

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

August 12th , 2016 | Volume: 2 - 6/8

[Pakistan supports Afghan Taliban: Afrasiab Khattak](#)

Afghanistan Times | 10th August
A former lawmaker and prominent Pakistani politician Afrasiab Khattak said that Pakistani security establishment's support for the Afghan Taliban is an open secret. He is not the only one, as several other politicians and critics slammed security establishments of their country for their 'good and bad' terrorist approach.

[Quetta carnage: Islamabad hints at RAW's involvement](#)

The Express Tribune | 12th August
Pakistan on Thursday indicated that India's premier intelligence agency RAW might have collaborated with local militant groups to carry out the latest terrorist attack in Quetta, which left 76 people dead on Monday. "Involvement of foreign elements working in cahoots with their local contacts in the condemnable terrorist attack in Quetta, which took a huge toll on the lives of innocent people, cannot be ruled out," said the Foreign Office spokesperson at the weekly press briefing in Islamabad.

[DPMs to visit Delhi, Beijing](#)

Kathmandu Post | 12th August
The government is sending Deputy Prime Ministers Bimalendra Nidhi and Krishna Bahadur Mahara as special envoys to India and China. A Cabinet meeting on Thursday decided to send DPM Nidhi to New Delhi and Mahara to Beijing.

AFGHANISTAN

[Explosion in Herat leaves 4 dead, 9 others wounded](#)

Khaama Press | 11th August

At least five people were killed in an explosion in western Herat province of Afghanistan this Thursday afternoon, local government officials said. Provincial governor's spokesman Jilani Farhad said the incident took place in Shindand district Bazaar, leaving at least two soldiers and three civilians dead. He said the incident took place after a motorcycle packed with explosives was detonated close to a security post. No group including the Taliban militants has so far claimed responsibility behind the incident.

[Conflicting reports suggest release of Pakistani helicopter crew in Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press | 12th August

Conflicting reports have emerged regarding the release of the abducted crew members of a Pakistani helicopter which crash-landed in Logar province of Afghanistan last week. According to the local media reports in Pakistan,

the crew members, including 5 Pakistanis and a Russian national were relocated. Geo News reported that the freed crew members were relocated to Pakistan but the Afghan authorities have not commented regarding the report so far.

BANGLADESH

[Strengthen anti-militancy awareness](#)

UNB/ The Daily Star | 12th August

Reiterating her firm resolve to free the country from terrorism and militancy, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged all, including Alem-Ulema, to strengthen the spirit against terrorism and militancy among the common people. "I think a strong public opinion has been created across the country against terrorism and militancy which is very good news. A good spirit has also been created among the countrymen and it's very much essential to strengthen this spirit against terrorism and militancy," she said.

[July export earnings 24.93pc down](#)

The Financial Express | 12th August

Country's export earnings in the first month of the current fiscal year fell short of the month's target by 24.93 per cent by official count. Total export earnings stood at \$2.53 billion in July against targeted \$3.37 billion, according to Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) data released Thursday. The export earnings also declined by 3.49 per cent compared to \$2.62 billion earned in July 2015.

BHUTAN

[Way forward for tourism industry](#)

Kuensel | 11th August

Highlighting areas of collaboration where tourism stakeholders can work together, the Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators (ABTO) submitted a comprehensive report to the government last week. Titled "Bhutan tourism review and recommendations 2016" the report was prepared by a think tank constituted by ABTO. The think tank reviewed and analysed the current tourism situation and came up with several findings which ABTO used to compile recommendations.

[24th round of Bhutan-China boundary talks begins today](#)

Kuensel | 11th August

The 24th round of boundary talks between Bhutan and China will be held in China from August 11 to 14, according to a foreign affairs ministry press release. The 24th round will review and adopt the report of the Joint Technical Field Survey of the disputed areas in the western sector of the Bhutan-China boundary, among others.

[India provides Nu 15M for Nehru-Wangchuck Scholarship](#)

Kuensel | 11th August

The Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) received a sum of Nu 15 million for the Nehru-Wangchuck Scholarship from the Government of India (GoI), yesterday. The scholarship programme provides opportunities for Bhutanese to study in premier Indian institutes, according to an RCSC press release.

MALDIVES

[Military personnel banned from meeting politicians](#)

Sun Online | 10th August

Officers of the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) banned from meeting with politicians and attending

social gatherings with politicians along with other such events. A statement issued by the MNDF state that no officer of the Maldivian Military can meet with politicians without the permission of a chief officer.

[President ratifies Defamation Bill](#)

Sun Online | 11th August

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom, on Thursday, ratified the bill on defamation and freedom of speech. The bill, which gives authorities sweeping powers to constrain the freedom of speech guaranteed by Maldivian Constitution has been published in Government Gazette, and has therefore started taking effect. The bill, which was proposed by Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) lawmaker, Unfoogaaru MP Jaufar Dhawood, passed with the vote of 47 government-aligned lawmakers.

