

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

March 5, 2018 | Volume - 4 - 01/03

[Pakistan loses major Afghan market share, as India penetrates](#)

Afghanistan News | 4th March
Pakistan has lost 50 percent of its shares in Afghanistan's market, an offshoot of that country's diversion of funds to sponsoring terrorism. Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and industry chairman Zubair Motiwala has disclosed that Islamabad has lost its 50 percent market share in Afghanistan as the time-tested friend, India has successfully penetrated the market on merit. Citing India's productive engagement in Afghanistan's reconstruction and economic development, Motiwala said New Delhi has been providing various items at subsidized rates to influence the Afghan market and the air cargo with a 75 percent rebate has played a vital role in boosting bilateral trade between the two countries, sidelining Pakistan.

[WHO appoints Sri Lankan President to co-chair a high-level commission on preventing non-communicable diseases](#)

Colombo Page | 5th March
The World Health Organization (WHO) has appointed Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena to co-chair a high-level commission on preventing and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Along with the Sri Lankan President, President Tabaré Vázquez of Uruguay, President Sauli Niinistö of Finland, Minister of Healthcare of the Russian Federation Veronika Skvortsova, and former Federal Minister of Pakistan Sania Nishtar will co-chair the WHO Independent Global High-level Commission on NCDs.

[300th school built by Nippon Foundation in Shan State](#)

Mizzima | 05th March
The Nippon Foundation has completed its 300th School in Shan State, state media reported on 5 March. The post-primary school was built under an initiative to construct schools by the Ministry of Border Affairs and the Nippon Foundation. According to the report, the Nippon Foundation has been providing assistance since 2002 to build or renovate schools and implement projects in the community to raise funds. He said the foundation was planning to expand the project into northern and southern Shan state and Kayah State to build some 120 schools.

AFGHANISTAN

[Afghanistan calls for intelligence probe into Daesh](#)

Afghanistan Times | 4th March

In response to accusations of Russia, Iran and Pakistan during the Kabul Process conference regarding Afghanistan's failure in countering terrorism especially Daesh, the National Security Adviser Haneef Atmar has offered a joint intelligence interrogation from the militants of Islamic State, also known as Daesh terrorist group, imprisoned by Afghanistan. Haneef Atmar offered it after the Russian, Iranian and Pakistani representatives expressed their concerns over Daesh

presence and operational activities in Afghanistan during the Kabul Process Conference, held on February 28, here in Kabul. Representatives from 20 countries participated in the conference in which President Ashraf Ghani unfolded a comprehensive and precondition offer of Talks to Taliban.

[NDS arrest ISIS members involved in deadly Kabul mosque attack](#)

Khamma Press | 4th March

At least two senior members of the ISIS terrorist group involved in the deadly mosque attack in Kabul city have been arrested by the Afghan intelligence operatives. The National Directorate of Security (NDS) said the detained individuals have been identified as Ehsanullah son of Karimullah and Omaar son of Abdul Hadi. A statement by NDS said the Ehsanullah is a senior member of the military commission of the ISIS terrorist group while Omar was a member of the recruitment commission of the terror group.

BANGLADESH

[Bangladesh to seek Vietnam investment in economic zones](#)

The Financial Express | 5th March

Bangladesh will focus on attracting investments in its special economic zones during talks with Vietnam's businesspeople accompanying visiting Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang. Vietnamese President arrived in Dhaka on a three-day state visit on Sunday. Bangladesh Ambassador to Vietnam Samina Naz said Some Vietnamese companies are in collaboration with Bangladeshi partners to transfer technology on aquatic plant and fish farming. Vietnam businesspeople can consider investing in 100 special economic zones and to avail the incentives being offered. "The two sides need to implement the Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement effectively to promote bilateral investment," Samina Naz said.

[‘Prof Zafar’s assault an attack on courage of independence’](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 5th March

The Gonojagoron Moncho formed a protest rally on Sunday in front of the national museum demanding the arrest of the mastermind behind the attack on Professor Md Zafar Iqbal. Moncho Spokesperson Imran H Sarker gave an ultimatum of 24 hours and said: "The government must find the real identity of those involved with this attack, and whether they are affiliated with any terrorist group." "The attack on Zafar Iqbal is an example of the culture of impunity that is prevailing in the country, with repeated attacks on outspoken progressives," Imran said. Lawyer and human rights activist Sultana Kamal said: "Zafar Iqbal is a symbol of non-communalism. The attack was launched by fundamentalist forces because his writings and thoughts harm their interests."

[BD wants to send trained IT engineers to Japan: Palak](#)

The Financial Express | 5th March

State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak on Sunday said Bangladesh wants to send trained IT engineers to Japan, the third most attractive IT market in the world, as the island nation is experiencing a shrinking manpower. Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Hiroyasu IZUMI was present at the programme as special guest while JICA Chief Representative Takatoshi Nishikata and BCC Executive Director were also present on the occasion. Citing the findings of several surveys conducted by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), he said competitive wages, low energy prices and cheap production cost have turned Bangladesh into the top investment destination for Japanese companies.

