

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

**November 24th , 2017| Volume: 3 - 8/11**

[Beijing Reaffirms Support to Kabul War on Terror](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 23rd November  
Chinese envoy in Kabul on Wednesday renewed his country's commitment to cooperating with Afghanistan in the fight against terrorism - a common threat to both the countries. Addressing a gathering at the Chinese Embassy here, Charge D'Affairs Zhang Zhixin said China supported an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process and China being a responsible nation wanted to play an effective role in Afghanistan's stability. He added China was striving to remove trust deficit between Pakistan and Afghanistan in order the two countries could effectively deal with terrorism.

[MoU on Rohingya repatriation inked, yet no timeframe](#)

Prothom Alo| 23rd November  
Without any specific timeframe, Bangladesh, Myanmar signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to repatriate Rohingya people from Bangladesh. The two neighbouring nations struck the MoU following a meeting between foreign minister AH Mahmood Ali and Myanmar's state counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi in the morning at Suu Kyi's office, reports UNB. Foreign minister AH Mahmood Ali and Myanmar's minister for state counsellor's office Kyauw Tint Swe signed the instrument. They also exchanged ratification of boundary agreement 1998. Minister Mahmood Ali made the disclosure of signing the 'Arrangement on Return of Displaced Persons from Rakhine State' after they reached a much-sought consensus on the Rohingya repatriation.

[Pakistan welcomes US offer to take on Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan](#)

Dawn | 23rd November  
Days before crucial talks with the US defence secretary, Pakistan has welcomed an American offer to take action against militants involved in cross-border raids from the Afghan soil, the Voice of America radio service reported on Wednesday. The official US news outlet also reported that Pakistan believed the US offer "augurs well" for regional counterterrorism cooperation. US Defence Secretary James Mattis is expected in Islamabad on Dec 3 for talks aimed at enlisting Pakistan's support for implementing the new US strategy for Afghanistan. The strategy seeks to force the Taliban to join the Afghan peace process by defeating them in the battlefield. Pakistan welcomes the US plan for persuading Taliban to seek reconciliation with the Afghan government but says that

there's no military solution to this dispute.

## AFGHANISTAN

### [Taliban and Daesh 'Involved in Human Trafficking'](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan| 23rd November

A report by the United Nations reveals that insurgent groups are involved in human smuggling often for the purpose of sexual slavery and forced labor. Addressing a UN session, the US ambassador to the United Nations Nikki R. Harley said Taliban and Daesh are involved in human smuggling. "As noted in the Secretary General's report, victims of trafficking by violent extremist groups like ISIS (Daesh) and the Taliban suffer from particularly severe trauma," she said. "Not only is the United States fully committed to the complete defeat of these violent extremist groups, but we join you in complete commitment to helping those victims." The session also called for more pressure to be put on terrorists groups, including sanctions.

### [Top Haqqani network leader among dozens killed in Wardak night operation](#)

Khaama Press| 23rd November

A top leader of the notorious Haqqani terrorist network was killed along with dozens of other militants in an operation in central Maidan Wardak province of Afghanistan. According to the local officials, the operation was conducted in the vicinity of Nerkh district of Wardak by the Afghan Special Forces. Provincial governor's spokesman Abdul Rahman Mangsal said the Afghan forces conducted a night operation late on Tuesday night, leaving more than 20 insurgents dead. He said several commanders of the Taliban group were also among those killed in the operation. However, another official said more than 30 insurgents including a top leader of the Haqqani terrorist network Qari Qudrullah were killed. The anti-government armed militant groups including the Taliban insurgents have not commented regarding the report so far.

Maidan Wardak is among the relatively volatile provinces in central parts of the country, located close to capital Kabul.

### [Germany investing 6.4 billion AFN for Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press|23rd November

The Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) says the government of Germany is investing 6.4 billion Afghanis for Afghanistan. According to a statement by the organization "Today, the Afghan government and the German KfW Development Bank signed a financial agreement: Germany provides AFN 6.44 billion funds to the Afghan state." The statement further added that the budget will be allocated to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), administered by the World Bank. Since the fund's creation in 2002, Germany has contributed almost AFN 47 billion. The Afghan government will use the budget for developing and implementing projects in the areas of good governance, agriculture, rural development, infrastructure, as well as human and social development. In 2016 alone, 9.3 million Afghans benefited from such projects.

