

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

August 10th , 2016 | Volume: 2 - 5/8

[India and Sri Lanka begin talks on ETCA agreement](#)

Colombo Gazette| 10<sup>th</sup> August  
India and Sri Lanka on Tuesday began preliminary official level talks on an Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement (ETCA) which the two countries hope to sign by year end, the New Indian Express reported.

[Taliban declares war against Daesh](#)

Afghanistan Times | 9<sup>th</sup> August  
As Daesh is making all-out efforts to gain a stronghold in Afghanistan, the Taliban declared full-scale war against the Islamic State. Spokesman for the militant group, Zabihullah Mujahid, said the Taliban fighters would fight Daesh (also known as Islamic State in the Global North) in the country. "Our fighters [Taliban] are committed and ready to eliminate Daesh from Afghanistan. We will fight them [Daesh] in cooperation of Afghan nation," he said.

[India lodges protest with Pakistan envoy against 'cross-border terrorism'](#)

DAWN|9<sup>th</sup> August  
A day after Balochistan Home Minister accused Indian spy agency Research and Analysis Wing of masterminding the suicide attack at Quetta Civil Hospital, India summoned Pakistan High Commissioner in New Delhi Abdul Basit to lodge a protest against "continuing cross-border terrorism from Pakistan". India's Ministry of External Affairs spokesman Vikas Swarup said Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar summoned the Pakistan envoy and specifically mentioned " a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist and Pakistani national Bahadur Ali, who was apprehended recently" in India-held Kashmir (IHK).

**AFGHANISTAN**

[ISIS Khurasan chief reportedly killed in East of Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press| 9<sup>th</sup> August

The leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group for the so called Khurasan province has been killed during an operation of Afghanistan. The Ministry of Defense of Afghanistan officials have said they are aware of the reports regarding the death of ISIS Khurasan chief Hafiz Saeed but an investigation is underway to

confirm his death. This is not the first time reports have emerged regarding the death of Hafiz Saeed in eastern Afghanistan.

#### [Pakistani minister claims there is no ban on country's currency in Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press | 9<sup>th</sup> August

The Pakistani finance minister Ishaq Dar has said there was no ban holding the country's currency in Afghanistan as a major campaign has kicked off from the southern Kandahar province to stop transactions in Pakistani rupees. According to a statement released by finance ministry of Pakistan, Mr. Dar made the remarks following a telephone conversation with Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal.

## **BANGLADESH**

#### [Militants are smearing Islam's image, says PM Hasina](#)

bdnews24 | 9<sup>th</sup> August

Militants are committing killings invoking Islam to confuse the people and make them question the religion of peace, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said. What's more deplorable is that they (militants, terrorists) are the ones causing the most harm to the religion," she said on Tuesday while reiterating her administration's tough stance against terrorism. "They are tainting our religion's image by killing in the name of Islam." The prime minister termed extremism and terrorism 'manmade disasters'. She said the Awami League-led government is fully capable of tackling them.

#### [Construction of two Bangladesh warships begins in China](#)

bdnews24 | 8<sup>th</sup> August

Bangladesh Navy chief Admiral Nizamuddin Ahmed has flagged off the construction of the two warships, Corvettes, in China. China Ship Building and Offshore Company is building those ships for Bangladesh. Constructions will be completed by 2019, the military's PR service, ISPR, says. President of China Ship Building and Offshore Company Yang Zhigang, Defence Attaché of Bangladesh embassy in China Nasim Akhter, and senior officials of Bangladesh Navy were present during the steel-cutting ceremony at Uchean shipyard on Tuesday.

#### [India seeks easy repatriation of profits by its cos in Bangladesh](#)

The Financial Express | 9<sup>th</sup> August

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Harsh Vardhan Shringla Monday called for relaxed policy for repatriation of profits made by businesses owned by Indians and remittance of salaries earned by their compatriots in Bangladesh for attracting more Indian investment. He said stronger economic integration and connectivity between the two next-door neighbours are needed for furthering their economic growth and development.

#### [\\$81m BB heist: High-level BD team to visit Manila next month](#)

The Financial Express | 10<sup>th</sup> August

A high-level delegation from Bangladesh will arrive next month here seeking to recover the \$81 million laundered in the Philippines, according to a report by [www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com). Philippines Senate Minority Leader Ralph Recto said that the Bangladesh delegation should not leave our country without their money.

## **BHUTAN**

#### [Truckers to reiterate their request to NC](#)

Kuensel | 9<sup>th</sup> August

The Trucker's Association of Bhutan say they face a lot of problems while plying in India, and now want the government to include these problems in negotiations on the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) motor vehicle agreement.

### [Government of India releases Nu 1.45 billion](#)

Kuensel | 9<sup>th</sup> August

The Government of India (GoI) handed over a cheque for Nu 1.45 billion (B) to the Royal Government, yesterday, according to a press release issued by the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC).

