

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

September 2nd , 2016 | Volume: 2 - 1/9

[Pakistan, Turkey move closer to inking free trade agreement](#)

The Express Tribune|2nd September

The long pending Pak-Turkey Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is finally at the brink of conclusion as both countries have agreed to eliminate 85% of tariffs. Both sides have also agreed to address all the remaining issues in the FTA which is to be signed by the end of this year.

[India and Sri Lanka discuss strengthening of bilateral ties](#)

Colombo Gazette| 1st September

India and Sri Lanka today discussed the need to further strengthen the bilateral ties between both countries. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, who is on a visit to Singapore, held talks today with India's Union Cabinet Minister for External Affairs M.J. Akbar.

[India Responds to Afghanistan's Request to Equip Afghan Forces](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan|1st September

India has responded positively to a request by the Afghan authorities to equip the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDS), it has been reported. The Afghan Ambassador to India, Dr. Shaida Mohammad Abdali, has said the request was made by the Afghan Army Chief of Staff General Qadam Shah Shaheem during his visit to New Delhi.

AFGHANISTAN

[Dostum criticizes President Ghani following a deadlock in unity govt](#)

Khaama Press|1st September

The First Vice President General Abdul Rashid Dostum harshly criticized President Ghani during a gathering in Kabul following a deadlock in the Government of National Unity by CEO Abdullah's remarks. According to a video released online by Enayatullah Babar Farahmand, the Chief of Staff of the Office of the First Vice President, Gen. Dostum is seen as accusing President Ghani of allocating his authorities to himself.

[ADB Approves \\$31.37m Grant for Salang Corridor Upgrade](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan|1st September

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$31.37 million grant to prepare the Salang Corridor rehabilitation project, the bank said on Wednesday. The grant includes \$15.92 million contributed by the Government of Japan through the ADB-administered Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund (AITF), an ADB statement said.

[Paradoxes in govt decision main reason behind hike of fuel price: Oil Union](#)

Aghanistan Times|1st September

General Union of Oil and Gas Companies of Afghanistan (GUGCA) on Thursday termed incoherence in government decision main factor behind increasing of fuel price in the market throughout the country.

BANGLADESH

[Gulshan massacre plotters traced'](#)

Prothom Alo | 1st September

Police said ten plotters of the Holey Artisan Bakery massacre in Gulshan, including the mastermind, funder and arms provider, have been identified. The police have already traced six of them. DMP's counter terrorism and transnational unit are investigating the case.

[Khaleda doubts anti-militant drives](#)

Prothom Alo | 1st September

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chairperson, Khaleda Zia, on Thursday cast doubts on the law enforcement's anti-militant drive, dropping a hint that those might be stage-managed.

"Police place arms in front of a group of people and then say they are militants and have been arrested. A few days later, they are shot to death," said Khaleda while addressing a discussion meeting in the capital city.

[8.opc GDP growth can only help absorb surplus labour force](#)

The Financial Express | 2nd September

The Bangladesh economy needs to grow at 8.0 per cent rate to absorb the existing labour force which has been surplus for the last 15 years, an Asian Development Bank (ADB)-International Labour Organisation (ILO) report said Thursday.

BHUTAN

[Inflation at 2.87 percent](#)

Kuensel Online|1st September

The price of goods and services increased by 2.87 percent between July last year and July 2016, according to the consumer price index. This was 0.69 percentage lower than the year-on-year inflation of June, which stood at 3.56 percent. This, however, does not translate in price reduction of goods and services because it only indicates that the rate of inflation has slowed by a small margin albeit the price increase.

MALDIVES

[Special Advisor to Saudi King meets President Yameen](#)

1st September | Sun online

Special Advisor to King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Faiz Al Abideen paid a courtesy call on Maldivian President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom on Thursday morning. During the meeting held at President's Office, President Yameen welcomed Dr. Abideen to Maldives and expressed his gratitude for the continued support and cooperation provided by the Saudi government to Maldives.

MYANMAR

[FDI in hotel and tourism projects hits US\\$2,918.5252 million](#)

Mizzima| 2nd September

Foreign direct investment (FDI) in Myanmar's hotel and tourism projects has reached US\$2,918.5252 million, state media reported on 2 September quoting figures from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

[Powerful militia storms out of Myanmar peace talks](#)

Mizzima| 2nd September

Delegates from one of Myanmar's most heavily armed ethnic groups stormed out of peace talks on Thursday in an early blow to a landmark gathering aimed at ushering in a new era of peace.

