



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

**August 23rd, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 06/8**

[Ghani Welcomes Trump's Strategy on Afghanistan](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Tolonews | 22nd August  
KABUL President Ashraf Ghani on Tuesday welcomed the announcement of the new US strategy on Afghanistan, saying that the decision unveils an enduring commitment by United States as a key partner of the Afghan government. "I am grateful to President Trump and the American people for this affirmation of support for our efforts to achieve self-reliance and for our joint struggle to rid the region from the threat of terrorism," Ghani said in a statement issued by Presidential Palace hours after Trump's strategy announcement.

[Scores of JSQM, JSM activists quit nationalist politics](#)

Dawn | 23rd August  
In what is being seen as an expression of sheer disappointment by activists against their respective leadership, scores of members of the mainstream Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM) and its Arisar faction as well as the Jeay Sindh Mahaz (JSM) in this district on Tuesday announced their decision to part ways with their respective party/group.

[87,000 Rohingyas enter Bangladesh since last year: IOM](#)

Prothom Alo | 23rd August  
Approximately 87,000 undocumented Myanmar nationals have so far entered Bangladesh following an outbreak of violence on 9 October last year in the Rakhine State of Myanmar, reports news agency UNB. The influx slowed in late February 2017; however, more new arrivals from Myanmar were reported in July, according to an assessment of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

**AFGHANISTAN**

[Trump Unveils Long-Awaited Afghan Strategy](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Tolonews | 22nd August

The US President Donald Trump early on Tuesday morning announced his administration's new strategy on Afghanistan and South Asia. After paying tribute to the US forces in Afghanistan, Trump said "I am here tonight to lay out our path forward in Afghanistan and South Asia." He was expected to talk about number of US troops which will be deployed to Afghanistan based on the new strategy. However, he did not mention this matter in his speech. "We will not talk about numbers of troops or our plans for further military activities," he said. "America's enemies must never know our plans or believe they can wait us out. I will not say when we are going to attack, but attack we will." He said the US victory in Afghanistan will have a definition.

#### [Ghani in Kandahar to Review Security Situation](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Tolonews | 22nd August

President Ashraf Ghani and his team will visit security forces in Kandahar province where he will hear the soldiers' problems and suggestions. President Ashraf Ghani on Tuesday visited Kandahar province in the country's south to review the security situation there. Ghani was welcomed at the Kandahar Airport by provincial governor Zalmai Weesa and other local officials, the Presidential Palace said in a statement. The statement did not provide further details about Ghani's trip. The president's trip comes after a series of insurgent attacks on military bases in Kandahar last month which left dozens of soldiers killed and wounded. The latest attack was late in July where 26 soldiers were killed when a group of militants attacked a military base in Khakriz district.

## **BANGLADESH**

#### [Bangladesh interested to buy MiG-35 jets: TASS](#)

bdnews24 | 23rd August

Bangladesh is interested in buying MiG-35 fighter jets from Russia, according to MiG aircraft corporation CEO Ilya Tarasenko. Negotiations over the purchase will be held at the Army-2017 military technical forum, he told Russia's TASS news agency on Tuesday. Representatives of the governments of Peru and Myanmar are also expected to take part in negotiations, he said.

#### [Dhaka, Delhi to swap trade-boosting recipes](#)

The Financial Express | 23rd August

Dhaka would propose relaxing Indian port restrictions on imports, rethinking countervailing duty (CVD) on specific Bangladesh goods and improving border infrastructure on their side for boosting the two-way trade. The proposals have been incorporated into an agenda of joint customs group meeting between India and Bangladesh today (Wednesday) in Dhaka, officials said. Bangladesh is likely to place a 16-point agenda while India a 10-point one in the meeting for discussion and decision.

#### [Japan's dev assistance to Bangladesh will continue, envoy tells PM](#)

The Financial Express | 23rd August

Japan will continue its development assistance to Bangladesh in various sectors as it is already providing 600 billion yen for different mega projects, reports UNB. Outgoing Japanese Ambassador in Bangladesh Masato Watanabe came up with the remarks when he made a farewell call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office on Tuesday. Prime Minister's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

## **BHUTAN**

### [Pass GST benefits to consumers: PM](#)

Kuensel Online | 21st August

Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay and the officials from the ministry of finance (MoF) on August 19 emphasised the opportunities India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) could bring to traders in Phuentsholing. Representatives from various sectors, businessmen, and industrialists from Phuentsholing, Gelephu, Samtse, and Samdrupjongkhar attended the presentation the department of revenue and customs (DRC) made on GST's impact and opportunities. Lyonchhen said that zero tax on import from India with the GST regime would make goods and commodities cheaper in Phuentsholing.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Naseer's nomination as Governor sent for evaluation](#)

Sun Online | 22nd August

Ahmed Naseer's nomination by President as the new Governor of Maldives Monetary Authority has been sent to Committee on Independent Institutions of People's Majlis for evaluation. The position of Governor of MMA lays vacant after the resignation of former Governor, Dr. Azeema Adam. President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom first nominated Assistant Governor Neeza Imad to the position, but later withdrew her name and nominated Naseer, instead. Neeza resigned from her position as Assistant Governor after her name was withdrawn.

