

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

**September 1st, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 01/9**

['We help but do not set the agenda for Myanmar' - Indian ambassador](#)

Mizzima | 31st August  
India wants to help Myanmar build a strong physical infrastructure for growth focused on creating public assets for the country rather than commercial assets for its own business, Indian ambassador Vikram Misri told Mizzima in an exclusive interview on Thursday. "We don't want to do what some other countries are doing, we want to create public assets for Myanmar to use, not the commercial infrastructure to primarily promote our business," Misri said in an interview to put the perspective on the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sept 6-7. "The point is that the assets we are creating are public assets, belonging to the people and government of Myanmar," he said. "They don't belong to commercial interests from India." Most of the development projects supported by India are financed

[US attaches new conditions to pledged military aid](#)

Dawn | 1st September  
The Trump administration has held back previously promised military aid of \$255 million to Pakistan by attaching new conditions which, the State Department says, will allow it to review the level of its cooperation with Islamabad before making new commitments. "The Department notified Congress on August 30 of our intent to obligate \$255 million in FY 2016 Foreign Military Financing for Pakistan. At the same time, the Department is placing a pause on spending those funds and on allocating them to any specific FMF sales contracts," said the State Department in a statement sent to Dawn.

[Bangladesh wants UN to intervene in Rohingya refugee crisis](#)

bdnews24 | 30th August  
Bangladesh wants the United Nations to step in to address the Rohingya refugee crisis in Myanmar's Rakhine state. Referring to the current situation, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali told the outgoing UN Resident Coordinator Robert Watkins to consider the recommendations made in the report by the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State led by former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan. He also referred to the two statements of UN Secretary-General António Guterres issued on the current situation and sought continued support of the UN to resolve this crisis. Violence broke out in parts of the Myanmar border state of Rakhine following the militant attacks on 30 police posts and an army camp on Aug 24.

by grants and some by a concessional line of credit.

## AFGHANISTAN

### [Pentagon approves contract worth \\$2.2 billion for Afghan forces and others](#)

Khaama Press | 31st August

The United States Department of Defense or Pentagon has approved a new contract for the Afghan forces and other militaries of the other nations. “AM General LLC, South Bend, Indiana, has been awarded a \$2,205,926,405 firm-fixed-price contract for the production of up to 11,560 High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicle expanded capacity vehicles, associated optional equipment and contractor-unique spare parts packages for foreign military sales customers worldwide, which will be identified with each order, with the first order being for Afghanistan,” Pentagon said in a notification.

### [Pak parliament, military, govt issue joint resolution in response to new US strategy](#)

Khaama Press | 31st August

A resolution was signed and jointly issued by the Pakistani parliament, government, and military in response to the new US strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia. The resolution was passed amid growing frustrations among the Pakistani politicians following the hard stance adopted by President Donald Trump, mainly regarding the persistent support the terror groups receive in the country. The resolution rejected the remarks of President Donald Trump and the US commander General John Nicholson regarding the leadership councils of the Taliban and Haqqani network in Pakistan.

### [Pentagon confirms 11 thousand US troops are stationed in Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press | 31st August

The United States Department of Defense or Pentagon officials have confirmed the exact number of US troops stationed in Afghanistan. The officials have said eleven thousand US forces are currently based and serving in the country. This comes as the number was put at eight thousand and six troops earlier as there was expectations that the numbers for the deployment of the additional troops will be announced soon.

## BANGLADESH

### [Bangladesh, Cambodia, China sign new UN treaty to strengthen digital trade in Asia-Pacific](#)

bdnews24 | 29th August

Bangladesh, Cambodia and China have signed a new UN treaty to strengthen digital trade in Asia-Pacific. The Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific, a new United Nations treaty aimed at strengthening digital trade in the region, was signed at the office of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific or ESCAP in Bangkok on Tuesday. ESCAP says this will provide the foundation for participating countries in the region to cooperate and accelerate progress in achieving paperless trade across borders, cut trade time and costs, and ultimately boost economic competitiveness.

### [Thousands more Rohingyas cross into Bangladesh border](#)

Prothom Alo | 1st September

Nearly 30,000 Rohingya Muslims have crossed into Bangladesh from Myanmar since Friday, straining scarce resources of aid agencies and local communities already helping tens of thousands of refugees from previous spasms of violence in Myanmar. Quoting United Nations' sources working in the Cox's Bazar district, Reuters says humanitarian workers operating in the area say contingency stocks of materials are low and the biggest problem is extreme overcrowding in the existing makeshift settlements.

## BHUTAN

[Hydropower committee to develop sector's roadmap](#)

Kuensel Online | 31st August

Acknowledging the importance of hydropower sector and bilateral relations with India, the Cabinet issued an executive order on May 15 establishing a hydropower committee with a mandate to develop a clear, robust, and consistent policy that will be driven by the overall long-term interest of the country. "The GoI has continued to support Bhutan's goals in hydropower development, as also in other sectors, which has led to further strengthening the close and warm relations between the government and people of Bhutan and India," the order stated.

