

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

September 12th , 2016 | Volume: 2 - 5/9

[Afghan Prez Ashraf Ghani to visit India to hold 'close consultations' with PM Modi](#)

Dnaindia / Afghanistan Times|11<sup>th</sup> September

Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani will be arriving in Delhi on September 14 on a two day visit to hold "close consultations" on key issues with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during which India is likely to accede to Kabul's demand for increased military assistance. Announcing the visit, External Affairs Ministry said the discussions between Ghani and Modi will cover a wide range of "matters of mutual interest".

[In a first, Pakistan, Russia to hold joint war games](#)

The Express Tribune|12<sup>th</sup> September

South Asia appears to be on the cusp of a strategic realignment, though nobody is ready to talk about it candidly. Pakistan and Russia are set to hold their first-ever joint military exercises later this year, officials and diplomatic sources said on Sunday. Not only that, Islamabad is also considering purchase of advanced Russian warplanes.

[Afghan president Ghani warns Pakistan, says open Wagah border or lose transit route to Central Asia](#)

Ibtimes / Afghanistan Times|11<sup>th</sup> September

Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani on Friday (9 September) warned Islamabad that he would close the Afghan transit route for Pakistani exports to Central Asia if his country's traders were not allowed to use Lahore's Wagah border for trade with India. Speaking during a conference with the UK's special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan Owen Jenkins in Kabul, Ghani said, "Afghanistan is no more a landlocked country as it has many transit routes for the import and export of goods."

**AFGHANISTAN**

[12,345 kg of explosives exported for Kabul attacks from Pakistan seized](#)

Khaama Press|11<sup>th</sup> September

The Afghan police forces confiscated 12,345 kg of explosives material exported from Pakistan as the militant groups were looking to use the materials for a series of attacks in capital Kabul. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) said the explosives material, Ammonium Nitrate, were seized by police forces soon after the truck carrying the materials entered Afghanistan from Torkham crossing.

[CEO Warns Against Ethnic-Oriented Politics](#)

Tolonews / Daily Outlook Afghanistan|10<sup>th</sup> September

Afghan Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah Tuesday warned that politics in the country based on ethnicity would have serious repercussions for the nation. Speaking at a gathering marking the 15th assassination anniversary of former Jihadi commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, the CEO underlined Massoud's political vision and said Massoud had been opposed to making deals and had worked with people regardless of their ethnicity.

### [Roundup: Sino-Afghan railway connection hailed as stride to bolstering trade, security](#)

Xinhua / Afghanistan Times | 11<sup>th</sup> September

An Afghan newspaper has welcomed the first-ever arrival of cargo train from China to Afghanistan's northern Hairatan border town as a vital step towards enhancing trade and economic activities as well as stabilizing security in Afghanistan and in the region. "Connecting China to Afghanistan through railway is very important for stabilizing peace in Afghanistan and boosting trade and economic activities among countries in the region," the Daily Afghanistan said in its editorial on Saturday.

## **BANGLADESH**

### [Foreign envoys appreciate Dhaka's counter-terrorism efforts: Foreign Minister](#)

Prothom Alo | 12<sup>th</sup> September

The foreign diplomats stationed in Dhaka highly appreciated the government of prime minister Sheikh Hasina for the enhanced surveillance and security measures taken around the country following a number of terror attacks. "The envoys thanked the government for the enhanced surveillance and security measures taken around the country and expressed satisfaction over the counter terrorism efforts and initiatives taken by the Government," foreign minister AH Mahmood Ali told reporters yesterday after a 'diplomatic briefing'. He said the envoys also shared their views on the possible measures for further strengthening the existing security of diplomats and diplomatic premises.

### [BBIN intra-regional trade drops in 2015](#)

The Financial Express | 12<sup>th</sup> September

Intra-regional trade in the sub-region of Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) dropped by 12 per cent in the last year. Statistics available with International Trade Centre (ITC) Trade Map revealed that BBIN intra-regional trade declined to \$21.64 billion in 2015 which was \$24.6 billion in 2014. At the same time, global trade of BBIN also declined to \$727.39 billion from \$851.56 billion.

### [BTRC inks deal with HSBC Bangabandhu satellite](#)

The Financial Express | 9<sup>th</sup> September

Bangladesh on Friday signed a 157.5 million Euro (equivalent Tk 14 billion) deal with Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC). As per the deal, Bangladesh is to get the amount as loan for the country's first ever satellite "Bangabandhu-I". BTRC Chairman Dr Shahjahan Mahmood and HSBC Bangladesh Deputy Chief Executive Officer M Mahubur Rahman inked the agreement at BTRC in the afternoon, reports BSS.

