

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

August 24th , 2016 | Volume: 2 - 10/8

[Kabul-Delhi Enjoy Friendly Relations Historically: Modi](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 23rd August
Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday reiterated his country's commitment to Afghanistan's rehabilitation, reconstruction, peace and stability. He reaffirmed the pledge in a video conference at the inaugural ceremony for the Storai (Star) Palace at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) after its rehabilitation. Almost a century old, the palace was in dilapidated condition before it was rebuilt at a cost of \$7 million provided by the Indian government.

[Indian finance minister to skip Saarc meeting in Islamabad](#)

DAWN | 24th August
India has formally conveyed to Pakistan that its Finance Minister Arun Jaitley will not attend the eighth finance ministers' meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) in Islamabad later this week.

[DPMs' visits to India, China fruitful: Govt](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 24th August
The government has claimed that recent visits by two deputy prime ministers to India and China were fruitful and highly successful. A Cabinet meeting on Tuesday concluded that relations with the two neighbours have reached a new height after the visits of two DPMs, Bimalendra Nidhi and Krishna Bahadur Mahara to India and China respectively.

AFGHANISTAN

[OIC to Host Conference on Afghan Reconciliation](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 23rd August

A three-day international conference of religious scholars will be organised in the holy cities of Makkah and Madina on

promoting peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Secretary-General Iyad Amin Madani informed Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah Abdullah and Foreign Minister Syed Salahuddin Rabbani about the event.

[Cabinet Oks Draft Election Law, Proposing Amendments](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 24th August

The cabinet has approved in principle a draft election law, underlining the imperative of a single-seat system at polling stations for the upcoming Wolesi Jirga polls. At a meeting chaired by President Ashraf Ghani late on Monday, the election law was shared with the cabinet by 2nd Vice-President Sarwar Danish and head of the Research Committee.

BANGLADESH

[DNA samples of Gulshan attackers have matched with relatives: DMP](#)

bdnews24 | 23rd August

The DNA samples of all six suspects killed in a military operation following the terror attack on Holey Artisan Bakery and O' Kitchen restaurant at Gulshan have matched with their relatives, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) have confirmed. On Tuesday, DMP Deputy Commissioner (Media) Masudul Rahman told bdnews24.com, "DNA samples of the six militants had been collected and tested against family members. The samples have matched."

[Dhaka-Delhi cargo trial run under BBIN MVA Aug 30](#)

The Financial Express | 24th August

Bangladesh will conduct a trial run of cargo vehicle from Dhaka to Delhi on August 30 under the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA). The date has been finalized after getting confirmation from the Indian side, officials said. A cargo with readymade garment (RMG) items will start journey from Dhaka after an inaugural function on August 28 and will cross Benapole-Petrapole on August 30, they said.

BHUTAN

[Bank official fiddles more than Nu 2 million](#)

Kuensel Online | 23rd August

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is investigating misappropriation of Nu 2.4 million by a Bhutan National Bank Ltd (BNBL) branch official in Paro. BNBL's internal auditors reported to the commission that the loan disbursement payment model official (LDPMO) in Paro branch had embezzled about Nu 2.4 million.

[Construction of slide and flood protection measures begin in P'ling](#)

Kuensel Online | 23rd August

Slope stabilisation and protection works at the Rinchending checkpoint and Reldri High School in Phuentsholing began on August 19 with a groundbreaking ceremony. This mitigation work is among the three National Adoption Programme of Action (NAPA) II projects in Phuentsholing thromde funded by the Global Environment Facilities (GEF) that is coordinated by UNDP. The cost of this project is Nu 93.92 million (M).

MALDIVES

[President ratifies amendment to freedom of assembly](#)

Sun Online | 23rd August

President Abdulla Yameen, on Tuesday, ratified the amendment to freedom of assembly which requires a written approval from the police to hold any gathering on the streets of Male'. The written permission is required for gatherings in any other area, other than which is authorized and listed by Ministry of Home Affairs for gatherings.