MYANMAR

[Suu Kyi's Rushed Peace Conference Worries Ethnic Leaders](#)

The Irrawaddy | 11th August

State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi's announcement that the Union Peace Conference would take place on August 31 has given rise to lingering questions, concerns and hesitation among ethnic armed organizations. Ethnic leaders have said there should be proper preparation before the conference and that Suu Kyi should clarify the agenda and which representatives would be in attendance.

[Bago and Yangon Region latest areas hit by flooding](#)

Mizzima | 12th August

Nationwide flooding, which began in mid-July and so far killed six people, has also affected more than 420,000 people in 98,000 households, according to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, state media reported on 12 August. Bago, Ayeyawady and Yangon regions are still experiencing flooding, while some regions, including Kachin State and Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway shut down shelters as floodwaters receded.

[Measles outbreak contained](#)

Mizzima | 12th August

An outbreak of measles which affected some remote villages in far northwestern Myanmar's Naga Self-Administrative Zone (SAZ) is now finally under control, according to the Naga SAZ authorities, state media reported. Specialists from the Public Health Department (PHD) of Nay Pyi Taw and Sagaing Region hospitals are reportedly administering vaccinations and providing medical treatment for locals in areas where the disease broke out.

NEPAL

[UNHCR Nepal to celebrate Refugee Olympic Team](#)

Kathmandu Post | 11th August

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) is organising various sporting events for refugees in Nepal to celebrate the first-ever participation of a refugee team in the Rio Olympics. "As the world cheers on Team Refugees in the Olympic Games, we are pleased to commemorate the spirit, strength and resilience of refugees in Nepal," said UNHCR Representative Kevin J. Allen. "We stand with refugees as they overcome diversity and achieve victories – both on the playing field and in everyday life."

[UNFPA calls for engaging youth in achieving SDGs](#)

Himalayan Times | 11th August

Stressing the need for policies to promote development and human rights of young people, United Nations Population Fund has called on all stakeholders to engage adolescents and youth as partners in achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

[PM's India trip likely in Sept second week](#)

Kathmandu Post | 12th August

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal has instructed Foreign Secretary Shankar Das Bairagi to expedite work to lay the groundwork for his India visit, which is likely to take place before he embarks on a trip to New York to participate in the United Nations General Assembly.

PAKISTAN

[‘Iran & Pakistan can reshape region’](#)

DAWN|12th August

Iran and Pakistan have no option but to work together despite the obstacles created by “third parties”, and this cooperation can help stabilise the region, said Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister Dr Seyed Mohammad Kazem Sajjadpour here on Thursday.

[Minority MPs seek constitutional amendment, demand top govt slots for non-Muslims](#)

DAWN|12th August

Lawmakers belonging to minorities demanded to amend the Constitution and make non-Muslims eligible for the slots of president and prime minister of the country. “Although it will be almost impossible for any non-Muslim to become president or the prime minister of the country under the present circumstances, at least the Constitution should be made neutral in this regard,” Khalil George, member of the National Assembly, said on Thursday.

[Pakistan Railways suffers another loss-making year](#)

The Express Tribune|12th August

Financial burden on state-owned entities never ceases to stop. In the latest development, Pakistan Railways’ (PR) losses surpassed a staggering Rs28 billion, increasing around 12.64% in fiscal year 2015-16, amid repeated statements of a turnaround being targeted for the ailing entity.

SRI LANKA

[Bilateral trade between India and Sri Lanka about to pass US\\$ 5 billion mark - Minister](#)

Colombo Page| 11th August

Bilateral trade between India and Sri Lanka has surged by 6.3 percent last year and overall trade volume between the two countries has edged towards a historic mark of US\$ 5 billion -only \$83 million short of the coveted threshold, Minister of Commerce and Industry Rishad Bathiudeen said.

[ETCA to address non-tariff, procedural barriers - Minister](#)

Daily News| 12th August

The proposed Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement (ETCA) with India can increase Sri Lanka’s competitiveness in industrial exports and also increase the supply capacity to better utilize the market access to India, Development Strategies and International Trade Minister, Malik Samarawickrama said.

[ADB grants Sri Lanka US\\$ 128 million for Greater Colombo Water and Wastewater Management program](#)

Colombo Page| 12th August

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has agreed to provide US\$ 128 million for the implementation of the Greater Colombo Water and Wastewater Management Improvement Investment Program to provide safe water and full sanitation coverage in the capital city area.

[US hails passage of OMP as huge stride forward](#)

Colombo Gazette| 12th August

The United States says the passage of the Bill on the Office on Missing Persons (OMP) is a huge stride forward for Sri Lanka.

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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