## **MALDIVES**

### [UN calls to Maldives to refrain from employing the death sentence](#)

Sun Online | 9<sup>th</sup> August

United Nations called to the Maldives to stick to a decades-long moratorium on imposing the death penalty. High Commissioner for Human Rights for the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Prince Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein issued a statement today saying that three men are already at risk of being executed. He raised concerns by saying that it is "deeply regrettable that a series of steps have been taken to resume executions in the country" despite the efforts to end the use of the death penalty in the Maldives.

### [4 government lawmakers vote against Defamation Bill](#)

Sun Online | 9<sup>th</sup> August

Four government lawmakers – including South Kulhudhuffushi MP Mohamed Nasheed – voted against the bill on defamation and freedom of expression which was passed by the People's Majlis on Tuesday afternoon. Three lawmakers from Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) voted against the Defamation Bill despite the three-line whip issued by the party to support the bill.

## **MYANMAR**

### [US Department of Agriculture steps up engagement in Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 9<sup>th</sup> August

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) is expanding activities and services in Myanmar with the opening of a new Office of Agricultural Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Yangon. "The opening of the FAS office in Burma is a part of the U.S. commitment to strengthen the partnership between our two countries through increased trade and investment," said FAS Administrator Phil Karsting, who traveled from Washington, D.C., for the official opening on August 8 at the embassy.

### [USDP to disclose its peace policy at the 21st century Peace Conference](#)

Mizzima | 9<sup>th</sup> August

Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) Chairman Thein Sein said that they would announce their peace policy at the 21st century Peace Conference which would be organized and sponsored by the ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) on 31 August.

## **NEPAL**

### [PM Dahal stresses on consensus to address national issues](#)

Himalayan Times | 9<sup>th</sup> August

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal said that national consensus was essential to address national issues. During a meeting with a delegation of the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) at his official residence in Baluwatar on Tuesday, Prime Minister Dahal emphasised national consensus to formulate new laws, expedite post-quake reconstruction works, and implement as well as amend the Constitution.

### [Protect rights of indigenous people: UN agencies](#)

Himalayan Times | 9<sup>th</sup> August

United Nations agencies have called on countries, including Nepal, to give greater priority to the fulfilment of the rights of indigenous peoples. In a message issued on the International Day of Indigenous Peoples, UNICEF,

UNFPA and UNESCO's Asia Pacific regional directors have asked countries to ensure that indigenous people are not left behind in efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals.

#### [Dahal likely to expand Cabinet in a day or two](#)

Himalayan Times | 9<sup>th</sup> August

A CPN-Maoist Centre meeting held at Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's residence decided that Dahal, who is also the party's chairman, should decide who all to appoint as Cabinet ministers from the party. PM Dahal is preparing to expand the Cabinet by Thursday, according to his Personal Secretary Ramesh Malla. "If the Nepali Congress provides the names by then, the PM will give full shape to the Cabinet and if the NC fails to do so, he will expand the Cabinet by appointing ministers from CPN-MC only by Thursday and will induct NC's ministers in the next expansion," he said.

## PAKISTAN

#### [Allocation and spending is politically driven in Pakistan, says UNDP](#)

The Express Tribune | 10<sup>th</sup> August

The concentration of public spending is politically driven and only restricted to a few developed districts, which is increasing inequality between the rich and poor regions of Pakistan, said the outgoing chief of United Nations Development Programme, Marc Andre, Tuesday.

#### [Exports to India on downward spiral](#)

The Express Tribune | 10<sup>th</sup> August

The government has admitted that Pakistan's exports with its neighbouring countries have been sliding since 2012-13. As the trade liberalisation agenda has been put on the back burner, the gains made through trade liberalisation with India have started to reverse, official statistics show.

#### [China vows to stand behind Pakistan in anti-terror fight](#)

The Express Tribune | 10<sup>th</sup> August

China has condemned Monday's deadly bombing in Quetta, and expressed a 'firm commitment to stand behind Pakistan' in the fight against terrorism. "Deeply shocked and saddened by the terrorist attack which caused grave casualties in Quetta, Pakistan. We express our strong condemnation. Our hearts go out to the families of those killed and injured, and we mourn for the lives lost," China's foreign ministry said in a statement.

## SRI LANKA

#### [Sri Lanka Muslims oppose Northern Province CM's proposal to merge North and East](#)

Colombo Page | 9<sup>th</sup> August

Muslim civil society in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province has stressed that North and East should not be merged when devolving power to the provinces under a new constitution.

#### [U.S. is supporting Sri Lanka's SMEs to bring about economic growth and financial stability](#)

Colombo Page | 9<sup>th</sup> August

The United States Government is working to support small- and medium-sized companies in Sri Lanka to bring about economic growth and financial stability, U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Atul Keshap said.

#### [Trade deficit widens in May](#)

Daily News | 10<sup>th</sup> August

Sri Lanka's external sector has showed a mixed performance during May 2016 with a widening of the trade deficit, continued growth in tourist earnings and an increase in workers' remittances, the Central Bank said yesterday.

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

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