

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

September 28th , 2016 | Volume: 2 - 12/9

[US provides \\$100m for uplift projects to Afghanistan](#)

Afghanistan Times| 28th September
The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) assistant administrator of Afghanistan William Hammink and minister of finance Eklil Ahmad Hakimi on Tuesday signed a letter for disbursement of \$ 100 million through the new development partnership. In a statement issued by ministry, as part of the ongoing commitment by the U.S government to improve the welfare of the Afghan people, the release of these funds is tied to the government's achievement of specific development results and implementation of key policy reforms, including improved revenue collection, reducing corruption and reducing poverty by helping the poor and marginalized, especially women.

[India pulls out of Pakistan-hosted 19th Saarc summit](#)

DAWN|27th September
India has decided to pull out of the upcoming Saarc summit in Islamabad, said the official spokesperson for the India's Ministry for External Affairs (MEA) Vikas Swarup in a tweet on Tuesday.

[Nepal PM assures Morcha on registering constitution amendment proposal before Dashain](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 27th September
Leaders affiliated to Madhesi Morcha called on Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal to talk about the constitution amendment at his official residence in Baluwatar on Tuesday. Prime Minister Dahal assured Morcha leaders that a proposal on constitution amendment will be registered before the Dashain festival.

AFGHANISTAN

[Pakistan Used Refugees Issue as Pressure Tool: Ghani](#)

Outlook Afghanistan|28th September
President Ashraf Ghani has alleged Pakistan is using the issue of Afghan refugees as pressure tool against Afghanistan. According to a senior government official, as many as 6,500 refugees return to Afghanistan from Pakistan and Iran on a daily basis and the numbers may exceed one million at the end of the year.

[Drugs Main Source of Terror Financing: CEO](#)

Outlook Afghanistan |28th September
Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah on Tuesday called drug smuggling the main financial source of terrorism in Afghanistan. The national unity government was determined to eliminate the menace of drug trafficking from the country, the CEO said in a statement from office. Abdullah expressed the view during a meeting with delegates from the Russian Federation, Iran and Tajikistan.

[Pakistan wants to use Hekmatyar to counter India: Ex-envoy](#)

Afghanistan Times | 28th September

Former Pakistan's ambassador to Kabul, Rustum Shah Mohmand, said that Islamabad wants to counter Indian influence in Afghanistan through Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. In an interview with the VOA, the ex-envoy said that it would be difficult for Pakistan to see its hopes turned into reality. Mohmand said the Hezb-e-Islami Afghanistan (HIA), led by Hekmatyar, has no military power but only political. "Pakistan thinks that if Hekmatyar went to Kabul, influence against India will increase there," he said, adding that it is just an expectation which would hardly become a reality.

BANGLADESH

[Bangladesh Bank initiates programmes to improve governance in banking sector: governor](#)

The Financial Express | 25th September

Bangladesh Bank Governor Fazle Kabir Sunday said the central bank has taken up alteration programmes for the country's banks and financial institutions to ensure good governance at all levels. "The central bank has taken up such reform programmes so that it can strengthen risk management along with ensuring required services to the clients," he said.

[Bangladesh boycotts SAARC summit in Islamabad amid India-Pakistan row](#)

Bdnews24 | 27th September

Bangladesh is boycotting the SAARC summit in Islamabad in November amid a diplomatic war between India and Pakistan following the terrorist attacks on an Indian army base in Kashmir. A foreign ministry official told bdnews24.com that they had informed the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu about the decision on Tuesday. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam confirmed it to bdnews24.com and said they would not attend the summit "due to busy internal affairs".

[Bangladesh President asks Press Council to make journalists follow ethics](#)

UNB/ Prothom Alo | 27th September

Mentioning that the news media are playing a positive role in the country's development process enjoying their full freedom, president Abdul Hamid on Tuesday urged the Press Council of Bangladesh to stay alert so that they abide by the ethics of journalism properly.

BHUTAN

[Finance ministry inaugurates new department](#)

Kuensel Online | 27th September

The finance ministry has established a new department under its wing called the Department of Macroeconomic Affairs to coordinate, formulate, and to monitor macroeconomic policies and programmes for the country. The government and the Royal Civil Service Commission approved the creation of new department. The Department of Macroeconomic Affairs will be the main coordinating agency for economic policies and will advise the government on macroeconomic and public finance management.

[Nation goes to polls today](#)

Kuensel Online | 27th September

Voters from 205 gewogs will cast ballots to elect gups, mangmis and tshogpas in the second local government (LG) elections today. The polls will open from 9 am until 5 pm. Samdrupjongkhar thromde will elect its second thrompon and thromde tshogpas, while 13 dzongkhag towns will elect a thromde ngotshab (town representative) each.