## BANGLADESH

### [Enforced disappearance scenario worse in US, UK: Hasina](#)

Prothom Alo| 23rd November

Prime minister Sheikh Hasina said people will not cast their vote for the party to see the resurgence of unrest. Referring to the Opposition Leader's concern about 'enforced disappearance', she said there is no doubt that it is the duty of the government to ensure the security of common people. Sheikh Hasina mentioned that many people are allegedly being disappeared and many of them also return. "But, the news items of those who return don't get the due coverage." Citing an estimate of 2009, she said some 275,000 British citizens went missing and 20,000 of them remained untraced. "The situation is even worse in the United States

### [2 Bangladesh solar firms awarded \\$1m UN grant](#)

Prothom Alo| 23rd November

Two Bangladeshi companies have received \$1 million of UN energy grant from the United Nations in recognition of a project to spur solar entrepreneurship. Grameen Shakti and ME SOLshare received the grant at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on Tuesday for their joint project that will allow villagers to secure more solar power, save money through flexible energy access, and generate income from trading electricity, said a UN press release. According to the release, the project will also enable rural Bangladeshi villagers to become solar entrepreneurs by creating an interconnected platform where solar home system users and non-users can exchange electricity. The project's bottom-up mini grids seek to transform solar home systems into an income-generating asset. The partnership estimates that the grant money will enable them to establish a minimum of 100 smart grids resulting in at least 15,000 beneficiaries. But the impact of the grant is going to be greater, as it is likely to inspire more such initiatives, said UN.

## **BHUTAN**

### [Bhutan to open consulate office in Guwahati](#)

Keunsel | 23rd November

Coinciding with the 50th anniversary of Bhutan-India relationship, Bhutan will open office of the consulate general in Guwahati next year. Foreign minister Damcho Dorji said this during the question answer session in response to Kengkhar-Weringla MP Rinzin Jamtsho's question on when the office would be opened at the National Assembly on November 21. "We have begun the work as we have pledged," Foreign Minister Damcho Dorji said. The government committed to open the office in Guwahati considering the challenges the Bhutanese face while travelling through Bhutan-India border. The Indian government approved the establishment of consulate office in Guwahati in May this year. The consultation occurred in July last year.

### [Australia Awards is for Bhutan, not for individuals](#)

Keunsel | 23rd November

The prestigious Australia Awards (AA) scholarship is for Bhutan and not for individuals, according to AA's team leader for South and West Asia, Tony Crooks. He said this during an AA scholarship's pre-departure briefing for 28 awardees on November 21 in Thimphu. "The AA is a scholarship granted as Australia's long-term commitment to Bhutan." Tony Crooks emphasised that AA's main objective is to contribute to national development and to strengthen linkages between Australia and Bhutan. "You are the link to obtain these objectives." He said that the Australian government is investing its taxpayers' money in the education of the awardees so that there is development in Bhutan and it is the responsibility of every awardee to prove that the investment was worth. "The programme fails when awardees do not make any contribution to the country after returning from Australia."

## **MALDIVES**

### [Maldives, Korea to celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations on Monday](#)

Sun Online | 23rd November

Special events have been organized to mark 50 years of diplomatic relations between Maldives and South Korea. Korean embassy in Sri Lanka reports it has organized a reception and Taekwondo demonstration for Monday, November 27. Taekwondo is a type of Korean martial arts. The anniversary reception will be held at Hotel Jen at 7 pm. And will be followed by a demonstration of Taekwondo and Maldivian cultural item Boduberu at the Alimas Carnival at 8:30 pm, says the Korean embassy.

### [Delegation from Global Forum for Moderation visits Maldives](#)

Sun Online | 23rd November

A delegation from the Global Forum for Moderation of Jordan has arrived in Maldives for an official visit at the invitation of Ministry of Islamic Affairs of Maldives. Ministry of Islamic Affairs reports the purpose of the visit was to strengthen ties with relevant institutions, and hold discussions and Maldives to promote religious moderation, eliminate religious extremism, and combat terrorism. The ministry reports the delegation has met with Commissioner of Police Ahmed Areef to discuss collaboration in fighting terrorism, and ways the institute can assist the Maldives in combating terrorism.

## MYANMAR

### [ASEAN Member States stand ready to help' on Rakhine crisis: Singapore FM](#)

Mizzima | 24th November

Mizzima correspondent Hong Sar met with Singaporean Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan and asked him his view on what ASEAN can do to address Myanmar's Rakhine crisis. As you know, there is a crisis in Rakhine State. So, what can ASEAN countries do to solve this problem in your view? Well, a tough but relevant question given current events. I think the first thing I want to say is that this is Myanmar's responsibility to resolve. All of us, in our own – I'm talking about all of the other individual Member States of ASEAN – all of us have had to deal with this very challenging issue of race, language, religion and citizenship in our history. All of us have had to deal with it and resolve it in our own unique ways. So that's the first point. This is Myanmar's responsibility and you have to resolve it. Second point is: I will recognise however, that this is a complicated, long-standing issue, and it's not easy to just negotiate, come up with a statement and say everything is fine. It is complicated, it is difficult. So, our first humanitarian response, regardless of politics, surely must be that the violence must stop.

