



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

16th August, 2023 | Volume - 9 - 03/08

<p>China's Sinopec to begin operations on September 20</p> <p>Daily Mirror 16th August</p> <p>Chinese oil major Sinopec expects to start operations in Sri Lanka on Sept. 20 and will be allowed to sell fuel for less than the maximum retail price set by the government, Sri Lanka's Power Minister said yesterday. Sinopec's entry into Sri Lanka will help reduce pressure on Sri Lanka's foreign exchange reserves, and the island nation expects two other international fuel operators to start operations by October and November, Minister Kanchana Wijesekera said.</p>	<p>India's future, security linked with Bangladesh, says senior MEA official</p> <p>Dhaka Tribune 16th August</p> <p>Smita Pant, a senior official at the Bangladesh, Myanmar Division of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, said on Tuesday that India's future, particularly its security, is inextricably connected with Bangladesh. Bangladesh and India can achieve a lot together, particularly in renewable energy and Sundarbans delta protection, Pant said while addressing an event commemorating the death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports Times Now News.</p>	<p>Govt retiring constitutionally after saving 'sinking ship of economy': PM</p> <p>The News 13th August</p> <p>Outgoing Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)-led government is handing over power in a constitutional way after "successfully rescuing the sinking boat of the economy". He said this while addressing the nation on the eve of likely handover of power to caretaker Prime Minister-designate Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, who is likely to take the oath of office tomorrow (Monday).</p>
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PAKISTAN

[Pakistan celebrates 76 years of independence](#)

The Express Tribune | 14th August

The nation is celebrating its 76th Independence Anniversary today (Monday) with utmost national fervour.

The day dawned with a 31-gun salute at the federal capital and a 21-gun salute at the provincial headquarters.

Special prayers were offered in mosques for peace, solidarity and prosperity of the country.

A one-minute silence was observed throughout the country with the sounding of sirens to herald the flag-hoisting ceremony at nine in the morning.

[PRL says Russian crude 'technically, commercially feasible'](#)

Dawn | 14th August

The Pakistan Refinery Limited (PRL) has said that it would again process Russian crude "when available at favourable commercial terms", denying the impression that it has suspended the use of Russian crude oil because of processing issues. In a release on Sunday, the refinery insisted that Russian crude was successfully processed and the "spot deal was technically and commercially feasible".

[Naval Chief meets Royal Malaysian Navy leadership during official visit to Malaysia](#)

The Nation | 13th August

Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi called-on Naval Leadership of Royal Malaysian Navy during an official visit to Malaysia. Upon arrival at the Ministry of Defence, the Chief of the Naval Staff was received by Chief of Royal Malaysian Navy Admiral Tan Sri Abdul Rahman bin Ayob and was presented Guard of Honour, a Pakistan Navy news release said on Saturday. During the meeting with the Chief of the Royal Malaysian Navy, matters of bilateral naval collaboration and regional maritime security were discussed.

SRI LANKA

[PM, five MPs in China](#)

The Island | 16th August

Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena and State Ministers Tharaka Balasuriya, Janaka Wakkumbura and Kanaka Herath and MP Yadamini Gunawardena are in China on a four-day visit to the Yunnan Province.

The Prime Minister's Office said that they landed at the Kunming International Airport yesterday morning (15 August).

[COYLE paves the way for strengthening trade relations between Egypt and Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page | 11th August

COYLE, the Chamber of Young Lankan Entrepreneurs, during a Special Forum in July 2023, brought together prominent figures and stakeholders to discuss ways to strengthen trade relations between Sri Lanka and Egypt.

Amongst the esteemed gathering was Maged Mosleh, the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to Sri Lanka, and Ayman Kamel, Egyptian Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs. This meeting marked a pivotal moment in fostering economic cooperation between the two nations.

AFGHANISTAN

[Taliban warn against any sabotage of Afghanistan independence](#)

Afghanistan Times | 15th August

Reiterating their commitment to the Islamic Sharia as the principle for their governance, the Taliban administration stated on Tuesday that they will not tolerate any threats to the independence and freedom of Afghanistan.

Speaking on the second anniversary of Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, spokesperson for the Taliban Zabihullah Mujahid said, "This day also demonstrated that all the endeavors of the foreign forces within our country have met with failure."

[Japan's envoy to Afghanistan holds talks with Taliban on women's rights](#)

The Khaama Press | 14th August

Japan's ambassador to Afghanistan has consistently voiced concerns during discussions with the country's Taliban leaders on the crucial issue of women's rights and the concerning restrictions on women.

He has emphasized the importance of upholding and expanding women's rights in Afghanistan through diplomatic channels, urging for a more inclusive and equitable society.

[Baradar Meets With Turkish Officials, Encourages Investment](#)

TOLO News | 14th August

The Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar met with the Turkish minister of trade and discussed investment, industrial

parks, setting up exhibitions, and developing small and medium businesses between Kabul and Ankara.

The deputy PM's office said that efforts to increase investment and regional connectivity were also discussed in this meeting.

