

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

**September 13th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 05/9**

[Kabul, Delhi Launch New Development Partnership](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan |13th September

More than 115 high-impact projects will be executed in Afghanistan's suburban and rural communities in 31 provinces under a new partnership with India. Sibghatullah Ahmadi, deputy spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), confirmed to Pajhwok Afghan News in New Delhi that the 116 agreements would be jointly implemented in 31 provinces.

[Global split over Rakhine crisis as China backs Myanmar crackdown](#)

Mizzima |13th September

International divisions emerged on Tuesday ahead of a UN Security Council meeting on a worsening refugee crisis in Myanmar, with China voicing support for a military crackdown that has been criticised by the US, slammed as "ethnic cleansing" and forced 370,000 Rohingya to flee the violence. Beijing's intervention appears aimed at heading off any attempt to censure Myanmar at the council when it convenes on Wednesday. China was one of the few foreign friends of Myanmar's former junta. Beijing has tightened its embrace under Aung San Suu Kyi's civilian government as part of its giant trade, energy and infrastructure strategy for Southeast Asia. The exodus from Myanmar's western Rakhine state began after Rohingya terrorists attacked police posts on August 25, prompting a military backlash that has sent a third of the

[Bangladesh to sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#)

bdnews24 |11th September

Bangladesh is going to be one of the signatories to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to sign the agreement during the 72nd UN General Assembly in New York this month. On Monday, the cabinet approved the proposal to sign the legally binding instrument of the UN for nuclear disarmament. "A total of 122 countries, including Bangladesh, have supported the treaty," Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiqul Alam told the media after the weekly cabinet meeting. "The cabinet's nod is required to sign these kinds of treaties."

Muslim minority population fleeing for their lives.

## AFGHANISTAN

### [Pakistani PM says open to join patrol with Afghanistan amid US pressures](#)

Khaama Press | 13th September

The Pakistani Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has said Pakistan is open to joint border patrols with the Afghan forces amid persistent US pressures on Pakistan regarding the terror safe havens often blamed for the major attacks in Afghanistan. Abbasi made the remarks during a press conference with the reporters on Tuesday, claiming that Pakistan does not provide safe havens to the terror groups.

### [Afghan govt approves new contracts worth around 2 billion Afghanis](#)

Khaama Press | 13th September

The Afghan government has approved ten contracts worth around two billion Afghanis during the latest meeting of the national procurement commission. The Office of the President, ARG Palace, said several road construction projects are among the new projects approved during the meeting.

### [Modi Reiterates India's Strong Support to Afghanistan in Fighting Terrorism](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 12th September

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday reiterated India's strong support to Afghanistan in fighting terrorism. Prime Minister Modi, during his meeting with Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani, affirmed that New Delhi attaches highest priority to its ties with Kabul. He also reiterated India's full support to the government and people of Afghanistan, including through humanitarian and development assistance, in their efforts to build a peaceful, united, democratic and prosperous nation.

## BANGLADESH

### [Bangladesh seeks world's 'political support' to end Rohingya crisis](#)

bdnews24 | 11th September

Dhaka has solicited "political support" from the international community to ensure safe return of the Rohingya refugees who have taken shelter in Bangladesh fleeing persecution in Myanmar's Rakhine State. Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali made the call when he briefed Dhaka-based diplomats in three phases on Sunday and Monday about the ongoing situation related to the influx of 300,000 Rohingyas. The call came ahead of the UN General Assembly next week when the issue is expected to be debated. Bangladesh has been giving shelters to Rohingyas for decades and with the latest influx, the government says the number has hit 700,000.

### [EU announces new €3 million aid for Rohingyas](#)

bdnews24 | 13th September

EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides, has announced additional aid as more and more refugees arrive in Bangladesh from Myanmar. The European Commission announced €3 million additional aid for both Bangladesh and Myanmar to address the most pressing needs of Rohingyas

civilians. The funding comes on top of the €12 million announced in May 2017 when Commissioner Stylianides visited Rakhine State in Myanmar.

## **BHUTAN**

### [BDD hopes to put national interest before party interests](#)

Kuensel Online | 12th September

Bhutan Democracy Dialogue (BDD) will try and prevent the nation from being divided along party lines by ensuring that parties place national interests before individual party interests. BDD is an initiative of all registered parties to promote and strengthen Bhutanese democracy as “Bhutanese first”. People’s Democratic Party’s general secretary, Sonam Jatso, was elected as BDD’s new chair at a recently held meeting. In its effort to prevent party interests from overriding national interests, the newly elected chairman said BDD’s steering committee would ensure that parties place matters of national interest before party interests.

### [Access to essential medicine a key priority](#)

Kuensel Online | 12th September

All the 11-member countries of the South-East Asia Region (SEAR) are facing challenges to ensure access to safe, efficacious, quality and affordable medicines and medical products. Despite progress over the past decade in improving access to essential medicines in the region, development has not been uniform. Disparity is more pronounced in health centres than in hospitals, and much lower in the public sector compared with the private sector. The WHO (World Health Organisation) during the third day of the Regional Committee (RC) meeting in Malé, called on countries across SEAR to take bold actions to ensure that all people in the region have access to safe, efficacious, quality and affordable medical products through collective strengths via greater inter-country cooperation.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Abu Dhabi grants MVR 77M for development projects in Maldives](#)

Sun Online | 12th September

Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) has extended a grant of 18.4 million Dirham (MVR 77 million) to assist development projects in Maldives. ADFD is an autonomous national entity affiliated with Abu Dhabi government, dedicated to helping developing countries achieve sustainable socio-economic growth. ADFD issued a statement last Monday, in which it said the grant seeks to support the balance of payments in the Maldives, improve the overall economic situation in the country, and aid the Maldivian government in achieving its development plans.

