



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

September 27th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 11/9

[Sri Lanka to host the Eighth Conference of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians](#)

Colombo Page | 27th September
The eighth Conference of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians (ASSP) will take place from 4th to 6th October 2017 at the Hotel Hilton in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The 8th Conference, organized by the Parliament of Sri Lanka, will bring together Speakers and Parliamentarians from the member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The conference will be inaugurated by President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister and Minister of National Policies and Economic Affairs Ranil Wickremesinghe will deliver the key note address at the Opening Ceremony to be held on 4th October 2017. Speaker of Parliament Karu Jayasuriya will grace the occasion delivering the welcome speech at the inauguration.

[Taliban has two options as country goes through a decisive moment: Ghani](#)

Khaama Press | 27th September
President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani says the Taliban group has two options as the country is going through a decisive moment. Speaking during a press conference with the US Secretary of Defense James Mattis and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, President Ghani said the Taliban group has an option to serve for the outsiders and join the international terrorism or renounce violence, join peace, and work for the development of the country.

[35,000 more Rohingyas reach Cox's Bazar](#)

UNB/ Prothom Alo | 27th September
Some 35,000 more Rohingya refugees reached the makeshift camps in Cox's Bazar district in last couple of days fleeing the persecution in Rakhine state of Myanmar, rising the cumulative arrival to 4,80,000 since fresh violence erupted there on 25 August, reports news agency UNB. Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) disclosed the new figure in a report published on Tuesday. The newly arrived Rohingyas have taken places in the overcrowded makeshift camps, the report said. Bangladeshi military have initiated road construction at the Kutupalong expansion site and have established bases in several locations.

AFGHANISTAN

[UN Finds Situation in Afghanistan Still Fragile](#)

Tolonews / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 27th September

The UN Security Council on Monday discussed the three month report by the secretary general on Afghanistan and stated the security situation in the country remains fragile. The report illustrates that several areas across the country were contested between the security forces and the Taliban in ongoing clashes.

[Mattis Seeks Indian Role in Afghanistan, Vows to Fight Militant Shelters](#)

Reuters / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 27th September

The comments come as President Donald Trump's administration has stepped up pressure on Pakistan for more action against militant groups operating from its soil that are blamed for attacks in India and neighbouring Afghanistan. Islamabad denies giving material support to the militants and instead accuses its arch-rival of trying to use Afghanistan as a base for anti-Pakistan activities.

BANGLADESH

[Bangladesh proposes UN-led verification for Rohingya return](#)

bdnew24 | 26th September

Bangladesh has proposed to the international community a United Nations-led screening process of Myanmar nationals who have fled violence in Rakhine State and taken shelter in Cox's Bazar. It has floated the idea after Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi in a statement on Sept 19 said her country is ready to take back their nationals after verification. Some 480,000 Rohingyas took shelter in Bangladesh in a month to escape violent crackdown in what the UN has described as 'ethnic cleansing'. Over 400,000 Rohingya Muslims have already been living in Bangladesh for decades.

[Bangladesh ranks 99th in Global Competitiveness Index](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 27th September

Bangladesh has been ranked 99th out of 137 countries in the latest Global Competitiveness Index published by the World Economic Forum. The country's overall score was 3.9 (in a scale of 7), up from 3.8 last year when it was ranked 106th among 138 countries. The competitiveness index focused on three subindexes – basic requirements, efficiency enhancers, and innovation and sophistication factors. Bangladesh scored well in macroeconomic environment category, ranking 56th. But its performance in health and primary education, and higher education and training categories were not as impressive – 102nd and 117th respectively.

BHUTAN

[Bhutan-Korea celebrate diplomatic ties](#)

Khuensel | 26th September

To commemorate the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relation between Bhutan and Republic of Korea, foreign ministry and Bhutan Post released a joint stamp album in Thimphu yesterday. The messages of His Majesty The King and the President of Republic of Korea, Moon Jae-in, were also exchanged during the event. Officiating Prime Minister Lyonpo Dorji Choden said the choice of stamps to commemorate the anniversary could not be better. "Stamps connect people and culture across time and space making itself a perfect tool for diplomacy."

[Bhutan's PFM at an advanced level: World Bank](#)

Khuensel | 25th September

Bhutan became the fifth country in the world to be recognised by Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) framework for maintaining high standards of public financial management (PFM) system. PEFA is a methodology for assessing a country's public financial management performance while aspiring to reduce transaction costs and harmonising donors support among others. "Bhutan's PFM is at a quite advanced level. But going forward, the government must place continued emphasis," the World Bank country director, Qimiao Fan said. To this effect, a multi-donor fund was established under the supervision of the World Bank. The European Union has contributed USD 3M and Austrian Development Cooperation has provided USD 1M. The grant agreement was signed on September 21 to help Bhutan manage public funds more effectively and improve the procurement and budgetary systems. In doing so, public service delivery and governance are expected to be enhanced.