BHUTAN

[Cross border electricity trade issues under review](#)

Kuensel | 03rd March

GoI's guidelines on cross border electricity trade has affected Dagachhu and Khonlongchhu projects. The government of India has formed a committee to review issues arising from its guidelines cross border electricity trade, economic affairs minister Lekey Dorji said at the meet the press session yesterday. He said that the Indian power secretary, Ajay Kumar Bhalla has assured that power transaction between the two countries will never be an issue. He said that the two governments are working to resolve issues that would impact hydropower development in the country. The concession agreement for Kholongchhu project is still on hold because of the

issues with guidelines on cross border electricity trade, which the Indian government issued on December 5, 2016.

MALDIVES

[Shareef's nomination to EC sent to Committee for evaluation](#)

Sun Online | 5th March

People's Majlis has accepted Ahmed Shareef, the Managing Director of Fenaka Corporation's name for consideration for the vacant seat at Elections Commission (EC). Lawmakers accepted President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom's nominee, Shareef, for consideration and submitted the nomination to the Committee on Independent Institutions during the Majlis sitting held this Monday morning.

[Mahloof charged with assault on security](#)

Sun Online | 5th March

Maldives Police Service has accused the MP for the South Galolhu constituency, Ahmed Mahloof, of assaulting the officers of the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) in charge of security at the parliament house. Lawyer Nazim Sattaar representing MP Mahloof, who is currently in police custody, said that Mahloof exercised his right to remain silent when the police questioned him regarding the assault.

MYANMAR

[Citizen rights of Myanmar Muslims cannot be forgotten, says student leader](#)

Mizzima | 05th March

88-Generation Student leader Mya Aye said that he would not accept any government which would compromise the citizen rights of Myanmar Muslims. He was speaking at the 'Civic Rights, Citizen's responsibilities and Serving the Nation forum' organised by Social Alliance, the Myanmar Muslim civil society, and held at Park Royal Hotel, Yangon on March 4 in the afternoon. "I'd like to say straight here we have no reason to feel inferior. We don't need to be inferior. I'd like to urge you to continue your work of serving the nation with the spirit of civic duty and with a clear conscience since you are not expecting any opportunity from anyone. And at the same time I'd like to say to other people not to treat us with inferior civic rights and I'd like to say to you to see us as the citizens of this nation.

NEPAL

[Pakistan PM arrives today](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 5th March

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi of Pakistan is arriving in Kathmandu on Monday, on a two-day official visit to "an important regional country and a close friend" of the Islamic republic. The Pakistani Foreign Ministry said in a statement that PM Abbasi's visit comes in line with his country's pro-active efforts to engage with neighbours. The foreign ministries of Nepal and Pakistan officially announced the visit on Sunday.

[55 members of National Assembly take oath](#)

Rastriya Samachar Samiti / The Himalayan Times | 4th March

Fifty-five members elected in the National Assembly, the upper house of Nepal's bicameral federal parliament, today took oath of office and secrecy amidst a ceremony at New Baneshwor-based Federal Parliament Building. NA senior most member Tara Devi Bhatta administered the oath of office and secrecy to them this evening. NA member Ramesh Prasad Yadav was absent on the occasion. In the 59-member NA, there is the representation of eight members from each of the seven provinces, including (at least) three women, one Dalit, and one person with disability or belonging to a minority group.

[PM Oli, CPN MC Chair Dahal direct MPs to work for unity and prosperity](#)

The Himalayan Times | 3rd March

Prime Minister and CPN-UML Chair KP Sharma Oli and CPN Maoist Centre Chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal of the left alliance, which remains in majority at the federal parliament, have urged

the Members of Parliament (MPs) from their parties to emerge as representatives who emphasise party unity and country's prosperity.

PAKISTAN

[Pentagon urges Pakistan to avail new opportunities for defeating terrorism](#)

Dawn | 5th March

As the United States and Pakistan reengage on Tuesday in efforts to improve their ties, the Pentagon reminded Islamabad that war against terrorism in the South Asian region has reached an inflection point and it should use this opportunity to defeat terrorists. "With respect to Pakistan we believe that Pakistan can do more to combat terrorism," Pentagon Chief Spokesperson Dana W. White said at a weekend news briefing in Washington. "This is an inflection point and this is an opportunity and Pakistan has an opportunity to do more," she added. "They've been victims of terrorism. So, we'll look forward to continuing to work with them to see where there are opportunities."

[Pakistan may suffer from domino effect if world goes to 'trade war'](#)

The Express Tribune | 4th March

US President Donald Trump is en route to adopting protectionist policies which may spark a global trade war. While his intended actions will not impact Pakistan directly, experts believe they will create a domino effect that will hit the country. In a big bang, Trump said steel products would face 25% tariffs and aluminum 10% from next week. One way or the other, the policy initiative is going to impact China, the largest steel producer and exporter in the world. Since Pakistan has massively redirected its economic reliance on China from the US, it may suffer as a consequence of a trade war between the two, he said.

SRI LANKA

['Invest Sri Lanka' takes center stage in Singapore](#)

Colombo Page | 4th March

The 'Invest Sri Lanka' Investor Forum organized by the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE), the Securities and Exchange Commission of Sri Lanka (SEC) and the Singapore - Sri Lanka Business Association (SLBA) was recently held at the Four Seasons Hotel Singapore and made a strong case for investment flows into Sri Lanka. The event drew a strong turnout of leading Asia-based institutional funds and other investors across multiple industries and was graced by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe as the keynote speaker and the Minister for Trade and Industry in Singapore S. Iswaran.

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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