

[Bangladesh ranks eighth in Happy Planet Index 2016](#)

Bdnews24 | 31st July

Bangladesh has been ranked eighth greenest and happiest country among 140 nations. UK-based New Economics Foundation (NEF) released its 'World Happiness Report' on Friday, where it said Bangladesh has scored 38.4 points. Costa Rica tops the index with a score of 44.7 points while Chad at the bottom with 12.8 points. "The Happy Planet Index measures what matters: sustainable wellbeing for all. It tells us how well nations are doing at achieving long, happy, sustainable lives," reads the website developed by NEF for the report.

[Consensus call fades: PM election likely on Wed](#)

The Kathmandu post | 1st August

With the deadline given by President Bidhya Devi Bhandari to the political parties to form a consensus government expiring on Sunday, Parliament is set to elect a new prime minister on Wednesday based on majority votes.

[Japan grants Sri Lanka Rs. 14 billion loan for the implementation of development projects](#)

Colombo Page | 31st July

The government of Japan has granted Sri Lanka a soft loan of 10 billion yen (Rs. 14 billion) for the implementation of development projects proposed in the budget.

AFGHANISTAN

[Massive truck bombing rocks Kabul city](#)

Khaama Press | 1st August

A massive explosion rocked Kabul city in the early hours of Monday morning with preliminary reports suggesting a Vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) was detonated. The incident took place around around 1:30 am local time targeting a compound, the North Gate, frequented by the foreigners. The attack was launched by at least four militants with three of them taking position close to the compound following the massive blast to launch gun attack .

[Chinese Diplomat, Atmar Talk Security Cooperation](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 1st August

Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing on Sunday met Afghan National Security Advisor Mohammad Hanif Atmar and discussed economic, political and security issues. The meeting took place days after a Taliban delegation headed by their political officehead in Qatar visited Beijing on July 21 and 22 at the invitation of Chinese authorities. A statement from the National Security Council said Atmar thanked the Chinese government for its military support that recently arrived in Kabul.

[British PM Praises Afghan Government's Ant-Corruption Effort](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 1st August

New British Prime Minister Theresa May and President Ashraf Ghani during a telephonic conversation discussed bilateral relations and other issues of mutual interests, the Presidential Palace said on Sunday. May praised the Afghan

government's efforts at countering administrative corruption and pledged support to the war-torn country, the palace said in a statement.

BANGLADESH

[India lets BGB use its roads for patrol](#)

The Daily Star | 1st August

Bangladesh Border Guard (BGB) personnel can use Indian roads alongside the Indo-Bangla border in remote areas for patrolling where Bangladesh has no road links, said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan. "I told Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh that we have some remote areas without road links and he assured me that Bangladesh Border Guard personnel can use their road for patrolling," he said yesterday while briefing reporters at his Secretariat office on the outcome of his recent India visit.

[Bangladesh opposition Jatiya Party MPs to visit India](#)

Bdnews24 | 31st July

An opposition Jatiya Party parliamentary delegation is going to India on a week-long visit. Head of the delegation Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu told bdnews24.com that the eight-strong team would leave Dhaka on Monday morning. He said this would be the first trip to India by the party's parliamentary delegation, and believed that this would "take the relations to a new high." "India is our close neighbour, close friend and partner. We'll meet senior leaders, think-tanks, policymakers and discuss how to take the relations further forward," he said.

[Bangladesh to provide security for foreigners during travel](#)

Bdnews24 | 31st July

Still reeling from the aftershocks of the Gulshan terror attack, the government is putting maximum priority on the security of foreigners, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed has said. Tofail had been claiming that the killings of Italian buyers of Bangladeshi garments and Japanese consultants of Dhaka Metrorail project had not affected the country's businesses. But after meeting a delegation of the European Union at his office on Sunday, he sounded concerned about the security of the foreigners. "Our top priority will be giving security to our foreign friends, who do business in Bangladesh. Many may travel to Chittagong, Khulna or Barisal by road. We will provide them escort if necessary," Tofail said. He said the decision to provide the foreigners with security while travel was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order.

BHUTAN

[Polio vaccine in short supply](#)

Kuensel | 31st July

Bhutan ran out of the Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) in the beginning of this year following a global manufacturing shortage of the vaccine. This has left parents of infants worried, as the vaccine, is administered by injection at 14 weeks after birth. Officials of the health ministry's vaccine preventable disease programme (VPDP) said that the country will get its stock on. August 4 and is expected to last for about five to six months.

[Learning from the disaster](#)

Kuensel | 31st July

The government, at a press conference yesterday, said people should not panic about food and fuel supplies since the country has adequate reserves to last months.

MALDIVES

[International concern on the bill threatening freedom of expression](#)

Sun online | 1st August

International community has raised concerns over the bill of Anti-Defamation and Freedom of Expression at the Parliament. UN Resident Coordinator to the Maldives, Ms. Shoko Noda said that her hope is that acceptable changes would be brought to the bill to address the concerns of the journalist before passing it. Journalists have been raising concerns of the bill that overshadows the right to freedom of expression. The US Embassy in Colombo raised concerned regarding the bill in a statement saying that the Anti-Defamation bill causing obstructions to the freedom of

expression. The US Embassy said that the bill is designed to pass harsh punishments to those embracing a right in an independent democracy.