[Bhutan welcomes disengagement of troops at Doklam area](#)

Kuensel Online | 30th August

Bhutan welcomes the disengagement by India and China at the face-off site in the Doklam area, the foreign ministry stated in a press release yesterday. "We hope this contributes to the maintenance of peace and tranquility and status quo along the borders of Bhutan, China and India in keeping with the existing agreements between the respective countries." The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India stated in a press release on August 28 that an expeditious disengagement of border personnel at Doklam area has been agreed to and is on going.

## MALDIVES

[Supreme Court rejects concerns presented by 56 lawyers](#)

Sun Online | August 30th

Supreme Court of Maldives have rejected a formal concern sent to the court by 56 lawyers regarding the concerns with the judicial system. At 1:15 p.m. today, 20 lawyers appeared at the Supreme Court to formally submit the concerns in writing. Leading them was the former Attorney General, Husnu Suood and lawyers Mahfooz Saeed and Moosa Siraj.

[PSM pays defamation fine](#)

Sun Online | August 30th

Public Service Media (PSM) has made the payment of a defamation fine after for airing defamatory content against the former Home Minister, Umaru Naseer. The company was fine MVR 200,000 for airing content on which the MP for Inguraidhoo constituency, Ibrahim Falaah spoke slanderous of the former Home Minister.

## MYANMAR

[UN Security Council meets on Myanmar violence](#)

Mizzima | 31st August

The UN Security Council on Wednesday discussed the violence in Myanmar where clashes and a security crackdown by the military in Rakhine state have sent 18,500 Rohingya fleeing across the border into Bangladesh and seen thousands of Rakhines displaced from villages as they also flee terrorist violence. There was no formal statement from the 15-member council following the closed-door meeting but British Ambassador Matthew Rycroft said there were calls from council members for de-escalation. "We all condemned the violence, we all called on all the parties to de-escalate," Rycroft told reporters. The clashes began on Friday after terrorists staged deadly surprise raids on police posts.

#### [16 Rohingya, including children, drown fleeing Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 31st August

Coastguards in Bangladesh on Thursday found the bodies of 16 Rohingya, many of them children, who drowned when their boat capsized as they fled an upsurge in violence in Myanmar that has forced at least 18,500 to seek refuge across the border. Officials in Bangladesh say growing numbers of Rohingya are trying to cross the Naf river that divides the two countries in rickety boats, which often do not survive the rough waters as they become increasingly desperate to escape. The International Organization for Migration said Wednesday that at least 18,500 Rohingya had crossed into Bangladesh since fighting erupted in Myanmar's neighbouring Rakhine state six days earlier.

## NEPAL

#### [New districts operating sans admin set-up](#)

The Himalayan Times | 1st September

Although two new districts were carved out from Nawalparasi and Rukum after the promulgation of the new constitution, they are yet to get their own administrative set up. According to the constitution, four districts — Nawalparasi-Bardaghat-Susta-east, Nawalparasi-Bardaghat-Susta-west and eastern Rukum and western Rukum — were carved out of the two districts.

#### [PM to leave for UNGA Sept 19](#)

My Republica | 1st September

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is scheduled to leave for New York on September 19 to address the 72nd General Assembly of the United Nations. Officials involved in the preparations for the UNGA said Prime Minister Deuba is scheduled to address the UNGA on September 23.

## PAKISTAN

#### [Benazir Bhutto's party remained 'disinterested' in murder trial](#)

Dawn | 1st September

For all their protestations against the verdict announced by a Rawalpindi anti-terrorism court (ATC), the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) did not seem to take the slightest interest in the Benazir Bhutto murder trial, and no one from the party turned up to hear the judgment on Thursday. Benazir Bhutto, who was twice elected prime minister of Pakistan, was assassinated when terrorists attacked her convoy, as it was leaving the historic Liaquat Bagh after addressing a public meeting on Dec 27, 2007.

### [PTI does not have a level playing field in NA-120: Qureshi](#)

Dawn | 1st September

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Thursday lashed out at the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) allegedly for not providing his party a level playing field in the campaign for the NA-120 by-election. Several PTI leaders, including Dr Yasmin Rashid, the PTI's candidate for the by-poll, joined Mr Qureshi at a press conference to raise the issue of violations of the ECP's code of conduct by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the commission's failure to establish its writ.

### [Market watch: Record low trading pulls KSE-100 back in red zone](#)

The Express Tribune | 31st August

The stock market's marginal recovery a day ago proved to be short-lived as it resumed its slide on Thursday despite a slight recovery in the second half of the trading session. Substantial foreign buying provided some respite to the market, exploration and production (E&P) sector sustaining losses.

## SRI LANKA

### [India's External Affairs Minister meets Sri Lanka President and PM](#)

Colombo Page | 1st September

India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj arrived in Colombo on Thursday to participate in the 2nd Indian Ocean Conference. On the side lines of the conference, Swaraj met Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe.

### [National Economic Council to meet for first time next month](#)

Colombo Gazette | 31st August

President Maithripala Sirisena says the National Economic Council which was appointed by him to make a comprehensive transformation in the agriculture and industrial sectors in the country, with the objective of strengthening of the national economy, will meet for the first time on the 12th of September. He says the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank have agreed to grant financial provisions for this program.

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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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