

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

August 8th , 2016 | Volume: 2 - 4/8

[Pakistan lagging behind other South Asian states](#)

The Express Tribune | 7<sup>th</sup> August  
Pakistan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 4.7% in 2015-16 may be a source of great satisfaction for its economic managers but it is no match to the other South Asian countries. During 2016, the GDP growth of Myanmar was 8.6%, Bhutan 8.4%, India 7.5% and Bangladesh 6.6%. What are the other neighbouring countries doing right that Pakistan is getting wrong?

[Indian delegation to arrive in Sri Lanka on Tuesday for negotiations on ETCA](#)

Colombo Page | 7<sup>th</sup> August  
An Indian delegation is scheduled to arrive in Sri Lanka on Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> August for discussions on the proposed Economic and Technological Cooperation Agreement (ETCA) which is expected to be signed later this year.

[Bangladesh ranks among riskiest countries for business](#)

The Daily Star | 8<sup>th</sup> August  
Bangladesh is one of the top extremely risky countries, susceptible to protests, mass demonstrations and violence, according to rankings by a London-based risk analysis company. The country ranked sixth in the top extremely risky country category in the latest quarterly Civil Unrest Index (CUI), devised by Verisk Maplecroft.

**AFGHANISTAN**

[6 ISIS loyalists killed in an airstrike in East of Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press | 7<sup>th</sup> August

At least 6 loyalists of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group were killed in an airstrike in eastern Nangarhar province of Afghanistan. The Ministry of Defense (MoD) said the airstrike was carried out in the restive Achin district, leaving 6 of them dead and 2 others wounded.

[Govt to run projects in Nangarhar districts cleared from Daesh](#)

Afghanistan Times | 7<sup>th</sup> August

The government plans to run development projects in the districts of eastern Nangarhar province cleared from Daesh recently. "In order to boost up stability, sectarian ministries plan to implement welfare projects at cost of tens million of Afs in the districts cleared from Daesh," said provincial governor Salim Kunduzi. He named the districts Kot, Achin, Haska Mina and Nazian that have been recently cleared from Daesh. Schools, clinics, seminaries, dams, mosques and houses will be reconstructed in the mentioned districts, he added.

### [Afghanistan's import from Iran jumps to \\$1.5b](#)

Afghanistan Times | 7<sup>th</sup> August

Director General of Afghanistan Customs Department Ahmad Reshad Popal on Sunday said that Afghanistan imported \$1.5 billion goods from Iran. He said this during his visit to the development project of Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar. "Afghanistan annual exports to Iran, especially from Sistan-Baluchestan reaches to 36 million [US] dollars," IRNA news agency quoted him as saying. He said that Afghan officials' visit to Iran, especially to Sistan-Baluchestan province, is facilitating investment and development of bilateral relations.

### [American and Australian university professors kidnapped from Kabul](#)

Khaama Press | 8<sup>th</sup> August

Unknown gunmen have kidnapped two foreign university students from the west part of Kabul city on Sunday evening, it has been reported. Hailing from US and Australia, the two professors were reportedly working with the American University in Kabul and were kidnapped at gunpoint near the university campus. The identities of the two professors have not been ascertained so far but reports suggest the two were kidnapped by gunmen in Afghan forces uniform.

## **BANGLADESH**

### [People say no to terror](#)

UNB/ The Daily Star | 8<sup>th</sup> August

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday said people are saying no to terrorism as a huge mass awareness against the menace has been created in the country. "We have also taken necessary measures to combat terrorism," she said when Vietnamese Ambassador to Bangladesh Nguyen Quang Thue paid a farewell call on her at her office in the morning. After the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters.

### [Chinese Anti- Corruption Commission \(ACC\) President Xi Jinping to visit Dhaka in Oct](#)

UNB / Prothom Alo | 8<sup>th</sup> August

Chinese president Xi Jinping is scheduled to visit Dhaka in October and both Bangladesh and China are now working to finalise a suitable date convenient to the two countries. The visit may take place before or after the BRICS Summit which will be held in India on 15-16 October as the Chinese president is also scheduled to attend the Summit, foreign ministry sources said. An inter-ministerial meeting was held at the foreign ministry on Sunday with foreign secretary M Shahidul Haque in the chair that discussed the Jinping's upcoming visit.

### [Country needs to boost health sector investment](#)

The Financial Express | 7<sup>th</sup> August

Bangladesh needs to increase GDP investment in health sector and make the upazila and union healthcare facilities functional to bring 66 per cent of the rural population under health coverage to achieve universal health coverage (UHC) target.

## **BHUTAN**

### [Credit grows by almost 17 percent](#)

Kunesel | 8<sup>th</sup> August

As of December last year, the economy absorbed about Nu 74.7 billion (B) in loans from the entire financial sector in the country. This is an increase from Nu 63.99B in December 2014, a rise by 16.86 percent.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Anti- Corruption Commission Luthufee: Don't believe Parliament would make Anti-Corruption laws](#)

Sun Online | 7<sup>th</sup> August

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has said that with the rising number of allegations of corruption against MPs,

it is not believed that they would make the laws required to fight corruption. Raising concerns about the failure to create laws to fight corruption, the President of ACC, Hassan Luthufee told Sun Media that since the ACC was founded, numerous amendments have been suggested to the Anti-Corruption Laws to no avail. The President of ACC does not believe that the MPs want to make the amendments. “It (corruption) is among the Parliament Members, they are the people to make the law, so they won’t be doing it.” President of ACC, Luthufee said.

