

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

August 3rd , 2016 | Volume: 2 - 2/8

[Pakistan constructs gate at  
Torkham; Kabul reacts](#)

Afghanistan Times | 3<sup>rd</sup> August  
Pakistan has constructed the much opposed gate at the Torkham crossing point. The gate has been constructed illegally as Afghan authorities pointed out. The gate named 'Bab-e-Pakistan' will officially be inaugurated on August 8. The gate has two doors which would be used for exit and entry. Pakistani security forces have also established checkpoints at both ends of the gate to restrict movement of Afghans stranded on both sides of the Durand Line.

[Bangladesh receives record \\$3.45b  
foreign aid in FY'16](#)

The Financial Express | 3<sup>rd</sup> August  
The country received a record-high US\$3.45 billion worth of foreign aid in the last financial year following a significant rise in disbursement by some key multilateral donors, including the World Bank. Officials said Tuesday the aid flow into the country in 2015-16 was \$406.95 million higher than \$3.04 billion received in the previous FY2015.

[Dahal poised to enter Baluwatar](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 3 August  
CPN (Maoist Centre) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal looks set to become the 39th prime minister on Wednesday, with more than 360 lawmakers likely to vote for him. On Tuesday, Dahal was the sole claimant to the post of the prime minister when he filed his candidacy at the Parliament Secretariat.

**AFGHANISTAN**

[Afghan forces to receive 1,673 Humvees under new \\$356m contract](#)

Khaama Press | 2<sup>nd</sup> August

The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) will receive an additional 1,673 Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs) also known as Humvees, it has been reported. The Humvees will be built and delivered to the Afghan forces under a new contract awarded to AM General worth USD356 million. The vehicles will be delivered to the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) forces, the US-based company has said in a statement released on 1st August.

[Obama's inactions in Afghanistan are actions](#)

Khaama Press | 2<sup>nd</sup> August

It has become apparent to many that Obama's foreign policy is intractable on assuring sustainable peace in the long term in Afghanistan. Only so much blame can be put on the Afghan government, but the underpinning feature about the backbone of the Afghan government is international support. Without international support, the government would ultimately collapse. Precluding the faults of the Afghan government is also a dishonest assessment on figuring why violence still prevails in the means of suicide bombs, explosive and all-out war in

some provinces. The Afghan governments in some respects are divided, but which government isn't, but a divided government in the midst of a war underscores exposed areas of which the enemy can strike.

### [Asia superpowers and Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press | 2<sup>nd</sup> August

Stability in Asia and in Afghanistan depends on the role that China, India and Russia play. It has been four years since the former president of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai in Peking University emphasized on the role of Russia, China and India for peace and stability in Asia. Now the three countries legitimate interests and problems of cooperation in Afghanistan becomes even more prominent.

### [Taliban shadow governor and war commander killed in Helmand](#)

Khaama Press | 2<sup>nd</sup> August

Two top Taliban leaders were killed in a drone strike in the restive southern Helmand province of Afghanistan, local officials said Monday. According to a statement released by the provincial governor's office, the two top Taliban leaders were identified as Mullah Abdul Rahim and Commander Mustaqeem.

### [248 uplift projects completed in Badakhshan](#)

Afghanistan Times | 3<sup>rd</sup> August

The National Solidarity Program has completed 248 projects for the public utilities in various districts of Badakhshan province, it said Tuesday. The program in statement sent to the media said the projects include the construction of community centers, culverts, aqueducts, pathways, bridges, micro-hydro-power stations, a gabion wall, protection walls, retaining walls, irrigation canals, water supply networks, community centers, surrounding walls and graveling rural roads.

## **BANGLADESH**

### [Bangladesh Police announce cash rewards for two terror attack 'masterminds'](#)

bdnews24 | 2<sup>nd</sup> August

Bangladesh Police have announced cash rewards for two people they have identified as the 'masterminds' of the terror attacks at a Dhaka cafe and at a Eid congregation in Kishoreganj. Dismissed army officer Syed Md Ziaul Haque and Canadian-Bangladeshi Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury have been identified as the brains behind the two attacks in early July, which left 25 people killed. Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque announced Tk 2 million rewards on each of them for information leading to their arrest. "Identities of those who will provide information will be concealed," he told a media briefing on Tuesday.

### [Govt orders shut-down of Peace schools](#)

Prothom Alo | 2<sup>nd</sup> August

The government has ordered the closure of all the unapproved schools by the name of 'Peace School'. To the end, the education ministry asked the home ministry issuing a notice in this regard on Tuesday. With the growing popularity of Indian 'Islamic scholar' Zakir Naik's Peace TV, a section of people in Bangladesh set up schools by the name of 'peace school' across the country.

## **BHUTAN**

### [Debt to GDP ratio at 116%](#)

Kuensel Online | 2<sup>nd</sup> August

The country's debt to GDP ratio has reached 116.9 percent of the GDP while the debt service ratio of the country has reduced from almost 20 percent in 2014-15 to 9.7 percent as of March this year.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Home Minister: Customs must be taken as an exemplary institute](#)

Sun Online | 3<sup>rd</sup> August

Home Minister and Minister of Customs, Azleen Ahmed has said that Maldives Customs Service is an exemplary institute to the other institutes in the country. Speaking at the ceremony today to award certificates of commemoration to the Customs staff that prepared the Galolhu Stadium for the Independence Day event, Minister Azleen said that Customs is an institute with very capable employees.