MALDIVES

[Agreement signed to create 1,000 jobs for G. A. Atoll youths](#)

Sun Online | 26th September

The government has signed an agreement with two private companies to create 1,000 job opportunities and train youths in G. A. Atoll. The agreement was signed in the inauguration of the Mercure Maldives Kooddoo Resort – a city hotel developed in G. A. Kooddoo – last Monday night. The two private companies which signed the agreement with the government are: Pristine Island Investment Private Limited and Hotels and Resort Construction Private Limited.

MYANMAR

[Myanmar to send team to Dhaka to talk refugee issue](#)

AFP/ Mizzima | 27th September

A Myanmar team will arrive in Bangladesh next week to discuss the mass exodus of Rohingya, an official said Tuesday, amid huge diplomatic efforts to find a durable solution to the crisis. The team are "coming early next week," Bangladesh's Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque told AFP, saying they would be working on the Rohingya issue but not giving further details. A senior foreign ministry official said the team was expected to be led by Myanmar's Minister of the Office of State Counsellor, Kyaw Tint Swe.

[China Offers Support to Myanmar at UN Amid Rakhine Crisis](#)

Reuters / Irrawaddy | 19th September

China supports efforts by the Myanmar government to protect its national security and opposes recent violent attacks in the country's Rakhine State, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told UN Secretary-General António Guterres. The military response to insurgent attacks in the western region of Myanmar last month sent more than 410,000 self-identifying Rohingya Muslims fleeing to neighboring Bangladesh, escaping what the United Nations has branded ethnic cleansing. Myanmar's government says about 400 people have been killed in the fighting.

NEPAL

[Economic growth to slow down to 4.7pc: ADB](#)

The Himalayan Times | 27th September

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has projected that Nepal's economic growth will slow down to 4.7 per cent in this fiscal as compared to 6.9 per cent of the previous fiscal 2016-17. Growth forecast of this fiscal has been revised down from the earlier estimate of 5.4 per cent in the wake of severe floods and landslides in August that affected one-third of the country, resulting in the loss of human lives and livelihoods, and destruction of crops, says the latest Macroeconomic Update of ADB released today.

[EC seeks 24-hour clarifications from tourism ministry over DG transfer](#)

MyRepublica | 27th September

The Election Commission (EC) has sought clarifications within 24 hours from the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MOCTCA) over its decision to transfer Director General of Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) Sanjiv Gautam back to the ministry. According to a press statement issued by the EC on Tuesday, the election body has termed the MOCTCA's decision a violation of the election code of conduct. The EC, according to the statement, has asked why it should not take action against those involved in transferring DG Gautam to the ministry without its prior consent. The ministry has been asked to furnish clarifications over the decision within 24 hours of receiving the EC's letter.

PAKISTAN

[NAB court indicts Ishaq Dar in corruption case, hearing to start Oct 4](#)

Dawn | 27th September

An accountability court in Islamabad indicted Finance Minister Ishaq Dar in a corruption reference filed against him by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The minister pleaded not guilty to all charges, terming them baseless. The NAB prosecution presented evidence and a list of witnesses against the accused before the court. The hearing was subsequently adjourned till October 4. The reference was filed against Dar for possessing assets beyond his known sources of income. A situation of chaos was observed outside the accountability court when Dar arrived for the hearing. The doors to the court were shut for reporters, and the finance minister had to wait at least 20 minutes outside before he was allowed to enter the court premises from the back door.

[Cabinet assails 'fake news' about Nawaz Sharif's order to Intelligence Bureau](#)

Dawn | 27th September

Members of the federal cabinet took serious notice of the airing of a “false report” on a private television channel claiming that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif had directed the Intelligence Bureau (IB) to keep vigilance over some 37 legislators, mostly belonging to the ruling PML-N, allegedly for having links with banned terrorist and sectarian outfits, sources told Dawn. According to the sources, the issue was raised by Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Riaz Hussain Pirzada at the cabinet meeting that was presided over by Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi.

SRI LANKA

[Photographic exhibition marks 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and China](#)

Colombo Page | 27th September

A photographic exhibition has been organized in China to mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and China. The photographic exhibition, aimed to enhance mutual understanding and friendship between the two countries was held in the UNESCO World Heritage Cultural City of Pingyao in Shanxi Province, China from 19th to 25th September 2017, the embassy said.

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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