#### [USD 622.6 mn in national reserve at start of July](#)

Sun Online | 7<sup>th</sup> August

Maldivian Monetary Authority (MMA) has announced that the money in national reserve at start of July amounted to USD 622.6 million. Monthly economy review by MMA shows that were USD 624 million in national reserve by beginning of June and USD 622,6 million by beginning of July. The usability reserve held USD 209.4 million at start of July, which is a USD 1 million improvements compared to start of June.

### **MYANMAR**

#### [Aung San Suu Kyi presented with ASEAN Lifetime Achievement Award](#)

Mizzima | 8<sup>th</sup> August

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was presented with an ASEAN Lifetime Achievement Award by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute at the 13th ASEAN Leadership Forum in Vientiane, Laos, on 6 August, state media reported.

#### [USDP to Reorganize](#)

The Irrawaddy | 5<sup>th</sup> August

Burma’s military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) will hold its central conference and elect new party leadership in August at its headquarters in Naypyidaw, said Htay Oo, USDP vice chairman, at the plenary meeting of the Rangoon Division USDP. “The central conference is exclusively for new party leadership elected at divisional and state levels. Those who were recently suspended from party membership have to stand for [leadership] election at township level,” said Htay Oo.

### **NEPAL**

#### [Two right-wing parties to unite to revive Hindu state](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 8th August

After months-long negotiations, two right-wing forces—Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal and the RPP—are set to become one after the latter agreed to its abandoned agenda of reinstating Nepal as a Hindu state. Following their unification scheduled for Tuesday, the new party will have a combined 37 seats in Parliament, with a 6.35 percent share of the lawmakers.

#### [Secys told to ready plans in 3 days](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 8<sup>th</sup> August

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal has asked the government secretaries to present their concrete plans within three days. In a meeting with the top bureaucrats at the Prime Minister’s Office on Sunday, the PM instructed them to lay out the priorities of their respective ministries.

#### [After Oli’s ouster, eyes now trained on Delhi-UML relations](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 8th August

The ouster of the KP Sharma Oli government in Kathmandu triggered a flurry of celebratory headlines in Indian newspapers. Indian officials appear happy to see the back of the CPN-UML-led government that had adopted a tough line on the Madhesi issue and publicly protested New Delhi’s perceived meddling into Nepal’s internal affairs.

### **PAKISTAN**

### [Power sector dues jump by Rs250bn in three years](#)

DAWN|8<sup>th</sup> August

Despite the government's claims of reining in the energy crisis and ensuring the recovery of outstanding dues from the public and private sectors, a staggering amount of Rs253.69 billion has been added to the power sector's outstanding dues between June 2013 and June 2016.

### [NUML to teach Chinese to Baloch people, Balochi to Chinese nationals](#)

DAWN|8<sup>th</sup> August

The National University of Modern Languages (NUML) will set up a campus in Gwadar primarily to teach Chinese language to the people of Balochistan and Balochi language to Chinese nationals. The purpose is to enable local people to play an effective role in trade and economic activities likely to be generated after completion of the Gwadar Port and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project being implemented with the financial help and participation of China.

### [More US lawmakers likely to visit North Waziristan](#)

DAWN|8<sup>th</sup> August

Pakistan plans to bring another congressional delegation to North Waziristan to prove its claim that it has eliminated all militant bases and ammunition dumps from the tribal area, diplomatic sources told Dawn. Congressman Chris Stewart of the House Intelligence Committee will head this delegation, which will include senior policy advisers. They are expected to reach Islamabad in next few days.

## **SRI LANKA**

### [U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs to visit Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page| 6<sup>th</sup> August

The United States Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs Charles H. Rivkin will visit Sri Lanka from August 11-12, the Department of State said in a statement on Friday.

### [Pakistan Air Force chief Sohail Aman in Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Gazette| 7<sup>th</sup> August

Chief of Air Staff of Pakistan Air Force Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman arrived in Sri Lanka today on a two day official visit on the invitation of the Commander of the Sri Lanka Air Force Air Marshal G.P Bulattsinghala.

### [Another batch of Tamil refugees to return to Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Gazette| 8<sup>th</sup> August

Another batch of Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu, India are arriving Sri Lanka under the UNHCR facilitated voluntary repatriation programme.

### [Sri Lanka records 4.8% annual real GDP growth in 2015](#)

Daily News| 8<sup>th</sup> August

The Sri Lankan economy reached an annual real GDP growth of 4.8 percent in 2015, while the nominal GDP recorded a growth of 7 percent to Rs. 11,183 billion. According to Statistics Department of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) based on the disaggregation of the rebased series of National Accounts estimates (2010 constant prices) by the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) as in previous years, Western province provided the highest contribution to GDP in 2015.

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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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