



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

**August 25th, 2017| Volume: 3 - 07/8**

[Taliban cannot win militarily, time to join reconciliation: Gen. Nicholson](#)  
Afghanistan Times| 24th August  
Days after the US announced a new Afghan strategy, the top US and NATO commander in the country warned the Taliban cannot win on the battle field and it is time for them to join the peace and reconciliation process, instead of continuing to kill more innocent Afghans. Speaking at a joint press conference with the U.S. Ambassador in Afghanistan here, General Nicholson, said that “The united states, our NATO allies and partners are with you (Afghanistan)”, adding “we stand with your (Afghan) security forces against terrorists and the enemies of Afghanistan and the enemies of the entire world.”

[Pakistan sets terms for help in anti-terror fight](#)  
Dawn|25th August  
Pakistan’s top civilian and military leadership on Thursday strongly rejected US President Donald Trump’s allegations of insincerity and duplicity in the fight against terrorism and set conditions for future counterterrorism cooperation with Washington and Kabul, specifically the removal of hideouts in eastern Afghanistan.

[Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma's Dhaka visit deferred](#)  
The Daily Star | 25th August  
The proposed visit of Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to Bangladesh in the first half of September has been deferred. She was scheduled to attend the fourth Bangladesh-India Joint Consultative Commission (JCC) meeting to be held in Dhaka before leaving for the US to join the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

**AFGHANISTAN**

[Hundreds gather in support of Momand and against Noor in Kabul](#)  
Khaama Press|25th August

A large gathering was organized in Kabul on Thursday in support of the Balkh provincial council member Asif Momand who was allegedly tortured by the provincial governor Ata Mohammad Noor's personnel. The gathering was attended by several representatives of the district councils and elders as well as hundreds of supporters of Momand.

#### [General Dostum welcomes announcement of new US strategy for Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press | 24th August 2017

The First Vice President of Afghanistan General Abdul Rashid Dostum welcomed the announcement of the new strategy by the United States for Afghanistan and South Asia. Dostum, who is currently in Turkey for the treatment purposes, welcomed the announcement of the new strategy through a short statement posted on his official Twitter account.

#### [Explosion in Kabul city leaves one wounded](#)

Khaama Press | 24th August 2017

An explosion has taken place in Kabul city earlier tonight with preliminary reports indicating at least one person was wounded. The incident has taken place in the vicinity of Sarai Shamali area of the city targeting a vehicle.

## **BANGLADESH**

#### [Bangladesh court rules gas deals with Canada's Niko illegal, orders seizure of its assets](#)

bdnews24 | 24th August

The High Court in Bangladesh has scrapped two gas deals with Canada-based Niko Resources. It has also ordered confiscation of Niko's assets in Bangladesh. The court also told the state not to pay Niko any money it owes to the company, until the two lawsuits -- one for the 2005 gas-field blast and the other on corruption -- are settled. Niko signed two deals in 2003 and 2006 to explore and sell natural gas to Bangladesh.

#### [Islamic banking grows in Bangladesh: Economist](#)

The Financial Express | 25th August

The London-based Economist in its latest issue has published an article on Thursday on the growth of Islamic banking in Bangladesh. The full text is as follows: In Motijheel, the main business district in Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka, an iron fence and terrible traffic divide two branches of the country's oldest private bank-a "conventional" one and an Islamic one. Abdus Sattar, manager of the Islamic one, says that when he joined AB Bank, in 2005, his was "a loser branch". Today, like most Islamic banks in the country, it is more profitable and better run than its conventional peers. Islamic banking's future in the country, however, remains murky.

## **BHUTAN**

#### [Japan commits to continue its assistance to Bhutan](#)

Kuensel Online | 24th August

The government of Japan renewed its support for Bhutan's socio economic development, during the 12th annual consultation on economic cooperation between the two countries yesterday. Since its inception in 2006, the annual consultation continues to serve as an avenue for the two countries to review and exchange views on ongoing and future bilateral cooperation programs, a press release from the foreign ministry stated. With the visit of Princess Mako this year, the minister counselor for economic and development from the Japan embassy in New Delhi, Kenko Sone said that the ties between the two countries has become stronger.

### [GST could trigger deflection of goods and fronting](#)

Kuensel Online | 23rd August

With the implementation to Goods and Services Tax (GST) in India making the price of goods and services in Phuentsholing competitive, trade officials are wary of fronting business increasing in the country's commercial hub. However, figures of business licenses approved before and after the introduction of GST show otherwise. Between June 17 and August 11 this year, the trade department in Phuentsholing issued 25 retail licenses, 18 micro licenses, and nine wholesale licenses in Chukha. The office issued licenses for 115 micro businesses, 98 retail businesses, and 20 wholesale businesses between January 1 and July 5 this year. Micro business licenses include businesses from rural areas.

## **MALDIVES**

### [U.S. Ambassador calls for free proceedings at Maldivian parliament](#)

Sun Online | 24th August

U.S. Ambassador to the Maldives and Sri Lanka, Atul Keshap has called the Maldivian parliament to ensure that the Majlis function freely in accordance with Maldivian law and Parliamentary procedures. In a video statement made by the Ambassador today, he said that he events taking place in the parliament over the past few days are disturbing and unfortunate.

