



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

**September 22th, 2017| Volume: 3 - 09/9**

[Pakistan won't be a 'scapegoat' in Afghan war, PM Abbasi tells UN General Assembly](#)

Dawn | 22nd September

Pakistan refuses to be a “scapegoat” for Afghanistan's bloodshed or to fight wars for others, Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi told the United Nations on Thursday. Addressing the UN General Assembly, Abbasi did not explicitly criticise US President Donald Trump's new strategy on Afghanistan and South Asia but made clear his displeasure with the renewed onus on Pakistan. “Having suffered and sacrificed so much due to our role in the global counterterrorism campaign, it is especially galling for Pakistan to be blamed for the military or political stalemate in Afghanistan,” Abbasi said. “We are not prepared to be anyone's scapegoat,” he said.

[President Ghani to Meet His US Counterpart Today](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 21st September

President Ashraf Ghani is all set to meet his US counterpart Donald Trump on Thursday and the two leaders are expected to confer on bilateral relations, terrorism and building capacity of the Afghan forces, a presidential spokesman said Wednesday. Ghani, heading a high-level delegation, arrived in New York on Sunday. In his speech to the UN assembly, the Afghan leader praised the new American policy for Afghanistan and South Asia and renewed his offer of dialogue with the Taliban and Pakistan. He said the new strategy about US military engagement in Afghanistan on conditions rather than timelines provided a certainty over US support for Afghanistan which he said the Afghan people had been seeking “for years.” He said Ghani and Trump were expected to talk about expanding bilateral ties, cooperation in fighting terrorism in Afghanistan and region,

[Nepal signs Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Treaty at UN](#)

Himalayan Times | 21st September

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Krishna Bahadur Mahara signed the treaty on behalf of the Government of Nepal during the 72nd United Nations General Assembly in New York this morning. The treaty was adopted at the United Nations Conference in July this year as a result of a global campaign focused on the unacceptability of the use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances and the hope that the Treaty's adoption would give renewed momentum to nuclear disarmament. With the signing of the treaty, Nepal maintains consistent and principled position on disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, said foreign ministry Spokesperson Bharat Raj Paudyal.

and building the capacity of Afghan security forces.

## AFGHANISTAN

### [Afghan ambassador meets Pak army chief amid new political developments](#)

Khaama Press | 21st September

The Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Omar Zakhil has met with Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa to discuss of mutual interest, a meeting which was organized after recent political developments in the region. The Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Omar Zakhil has met with Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa to discuss of mutual interest, a meeting which was organized after recent political developments in the region. The Afghan and US officials are saying that the leadership councils of the Taliban and Haqqani network are based in Pakistan and the two groups are having freedom of action in the country from where they plan and coordinate attacks in Afghanistan.

### [UH-60 assault helicopters included in plans for Afghan Air Force expansion](#)

Khaama Press | 22nd September

The introduction of UH-60 assault helicopter is included in the plans for the expansion of the Afghan Air Force, the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission has said. This comes as the first batch of the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters for the Afghan Air Force arrived in southern Kandahar province on Monday. According to a short statement posted online by the alliance "The world is taking notice of Afghan Air Power and its success against the enemy. The Afghan Air Force will more than double their fleet of aircraft over the next seven years."

### [Ghani Renews Offer of Dialogue to Taliban, Pakistan](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 21st September

Welcoming the new American strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia, President Ashraf Ghani on Tuesday called upon neighbours to join his quest for peace and regional stability. "The Afghan government has proven that we are committed to peace through our own internal processes, as demonstrated by the agreement with Hezb-i-Islami," Ghani said in his address to the UN General Assembly. He urged all of Afghanistan's neighbors -- near and far -- to support the Kabul process. He also asked for a change of perspective from international partners, saying the conflict in Afghanistan was not a civil war. But this war is not within our soil; it is over our soil." Afghanistan will again become a multi-faceted hub in the 21st century -- for transport, energy, water and mining -- for the benefit of the entire region's economic prosperity and security.