### [Fisheries & Agriculture Minister Shainee: No grounds to blame government for failed sit-down](#)

Sun Online | 12th September

There is zero ground to blame government for the failure of the discussions between government and opposition parties to reconcile differences, says Chief Negotiator and Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture, Dr. Mohamed Shainee. Speaking during a press conference held at President’s Office this Tuesday morning to brief the media regarding the invitation for a sit-down, Dr. Shainee said the government had compromised as much as it could. He said that the opposition had conditioned the dismissal of sentence against former Maldivian President Mohamed Nasheed and permission for his to participate in the upcoming presidential elections.

## MYANMAR

### [India dispatches First Diesel Consignment to Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 11th September

Symbolising the growing hydrocarbon engagement between India and Myanmar, the first consignment of 30 MT of High Speed Diesel was sent today from India to Myanmar by land route, according to a statement. Numaligarh Refinery Ltd. (NRL), which has been supplying HSD to Bangladesh, dispatched the first diesel consignment through NH 37 across the Moreh Custom Check Point on the Indian side and Tamu Custom Check Point on the Myanmar side. Supply of diesel to Myanmar is another step in realising the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to enhance hydrocarbon synergy with neighbouring countries as well as promoting India's Act East Policy.

### [Euromoney Myanmar Global Investment Forum begins in Nay Pyi Taw](#)

Mizzima | 12th September

The Euromoney Myanmar Global Investment Forum started today and will continue tomorrow. The forum is where the country's policymakers, business leaders, and investors gather to hear directly from the government about their latest economic agenda and reforms. According to the organisers' website, in the first year of the National League for Democracy (NLD) government, Myanmar's economy has decelerated and the pace of economic reform slowed. Yet, the government appears confident growth will return and has pledged to boost its economy in 2017-18.

## NEPAL

### [Commercial banks urged to expand investment portfolio](#)

The Himalayan Times | 13th September

Local banks in the country have been urged to expand their portfolio through investments in sovereign bonds, treasuries and other financial instruments via Mashreq Bank. During an event organised by the United Arab Emirates-based Mashreq Bank to mark seven years of its presence in Nepal, Jan Willem Sudmann, executive vice president, International Banking Group of the bank, said that Mashreq has been providing service to the local banks as a custodian of their investments in various financial instruments abroad, including foreign currency investment.

### [Security tightened for upcoming local polls in Saptari](#)

The Himalayan Times | 13th September

The local authorities are tightening the security in Saptari district in view of the forthcoming 3rd phase of local polls the government has announced for September 18. Saptari's Superintendent of Police (SP) Mukesh Kumar Singh said check posts have been set up at various locations along the Nepal-India border, major roads and points in Rajbiraj and other places as part of the heightened security measures. Saptari district has 295 polling stations under 10 local levels. The authorities have designated 207 voting stations as highly sensitive and 88 as sensitive. The district has 331,079 registered voters including 170,888 men, 160,770 women and 21 members of the third gender.

## PAKISTAN

### [Pakistan must shift to indigenous energy resources: Sartaj](#)

Dawn | 13th September

Minister for Planning and Development Sartaj Aziz said Pakistan's heavy dependence on imported energy was the main cause of circular debt, and the country needs a decisive shift to indigenous resources to reduce dependence on imported fuels. Addressing the two-day International Conference on Sustainable Energy Technologies, Mr Aziz said that an optimum sustainable energy mix has to be evolved with reference to indigenous resources, economic feasibility and environmental impact. The minister said energy efficiency and conservation through larger investment and improved technologies remains a major challenge. Mr Aziz said Pakistan has been suffering from a multi-dimensional energy crisis in the past decade. "But in the past three years, a successful effort has been underway to address the energy crisis on a war footings and Pakistan is now emerging from this crisis," he said.

### [Senate clears Corporate Rehabilitation Bill](#)

Dawn | 13th September

The Senate passed the Corporate Rehabilitation Bill 2017 after a clause-by-clause reading. The bill was tabled by Minister for Law and Justice Zahid Hamid. The bill aims to provide for rehabilitation and reorganisation of distressed corporate entities. According to statement of Objects and Reasons of the bill, the existing institutional arrangements and legal process for revival and rehabilitation of distressed companies is both inadequate and time consuming. Efforts in the past have been made largely on creditor friendly recovery laws which resulted in imbalance of legal remedies for rehabilitation of debtors, it notes.

## **SRI LANKA**

### [U.S. Senate committee opposes cuts in aid to Sri Lanka proposed in 2018 budget, recommends total of US\\$ 43.88 million aid](#)

Colombo Page | 12th September

The United States Senate Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific has opposed the Trump Administration's proposal of a drastic 92 percent cut in U.S. aid to Sri Lanka. The Committee on Appropriations while passing the Department Of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, 2018 noted that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) arbitrarily set the topline funding level for the International Affairs budget without input from the Department of State and aid for Sri Lanka, strategically positioned along key shipping lanes and emerging from decades of conflict, was cut by 91 percent in the proposed budget.

### [SAARC Law conference in Colombo from October 27 to 29](#)

Colombo Page | 13th September

President of South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) in Law Mehmood Mandviwalla has announced that the 14th SAARC Law conference and 11th SAARC chief justices conference will be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from October 27 to 29. The event will be held at Taj Samudra in Colombo.

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

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