### [Jihad appointed Chairman of Social Council, Zuhoor - Chairman of Economic Council](#)

Sun Online | 2<sup>nd</sup> August

Vice President Abdulla Jihad has been appointed Chairman of Social Council, and Minister for President's Office Ahmed Zuhoor – as Chairman of Economic and Youth Council. The appointments were announced by President's Office this Tuesday.

## MYANMAR

### [Parliament calls on government to speed up efforts in fight against drug trafficking](#)

Mizzima|3<sup>rd</sup> August

After a two-day debate on the elimination of drug abuse and trafficking in the country by lawmakers in the Amyotha Hluttaw, parliament yesterday unanimously decided to call on the government to speed up efforts in cracking down on drug crime, state media reported on 3 August. Dr Myat Nyana Soe, Secretary of the Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee, stressed the need to take serious action against drug traffickers as drug trafficking is leading to trafficking in persons, arm smuggling and money laundering.

### [Myanmar tourism boom set to bring 7.5m visitors a year](#)

AFP/Mizzima|3<sup>rd</sup> August

Myanmar is hoping to lure 7.5 million tourists a year by 2019, an official said Tuesday, as the impoverished former junta-ruled nation emerges as one of Southeast Asia's hot destinations. Travel to the once-cloistered country used to be reserved for the well-heeled and intrepid, prepared to endure the travails of a country under military rule with patchy electricity and limited communications.

## NEPAL

### [NC-Maoist alliance, Madhesi Front make 3-point agreement](#)

The Himalayan Times | 2 August

Nepali Congress and CPN Maoist Centre on Tuesday made a three-point agreement with United Democratic Madhesi Front to secure support from the Madhesi parties for their bid to form a new government in Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal's premiership.

### [Nepali swimmer Singh youngest Olympian at Rio 2016](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 2 August

Nepal's wonder kid Gaurika Singh imprinted her name in the history books by becoming the youngest athlete of the 31<sup>st</sup> Olympic Games scheduled for August 5-21 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. With 13 years and 235 days, the five-foot on inch (5'1") the Nepali swimmer was named as the youngest among the over 10,000 athlete to compete in Rio Olympics, according to the official Rio Olympics website.

## PAKISTAN

### [Turkish FM insists 'Gülen-run' schools be shut down in Pakistan](#)

The Express Tribune|2<sup>nd</sup> August

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu on Tuesday stressed the chain of 'Gülen-run' schools in Pakistan should be shut down. During an official visit to Islamabad, the Turkish envoy addressed a joint press conference after his meeting with Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz. Ankara claims that Gülen, who is living in self-imposed exile in the United States, was the alleged mastermind of the recently failed military coup plot in Turkey.

### [Govt's borrowing record tumbles](#)

The Express Tribune|3<sup>rd</sup> August

The federal government borrowed an unprecedented Rs2.1 trillion in the last fiscal year that comes to about Rs5.7 billion per day on average. This is the highest-ever amount added into the debt pile of the country in a single year by any government. The federation's debt increased from Rs16.96 trillion to Rs19.1 trillion by the end of the 2015-16 fiscal year, the State Bank of Pakistan has reported.

### [India sticks to no bilateral meetings at SAARC huddle](#)

The Express Tribune|3<sup>rd</sup> August

India once again reiterated on Tuesday there would be no bilateral meetings between Home Minister Rajnath Singh and his Pakistani counterpart, a day before the former travels to Islamabad for a SAARC meeting. Singh will

be the first high-level Indian official to visit Pakistan from India since Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi landed in Lahore in December 2015.

### [Centre, Sindh at loggerheads over Rangers' special powers](#)

DAWN|3<sup>rd</sup> August

The federal and Sindh governments were at loggerheads on Tuesday over the issue of Rangers' special powers, with the centre rejecting the province's summary restricting policing powers of the paramilitary force to Karachi. Informed sources in Islamabad told Dawn that the centre wanted the extension of Rangers' policing powers to the whole of Sindh – an idea not acceptable to the provincial government.

## SRI LANKA

### [Sri Lanka hopes to introduce economic reforms for infrastructure, economic stability](#)

Colombo Page| 2<sup>nd</sup> August

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe says the National Government comprising the two main political parties under the leadership of President Maithripala Sirisena is committed towards not merely Political Stability, but also Economic Stability.

### [India looks to revive historic maritime ties with Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Gazette| 2<sup>nd</sup> August

The Indian Government said it is trying to revive the historic maritime cultural and economic ties with 39 countries, including Sri Lanka, under a new initiative called 'Mausam'.

### [Sri Lanka State Trading Corporation revenue surpasses Rs. 3 billion last year](#)

Colombo Page| 2<sup>nd</sup> August

Sri Lanka's official supply giant to the state sector, State Trading Corporation (STC), despite stiff competition from private sector giants in the market, has increased its revenues five times over the last five years surpassing Rs. 3 billion last year, Minister of Commerce and Industries Rishad Bathiudeen said.

### [India offers scholarships to children of estate workers](#)

Colombo Gazette| 2<sup>nd</sup> August

The Indian Government has invited applications from children of estate workers, who are resident on estates, for award of scholarships by the Ceylon Estate Workers' Education Trust (CEWET). These scholarships are available for G.C.E. Advanced Level, Undergraduate courses and for students undergoing Vocational/ Technical education in any other Government Technical Colleges in Sri Lanka.

### [Sri Lanka trade deficit contracts by 2.4 percent in April 2016 as imports decline](#)

Colombo Page| 1<sup>st</sup> August

Sri Lanka's trade deficit contracted by 2.4 percent to US\$ 754.3 million in April 2016 from US\$ 777.1 million a year earlier, according to the Central Bank data released in its External Sector Performance Review Monday.

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### ***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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