## BANGLADESH

### [Bangladesh clears new antiterrorism police unit](#)

bdnews24 | 21st September

The home ministry has approved a new police unit to tackle terrorism across Bangladesh. The 'Antiterrorism Unit' will join the police and swing into action 'soon', Additional Inspector General of Police Mokhlesur Rahman told bdnews24.com on Wednesday. This unit will play the 'biggest role' in efforts to free Bangladesh from terrorism and militancy, the additional IGP said. Currently, the Counterterrorism and Transnational Crimes unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police is tackling terrorism in the country. The unit, headed by a deputy inspector general, started

its journey in February last year following a number of deadly attacks by suspected Islamist militants on secular writers, bloggers, activists, and people of other religious beliefs in past few years.

### [UN set to revise Bangladesh funding appeal over Rohingya refugee crisis](#)

bdnews24 | 20th September

The United Nations Office in Dhaka is preparing to make a “massive” funding request to manage the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees sheltered in Bangladesh’s Cox’s Bazar. “Bangladesh will not be alone,” UN Resident Coordinator in Dhaka Robert Watkins said in an exclusive interview on Wednesday. He sat with bdnews24.com having just come back from Cox’s Bazar where over 420,000 Rohingyas took shelter in three weeks, fleeing Rakhine violence. He said they will shortly launch the funding request for 1.2 million people including local host community. “We are looking at a massive request of funding. We have been organising meetings with the international donor community here in Bangladesh. Then, the next revised appeal is going to be so much larger,” he said. The UN had initially asked for \$78 million funding to meet the emergency needs of the 300,000 Rohingyas for three months. But the number is rising every day.

## **BHUTAN**

### [RemitBhutan records USD 2M in remittances](#)

Kuensel Online | 21st September

Exactly a year after the launch of RemitBhutan, the country received over USD 2M in remittances from about 850 Bhutanese living abroad against the initial target of USD 1M. The USD 1M target was achieved last May, eight months after the introduction of RemitBhutan. The foreign currency accounts with local banks increased from 637 in May to 850 today. RemitBhutan is a platform facilitated by the Royal Monetary Authority (RMA) for non-resident Bhutanese to operate foreign currency accounts with any authorised bank in Bhutan. “RemitBhutan is now well established and the pace may increase with increasing number of youth going abroad to work,” the Central Bank governor Dasho Penjore said. “There are many incentives to secure their savings within the country.” For instance, Bhutanese living abroad can open a foreign currency account without any charge and zero balance. The only cost is the remittance charges that clients have to pay to the host banks abroad. Once the account is credited with foreign currency, all facilities like online shopping, remittance to other local and international banks and card facilities are provided.

### [UN framework identifies four areas for assistance](#)

Kuensel Online | 20th September

Representatives from government, non-government organisations and the UN agencies in the country discussed the draft common country analysis (CCA) report yesterday. The CCA will provide the evidence base for the development of the 2019 – 2023 UN development assistance framework (UNDAF). The document, along with others, will help guide the UN country team to engage in and support Bhutan’s development efforts in the 12th Plan. The report identifies four key thematic issues that have the potential for joint programming, on climate resilience and disaster risk management, gender equality, food and nutrition security, and SDG data for evidence-based decision-making. Some of the key issues in climate resilience and disaster risk management are coordination across multiple sectors and agencies; shortage of appropriately skilled manpower to effectively deal with disasters; barriers including limitations in basic data, financial resources, knowledge and information and institutional capacities.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Maldives calls for quick action in the Rohingya issue](#)

Sun Online | 20th September

Foreign Minister Dr. Mohamed Asim has called upon the international community to take quick action in stopping the inhumane treatment of the Rohingya Muslims by the government of Myanmar. Dr. Asim expressed the concerns at an Emergency Meeting by the OIC on the Rohingya Muslims issue.

### [President: International community's responsibility to help Rohingya Muslims](#)

Sun Online | 20th September

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has said that it is the responsibility of the international community to put an end to the "anti-humane" actions being carried out against the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. The President made the remark in his message to the Maldivian people on the occasion of the Islamic New Year 1439. In his message, the President noted that all Muslims must acquire lessons from the Hijrah (migration from Mecca to Medina) of the Prophet Mohamed (pbuh), the importance given by the Prophet (pbuh) for the duties bestowed upon him by the Almighty Allah, and the sacrifices of the Prophet (pbuh) in promoting Islam.