### [Naseer appointed Governor of MMA](#)

Sun Online | 24th August

Ahmed Naseer from Mushthareege in K. Maafushi has been appointed Governor of Maldives Monetary Authority. People's Majlis provided its backing to Naseer's appointment during the Majlis session this Thursday morning. He was appointed to the position and given his credentials by President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom during a function at President's Office this Thursday afternoon.

## **MYANMAR**

### [Northern Alliance Appeals for Chinese Cooperation in Peace Process](#)

The Irrawaddy | 24th August

After a six-day meeting, the ethnic armed alliance the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee (FPNCC) appealed for more Chinese cooperation for the achievement of Myanmar's peace process. In Panghsang, the capital of the Wa Self-Administered Zone in northern Shan State, the United Wa State Army (UWSA)-led FPNCC gathered since last Friday for meetings. The bloc discussed principles to negotiate with the government, the 21st Century Panglong peace conference, the country's political situation and collaboration among ethnic armed organizations.

### [Myanmar needs to throw its weight behind Rakhine Commission's recommendations – HRW](#)

Mizzima | 25th August

Myanmar needs to throw its full weight behind the Rakhine Commission's recommendations Phil Robertson, Deputy Asia Director, Human Rights Watch said yesterday. Mr Robertson was commenting after the unveiling of the Commission's landmark report in Yangon. Myanmar must scrap restrictions on movement and citizenship for

its Rohingya minority if it wants to avoid fuelling extremism and bring peace to Rakhine state, the commission led by former UN chief Kofi Annan said Thursday.

## NEPAL

### [Nepal, India sign 8 MoUs, 4 on quake reconstruction](#)

MyRepublica | 25th August

Nepal and India have signed eight separate Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) during the visit of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to India. Four of these MoUs are related to post-quake reconstruction in Nepal. Senior officials of the government of Nepal and India exchanged the MoUs in the presence of Prime Minister Deuba and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi at a special function held at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Thursday.

### [Alternative checkpoint to ease Nepal-India trade](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 25th August

Nepal and India has agreed to use the Bhimnagar-Bhantabari small customs checkpoint in the eastern region as an alternative to the Biratnagar-Jogbani customs to keep trade movement between two countries operating smoothly.

### [PM assures India of fresh bid at statute amendment](#)

MyRepublica | 25th August

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has assured India that the ruling parties would make another attempt to bring an amendment to the new constitution of Nepal to accommodate the concerns of all groups in the country. Addressing a joint press conference held after the bilateral meeting between Nepal and India at Hyderabad House, New Delhi on Thursday, Prime Minister Deuba gave the assurance as the attempt to amend the constitution earlier this week did not succeed.

## PAKISTAN

### [NAB may give Sharifs 'last chance' to join probe](#)

Dawn | 25th August

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) is mulling giving a 'last chance' to the Sharif family members to join investigation before it files four references against them by Sept 8.

"NAB is considering issuing a third and final notice to ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif, his sons — Hussain and Hassan — daughter Maryam, son-in-law retired Capt Safdar and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar to join investigation before it files four references against them," a senior NAB official told Dawn on Thursday.

### [FPCCI for renegotiating trade pacts](#)

Dawn | 25th August

The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) on Thursday urged the government to revisit the free and preferential trade agreements, which are heavily in favour of partner countries. FPCCI President Zubair Tufail in a statement said that although the chamber supports bilateral trade agreements with different countries and regional blocs, it believes that these should be based on mutual benefit and must protect the country's economic interests.

### [Glaring irregularities in Karachi project detected](#)

The Express Tribune | 25th August

Serious irregularities have been found in the construction of a Labour Complex in Karachi, comprising around 3,000 flats, according to an audit report by the Auditor General of Pakistan. "There was a cost overrun of Rs854.534 million due to non-completion of the project within the specified period," states the report, adding that Rs503.315 million worth of excessive expenditure on purchase of land beyond requirement was also incurred.

## SRI LANKA

### [China and India to take part in military exercise in Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Gazette | 25th August

China and India are to take part in a joint military exercise in Sri Lanka next month, the Asia Pacific Daily (APD) reported on Friday quoting the Sri Lankan military as saying. The joint annual Field Training Exercise (FTX), 'Exercise – Cormorant Strike VIII – 2017' organized by the Sri Lankan army will see the participation of 2675 army, navy and air force troops, including 62 foreign military participants and observers.

### [Sri Lanka President, PM to unveil Vision-2025 economic development plan for next eight years](#)

Colombo Page | 24th August

Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe will unveil the economic development plan for the next eight years, Vision-2025 on 4th September in Colombo, State Minister of Finance Eran Wickramaratne said. State Minister Wickramaratne made these comments at a press briefing held today (24th Aug.) at the Department of Government Information to discuss about the new Inland Revenue Bill which is to be presented in Parliament on Friday (25th Aug).

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***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.*

To know more, Please log on to [www.anantaaspencentre.in](http://www.anantaaspencentre.in)