11**

[Pakistan, India may scale down diplomatic ties](#)

The Express Tribune | 4th November

Pakistan and India may temporarily recall their high commissioners in the wake of the latest diplomatic debacle triggered after the cover of certain officials posted in each other's capitals was revealed by the two sides through media leaks, officials said on Thursday.

[Japan to help Myanmar end ethnic conflict](#)

Mizzima | 4th November

Japan's Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and Myanmar's State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi agreed to cooperate in efforts to end ethnic conflict in Myanmar, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said. The two held talks in Tokyo on several issues including bilateral relations, challenges in the region, ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty-CTBT and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) to be hosted by Myanmar in 2017.

[Russia to support Afghanistan in all sectors: Abdullah](#)

Khaama Press | 4th November

Russia has reaffirmed commitment to support Afghanistan in all sectors as the Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah and the Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev met on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit to discuss the bilateral cooperation between Kabul and Moscow. The Office of the Chief Executive said the two sides discussed regarding the SCO summit and bilateral cooperation between the two nations.

**AFGHANISTAN**

[Ghani Blasts Officials for Inability to Get Supplies to Troops](#)

Outlook Afghanistan | 3rd November

President Ashraf Ghani on Wednesday sharply criticized government departments for the late and non-delivery of fuel and supplies, including food, weapons and ammunition, to the Afghan security forces – many of whom are on the battlefields. He called for urgent action by the security institutions to address the problem. Ghani also raised deep concerns over a dramatic surge in fatalities among the conventional forces, and ordered security leaders to outline a new strategy to curb the rising trend.

[EU, ADB Pledge \\$76m in Aid for Afghan Agriculture](#)

Outlook Afghanistan | 3rd November

The European Union (EU) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) would provide Afghanistan \$76 million in aid until 2022 for agriculture development under an agreement signed on Wednesday. The aid contract was signed between Finance Minister Eklil Hakimi, ADB's country director in Afghanistan, Thomas Panella, and Gonzalo

Serrano, the EU Delegation deputy head for cooperation, in the presence of Asadullah Zamir, the minister of agriculture, irrigation and livestock, in Kabul.

### [Trilateral Emergency Meeting on Refugees Proposed](#)

Outlook Afghanistan | 3rd November

The Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation has proposed an emergency trilateral meeting with Pakistan and the United Nations, an official said on Wednesday. Pakistan extended, apparently for the last time, the deadline for Afghan refugees' stay in the country until March, 2017. But the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has halted the repatriation of Afghan refugees to Afghanistan until March 2017 due to the advent of winter.

## **BANGLADESH**

### [Houses of Hindus torched in fresh attack in B'baria](#)

UNB/ Prothom Alo | 4<sup>th</sup> November

Miscreants set six dwelling structures of the Hindu community on fire at Nasirnagar upazila headquarters early Friday, escalating tension further in the trouble-hit upazila. The incident took place four days after the attacks on temples, houses and business establishments of the Hindu community in the upazila, reports news agency UNB.

### [Hasina warns against '2015-like mayhem'](#)

BSS/ Prothom Alo | 4<sup>th</sup> November

Prime minister Sheikh Hasina on Thursday warned of tougher actions against any attempt to create disorder in the name of politics under 'orchestrated plots like that of the 2015 one, staged by the BNP'. "It was the wrong decision on the part of Khaleda Zia to boycott the general election in 2014. A political party must pay itself for any wrong decision of its own," she said while addressing a discussion organised by Bangladesh Awami League marking the jail killing day at Krishibid Institute in the city.

### [Bangladesh foreign currency reserves top \\$32 billion](#)

The Financial Express | 4<sup>th</sup> November

Bangladesh Bank's foreign exchange reserves have bulged beyond the \$32 billion mark. The reserves were \$32.05 billion after the end of Thursday, the central bank's spokesperson Shubhankar Saha told, reports bdnews24.com. The purse is estimated to be enough to pay nine-month import costs.

### [ADB to lend US\\$ 8b for implementing 7th 5-year plan](#)

The Financial Express | 4<sup>th</sup> November

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will lend US\$ 8 billion to Bangladesh to help implement its ongoing 7th 5-year plan (2016-2020). This was revealed at the ADB's Bangladesh Country Partnership Strategy 2016-2020, launched in capital Dhaka on Wednesday at an event at National Economic Council (NEC) auditorium.

## **BHUTAN**

### [OAG prosecutes Druk PNB and 14 individuals in INR racket](#)

Kuensel Online | 3rd November

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) has filed two criminal cases against three prime accused and 11 officials of Druk Punjab National Bank (PNB), Thimphu branch, along with the employer in connection with the fraudulent repatriation of Indian Rupee (INR) worth 61.369 million. In the two separate criminal charge-sheets of 319 pages registered with the Thimphu dzongkhag court on October 25, the OAG charged the defendants for deception, collusion, forgery, kickbacks and fronting as they repatriated INR illegitimately from Druk PNB to India in contravention to the "Operational Guidelines for Indian Rupee Transactions" issued by the Royal Monetary Authority.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Civil Court: MMPRC violated contract in re-possessing leased lagoon](#)

Sun Online | 2<sup>nd</sup> November

Civil Court has ruled that Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC) had violated its contract with Sea House Resort Private Limited in re-possessing a lagoon which was leased to Sea House for development as a tourist resort. Civil Court issued the ruling last Tuesday, October 1.