[China says it will play constructive role in Myanmar peace talks](#)

EFE_EPA/Mizzima|2nd September

China on Thursday showed its support for the ongoing meeting between the Myanmar government and the country's ethnic minorities aimed at charting out a peace process following decades of armed conflict, and assured it would play a constructive role in the talks.

NEPAL

[China pledges five times more FDI in Nepal than India](#)

My Republica| 29th August

China has surpassed India in terms of committing foreign direct investment (FDI) in Nepal. According to the latest statistics maintained by Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), China has outdone India in terms of committing FDI in Nepal as well as in terms of projects in Nepal.

[Govt fails to meet the expectations of new constitution](#)

My Republica| 1st September

With less than three weeks left to mark the first anniversary of the promulgation of the new constitution in the country, the government is failing to expedite several key tasks that must be done by September 19.

[Upadhyay, Paudyal named as envoys to New Delhi, Beijing](#)

The Kathmandu Post| 2nd September

The government on Thursday recommended Deep Kumar Upadhyay and Leela Mani Paudyal as the ambassadors to India and China respectively. Upadhyay was Nepal's ambassador to India until the erstwhile KP Sharma Oli-led government decided to recall him in May. Paudyal is former chief secretary of the government of Nepal.

[Parliament endorses four bills](#)

Himalayan Times/ Rashtriya Samachar Samiti| 1st September

The Legislature-Parliament today unanimously endorsed the Employees' Provident Fund (Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2073. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Krishna Bahadur Mahara, had presented the proposal before the meeting, seeking the approval.

PAKISTAN

[Attack on Peshawar's Christian Colony: Civilian killed, all terrorists dead](#)

DAWN|2nd September

At least one civilian and four suicide bombers were killed after terrorists attacked Peshawar's Christian Colony on Friday morning and exchanged fire with security forces, security sources said.

[IS footprints eliminated from Pakistan: army](#)

DAWN|2nd September

The Pakistan Army said on Thursday that the footprints of the militant Islamic State (IS) group had been eliminated from Pakistan. "They tried to [sneak] into Pakistan but failed and [were] apprehended," Inter-Services Public Relations Director General (ISPR) Lt Gen Asim Saleem Bajwa told reporters during a briefing.

[US, India urge Pakistan to bring Mumbai, Pathankot attackers to justice](#)

DAWN|2nd September

The United States and India have urged Pakistan to bring the perpetrators of the 2008 Mumbai and 2016 Pathankot terrorist attacks to justice, says a joint statement issued simultaneously in New Delhi and the US capital.

[General Raheel sends clear message to hawkish India](#)

The Express Tribune|1st September

Army chief General Raheel Sharif has said be it Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi or its spy agency RAW, they must know that Pakistan's boundaries were completely safe.

SRI LANKA

[UN chief and President discuss reconciliation process](#)

Colombo Gazette| 1st September

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon held talks with President Maithripala Sirisena at the President's House in

Colombo today. The two leaders discussed about the ongoing development programmes, the progress of the programmes being implemented to strengthen reconciliation and the process of constitutional reforms.

[Japan extends Rs. 86 million grant for Humanitarian Mine Clearance for Resettlement and Livelihoods in Northern Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page| 1st September

The Government of Japan has decided to provide a total sum of Rs. 86,399,929 (Approximately USD 607,380) in grant aid for humanitarian mine clearance in Northern Sri Lanka, under its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Project (GGP).

[U.S. assistance programs help to improve Sri Lanka's business climate](#)

Colombo Page| 1st September

The United States has a number of ongoing assistance programs to help attract additional investments and improve Sri Lanka's business climate, the U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Atul Keshap said.

[TIFA will give SL exports more access to US market](#)

Daily News| 2nd September

Development Strategies and International Trade Minister Malik Samarawickrama said the Inter-Sessional meetings of the 12th United States- Sri Lanka Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) to complete the work-plan under US-Sri Lanka Joint Action Plan finalised on April 28 in Washington DC will yield concrete outcomes and give Sri Lanka's exports increased access to the US market.

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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