MALDIVES

[MDP, AP: Freeing political leaders is a goal of discussions](#)

Sun Online | 27th September

Two political parties taking part in official talks with the government, MDP and Adhaalath Party, has said that one of the goals of the discussions is to free the political leaders. Speaking at an MDP-Adhaalath Party joint press conference held today, the Vice President of MDP, Mohamed Shifaz said that since they decided to start

discussions with the government with no prior conditions, the topic of discussions would be clear once the official discussions begin.

[President: Tourism sector is thriving, 9 more resorts will open this year](#)

Sun Online | 27th September

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has said that the tourism sector of the country was thriving, with four new resorts starting operations this year and nine more scheduled for completion by end of this year. President Yameen made the remarks during his official address on occasion of World Tourism Day, celebrated annually across the globe on September 27.

MYANMAR

[Ministry of Home Affairs backtracks over devolving control](#)

Mizzima | 28th September

Myanmar's military-controlled Ministry of Home Affairs has cancelled plans to give partial control of five of its departments to regional and state chief ministers, following the leaking of an office memo about the change on social media, RFA reported on 27 September. Minister of Home Affairs KyawSwe sent a letter in August to leaders of the country's regional and state governments, saying that the power-sharing deal would give them control of the management of the Police, Bureau of Special Investigations, Fire Service Department, Prison Department, and General Administration Department.

NEPAL

[Will meet Chinese prez at BRICS Summit: PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal](#)

PR/Kathmandu Post | 27th September

At a time when the planned visit of the Chinese president to Nepal in October is yet to be confirmed, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal has said that he will be meeting with Xi Jinping during the upcoming BRICS Summit in Goa, India. India is hosting the eighth summit of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa on October 15 and 16.

[Cabinet gives additional mandate to LBRC](#)

The Himalayan Times | 28th September

A Cabinet meeting today decided to give additional mandate to the Local Bodies' Restructuring Commission for demarcating boundaries of local bodies on the basis of existing structure of Ilakas. On Sunday, the three major parties Nepali Congress, CPN-Maoist Centre and CPN-UML had agreed on carving out local bodies on the basis of structure of Ilakas.

PAKISTAN

[Pakistan urges World Bank to stop Indian projects on Neelum, Chenab](#)

DAWN | 28th September

Pakistan took its case on the Indus Waters Treaty to the World Bank on Tuesday, urging it to prevent India from making illegal constructions on the Neelum and Chenab rivers, embassy officials said on Tuesday. "In the meeting with the Pakistani delegation, the World Bank committed itself to timely fulfilling its obligations under the treaty while remaining neutral," said a statement issued by the Pakistan Embassy in Washington.

[Global Competitiveness Index: Pakistan improves, but remains among bottom 20 economies](#)

The Express Tribune | 28th September

Pakistan remained among the bottom 20 in the list of 138 countries ranked on the influential Global Competitiveness Index of the World Economic Forum and is at the bottom among South Asian economies, trailing behind even Nepal and Bangladesh.

[Revocation of Indus Waters Treaty can be taken as an act of war: Sartaj Aziz](#)

DAWN | 28th September

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz on Tuesday told the Senate that revocation of the Indus Waters Treaty by India "can be taken as an act of war" against Pakistan. "The Indus Waters Treaty is quoted

as perhaps the most successful water treaty ever conducted between the two countries. Its revocation can be taken as an act of war or a hostile act against Pakistan," Aziz told lawmakers.

SRI LANKA

[U.S. supports to promote Public-Private Partnerships in Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page| 26th September

The United States, which has solid experience in supporting Public-Private Partnership (PPP) programs across the world, has expressed support to the government of Sri Lanka to adapt and institutionalize the PPP model to encourage the private sector involvement in development.

[ECTA agreement to be signed despite opposition](#)

Colombo Gazette| 27th September

The Government today announced that the ECTA agreement with India will be signed soon. The announcement was made by Minister for Development strategies and International Trade Malik Samarawickrema at a joint press conference with visiting Indian Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Nirmala Sitharaman in Colombo today.

[ADB revises down growth forecast for Sri Lanka in 2016 & 2017](#)

Colombo Page| 27th September

Asian Development Bank (ADB) lowered the economic growth forecast for Sri Lanka Tuesday saying growth prospects for Sri Lanka edge lower on weak industrial performance and fiscal consolidation.

[Over US\\$ 2 bn investments from India envisaged](#)

Daily News| 28th September

Over US\$2 billion investments from India is envisaged within the next three to four years, said the visiting Indian Minister for State (IC) Commerce and Industry of India Nirmala Seetharaman. Speaking at press conference in Colombo yesterday she said that these investments would be in oil farms in Trincomalee, renewable energy, infrastructure, and in other new areas of business.

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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