

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

December 7th, 2016 | Volume: 2 - 3/12

Pakistan has welcomed the proposal of newly-elected US administration to mediate on Kashmir dispute.

Geonews | 7th December
Foreign Office Spokesperson Nafees Zakaria on Tuesday while speaking to Radio Pakistan said that only the implementation of UN resolutions is the solution to the decades-long crisis in Kashmir valley, further adding that role of the United States as a mediator would be a positive step in resolving the issue.

Fisheries Minister asserts Indian trawlers not released

Colombo Gazette | 6th December
Fisheries Minister Mahinda Amaraweera today asserted that Indian trawlers seized by the Navy have not been released. Amaraweera told Parliament Sri Lanka is working with India to resolve the fishing dispute. "We have not released any boats seized from Indian fishermen," he said. He said that as a result of measures taken by the Navy to arrest Indian fishermen poaching in Sri Lankan waters, the number of Indians boats crossing into Sri Lankan waters illegally has reduced.

21,000 Rohingya flee to Bangladesh from Myanmar: IOM

Mizzima | 7th December
More than 20,000 Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh in recent weeks, humanitarian officials said on Tuesday, following a bloody crackdown by the army in neighbouring Myanmar. Bangladesh has stepped up patrols on the border to try to stem the tide of refugees since an eruption of unrest in Myanmar's western state of Rakhine in early October.

AFGHANISTAN

US cannot eliminate the Taliban or end violence in Afghanistan: Obama

Khaama Press | 6th December

The US President Barack Obama has said the United States cannot eliminate Taliban or end violence in Afghanistan. In his speech on Administration's approach to counterterrorism, Obama said he 'don't want to paint too rosy a picture', admitting that the situation in Afghanistan is still tough. "War has been a part of life in Afghanistan for over 30 years, and the United States cannot eliminate the Taliban or end violence in that country," Obama said. However, he said "But what we can do is deny al Qaeda a safe haven, and what we can do is support Afghans who want a better future, which is why we have worked not only with their military, but we've backed a unity government in Kabul."

'We will reconfirm strong commitment to Afghanistan': Stoltenberg

Khaama Press | 6th December

The NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said Tuesday that the alliance will reconfirm strong commitment to Afghanistan during the alliance's foreign ministerial in Brussels. "The ministerial will close with a meeting on Afghanistan and our Resolute Support mission. We will reconfirm our strong commitment to Afghanistan's

security and we will get an update on the government's reform agenda, which is essential for Afghanistan's long-term stability and prosperity," Stoltenberg said.

[61 tons of hashish seized in Kabul](#)

Afghanistan Times | 6th December

"The CNP especial unit conducted the first ever ground and air independent operation on Saturday seized six big hashish caches in the Khak-e-Jabbar district of Kabul province," said Deputy Minister for Counter Narcotics from the Ministry of Interior Baz Mohammad Ahmadi. He said 61 tons of hashish confiscated in the mentioned caches and torched in the area.

[Taliban attack repulsed in Kandahar](#)

Afghanistan Times | 6th December

Afghan security forces in a counter attack have repulsed a massive Taliban offensive in surrounding areas of the southern Kandahar province and pushed the militants back, an official said Tuesday. The militants suffered heavy casualties in the fighting, who had retreated several areas in the Arghistan district after several hours of intense gun battle. Provincial governor's spokesman Samim Kholwak confirmed the attack and saying the Taliban insurgents suffered heavy casualties in the clash.

BANGLADESH

[Unique relations with India will flourish further with PM's visit: Foreign Minister](#)

bdnews24 | 6th December

The foreign minister has termed Bangladesh, India relations "unique and multidimensional" and said it would flourish further during the Prime Minister's upcoming visit to New Delhi. "We can expect newer efforts and fruitful discussion of issues of bilateral interests to deepen the existing good relations further," AH Mahmood Ali said on Tuesday, speaking at a discussion. The dates of the prime minister's visit has not been announced officially, but officials at the foreign ministry told bdnews24.com on Tuesday that the PM is expected to leave Dhaka on Dec 18 on a three-day visit.

[Don't turn back Rohingyas, EU urges Bangladesh](#)

The Financial Express | 6th December

Recognizing the long-standing solidarity and hospitality of the government and the people of Bangladesh, the European Union has said it is important that those fleeing violence in Myanmar are not deported or turned back, report agencies. "By providing assistance and protection to them until the situation in northern Rakhine State has stabilised and their safe return can be ensured, the Bangladeshi authorities will continue to contribute to stability in the region," said the EU spokesperson on the recent escalation of violence in Myanmar.

[Bangladesh, India inland water transit meeting held](#)

bdnews24 | 6th December

The 18th meeting of the Standing Committee on Protocol on Inland Water Transit & Trade (PIWTT) between India and Bangladesh was held on Tuesday in Dhaka. Additional Secretary of the Bangladesh's Shipping Ministry Md. Rafiqul Islam and Chairman of Inland Waterways Authorities of India, Amitabh Verma, led the respective sides in the meeting.

[SC upholds death sentence for HuJI leaders in 2004 grenade attack on British envoy](#)

The Financial Express | 7th December

Death penalty has been upheld in the appeal verdict for three militants of the Harkat-ul-Jihad convicted of launching a grenade attack on the British envoy in 2004. The Appellate bench headed by Chief Justice SK Sinha rejected their appeal to overturn a High Court verdict on Wednesday.