## **MYANMAR**

### [Samsung launches educational programs for underprivileged children in Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 23rd August

Samsung Electronics Co. said Wednesday it introduced three buses equipped with IT facilities in Myanmar to provide underprivileged children with educational programs, according to Korea's Yonap News Agency. The South Korean tech giant first introduced "Samsung Mobile Education Bus" in Myanmar in 2015. The company said the new buses are equipped with a class room as well as kitchen facilities. Samsung said the program aims to visit children in Myanmar who have limited access to educational opportunities.

### [World Bank signs zero-interest \\$200m credit deal with Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 22nd August

The World Bank has signed a zero-interest \$200m credit with Myanmar to help with programmes that include better public debt management, increased tax collection and stronger public finance management, publicfinanceinternational.org reported on 21 August. Myanmar's first 'macroeconomic stability and fiscal resilience development policy operation' is aimed at accelerating economic changes needed for long-term peace and prosperity.

### [Bangladesh sends back Rohingya boat carrying injured](#)

Mizzima | 21st August

Bangladesh coastguards on 19 August turned back a boat carrying 31 Rohingya Muslim refugees escaping renewed army activity in their neighbouring Myanmar homeland, an official said. The push-back came after at least 500 Rohingya fled their villages in Myanmar's Rakhine state, crossing the border to take shelter in refugee camps and

hills in Bangladesh's southeastern Cox's Bazar district. A coastguard patrol boat found the boat on the Naf river, which acts as a border between Bangladesh and Myanmar, as it tried to enter Cox's Bazar early in the morning.

## NEPAL

### [PM heading for India today leading 59-member delegation](#)

MyRepublica | 23rd August

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is leaving for a five-day state visit to India on Wednesday, leading a 59-member delegation. The prime minister's delegation comprises of four ministers, 12 lawmakers from various political parties and nine government secretaries. The official delegation does not include those in the accompanying business delegation.

### [PM Deuba expands Cabinet, inducts 15 State Ministers](#)

The Himalayan Times | 22nd August

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has inducted 15 more State Ministers in his Cabinet on Tuesday. PM Deuba administered the oath of office and secrecy to the newly appointed State Ministers at the Office of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers today. The latest expansion to the cabinet has led to a 46-member Council of Ministers including three Deputy Prime Ministers, 19 Ministers and 23 State Ministers.

## PAKISTAN

### [ECP meeting: Opp candidates allege use of state resources in Kulsoom's campaign](#)

Dawn|23rd August

The nominees of various political parties as well as independent candidates in the run for the National Assembly constituency NA-120, Lahore-III, have alleged use of the state resources, besides other violations of the code of conduct by the ruling PML-N. The complaints about violations of the code of conduct surfaced during a meeting the Election Commission of Pakistan held here on Tuesday, where the candidates were invited to share their views regarding the so far implementation of the code in NA-120.

### [Lawyers' boycott hits lower courts, SHC remains unaffected](#)

Dawn|23rd August

While lawyers boycotted court work in subordinate judiciary, they appeared in the Hyderabad circuit bench of the Sindh High Court (SHC) where all four judges heard cases as per routine on Tuesday. High Court Bar Association (HCBA) general secretary Hameedullah Dahiri met senior judges of the bench to request that the board of cases should be discharged, but he was told that if the court work continued at the principal seat, they would hear cases.

### [Senate passes right to information bill](#)

The Express Tribune|23rd August

The long-pending Right of Access to Information Bill finally saw the light of day on Tuesday when the upper house of parliament adopted it unanimously. If implemented, the bill would give people – including the

media – access to public record. However, there will still be some limitations in obtaining access to the material that may be considered harmful to national security, relations with friendly countries, privacy of someone’s life, home and family records.

## SRI LANKA

### [UNP calls on President to remove Minister Wijedasa Rajapakshe from all cabinet portfolios](#)

Colombo Page | 22nd August

Sri Lanka's main ruling party United National Party on Tuesday said the party leadership has urged the President Maithripala Sirisena to remove Minister of Justice and Buddha Sasana Wijedasa Rajapakshe from all his ministerial portfolios. Issuing a statement, General Secretary of the UNP Minister Kabir Hashim said the working committee of the UNP decided that Rajapakshe should be removed since he failed to act according to the decision taken by the committee and continues to violate collective responsibility of the party and the cabinet.

### [Government says 84 PTA related cases still before court](#)

Colombo Gazette | 22nd August

The Government says 84 cases related to the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) are still before court. The President’s media division said that the Attorney-General’s Department is examining police investigation reports pertaining to another 12 suspects also arrested under the PTA for further legal action.

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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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