### [India welcomes Myanmar-Bangladesh MOU on refugee repatriation](#)

Mizzima | 23rd November

India on Thursday welcomed the MOU signed between Myanmar and Bangladesh to start the repatriation of Rohingya refugees. An Indian external affairs ministry official told Mizzima that the "MOU was a major breakthrough." "It shows Myanmar and Bangladesh can resolve this issue through bilateral dialogue," the official said but was not willing to be named. "Both countries are friendly neighbours, and we back their efforts to find a solution." India had earlier welcomed as encouraging and positive Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi's address on the situation in the country's Rakhine state where violence has triggered an outflow of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees to neighbouring Bangladesh. "It was an encouraging address and contained a very positive message," India's Ambassador to Myanmar Vikram Misri told the media after Suu Kyi's state of the union address on the issue."

## NEPAL

### [Govt funds released for polls reach Rs 19 billion](#)

MyRepublica | 24th November

The government has released a total of Rs 19 billion in expenditures to the Election Commission (EC) as well as various security agencies for the upcoming parliamentary and provincial polls. According to the Ministry of Finance, the EC has already received Rs 10 billion for meeting election-related expenses. The government has also doled out Rs 9 billion to various security agencies. Temporary police alone to add Rs 5 billion to election bill.

### [New age after polls: UML Chair Oli](#)

The Himalayan Times | 24th November

CPN-UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli on Thursday said that the country would enter a new era after the polls. Addressing an election campaign organised in Birendranagar of Surkhet district yesterday, Oli said that “The elections will give the country a stable government, and then there will be a beginning of a new era.” He also claimed that the next government would be formed under the leadership of a leftist party.

### [Police open fire to control clash between left, democratic cadres in Rasuwa](#)

The Himalayan Times | 24th November

A clash broke out between cadres of the left alliance and democratic alliance took a nasty turn in Rasuwa district on Thursday night forcing the police to open fire into the air. The incident took place started in Kalikasthan area just a few hours ago before the silence period started.

## PAKISTAN

### [India wants envoy to accompany spy Jadhav's wife](#)

Dawn | 24th November

India has informed Pakistan that it wants one of its officials to accompany the wife of espionage convict Kulbhushan Jadhav when she meets him in Pakistan, Indian Express said on Thursday. India has also sought a sovereign guarantee from Pakistan that Jadhav's family members would not be harassed or questioned when they visit him, the paper said, adding that Pakistan is yet to respond to India's message. Jadhav, a former Indian Navy officer, was arrested in Pakistan on espionage charges. The Pakistan government, earlier this month, had agreed to let Jadhav meet his wife on “humanitarian grounds”. “The government of Pakistan has decided to arrange a meeting of Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav with his wife, in Pakistan, purely on humanitarian grounds,” Foreign Office spokesperson Mohammad Faisal said in a statement, adding the meeting will take place on Pakistani soil.

### [SC seeks report on Pakistanis named in Panama Papers](#)

The Express Tribune | 24th November

The Supreme Court on Thursday issued notices to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and the federal government seeking reports on action taken against 436 Pakistanis named in the Panama Papers. A two-member bench of the apex court chaired by Justice Ejaz Afzal started hearing the petitions filed by Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Senator Sirajul Haq and Advocate Tariq Asad. The petitioners seek action against all those named in the Panama Papers. The court had clubbed both the petitions into one. Advocate Asad started with the request that the court should act against all (those whose have appeared in the leaks) without any discrimination. “These companies are being established to evade taxes,” Asad stated, adding that the court should take action against all such people

who engaged in laundering money.

### [India using Afghan war against Pakistan, says Ahsan Iqbal](#)

Geo News | 23rd November

Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday said that India is using the Afghan war against Pakistan. "India's role in Afghanistan is not to establish peace," Iqbal said in an interview with Al Jazeera. He stressed that a lot, apart from the peace efforts, needs to be done in Afghanistan. "Peace in Afghanistan is a guarantee of peace in Pakistan," he said, adding that the US cannot establish peace in the country without Pakistan's assistance. "Pakistan-US cooperation is imperative for regional peace and stability," the interior minister said, adding that it is time that regional players unite with the common objective of bringing about sustainable peace in Afghanistan. He also stressed that Pakistan will never allow its soil to be used against any other country. "We hope that other countries also don't allow their soil to be used against Pakistan," he added.

## SRI LANKA

### [India supports Sri Lanka PM's vision to create a stable and prosperous country](#)

Colombo Page | 23rd November

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe called on the President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. Welcoming the Sri Lankan Prime Minister to India, the President Kovind said that India supports his vision to create a stable and prosperous Sri Lanka. The President also appreciated Mr Wickremesinghe's positive role in Sri Lanka's active engagement with the world. The President said that relations between India and Sri Lanka are unique, warm and friendly. They are based upon shared historical, cultural, ethnic and civilizational ties and extensive people-to-people linkages.

### [Sri Lanka receives World No Tobacco Day Award for third time](#)

Colombo Page | 23rd November

Sri Lanka for the third time, won World No Tobacco Day Award 2017, bestowed by the World Health Organization (WHO) for the WHO Regions for their accomplishments in the area of tobacco control. The award was officially presented to President Maithripala Sirisena by the Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia Region Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh at the Water's Edge Hotel in Battaramulla.

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

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