BHUTAN

[Assembly to submit BBIN agreement to Druk Gyalpo](#)

Kuensel Online | 6th December

The National Assembly yesterday decided to submit the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) to His Majesty The King for Royal Command for deliberations in a joint sitting. The House decided this by a show of hands after deliberating the objections of the National Council (NC), which last month voted against ratifying the agreement. The upper House has raised 15 objections. The agreement was endorsed by the Assembly during the last summer session. The NC deliberated the agreement last month.

MALDIVES

[Audit reveals financial irregularities by Ministry of Youth and Sports](#)

Sun Online | 6th December

Audit on Ministry of Youth and Sports has revealed violations of State finance regulation by the ministry in its projects run in 2015. The finance audit on Ministry of Youth and Sports, released by Auditor General Hassan Ziyath during end of November, reveals that the ministry has violated the State finance regulation with makes it compulsory that projects valued at more than 25,000 needs to be awarded after an open bidding process and evaluation.

[Over 900 candidates apply for Council Election](#)

Sun Online | 6th December

Elections Commission has announced that more than 900 candidates applied for the Local Council Election by the deadline on December 1. Member of EC, Ahmed Akram spoke to “Sun” this Tuesday and said that the commission was in the process of reviewing the over 900 applications submitted to EC by December 1. Akram also said that the commission had not decided on re-opening the application process.

[President ratifies amendment disqualifying candidates who lose primaries from elections](#)

Sun Online | 6th December

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has ratified the amendment to Political Parties Act, disqualifying candidates who lose a political party primary from contending in any official election either as an independent candidate, or as a candidate of another political party. The controversial amendment was ratified and published in the Government Gazette this Tuesday morning. The amendment was submitted to People’s Majlis by the ruling Progressive Party of Maldives member, Vilingili MP Saud Hussain.

MYANMAR

[Northern Alliance – Burma wants China as peace negotiator](#)

Mizzima | 6th December

Four armed ethnic groups operating in Myanmar’s Shan State have called on China to mediate to end clashes after the government claimed that a major town, Mongkoe, had been brought back under army control. A joint statement by the combined forces of the Northern Alliance - Burma demanded the military stop its offensives immediately and withdraw troops from ethnic areas across the whole country, according to a report by the Anadolu Agency on 5 December.

NEPAL

[Nepal’s first underpass being built at Kalanki](#)

My Republica | 6th December

If you visit Kalanki in the Capital City, you will no longer see the overhead bridge that was built for predestinations to cross the busy road. The overhead bridge has been demolished to construct an underpass as a part of the Ring Road expansion drive. Probably after one and a half years, the construction of the 800 meters long underpass will conclude. The underpass will extend from Bafal to Khasibazaar.

[Make drafting of bill transparent: NHRC](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 7th December

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has questioned the government intent behind drafting an

amendment bill to the transitional justice keeping from the constitutional body that is mandated to advise the government for review of laws and draft bills related to human rights.

[Soaltee, NAC join hands](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 7th December

Soaltee Crowne Plaza Kathmandu and Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) has entered into a commercial agreement for joint promotion in developing mutual business opportunities on tourist generating markets like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore in India and Dubai. Upaul Majumdar, general manager of Soaltee, and Sugat Ratna Kansakar, managing director of NAC, signed the agreement here on Tuesday.

PAKISTAN

[182 Pakistanis named in Panama leaks untraceable](#)

The Express Tribune | 7th December

The whereabouts of nearly 200 Pakistanis named in Panama Papers and Bahamas Papers remain a secret for the country's taxman. The Panama and Bahamas Papers are huge collections of classified documents leaked by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) in April and September, respectively. Pakistan welcomes US offer to mediate in Kashmir dispute

[President signs act, grants legal cover to amnesty scheme](#)

Dawn | 7th December

At a time when the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is facing a shortfall of over Rs100 billion in revenue collection, President Mamnoon Hussain has given assent to the Income Tax Amendment Act 2016 to grant legal cover to an amnesty scheme that will allow property owners to whiten money parked in the real estate sector on payment of three per cent tax. The president signed the act, which was passed by the National Assembly on November 30, on Tuesday despite opposition from certain quarters.

SRI LANKA

[Sri Lanka Navy chief advises strengthening maritime security through a proactive strategy](#)

Colombo Page | 7th December

Commander of Sri Lanka Navy advises that Sri Lanka should strengthen maritime security through a proactive strategy to counter emerging maritime threats. Addressing a large gathering of scholars, Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy Vice Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne highlighted that dependency on the maritime domain for a wider range of needs had become increasingly high due to various reasons and maritime domain has also become a platform for projection of power.

[Solomon Islands keen to work with Sri Lanka on regional security](#)

Colombo Gazette | 7th December

The Solomon Islands is keen to work with Sri Lanka on regional security, the Solomon Islands Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (MAFET) Milner Tozaka said. He said this at a meeting with Sri Lanka's new Honorary Consul to Solomon Islands Kutilla Pinto. Minister Tozaka congratulated Pinto's appointment saying Solomon Islands looked to cooperate with Sri Lanka on issues of trade, investment, climate change, disaster management, sports, people-to-people diplomacy and regional security.

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