[Former President Maumoon doesn't approve of bill threatening freedom of expression](#)

Sun Online | 31st July

Former President of Maldives and President of PPM, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom has said that he does not approve the bill of Anti-Defamation and Freedom of Expression submitted at the Parliament by the MP for Ungoofaaru constituency, Jaufaru Daood. In a message sent to the members of the PPM Parliamentary Group through Viber today, Maumoon said that he sincerely want to say that passing that is bill is not something he wants to see done. Maumoon said that as the President of the party, for the benefit of the people, it is his responsibility to say what needs to be said to any and all bodies of the party.

MYANMAR

[Suu Kyi government's economic policy document 'lacks detail'](#)

Mizzima | 30th July

The three-page document, launched by the Ministry of Planning and Finance in a government meeting in Nay Pyi Taw, comes five months after Aung San Suu Kyi-Htin Kyaw government took up the reins of power. Many observers are reportedly disappointed by the lack of financial specifics, given the importance the new government had said they placed in helping improve the economy.

[Suu Kyi and Commander-in-Chief meet Wa and Mongla rebel reps](#)

Mizzima | 30th July

he leaders from United Wa State Party (UWSP) from Shan State Special Region No. 1 and National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) from Shan State Special Region No. 2 met State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing separately in Nay Pyi Taw on July 29.

NEPAL

[New alliance to form nine-member panel](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 31st July

In an attempt to bring the Madhes-based parties on board the government formation process, the Nepali Congress and the CPN (Maoist Centre) have agreed to form a joint team. The panel, which will have three members each from the NC, Maoist Centre and Sanghiya Gathabandhan, an alliance of Janajati and Madhesi parties, will try to find ways to settle all contentious issues related to the constitution, including redrawing of federal boundaries.

[10-yr plan aims to end all forms of child labour](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 31st July

The government is working on a new master plan, aiming at ending all forms of child labour within a decade. The earlier government plan was prepared with an aim to end worst forms of child labour by 2016 and all forms of child labour by 2020.

PAKISTAN

[PPP signals greenlight on Rangers powers](#)

The Express Tribune | 1st August

PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari issued fresh instructions to Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah to resolve the matter of extending special policing powers for Rangers in the province as soon as possible. The paramilitary force's right to detain suspects without any charge in Sindh expired on July 19 and extension of those powers has long been a source of friction between the federal and provincial authorities.

[Pakistan ICTs emerging on world map – again](#)

The Express Tribune | 1st August

The brightest spotlight belongs to the two-day Asia Pacific Regulators Roundtable which took place in Islamabad. More than 45 participants from the regulatory and other ICT authorities of over 20 countries took part. These countries represent nearly 50% of the world's population. The significance of the event lies in the fact that it was after a long gap of around eight years that such a gathering of ICT luminaries took place in Pakistan.

[PTI to rejoin ToR talks but won't call off protest](#)

The Express Tribune| 1st August

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Sunday announced it will re-engage with the government in a bid to hammer out the terms of reference (ToRs) for the Panamagate inquiry, but made it clear that it had no plans to postpone its anti-corruption campaign.

[Pakistan-origin father of slain US soldier in row with Trump](#)

AFP/ Dawn| 1st August

The father of a slain Muslim American soldier assailed Donald Trump as a “black soul” on Sunday in an impassioned exchange with the Republican presidential candidate over the qualities required in a US leader. Khizr Khan electrified the Democratic convention last week with a tribute to his fallen son that ended with a steely rebuke that Trump had “sacrificed nothing” for his country.

SRI LANKA

[Sri Lanka's pact with IMF: 'Out of the Trap or from Frying Pan to Fire?'](#)

Colombo Page| 31st July

Alliance for Economic Democracy, a recently formed coalition of trade unions, student unions, progressive intellectuals, social organizations and activists says the International Monetary Fund's a US\$ 1.5 billion loan will pull Sri Lanka 'into the fire from the frying pan'.

[WB approves \\$100 mn for Lanka's economic reforms](#)

Daily News| 1st August

The World Bank Board has approved a \$100 million credit from the International Development Association (IDA) to support the Government's economic reform program. Sri Lanka has been making steady progress on economic reforms, with the government aiming to create one million new jobs through a reform package focused on improving the country's competitiveness, transparency and macroeconomic stability.

[Government insists Chinese loans in accordance with talks](#)

Colombo Gazette| 1st August

The Government today insisted that the debt equity transfer on the Chinese loans for Sri Lanka will be implemented in accordance with the discussions Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe had in Beijing with the President of the Peoples Republic of China Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Li Keqiang in April.

[Sri Lankan envoy eyes LNG imports from Qatar](#)

Colombo Gazette| 1st August

Sri Lanka is exploring the potential benefits of his country importing liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Qatar, The Gulf Times reported. Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Qatar, WM Karunadasa said Sri Lanka's current LNG needs are met through imports from Iran and Iraq, among other suppliers, but not Qatar.

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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