### [Home Minister: Luthufee will be re-captured soon](#)

Sun Online | 3<sup>rd</sup> November

Minister of Home Affairs, Azleen Ahmed has pledged Abdulla Luthufee – who attempted to overthrow the government in the coup attempt of 1988 – would be re-captured and brought back to Maldives very soon. Luthufee is one of the key individuals behind the coup attempt which took the lives of 19 Maldivians. He had attempted the coup with the help of mercenaries hired from People's Liberation of Tamil Eelam (PLOT) from Sri Lanka.

## MYANMAR

### [Telenor Myanmar to shift focus towards data services](#)

Mizzima | 4th November

Telenor Myanmar will shift focus towards data services as the era of rapid initial subscriber growth comes to a close, telecomasia.net reported on 3 November. According to the report, Telenor Myanmar CEO Lars Erik Tellmann told Reuters that the competitive environment is rapidly changing, with operators targeting internet service use.

### [Police post attacked in Rakhine State](#)

Mizzima | 4th November

A police post in Nurula, about three miles from Maungtaw, was attacked at about 6 pm yesterday by armed men on motorcycles, resulting in the death of one officer, state media reported on 4 November. Attackers who arrived on three motorcycles assaulted the two guards of the post with small weapons fire, but members of the post were able to repel the attackers, forcing them to withdraw with injuries and abandon their motorbikes, the report said.

## NEPAL

### [Focus of Constitution on safeguarding democratic gains: Prez Bhandari](#)

My Republica | 3<sup>rd</sup> November

President Bidya Devi Bhandari has said that the focus of Nepal's Constitution which was promulgated last year is to safeguard and consolidate the democratic gains which Nepal has made in recent times. The President said so in her welcome speech at the State Banquet hosted in the honor of visiting Indian President Pranab Mukherjee at Hotel Soaltee in the capital on Wednesday.

### [Mukherjee meets political leaders](#)

My Republica | 4<sup>th</sup> November

Visiting Indian President Pranab Mukherjee held separate meetings with leaders of the three major political parties and with Madhes-based leaders on Thursday, the second day of his visit to Nepal. Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba and CPN-UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli held separate meetings with the Indian president. Senior leaders from their respective parties also joined the meetings. Heads of various Madhes-based political parties called on Mukherjee jointly.

## PAKISTAN

### [EU mission tells govt to strictly enforce child, labour rights](#)

The Express Tribune | 4th November

A European Union assessment mission on the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) Plus has urged Pakistan to strictly implement laws that protect human rights, including fundamental rights of the child and bonded labour. In a meeting with Federal Commerce Minister Khurram Dastgir, the four-member mission, however,

voiced its satisfaction over the progress made to introduce legislations for the elimination of child and bonded labour from the country, an official privy to the meeting told *The Express Tribune*.

#### [Christine Lagarde congratulates PM Nawaz](#)

The Express Tribune|4th November

International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Christine Lagarde has congratulated Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on the completion of country's IMF-supported economic reform programme. In a letter addressed to the prime minister the IMF chief said, "Pakistan has achieved a great deal over the past three years, and I congratulate you and your colleagues on the completion of your IMF-supported economic reform programme which helped restore macroeconomic stability and strengthen economy's resilience."

#### [Abbasi announces gas prices will not be increased](#)

The Express Tribune|4th November

Petroleum and Natural Resources Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has announced that the government will not increase gas prices in order to provide relief for the consumers. The announcement sprang a surprise as the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) had recently decided to increase gas prices up to 36% for the ongoing financial year 2016-17. The government reviews gas prices every six months.

#### [Sindh to monitor people returning from Afghanistan, Iran and Syria](#)

DAWN|4th November

The apex committee has decided to launch a crackdown on drug dealers and criminals involved in street crime besides compiling a list of people, particularly seminary students, who have been to Afghanistan, Iran and Syria in recent years.

### **SRI LANKA**

#### [4th Indo - Sri Lanka Defense Dialogue reviews defense cooperation between the two countries](#)

Colombo Page| 3<sup>rd</sup> November

Sri Lanka and India reviewed the defense cooperation between the two countries at the annual Indo-Sri Lanka Defense Dialogue held Thursday for the fourth year in Colombo.

#### [Sri Lanka owes \\$65 billion for loans it obtained](#)

Colombo Gazette| 3<sup>rd</sup> November

Sri Lanka owes \$65 billion for the loans it obtained from lending agencies and countries it borrowed money from. Industry and Commerce Minister Rishad Bathiudeen said that the country's debt-to-GDP currently stands around 75% and a significant portion of all Government revenue is currently going towards debt repayment.

#### [Finance Minister rejects comments by Chinese envoy](#)

Colombo Gazette| 3<sup>rd</sup> November

Finance Minister, Ravi Karunanayake, today rejected the statement made by China's Ambassador to Sri Lanka, stating that loans given by China to Sri Lanka was at a 2 percent interest rate.

#### [Japanese business delegation explores investment opportunities in Sri Lanka SMEs](#)

Colombo Page| 3<sup>rd</sup> November

A large delegation consisting of representatives from the World Business Society of Tokyo Small and Medium Enterprise Consultant Association (WBS), who are currently visiting Sri Lanka to evaluate investment opportunities and opportunities of partnerships between Sri Lankan Small and Medium Enterprises and Japanese SMEs, met with Sri Lanka's investment promotion agency the Board of Investment (BOI).

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