## **BHUTAN**

### [177 companies participating in SAARC trade fair](#)

Kuensel Online | 9<sup>th</sup> September

To enhance intra-regional trade and investment among SAARC countries, the 13th SAARC trade fair began at the Changlimithang parking lot in Thimphu yesterday. A total of 177 companies from four member countries are taking part in the five-day fair. This year the maximum participation is from Nepal where 68 companies are exhibiting their products and services. India is represented by 52 companies followed by 44 from Bhutan and 13 from Bangladesh.

## **MALDIVES**

### [President: No matter how much pressure, development projects cannot be stopped](#)

Sun Online | 11<sup>th</sup> September

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has said that no matter how much pressure is put on the government and regardless of the attempts to smear the name of the country, no development projects being conducted for the good of the people is going to slow down. Addressing the nation on the occasion of Eid-al-Adha and sending the wishes of the occasion, the President said that the government has its sights on fulfilling the promises made to the

people. The President said that the results of the fulfillment of the promises and projects for the good of the people are being seen.

## **MYANMAR**

### [China to improve military ties with Myanmar, says senior official](#)

Mizzima | 10<sup>th</sup> September

The Chinese army will further enhance mutual trust, exchange and cooperation with the Myanmar army at different levels and in different fields, a Chinese senior military official was quoted by Xinhua as saying on Friday.

## **NEPAL**

### [Stability, dev possible thru tripartite strategic partnership: PM](#)

Rastriya Samachar Samiti / The Himalayan Times | 10<sup>th</sup> September

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal on Saturday said that Nepal's peace, stability, development and national independence could be possible only through tripartite strategic partnership between Nepal, India and China. Nepal should maintain delicate balance in its relations with two emerging economies; India and China, to realise its path to economic prosperity, PM Dahal added.

### [UML hands memo to Dahal](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 12<sup>th</sup> September

Ahead of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's four-day state visit to India that begins on Thursday, a delegation led by former PM and CPN-UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli met Dahal in Singha Durbar on Sunday. Submitting a memorandum, Oli urged the PM to make national welfare the first priority of his visit. The demands included taking concrete steps to revise the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship with India, having a strong position while concluding negotiations on the Extradition Treaty and Mutual Legal Assistance, and implementation of the Mahakali Treaty while mobilising domestic resources for constructing the Kathmandu-Tarai Fast Track.

### [FinMin to be guarantor on loan for fleet expansion](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 12<sup>th</sup> September

The Finance Ministry has agreed to act as a guarantor on a loan Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) plans to take to procure two widebody jets. The decision to stand surety for the national flag carrier has allowed the Tourism Ministry to table a procurement proposal in the Cabinet.

## **PAKISTAN**

### [Sanctioning Pakistan can backfire, US lawmakers warned](#)

DAWN | 12<sup>th</sup> September

United States lawmakers were warned at a congressional hearing that sanctioning Pakistan or declaring it a state sponsor of terrorism could backfire. A transcript released on Sunday shows a lively debate on the issue at the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which held a hearing on US-Pakistan relations. In his opening statement, the committee's chairman Senator Bob Corker expressed frustration with Pakistan's alleged lack of cooperation in defeating militant groups still active in neighbouring Afghanistan.

### [Ghani's call for India joining transit trade rejected](#)

DAWN | 12<sup>th</sup> September

ISLAMABAD: A top government official on Saturday rebuffed calls by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to involve India in transit trade with Afghanistan, saying it is not possible. The official was replying to a question regarding President Ghani's statement in which he had threatened to block Pakistan's trade access to Central Asian States (CAS), if it did not allow Afghanistan to trade with India via the Wagah border.

### [Pakistan's trade deficit widens 27.3%](#)

The Express Tribune | 10<sup>th</sup> September

External trade figures continued to present a dismal state of affairs, deepening apprehensions about the challenges ahead for the country. Pakistan posted a trade deficit of \$4.8 billion in first two months of the fiscal year – higher by \$1.1 billion over the same period of the last fiscal year, after a steep decline in exports and double-digit growth in imports, reported the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) Friday.

## **SRI LANKA**

### [Sri Lanka's path to democracy and reconciliation draws special attention of the U.S.](#)

Colombo Page| 10<sup>th</sup> September

Sri Lanka deserves the special attention of the United States as the island nation continues to consolidate democratic gains and put the country on a path to reconciliation, a top ranking U.S. official said.

### [Sri Lanka - Slovenia: MoU on Political Consultations Mechanism](#)

Daily News| 11<sup>th</sup> September

The Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka and Slovenia signed a Memorandum of Understanding on September 7 that would lead to structured and regular interaction in areas of political and economic cooperation.

### [Sri Lanka takes prior actions to access US\\$ 100 million Development Policy Financing from World Bank for long-term development of economy](#)

Colombo Page| 11<sup>th</sup> September

Sri Lanka has put in place several actions in order to receive US\$ 100 million Development Policy Financing (DPF) from the World Bank for the long-term development of economy through policy reforms.

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### ***About Ananta Aspen Centre***

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