



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

September 15th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 06/9

[U.S. and Nepal Sign \\$500 Million Compact: MCC's investment expected to benefit 23 million Nepalis](#)

MyRepublica | 15th September  
The U.S. Government's Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and the Government of Nepal yesterday signed a \$500 million compact to spur economic growth and reduce poverty in Nepal in Washington D.C. Nepali Minister of Finance Gyanendra Bahadur Karki and Acting MCC CEO Jonathan Nash joined Deputy Secretary of State John J. Sullivan at the U.S. State Department in Washington, D.C., for the signing ceremony. The Nepal Compact, MCC's first compact in South Asia, aims to strengthen Nepal's energy sector, improve regional energy connectivity, and control transportation costs to encourage growth and private investment.

[Amnesty alleges Myanmar military torching villages in Rakhine](#)

Mizzima | 15th September  
Pressure on Myanmar soared as US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson called the violence against Rohingya Muslims "unacceptable" and rights group Amnesty alleged on Friday that it has evidence of the military's "systematic" torching of villages. The increasingly harsh global condemnation comes as the number of Rohingya who have fled Myanmar's Rakhine state for Bangladesh to escape ethnic unrest hit 389,000, and the United Nations warned of a looming "worst case scenario" with all of the Muslim minority group trying to leave. The number of refugees was up 10,000 in just 24 hours, as the three-week old crisis deepens.

[Abrupt US Pullout from Afghanistan Opposed](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 14th September  
"We cannot afford not to sustain our efforts in Afghanistan. As a nation, we cannot afford the increased risks and peril that would come from a wholesale departure or rapid reduction in our footprint in Afghanistan," John R. Bass said. At his confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he said: "We don't have to guess at the consequences from that policy choice."

### [Insecurity Haunts Investment Initiatives](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 14th September

Though insecurity and lawlessness have been influencing almost all the sectors in Afghanistan, one of the most important sectors that is being influenced badly is the economic sector. Finding no opportunities for growth and threatened by consistent rise in terrorist attacks, kidnapping and corruption, the economic system in our country lacks investment initiatives and fruitful prospects.

### [Two Taliban militants blown while planting IED in Kapisa](#)

Khaama Press | 15th September

At least two Taliban insurgents were killed while planting an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) on a roadside in northeastern Kapisa province. The 201st Silab Corps of the Afghan national army in the east said the incident took place on Thursday in the vicinity of Tagab district.

### [Pakistan Ready for Joint Patrols of Durand Line: Abbasi](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 14th September

Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi says his country is ready for joint patrols and establishment of joint posts on the Durand Line with Afghanistan, a media report said on Wednesday. Speaking to reporters in Islamabad, Abbasi said Pakistan was fencing its part and welcomed the Afghans to fence their side as well to ensure a halt to cross-border terrorism.

## **BANGLADESH**

### [Bangladesh, Georgia discuss potentials in bilateral relations in first foreign office consultation](#)

bdnews24 | 14th September

Bangladesh and Georgia have discussed the potentials of expanding the bilateral relations further as the foreign ministries of the two countries have held their first-ever foreign office consultations in Dhaka. Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque led the Bangladesh side, and Deputy Foreign Minister of Georgia David Jalagania led his side during the discussion on Tuesday. Both sides noted that the two countries enjoyed “excellent” bilateral relations but the potential to expand the gamut of bilateral relations remains “immense”, the foreign ministry said on Wednesday.

### [US briefs Bangladesh on North Korea after new sanctions](#)

bdnews24 | 14th September

The Chargé d'Affaires of the US embassy in Dhaka has briefed the foreign ministry about the latest sanctions imposed on North Korea following its claim of a hydrogen bomb test. Joel Reifman went to the foreign ministry on Tuesday afternoon and updated the relevant senior officials with information relating to the issue. In the latest sanction slapped on the country, the UN Security Council on Monday banned North Korean textile exports, an important source of hard currency, and capped its imports of crude oil. It followed after North Korea's sixth nuclear test on Sep 3.