BANGLADESH

[Global activities on fair elections in Bangladesh step up](#)

Prothom Alo | 13th August

Two members of the US Congress are in Dhaka at the moment. Just last week the US state office's coordinator on global anti-corruption paid a visit. And the director of the US Indo-Pacific Command will be coming this month too. And over two weeks back, a delegation of the European Union visited Dhaka too. Over this past year or so, one of the focal points of interest of visiting delegations from various western countries, has been Bangladesh's forthcoming national election.

[UK keen to enhance bilateral trade with Bangladesh](#)

Bangladesh Post | 14th August

The United Kingdom (UK) on Monday expressed its interest to enhance bilateral trade and investment with Bangladesh as its High Commissioner Sarah Cooke paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official Ganabhaban residence here.

"The UK will continue its cooperation in Bangladesh's efforts for its overall development particularly in women education," PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim quoted Cooke as saying in a media briefing after the meeting.

BHUTAN

[More than 3,400 civil servants resign, marking transformation in Bhutan's workforce](#)

Kuensel | 12th August

In a sweeping shift, attrition rate of civil service careers in the country has surged fourfold from fiscal year 2021-2022 to FY 2022-2023, marking a seismic transformation in the nation's workforce landscape.

The annual report of the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) for 2022-2023 reveals a remarkable trajectory, with the attrition rate skyrocketing to an exponential 16 percent from July 2022 to June 2023.

This sharp ascent contrasts with the attrition rate of 4.6 percent witnessed during FY 2021-2022.

[Spreading the wings to Nepal](#)

Business Bhutan | 15th August

Druk Air initiating exploration of a new route connecting Pokhara/Lumbini to Gaya

The Bhutan Civil Aviation Authority (BCAA), under the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, has requested approval for direct commercial flights to two cities, Pokhara and Bhairahawa, in Nepal to enhance air connectivity and cater to a growing number of Buddhist tourists.

Through its Civil Aviation Authority, Bhutan's Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport has requested that Nepal allow direct commercial flights to two of its cities.

MALDIVES

[President Solih affirms housing for the underprivileged](#)

The Edition | 15th August

Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) candidate Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, who is seeking re-election, has pledged to introduce a rent-free council housing scheme for the impoverished and disadvantaged during his second term.

President Solih unveiled his "New Youths' Generation" policy manifesto during a campaign event in Landhoo of Noonu Atoll on Monday, August 14. He is presently touring the islands of Noonu Atoll as part of his presidential campaign.

[More than 150 foreign observers are expected to observe the Presidential Election](#)

Raajje | 11th August

Elections Commission (EC) has disclosed that 2023 Presidential Election is expected to see around 150 foreign observers.

This was stated by the Vice President of the commission, Ismail Habeeb.

Habeeb said that the commission had invited foreign monitors and observers to ensure that the presidential election was conducted in accordance with the law.

The commission in October, sent official invitations to 15 countries to observe the Presidential Election slated for September. A total of 32 observers are expected to be seen from these countries.

MYANMAR

[New Myanmar Junta Defense Minister in Russia to Boost Bilateral Ties](#)

The Irrawaddy | 15th August

Myanmar junta's new defense minister, Tin Aung San, is in Moscow attending Russia's military-technical forum and the 11th Moscow Conference on International Security.

Around 60 countries are participating in the events and about 1,500 Russian companies are presenting military hardware.

Faced with international sanctions, Myanmar's regime has deepened bilateral cooperation with Moscow.

[Shwe Byain Phyu announces dissolution of petroleum company](#)

Myanmar Now | 15th August

Shwe Byain Phyu (SBP)—which rose to international notoriety last year when it was identified as the joint buyer of Norwegian telecoms giant Telenor's Myanmar subsidiary—liquidated one of its petroleum businesses last week, according to a public announcement by the company.

The Shwe Byain Phyu Oil and Gas Company, whose primary activity is the extraction of crude petroleum and natural gas, said in army-ran newspaper Myawady on Friday that its shareholders had decided to liquidate the business at a board meeting on August 10, with all outstanding payments and receivables to be settled by September 9.

NEPAL

[PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal to visit USA and China in September](#)

Onlinekhabar | 14th August

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal will visit the USA and China in September. Dahal will first visit the USA to take part in the 78th UN General Assembly starting on September 5 after which he will leave for China to be part of Nepal's delegation in the 19th Asian Games.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has already begun preparations for the two visits. "The council of ministers will need to give the final green light but we have started to prepare for the two visits," said a source from the ministry.

[Govt focused on good-governance: Minister Sharma](#)

The Himalayan Times | 16th August

Minister for Communications and Information Technology, Rekha Sharma, asserted that the incumbent government was focused on ensuring good-governance and thus was advancing towards justice and prosperity.

At a press meet organized by the Press Centre, Dang chapter in Dang today, Minister Sharma called for cooperation from all quarters in the government's battle against the corruption.

[Vice President Ramsahay Yadav embarks on China trip](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 14th August

Vice President Ramsahay Prasad Yadav on Monday left for China for his first foreign trip since assuming the office on March 20.

Yadav embarked on the week-long trip leading a Nepali delegation ahead of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's scheduled visit to the northern neighbour.

The trip, approved by the Cabinet last Wednesday, will last until August 21.

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