## MYANMAR

### [Saudis call on Myanmar to allow refugees to return](#)

Mizzima | 22th September

A top Saudi relief official called Thursday for Myanmar to take back Rohingya refugees and let them live in peace. Dr. Abdullah al-Rabeeah, former health minister and now leading the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, said major global powers need to press Myanmar to stop its violent expulsion of the Muslim ethnic minority into Bangladesh. "What I want from our allies like the US and UK and the international community, I think it's time to put pressure on the Burma or Myanmar government to allow those refugees to go back and live in peace and get their rights," he said. Rabeeah, on a stop in Washington before talks Friday at the United Nations on Yemen, said Saudi Arabia was already pumping aid in for the 422,000 Rohingyas who have been driven out of Myanmar's westernmost Rakhine state to Bangladesh since August 25.

### [Mob tries to block aid shipment in Rakhine](#)

Mizzima | 21st September

Hundreds of Buddhists in Myanmar tried to block a shipment of aid to Muslims in Rakhine state with a witness saying protesters threw petrol bombs before police dispersed them by firing into the air. According to a Reuters report, the shipment, organised by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), was bound for the north of the state where terrorist attacks on Aug. 25 led to counter-insurgency operations. Several hundred-people tried to stop a boat being loaded with about 50 tonnes of aid at a dock in the Rakhine State capital of Sittwe late on Wednesday. The protesters, some carrying sticks and metal bars, threw petrol bombs and about 200 police were forced to disperse them by shooting into the air, a witness said, adding that he saw some injured people. Eight people were detained according to the report.

## NEPAL

### [Province 2 gets first woman mayor](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 21st September

Rina Kumari Sah (Kabita) of CPN (Maoist Centre) has been elected as the first mayor of Province 2. She was

elected from Maulapur Municipality of Rautahat district. Sah mustered 3,912 votes while her contender Rabindra Patel of Rastriya Janata Party-Nepal (RJP-N) secured 2,208 votes. Rina was active as the district committee member during the insurgency. Minister Sah said the party's district committee had recommended her unanimously as the mayoral candidate, recognising her contribution to the people and the party.

## **PAKISTAN**

### [Pakistan to pay dearly for 'expropriating' assets of Turkish firm Karkey](#)

Dawn | 22nd September

The government is trying to downplay the international arbitration loss in a rental power project case to Turkish firm Karkey Karadeniz, which claims to have secured an \$800 million compensation award. The office of the Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP), which coordinated the arbitration proceedings, and the Power Division under the Ministry of Energy separately confirmed on Thursday that the arbitration by the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) of the World Bank had gone against Pakistan. However, both of them said in their statements that the amount of the compensation award had not been concluded and was still subject to a mutual settlement.

## **SRI LANKA**

### [Opposition Leader assures new constitution is within the firm framework of a 'united undivided and indivisible Sri Lanka'](#)

Colombo Page | 21st September

Leader of Sri Lanka's Opposition and main Tamil party, Tamil National Alliance (TNA) R. Sampanthan today assured that the unitary status of the island nation is perpetually safeguarded in the new constitution and it is being done within the firm framework of a 'united undivided and indivisible Sri Lanka'. "Sri Lanka would perpetually be a united undivided and indivisible country in keeping with the basic and Supreme Law of the country, and on the basis of the free will and consent of all its people," the Opposition Leader said. Issuing a statement following the submission of the interim report of the Steering Committee to the Constitutional Assembly today by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, Mr. Sampanthan pointed out that no Constitution has thus far been framed for Sri Lanka on the basis of a substantial bi-partisan consensus amongst its different people, in particular the Tamil people or on the basis of such bi-partisan consensus between the two main parties and other political parties.

### [Sri Lanka, Nepal agree to assist each other strengthening bilateral relations](#)

Colombo Page | 22nd September

Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister of Nepal Sher Bahadur Deuba held bilateral a meeting on the sidelines of the 72nd Session of UN General Assembly, in New York City on Thursday (21). During this meeting, the leaders of the two South Asian nations paid special attention to further developing bilateral relations between the two countries in all the fields, at a time Nepal and Sri Lanka celebrate the 60th anniversary of their relationship. The two heads of state discussed in detail on ways to take forward the economic, trade as well as religious and cultural ties between the two nations.

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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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