[President ratifies Bill on Gender Equality](#)

Sun Online | 23rd August

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom, on Tuesday, ratified the bill on gender equality to eliminate discrimination between genders. The bill forbids any differentiation made based on gender – both directly and indirectly. It states that any differentiation made due to appropriating certain work to a specific gender, and resultant systems that deny a certain gender from performing a certain job(s) would also be considered as gender inequality and differentiation based on gender.

MYANMAR

[USDP vows to adopt new strategy](#)

Mizzima|23rd August

The Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) vowed yesterday to adopt a new strategy in accordance with the desire of the people without altering its original objective, Xinhua reported on 22 August. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the second Nationwide Party Conference of the USDP in Nay Pyi Taw, Chairman U Thein Sein called for re-assessment of the 2015 general election results and reformation of the party at each level from the bottom up to the central level.

[Myanmar says UN's Ban will attend peace talks](#)

Mizzima/AFP|23rd August

United Nations chief Ban Ki-moon will attend a landmark peace conference in Myanmar this month, an official and a rebel group said Monday, bolstering Aung San Suu Kyi's drive to end decades of fighting. Several complex ethnic conflicts are rumbling across Myanmar's borderlands, hampering efforts to expand the economy after the end of junta rule. Suu Kyi has made peace a flagship policy of her newly installed civilian-led government.

NEPAL

[Congress for holding 'interim local polls'](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 24th August

A meeting of the Nepali Congress Parliamentary Party on Tuesday concluded that the government should hold "interim local elections" under the existing structure in view of confusion over the number of local units in the federal set-up. The Local Body Restructuring Commission (LBRC), formed to determine the number and boundaries of local units (village and municipal councils), has proposed 565 local units across the country.

[Annual security talks to focus on border issues, trafficking](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 24th August

Cross-border crime and human trafficking will top Nepal's agenda for the Indo-Nepali Home Secretary level meeting scheduled for September 6-7 in New Delhi. "We will also focus on ways to combat drugs smuggling across the border and issues on embankment and inundation of Nepali villages," said Yadav Koirala, spokesperson for the Ministry of Home Affairs.

PAKISTAN

[Former Afghan president 'appreciates' Modi for highlighting Balochistan issue](#)

Reuters/The Express Tribune|21st August

Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai on Saturday expressed appreciation for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his remarks on 'freedom' for Balochistan in his Independence Day speech.

[ADB to lend Pakistan \\$810m to improve power infrastructure](#)

DAWN|24th August

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a \$810 million loan facility for Pakistan to help the country improve its dilapidated power transmission infrastructure not capable of lifting additional power generation load.

[Talks fail to solve Chaman border issue](#)

The Express Tribune|24th August

A second round of talks between officials from Pakistan and Afghanistan on Tuesday failed to resolve the impasse on the key border crossing at Chaman which remained closed for a fifth consecutive day.

SRI LANKA

[U.S. Pacific Command concludes Operation Pacific Angel in Northern Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page| 23rd August

The United States and Sri Lanka conducted humanitarian assistance operations from August 15-20, 2016, as part of Operation Pacific Angel (PACANGEL) 16-3. The multinational team led by United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) concluded their week-long assistance program yesterday in Jaffna, providing general medical care for approximately 4,000 people and renovating six schools that serve a total of 1,100 students.

[Principal US Deputy Assistant Secretary in Sri Lanka for talks](#)

Colombo Gazette| 23rd August

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs at the US State Department William (Bill) E. Todd began talks in Sri Lanka today. The US Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Atul Keshap said that Todd will discuss the bilateral agenda with Government leaders and civil society in Sri Lanka.

[Pakistan reaches out to rehabilitate agrarian community in Eastern Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page| 24th August

Providing assistance to promote and rehabilitate agrarian community of the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, the Government of Pakistan, through its High Commission in Colombo handed over a Pakistan-made tractor worth US\$ 10,010 to the Palayadivadai Farmers Association, Pottuvil at a ceremony Tuesday at the High Commission.

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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