## **BHUTAN**

### [Economic prospects dim for next six months](#)

Kuensel Online | 14th September

Bhutan maintained solid growth and economic stability in the first half of this year, according to the World Bank's Bhutan Economic Update September 2017 report. World Bank's resident representative, Yoichiro Ishihara, while presenting a report to the finance and other agencies yesterday, said, "Lending growth rates are strong. Consumer price index, exchange rates and gross international reserves show macroeconomic stability." He said that lending rates from financial institutions were 14.5 percent in 2015, 17.9 percent in 2016, and 17.6 percent until May this year. The gross international reserves exceed USD 1 billion as of May this year. However, he also said that external debt keeps increasing and there were also increase in food prices. "Bhutan is at moderate risk of debt distress."

## MALDIVES

[Indian Ambassador meets Maldivian delegates participating in SAYS](#)

Sun Online | 14th September

Indian Ambassador to Maldives, Akhilesh Mishra has met with the Maldivian delegates participating in the 1st South Asian Youth Summit (SAYS). SAYS 2017 is scheduled to begin in the Eastern Indian city of Bhubaneswar on September 17. Ambassador Mishra hosted the Maldivian delegates participating in the Summit at the Indian Cultural Center last Wednesday evening.

## MYANMAR

[Armed conflict must be eliminated to end human trafficking – Vice President](#)

Mizzima | 14th September

Vice President U Henry Van Thio has called for eliminating armed conflicts in Myanmar to address human trafficking, stressing that eliminating armed conflicts plays a special important role in the government's anti-human trafficking endeavour, state media reported on 14 September. The remark came at a ceremony to mark the fifth Anti-Trafficking in Persons Day in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. He also warned that workers migrating elsewhere due to difficulties about their livelihood are facing the danger of human trafficking.

## NEPAL

[DPM Mahara refutes claim government violated election code](#)

The Himalayan Times | 15th September

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Krishna Bahadur Mahara today refuted claims that the government violated the election code. Speaking to journalists here in Chitwan, DPM Mahara said the government remained mindful of the election code while carrying out its duties.

[Minister Dev wants to sack CAAN chief: Nepal likely to lose 6 billion](#)

MyRepublica | 15th September

The government has sought clarifications from Sanjeev Gautam, director general of the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN), with a view to remove him from his post, and this has helped a Spanish company, whose contract for upgrading the Tribhuvan International Airport was terminated, in a case it filed against CAAN.

## PAKISTAN

### [Provinces' job to take action against banned outfits, says Ahsan](#)

Dawn | 15th September

Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal told the Senate on Thursday that it was the responsibility of the provincial governments to keep an eye out for and take action against banned outfits in the country, including those organisations that were resurfacing under new names after being outlawed. The Senate had asked Mr Iqbal to provide the name of the authority or agency responsible for keeping a lookout for banned organisations in the country, under the National Action Plan, and the role of the Ministry of Interior in monitoring the activities of these organisations.

### [CPEC projects enter second phase](#)

The Express Tribune | 15th September

Sindh Board of Investment (SBI) Chairperson Naheed Memon has said that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects have entered their second phase where collaboration between local and Chinese industries is expected on a large scale.

### [Panamagate case: Top court throws out Sharifs' review petitions](#)

The Express Tribune | 15th September

The Supreme Court (SC) on Friday rejected two review petitions filed by deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif and his family, challenging the apex court's landmark July 28 verdict in Panamagate case. The case against the former prime minister stemmed from the Panama Papers leak last year, which spurred a media frenzy over the extravagant lifestyles and high-end London property portfolio of the Sharif dynasty.

## **SRI LANKA**

### [Sri Lanka Prime Minister seeks more women contribution in development planning](#)

Colombo Page | 14th September

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe says although percentage of women in the country is 52 percent there is lack of women contribution in planning of government's development activities. The Prime Minister said that there is a decline in women planning in the Divisional and District Secretariats. While the development in the fields of youth services, agriculture, irrigation, power, road construction, education and all other areas including religion is progressing well there is a decline in in women's work and plans.

### [Sri Lanka's Finance Minister to present first ever 'Designer Budget' for next year](#)

Colombo Page | 14th September

Sri Lanka's Minister of Finance and Mass Media Mangala Samaraweera states that the budget for next year will be designed to liberalize economic reforms, promote entrepreneurship and prepare pragmatic investment projects. The Finance Minister made these comments participating at the Daily FT-Colombo University MBA Alumni Association organized 2018 Pre-Budget Forum at Hilton Colombo yesterday. Minister Samaraweera expressing keenness to engage with the private sector said the budget proposals presented by leading businesses will be considered. "We will certainly take into account your proposals and we welcome further engagement," he said.

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### ***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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